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Weekly Current Affairs

April 2026 - Week 5

27 April - 2 May 2026 | Exam Revision Notes

55+ Topics · 10 Sections · ~30 Min Read

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Dear Aspirants,

Greetings from ReadingRoomz! Another week has passed with significant developments across national affairs, state governance, economy, science, and defence — all of which matter for your APPSC journey. This Weekly Current Affairs digest is structured for quick revision, connecting dynamic current events with static GK you already know.

Read each topic carefully, note the key facts, and revise before your next practice session. Consistency is your greatest weapon. **Every small step you take today brings you closer to your dream tomorrow.**

— Team ReadingRoomz | contact@readingroomz.com

Table of Contents

1. International	UNCLOS, India–NZ FTA, SCO Defence Meeting, UNESCO Chair, UAE Exits OPEC, Bangladesh Rooppur NPP, USA Returns 657 Artefacts
2. National	Project DANTAK, Ganga Expressway, AI4WaterPolicy, UCG Coal Mining, Green Methanol Plant, Great Nicobar, Padma Doree
3. Andhra Pradesh	Google \$15B Data Centre Vizag, South Coastal Railway Zone, PAI 2.0, C-ART Andhra University
4. Polity & Governance	Anti-Defection Merger Clause, Digital Vigilantism, Online Gaming Rules 2026
5. Economy	SAARC Currency Swap (Maldives), Paytm Payments Bank Cancelled, UPI – 10 Years
6. Science & Technology	Cold Spark Technology – Alternative to Fireworks
7. Defence	NASM-SR Salvo Launch, INS Mahendragiri (Project 17A)
8. Ranks & Reports	PAI 2.0 Report, Women and Men in India 2025 (MoSPI)
9. Appointments	Ashok Kumar Lahiri (NITI Aayog VC), Parliamentary Committee Chairs, CGDA
10. Miscellaneous	Thrissur Pooram, Raghu Rai Passes Away, Sourav Kothari – IBSF 2026

1. International Current Affairs

UNCLOS - How International Waters Are Governed

The **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, in force since **1994**, is the legal framework governing ocean space. It treats the high seas as a shared global commons where all countries have equal navigation rights.

Interception on High Seas: Permitted only with UN Security Council authorisation, during hot pursuit from territorial waters, for stateless vessels, or with flag state permission. Strait of Hormuz (Iran-Oman): Governed by the transit passage rule — all ships can pass freely and continuously; Iran cannot block ships or impose tolls. Key focus in global maritime legal debates during geopolitical tensions.

India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) 2026 - Zero Duty on All Indian Exports

India and New Zealand signed a landmark **FTA in April 2026**, concluded in a record **9 months** — one of the fastest FTAs India has ever negotiated.

Key Highlights: Zero-duty access for 100% of Indian exports (textiles, leather, engineering goods, processed foods, marine products, pharmaceuticals) | USD 20 billion NZ investment commitment over 15 years | Access to 118 service sectors | AYUSH systems promoted globally. Visa Provisions: TEE visa for 5,000 skilled Indian professionals annually | Working Holiday Visa scheme | Post-study work visas — first time such provisions appear in an India FTA. Exclusions: Dairy and certain agricultural products kept in India's exclusion list.

SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting - Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (April 28, 2026)

Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** attended the **SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting** in **Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**. India stressed the need for a unified global approach to combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism, and called for eliminating safe havens for terrorist organisations.

Asia's First UNESCO Chair on Gender Inclusion & Skill Development - SSPU, Pune
Symbiosis Skills and Professional University (SSPU), Pune launched **Asia's first UNESCO Chair on Gender Inclusion and Skill Development**. Inaugurated by **Jayant Chaudhary**, Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.

UAE Exits OPEC - Third-Largest Producer Leaves the Cartel (May 1, 2026)

The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** announced its withdrawal from **OPEC**, effective **May 1, 2026**. As OPEC's third-largest oil producer, the UAE's exit weakens the cartel's ability to influence global oil prices. The UAE also plans to exit **OPEC+** (which includes Russia). Reason: Long-standing disagreements over production quotas.

About OPEC: Established 1960 | Headquarters: Vienna, Austria | Controls ~40% of global oil production. Current members after UAE exit: 11 — Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela. OPEC+ is a separate grouping of OPEC + 11 non-OPEC countries (including Russia).

Bangladesh Begins Fuel Loading at Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant

Bangladesh achieved a landmark by starting uranium fuel loading at its first nuclear power plant — the **Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant** — a **2,400 MW facility** developed with **Russian financial and technical assistance**. Once operational, it will meet around **10% of Bangladesh's electricity demand**.

USA Returns 657 Trafficked Artefacts to India - Valued at ~\$14 Million

The United States returned **657 trafficked antiquities to India**, collectively valued at nearly **\$14 million**, recovered through investigations into global smuggling networks linked to traffickers like **Subash Kapoor** and **Nancy Wiener**. Restitution in three phases: 612 artefacts (November 2024), 26 artefacts (July 2025), and 19 artefacts (April 2026).

2. National Current Affairs

Project DANTAK Celebrates 66th Raising Day – BRO's Symbol in Bhutan

Project DANTAK of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) celebrated its **66th Raising Day on April 24, 2026** in Thimphu, Bhutan. Established in **April 1961**, it built Bhutan's **first motorable road** and has constructed over **1,500 km of roads** across the kingdom over six decades.

PM Modi Visits Varanasi – ₹6,350 Crore Projects and 594 km Ganga Expressway

PM Modi visited **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh** (April 28–29, 2026), inaugurating projects worth approximately **₹6,350 crore** and flagging off two Amrit Bharat Express trains: **Banaras-Pune** and **Ayodhya-Mumbai**.

Ganga Expressway: Length 594 km | Route: Meerut to Prayagraj | Cost: ~₹36,230 crore | Access-controlled greenfield expressway | Travel time reduced from 10–12 hours to ~6 hours.

AI4WaterPolicy – AI for Community Water Governance in Rajasthan

A pilot project named **AI4WaterPolicy** demonstrated AI-powered community-led water governance in the water-stressed districts of **Sirohi and Pali in Rajasthan**. An AI chatbot conducted over **350 WhatsApp interviews** with Pani Mitras (water volunteers), Panchayat leaders, and field staff in Hindi and local dialects, identifying key issues and enabling mid-cycle redesign of training programmes.

India's First Coal Mine Agreement with Underground Coal Gasification (UCG)

The Ministry of Coal signed **Coal Mine Development and Production Agreements (CMDPAs)** under the **14th round of commercial coal mining auctions** — the **first in India** to include **Underground Coal Gasification (UCG)** provisions. Mines allocated to **Reliance Industries Limited** and **Axis Energy Ventures India** in **Andhra Pradesh and Odisha**.

What is UCG? Underground Coal Gasification converts coal into synthetic gas directly within the coal seam — without traditional surface mining. Allows energy extraction from deep or economically unviable deposits; produces syngas usable for power, fertilisers, and hydrogen.

India's First Green Methanol Plant – Kutch, Gujarat (Invasive Plant as Fuel)

India's first **green methanol production plant** will be built at **Deendayal Port Authority, Kutch, Gujarat**, using the invasive plant species **Prosopis juliflora** as its primary feedstock — turning an ecological problem into a clean energy resource.

Detail	Fact
Developer	Thermax (gasification technology by Ankur Scientific)
Production Capacity	5 tonnes of methanol per day
Feedstock	Prosopis juliflora biomass (invasive plant introduced during British era; spread across Banni grasslands)
Use Case	Clean marine fuel to replace heavy bunker oil in shipping

Great Nicobar Project - India's Strategic Hub in the Indian Ocean

The **Great Nicobar Project** aims to transform Great Nicobar Island into a strategic maritime and economic hub, located approximately **40 nautical miles from the East-West international shipping lane**, reducing India's dependence on Colombo and Singapore.

Key Infrastructure: International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT) — 14.2 million TEU capacity | Greenfield International Airport — 4,000 Peak Hour Passengers (PHP) | 450 MVA Gas + Solar Power Plant. Significance: Strengthens maritime security and defence presence in the Indo-Pacific; positions India as a global shipping node.

Padma Doree - Northeast Eri Silk Meets Madhya Pradesh's Chanderi Weaving

The **Padma Doree** initiative was launched globally on **May 1, 2026** by the **North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC)** under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region. It combines **Eri Silk traditions of Northeast India** with the **Chanderi weaving heritage of Madhya Pradesh** — blending Ahimsa silk production with traditional handloom craftsmanship.

Prehistoric Rock Painting Site "Oor Pare" Rediscovered in Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu

A prehistoric rock painting site called **"Oor Pare"** was rediscovered near **Vellarikombai village, Kotagiri, Nilgiris**. Around **30 identifiable figures** painted in **red ochre** documented — including anthropomorphic figures with conical headgear and elongated limbs. The site holds cultural significance for the **Irula and Kurumba tribal communities**.

Operation WHITE STRIKE - NCB Seizes 349 kg Cocaine Worth ₹1,745 Crore

The **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** busted a major transnational drug trafficking syndicate under **Operation WHITE STRIKE**, seizing approximately **349 kg of high-grade cocaine valued at ~₹1,745 crore** from the **Mumbai-Navi Mumbai-Thane logistics corridor** — one of the largest cocaine hauls in India's history.

3. Andhra Pradesh Current Affairs

Google's \$15 Billion AI Data Centre Hub - Foundation Stone Laid in Visakhapatnam

CM N. Chandrababu Naidu laid the foundation stone for a **\$15 billion AI data centre hub by Google** in Visakhapatnam — one of the **largest FDI projects in India's history**. Developed across **Rambilli, Adavivaram, and Tarluwada**, with a planned capacity of **1 gigawatt**, executed by Google's subsidiary **Raiden Infotech** in partnership with **Adani Infra**.

Investment: \$15 billion | Capacity: 1 Gigawatt | Target Completion: July 2028. Infrastructure: Submarine cable landing stations + dedicated fibre networks. Jobs: Thousands of high-value roles in data science, cybersecurity, and AI. Part of AP's vision to build a 6.5 GW digital ecosystem; positions Visakhapatnam as a global AI and cloud hub.

South Coastal Railway Zone - India's 18th Railway Zone, HQ in Visakhapatnam

The Government of India announced the creation of the **South Coastal Railway Zone (SCoR)**, effective **June 1, 2026** — India's **18th railway zone**, headquartered in **Visakhapatnam** (Mudasarlova area). Originally announced in 2019.

4 Divisions: Visakhapatnam (reorganised from Waltair), Vijayawada, Guntur, Guntakal. Jurisdiction: Parts of AP, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu — over 3,000 route km. AP Railways Highlights: 100% electrification achieved | Budget allocation ₹10,134 crore (up from ₹886 crore) | AP served by 16 Vande Bharat and 22 Amrit Bharat trains.

Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0 - AP Performance Highlights

Of AP's **13,310 gram panchayats** participating in **PAI 2.0**, the best-performing panchayat was **Nayanur, Kuppam Block, Chittoor District** (score: 84.67). Grade distribution: A Grade (75–90): 591 | B Grade (60–75): 10,178 | C Grade (40–60): 2,468.

Top AP Panchayats by Theme: Poverty & Livelihoods – Chemmullapalli (Y.S.R) | Health – Pandrapadu (Guntur) | Child Friendly – Kachavaram (Palnadu) | Water – Yepiligunta (SPS Nellore) | Clean & Green – Thoopalli (Sri Sathya Sai) | Infrastructure – Gundamala (Prakasam) | Social Justice – Savaragudem (Krishna) | Governance – C. Reddy Gari Palle (Chittoor) | Women Friendly – Durgi (Palnadu).

Coastal Atmospheric Research Testbed (C-ART) Inaugurated at Andhra University

The **Open-Field Observatory of Coastal Atmospheric Research Testbed (C-ART)** was inaugurated on **May 1, 2026 at Andhra University, Visakhapatnam**. Established by the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology** under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** as part of the **Mission Mausam initiative**, to enhance understanding of coastal weather systems affecting AP and the Bay of Bengal region.

4. Polity & Governance

AAP MPs Join BJP - The Anti-Defection Merger Clause Explained

Seven of ten Rajya Sabha MPs from the **Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)** joined the **BJP**, raising questions about India's **Anti-Defection Law** — part of the **Tenth Schedule** of the Constitution, added by the **52nd Constitutional Amendment Act (1985)**.

Anti-Defection Law: A member is disqualified for voluntarily leaving their party or voting against party instructions. Merger Clause Exception: If at least two-thirds of a legislative party's members agree to join another party, it is treated as a "deemed merger" — disqualification may not apply. Debate: Some experts argue a valid merger requires the original political party itself to merge, not just its MPs. In the Rajya Sabha, an additional complexity arises since MPs are elected by State MLAs — if MPs switch but MLAs remain in the original party, it creates a representation disconnect. Decision Authority: The Rajya Sabha Chairman decides on disqualification, subject to court challenge.

Online Gaming Rules 2026 - Complete Ban on Money Games, New National Regulator

The **Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026** were notified and came into effect from **May 1, 2026**, operationalising the Online Gaming Act, 2025.

Key Provisions: Online Gaming Authority of India established as central regulator. Three categories: E-sports (skill-based, competitive) | Online social games (recreational) | Online money games (completely prohibited — including advertising and financial transactions). User Safety: Age verification, time limits, parental controls | Two-tier grievance redressal | 90-day time-bound decisions. Penalties: Up to 3 years imprisonment or ₹1 crore fine | Repeat offences: 5 years and ₹2 crore fine.

5. Economy

India Approves ₹30 Billion Currency Swap for Maldives - SAARC Framework

India approved the first withdrawal of **₹30 billion to the Maldives** under ongoing financial assistance, through the **SAARC Currency Swap Framework** — a financial arrangement introduced by the **Reserve Bank of India** to provide short-term foreign exchange liquidity support to SAARC member countries. The Maldives had earlier availed **\$400 million** under the same framework in October 2024.

RBI Cancels Paytm Payments Bank Licence - Effective April 24, 2026

The **RBI** cancelled the banking licence of **Paytm Payments Bank Limited** under the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949** (Section 22(3)(g)), effective **April 24, 2026**. The bank had earlier faced a ban on onboarding new customers (March 2022) and restrictions on deposits and wallet top-ups (2024).

About Payments Banks: Specialised banking model by RBI — can accept deposits (up to a prescribed limit) and provide digital payment services, but cannot lend money like a regular bank. India's First Payments Bank: Airtel Payments Bank.

UPI Completes 10 Years - From 2 Crore to 24,162 Crore Transactions

The **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** completed 10 years since its launch on **April 11, 2016** by the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, regulated by the Reserve Bank of India.

Metric	Data
Transaction Volume	2 crore (FY17) → 24,162 crore (FY26) — ~12,000-fold growth
Transaction Value	₹0.07 lakh crore → ₹314 lakh crore — ~4,000-fold growth
Banks on UPI	21 at launch → 703 now
Share of India's Digital Payments	85%
Share of Global Real-Time Transactions	~49%
Daily Average	~66 crore transactions per day
Global Reach	UAE, Singapore, France, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Qatar

6. Science & Technology

Cold Spark Technology – Noiseless Alternative to Traditional Fireworks

Concerns about noise pollution and public safety during events like **Thrissur Pooram** in Kerala have highlighted the need for safer alternatives. **Cold Spark Technology** is a modern, noiseless substitute for traditional fireworks.

How It Works: Uses fine metal powders (titanium and zirconium) — no explosive combustion. The powder is heated and a fan ejects it into the air; particles react with oxygen, producing spark-like visual effects.

Advantages: Light without loud sound, explosion, ash, or toxic residue | Safe to use in crowds, near animals, and in enclosed venues | Unlike conventional fireworks.

7. Defence

DRDO Conducts Maiden Salvo Launch of NASM-SR Anti-Ship Missile

DRDO, in collaboration with the Indian Navy, successfully conducted the **maiden salvo launch of the Naval Anti-Ship Missile - Short Range (NASM-SR)** — firing **two missiles in quick succession from the same helicopter** over the **Bay of Bengal**, off the Odisha coast. This was the **first-ever salvo launch** of this air-launched anti-ship missile system, demonstrating India's indigenous multi-strike naval capability.

INS Mahendragiri Delivered – 6th Ship of Project 17A Stealth Frigate Programme

The Indian Navy received **INS Mahendragiri**, the **6th ship of the Nilgiri-class (Project 17A)**, on **April 30, 2026** at **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL)**. Built under India's advanced stealth frigate programme, designed by the **Warship Design Bureau**, using a **CODOG (Combined Diesel or Gas) propulsion system**. Equipped with anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine warfare systems.

8. Ranks & Reports

Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 2.0 Report – Released on National Panchayati Raj Day

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj released the **PAI 2.0 Report** on **National Panchayati Raj Day (April 24, 2026)**. PAI 2.0 evaluates panchayats on **150 indicators across 9 themes** aligned with the SDGs. Of the panchayats assessed, **3,635 are Front Runners** and **1,18,824 (~45.72%) are Performers**. Top-performing themes nationally: Poverty-Free Livelihoods and Healthy Panchayats.

"Women and Men in India 2025" - 27th Edition Released by MoSPI

MoSPI released the **27th edition of "Women and Men in India 2025"** on April 29, 2026, in Bhubaneswar. The report uses **50 key indicators** to analyse gender data across population, education, health, economic participation, and violence against women.

Indicator	Data
Sex Ratio at Birth	904 (2017-19) → 917 (2021-23) — improving
Gender Parity in Education	Achieved at all school levels (Primary to Higher Secondary)
Higher Education GER (Female)	28.5 → 30.2 Male: 28.3 → 28.9
Rural Women LFPR	37.5% → 45.9% — significant increase
Women in Managerial Roles	Grew by 102.54% (2017-2025) vs. 73.80% for men

9. Appointments

Ashok Kumar Lahiri Appointed Vice-Chairperson of NITI Aayog

Ashok Kumar Lahiri has been appointed as the new **Vice-Chairperson of NITI Aayog**, replacing **Suman K. Bery** who served since May 2022. NITI Aayog is chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**. Full-time members: Rajiv Gauba, K.V. Raju, M. Srinivas, Abhay Karandikar, and Gobardhan Das.

Parliamentary Committee Chairpersons 2026-27

Committee	Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee (PAC)	K.C. Venugopal (reappointed) — examines government expenditure and ensures accountability of public funds
Committee on Public Undertakings	Baijayant Panda
SC/ST Welfare Committee	Faggan Singh Kulaste
Committee on Estimates	Sanjay Jaiswal

Appointments made by Om Birla (Lok Sabha Speaker) | Term: May 1, 2026 – April 30, 2027.

Anugraha Narayana Das - Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA)

Anugraha Narayana Das (1991 batch, Indian Defence Accounts Service) assumed charge as **Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA)** on **May 1, 2026**, bringing over three decades of experience in defence financial management, audit, budgeting, and expenditure monitoring.

10. Miscellaneous

Thrissur Pooram - The “Mother of All Poorams”, Kerala

Thrissur Pooram, celebrated at the **Vadakkunnathan Temple in Thrissur, Kerala**, is called the "Mother of all Poorams." Instituted in the late 18th century by **Maharaja Sakthan Thampuran of the Kingdom of Cochin**, it is a rare celebration of cultural unity where multiple temples come together. Its centrepiece is the **Kudamattom** — a ceremonial exchange of decorated parasols atop caparisoned elephants, accompanied by **Panchavadyam and Melam** traditional percussion ensembles.

Raghu Rai (1942-2026) - India’s Legendary Photojournalist

Renowned Indian photojournalist **Raghu Rai** passed away at the age of **83**. A **Padma Shri** awardee, he documented some of the most important events in 20th-century India — including the **Bhopal Gas Tragedy** — and iconic personalities such as **Indira Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, and Mother Teresa**, leaving behind one of the most important visual archives of the nation.

Sourav Kothari Defends IBSF World Billiards Championship - Defeats Pankaj Advani

Sourav Kothari successfully defended his **IBSF World Billiards Championship** title by defeating **Pankaj Advani** in the final held at **Carlow, Ireland**. Kothari won **\$5,000** and Advani received **\$2,500** as runner-up — continuing India’s near-total dominance in global billiards.



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