



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Coverage of

16 April - 22 April, 2025

★★ Useful for ★★

**UPSC ESE, PSUs,
RRB, SSC, Banking &
State Services Exams**



POPE FRANCIS

Passed away recently

16th APRIL 2025

World Pandemic Treaty

- **Context:** The members of the World Health Organization (WHO) have finalized a proposal for the World Pandemic Treaty.

Key Highlights

- The proposal was finalised by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB), established in December 2021 to draft and negotiate a convention, agreement or other international instrument, under the WHO Constitution, to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.
- It would be presented at the 78th World Health Assembly for consideration.
- **Objective of the Treaty:** To ensure coordinated global response to pandemics while strengthening national and global:
 - Prevention strategies
 - Preparedness capacities
 - Resilience of health systems
 - Equitable access to pandemic-related resources

Key Provisions

- It establishes a framework for sharing pathogens and ensuring equitable distribution of vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments derived from them.
- The treaty encourages integrated surveillance of human, animal, and environmental health.
- Draft promotes sharing of technology, knowledge, and skills to enhance R&D and production across diverse geographies.
- It proposes a global pool of trained and multidisciplinary professionals for rapid pandemic response.
- It sets up a fund or mechanism to support preparedness and emergency response, especially in lower-income countries.

- It calls for strengthening core health infrastructure, preparedness drills, and public health communication systems.
- It establishes a coordinated mechanism for uninterrupted supply and distribution of essential health commodities.

Operation Chakra V

- **Context:** The CBI arrested four people in connection with a 'Digital Arrests' fraud, as part of 'Operation Chakra V,' after searches at 12 locations.

About Operation Chakra

- It is an initiative of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which was launched in 2022.
- It is a global initiative supported by INTERPOL to combat and dismantle organized cyber-enabled financial crime networks.
- These crimes, including impersonation, phishing, romance, and lottery scams, involve sophisticated tactics such as data harvesting, customized messaging, money mules, and call center operations.
- The operation aims to coordinate law enforcement efforts internationally to address the growing threat of cyber-enabled financial crimes.

Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)

- **Context:** ONDC gets eight interim executive committee members until the new CEO steps in.

About ONDC

- ONDC is just like a "UPI for e-commerce". UPI lets any app send or receive money, whereas ONDC wants to make it easier for buyers, sellers, delivery partners, and platforms to work together no matter which app or website they use.
- ONDC is backed by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

- It's built using open-source tech and follows common rules so that no single platform controls everything.
- It wants to help small kirana stores and local sellers get online and compete with big e-commerce players.
- It also aims to simplify logistics, reduce costs, and make sure consumers get more choices and better deals.

17th APRIL 2025

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

- **Context:** The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry emphasized the potential of India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) as a modern-day Silk Route aimed at connecting Asia with Europe through the Middle East.

About India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

- **Establishment:** The MoU signed by leaders from India, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and the US at the G20 Summit (2023) in New Delhi directly points to the official announcement and initial steps for the IMEC.
- **Aim:** The description of a multi-modal connectivity project involving ports, railways, roads, sea lines, and pipelines to enhance trade between India, the Arabian Peninsula, the Mediterranean region, and Europe perfectly aligns with the stated goals of the IMEC.
- **Corridors:** The division into an Eastern corridor (India to the Gulf) and a Northern corridor (the Gulf to Europe) is a key structural element of the IMEC.

Significance for India

Strategic Geopolitical Influence:

- **Counter to China's BRI:** IMEC is viewed as a Western-backed alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), giving India a key role in shaping global connectivity.
- **Strengthens ties with West Asia and Europe:** It enhances India's diplomatic and trade engagement with countries like UAE, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and EU nations.

Trade and Economic Boost:

- **Faster, cheaper trade routes:** IMEC offers an efficient corridor for Indian exports to reach European markets through the Middle East, reducing transit time and cost.
- **Economic integration:** Encourages foreign investment in India's ports, railways, and logistics sectors, boosting employment and GDP.

Energy Security:

- Facilitates better energy cooperation, especially in green hydrogen, natural gas, and renewable energy, aligning with India's transition to clean energy.
- Enhances connectivity to Gulf energy hubs like Saudi Arabia and UAE.

Digital Infrastructure and Technology:

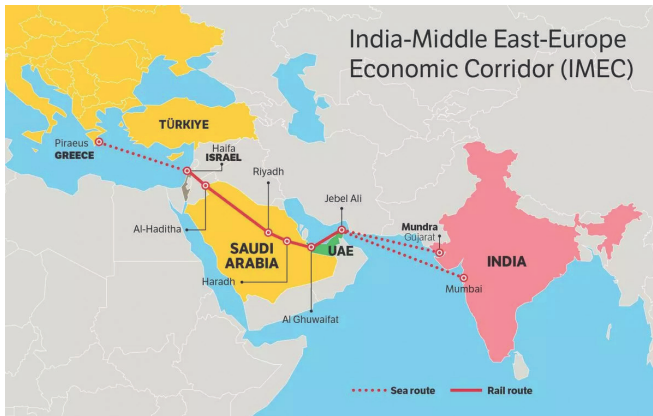
- Includes plans for digital connectivity (like fiber-optic cables) between India, Middle East, and Europe—critical for tech partnerships and cyber cooperation.

Infrastructure and Maritime Development:

- Boosts India's port-led development under the Sagarmala Project by integrating Indian ports into global logistics chains. Logistics cost can be reduced up to 30%.

Multilateral Cooperation:

- Reinforces India's image as a responsible global player and a vital link between Global South and Global North.
- Encourages triangular cooperation with the US, EU, and Gulf nations.



- Seyfert galaxies feature active galactic nuclei (AGNs) powered by supermassive black holes, which emit radiation across the electromagnetic spectrum.
- Its central black hole is around 10,000 times the mass of the Sun.

18th APRIL 2025

UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

- **Context:** The manuscripts of the Bhagavad Gita and Natyashastra have been inscribed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

About UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

- **Establishment:** 1992 by UNESCO.
- **Purpose:** To preserve rare manuscripts, archival holdings, and other documentary heritage of universal value against neglect, decay, and destruction.
- **Criteria for Inclusion:**
 - Outstanding universal value.
 - Historical, cultural, or social significance.
 - Authenticity, integrity, and rarity.
- As of 2025, the register includes 570 collections from 72 countries and 4 international organizations.

Key Facts about Bhagavad Gita:

- **Meaning:** "The Song of the Lord."
- **Attributed to:** Sage Vyasa.
- **Content:** A 700-verse dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna from the Mahabharata.
- **Themes:** Dharma (duty), Karma (action), Bhakti (devotion), Jnana (knowledge).
- **Significance:** Central to Indian philosophy, ethics, and spirituality; global influence on thinkers like Gandhi, Einstein, and Aldous Huxley.

Intermediate-Mass Black Hole (IMBH)

- **Context:** Indian astronomers used the Devasthal Optical Telescope (DOT) to detect and measure an elusive intermediate-mass black hole (IMBH) in the faint galaxy NGC 4395.

About Intermediate-Mass Black Holes (IMBHs)

- Intermediate-Mass Black Holes are missing links between stellar-mass and supermassive black holes.
- They are believed to be seeds for the growth of supermassive black holes.
- IMBHs are considered to be the "seeds" that can eventually grow into supermassive black holes, helping explain how such giants formed in the early universe.
- Intermediate-Mass Black Holes are difficult to observe due to their faint emissions and location in small galaxies.
- This makes traditional detection techniques ineffective, requiring advanced instruments and methods.

About NGC 4395

- It is a dwarf spiral galaxy located about 14 million light-years from Earth.
- It has a low surface brightness and is notable for being one of the closest and dimmest known Seyfert galaxies.

Key Facts about Natyashastra

- **Author:** Bharat Muni.
- **Date:** Circa 200 BCE – 200 CE.
- **Content:** Foundational Sanskrit treatise on drama, dance, music, and performance.
- **Key Concepts:**
 - **Rasa theory:** Aesthetic experience (e.g., Shringara, Karuna, Veera, etc.).
Detailed analysis of stage design, acting, gestures (mudras), costumes, and musical instruments.
 - **Impact:** Basis for classical Indian dance forms (Bharatanatyam, Kathak, etc.) and traditional theatre.

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- **Context:** The Government of India and the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) signed the Headquarters Agreement.

Key Highlights

- The Agreement provides for India to be the host for the IBCA Headquarters and Secretariat; and it entails necessary provisions to enable IBCA to meet its intended objectives.
- The Government of India shall provide budgetary support of Rs 150 crore to IBCA for creating a corpus, building infrastructure, and meeting recurring expenditure for five years from 2023-24 to 2028-29.

About International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- International Big Cat Alliance was launched by the PM Narendra Modi in 2023, during an event “Commemorating 50 years of Project Tiger” at Mysuru.
- The IBCA became a legal entity after five countries—Nicaragua, Eswatini, India, Somalia, and Liberia—had signed the Framework Agreement to formally become members of the IBCA.

- The IBCA primarily aims for conservation of seven big cats namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma.
- **Objectives:**
 - Facilitation of collaboration and synergy amongst the concerned stakeholders,
 - consolidation of successful conservation practices;
 - and expertise to achieve conservation of big cats around the globe.
- The initiative seeks to foster international collaboration for the sustainable future of big cats, as well as underscores India’s leadership and commitment to global wildlife conservation.

K2-18b

- **Context:** Researchers that have been studying data from the planet K2-18b, some 120 light years away from Earth, have reported strong signals of dimethyl sulphide (DMS) and dimethyl disulphide (DMDS).

Key Highlights

- The gases detected include dimethyl sulphide (DMS) and dimethyl disulphide (DMDS) — detected for the first time outside our solar system.
 - These gases are associated with biological processes on Earth, especially from small ocean organisms.
 - On Earth, these are a product of metabolic processes and the decay of small plant-like organisms in the oceans.
- This has led to scientists hypothesising on the possibility of a warm ocean on K2-18b, an environment similar to the one that gave rise to life on Earth about 3.5 to 4 billion years ago.

About K2-18b

- Discovered in 2015, K2-18 b is a super Earth exoplanet.
- It is 8.6 times as massive as Earth.

- It orbits in the “habitable zone” – a distance where liquid water, a key ingredient for life, can exist on a planetary surface.
- It orbits around a red dwarf star smaller than the Sun.

19th APRIL 2025

Rashtriya Karmayogi Jan Seva Programme

- **Context:** The Ministry of Ayush conducted a session of the Rashtriya Karmayogi Jan Seva Programme.

Key Highlights

- The objective of the Programme is to enhance the service orientation and professional skills of the employees of the Ministry of Ayush.
- The initiative was held in collaboration with the Capacity Building Commission under the Mission Karmayogi framework.
- The programme included four focused sessions covering themes such as self-awareness, motivation, and leadership.
- Case studies from ongoing initiatives in Ayurveda, Yoga, and other traditional medicine systems were shared to provide practical context.

About Capacity Building Commission (CBC)

- CBC monitors and reviews the implementation of capacity-building programs, aligning them with the objectives of Mission Karmayogi.
- The CBC was established in April 2021 and is uniquely staffed with representation from the private sector and the civil society.

ISRO-NASA Mission (NISAR)

- **Context:** The NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Satellite) mission will be launched in June 2025.

About NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar)

- NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) is a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) observatory being jointly developed by NASA and ISRO.
- NISAR will map the entire globe in 12 days and provide spatially and temporally consistent data for understanding changes in Earth's ecosystems, ice mass, vegetation biomass, sea level rise, ground water and natural hazards including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and landslides.
- It carries L and S dual band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), which operates with Sweep SAR technique to achieve large swaths with high resolution data.

20th APRIL 2025

Partnerships for Accelerated Innovation and Research (PAIR) Programme

- **Context:** Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) has announced the selection of PAIR Networks under the Partnerships for Accelerated Innovation and Research (PAIR) Program.

Key Highlights

- The PAIR program aims to strengthen India's higher education and research ecosystem by nurturing innovation, building research capacity and promoting excellence across regions.
- The PAIR Networks comprises 18 Hub institutions and 106 partnering Spokes and have been categorized into two strategic modes to foster deeper research engagement and inclusive growth:
 - Category A: 7 Hub institutions with 45 Spokes
 - Category B: 11 Hub institutions with 61 Spokes

- The network connects universities and colleges with leading research institutions through structured mentorship and collaboration.

About Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)

- ANRF has been established with the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) 2023 Act.
- The ANRF aims to seed, grow and promote research and development (R&D) and foster a culture of research and innovation throughout India's universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D laboratories.
- ANRF will act as an apex body to provide high-level strategic direction of scientific research in the country as per recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP).
- The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) established by an act of Parliament in 2008 has been subsumed into ANRF.

Breakthrough Prize 2025

- **Context:** The Experimental High Energy Physics (HEP) group of Bose Institute (BI), has been awarded the Breakthrough Prize 2025 in Fundamental Physics as a part of ALICE at CERN.

Key Highlights

- The \$3 million Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics for 2025 is awarded to thousands of researchers from more than 70 countries representing four experimental collaborations at CERN's Large Hadron Collider (LHC) – ATLAS, CMS, ALICE and LHCb.
- Prize money will support PhD studentships to enable selected students to spend up to two years at CERN.
- Bose Institute is an autonomous body under the Department of Science and Technology.

- They have been honoured for their contributions to ALICE (A Large Ion Collider Experiment), one of the key experiments at CERN's Large Hadron Collider. They have played a crucial role in detector hardware development, simulation, physics analysis, and even data-taking operations.

About Breakthrough Prize

- Breakthrough Prize was founded in 2012 by a group of prominent Silicon Valley figures, including Yuri Milner, Mark Zuckerberg, Priscilla Chan, and Sergey Brin Yuri Milner.
- It honours pathbreaking discoveries in physics, life sciences, and mathematics, aiming to inspire the next generation of scientists.

21th APRIL 2025

Pope Francis

- **Context:** Pope Francis, leader of the Roman Catholic Church has passed away.

Key Facts

- Pope Francis was the 266th pope, in a lineage dating back to Saint Peter in 30 CE. He assumed the papacy in 2013, taking over from Pope Benedict XVI.
- Pope Francis was the first non-European pope in more than a millennium and the first Latin American pope.



About Office of Pope

- In Christianity, there are three major branches — Catholic, Protestant, and (Eastern) Orthodox. Among them, the Pope is the supreme spiritual leader of Roman Catholics.
- The papacy oversees the Holy See, the central governing body of the Church and Vatican City.

- The Ring of the Fisherman, the Pope's signet ring bearing the seal of his papacy, is broken off to symbolise the end of his rule.

Election of Pope

- The College of Cardinals, the Church's most senior officials worldwide, chooses the pope.
- Within 15-20 days, cardinals under age 80 arrive from all over the world to participate in the papal conclave, the secret election process to determine a successor.
- A candidate must receive a two-thirds majority of votes to be elected.
- In India, four cardinals are eligible to vote in a papal conclave.

Civil Services Day

- **Context:** The Prime Minister of India addressed Civil Servants on the occasion of 17th Civil Services Day in New Delhi.



About Civil Service Day

- Civil Services Day is observed on 21st April every year to commemorate the day in 1947 when Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel addressed the first batch of civil servants at the Metcalfe House, New Delhi. He termed civil servants as the "Steel Frame of India," emphasizing their role in maintaining unity and integrity.

History of Civil Services in India

- Lord Cornwallis is considered as 'Father of Civil Services in India'.
- Lord Wellesley founded the College of Fort William in Calcutta in 1800 to educate young recruits for the Civil Services.
- Before 1853 East India Company directors used to appoint Civil Servants. Board of Control members were allowed to make some nominations.
- The Charter Act of 1853 abolished the patronage system and introduced open competitive examinations.
- The first competitive exams for the Indian Civil Services (ICS) were held in London in 1855.
- Satyendranath Tagore was the first Indian to clear ICS in 1864.

22th APRIL 2025

SPADEX Mission

- **Context:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully completed the second docking of two satellites, SDX01 (Chaser) and SDX02 (Target), as part of the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) mission.



About SPADEX Mission

- The PSLV-C60 / SpaDeX mission was launched on 30 December 2024.

- It is a cost-effective technology demonstrator by ISRO, showcasing in-space docking using two small spacecraft launched by PSLV.
- The first docking occurred on 16 January 2025, and the first undocking was on 13 March 2025.
- India becomes the fourth country, after the U.S., Russia, and China, to successfully conduct a spacecraft docking experiment.

Objectives of SPADEX Mission

- It aims to develop and demonstrate technology for spacecraft rendezvous, docking, and undocking.
- It aims to support future space missions, such as sending an Indian astronaut to the moon, returning moon samples, and building an Indian space station.
- It will also demonstrate the transfer of electric power between docked spacecraft, crucial for future applications like in-space robotics, spacecraft control, and payload operations.

Note: Docking is the process of bringing two fast-moving spacecraft into the same orbit, then manually or autonomously bringing them together to join.

Exercise Desert Flag-10

- **Context:** A contingent of the Indian Air Force reached Al Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to participate in Exercise Desert Flag-10.

About the Exercise

- Exercise Desert Flag is an annual multinational air combat exercise hosted by the UAE Air Force.
- This year, it brings together the air forces of Australia, Bahrain, France, Germany, India, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Republic of Korea, Turkey, UAE, United Kingdom, and the United States.
- The aim of the exercise is to undertake complex and diverse fighter engagements, with exchange of operational knowledge and best practices with some of the most capable Air Forces in the world.

