UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 22-04-2026

One Liners 22-04-2026

History, Art and Culture

India's First Petroglyph Park

On April 2026, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena laid the foundation stone for India's first **Petroglyph Conservation Park** in Ladakh

- **Located along** - the Indus River, this project marks a vital step in safeguarding ancient cultural treasures.
- **Petroglyphs -** Are prehistoric rock carvings that document early human migration, hunting practices, and ecological history. Ladakh's carvings feature ibex, snow leopards, and Buddhist symbols, reflecting centuries of cultural evolution.
- **Park addresses -** Growing threats from infrastructure development, tourism, and environmental damage. By relocating endangered carvings from vulnerable areas, the facility ensures their survival and provides a space for public education.
- **Isolated Sites -** With nearly 400 sites across Ladakh, many isolated carvings face destruction from road construction. The park centralizes these "at-risk" assets into a secure, curated environment.
- **A landmark MoU** - Between the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and local authorities ensures scientific preservation.
- This partnership focuses on long-term heritage management using modern conservation techniques.
- **A Historic Crossroads -** These carvings include ancient inscriptions in Sanskrit, Arabic, and Chinese. Such diversity highlights Ladakh's legacy as a pivotal hub for global trade and civilization.

Raja Ravi Varma Painting

Painting recently sold for **₹167 crore**, highlighting his immense market demand. This record price reflects the rarity and profound cultural value placed on his work by global collectors.

- **Father of Modern Indian Art -** Born in Kilimanoor, Kerala, Raja Ravi Varma (1848–1906) revolutionized Indian aesthetics. He was a member of the **Travancore royal family** and is celebrated today as the pioneer of modern Indian painting.
- **Mastering Western Realism -** Varma was the first Indian artist to master **Western oil painting** techniques.
- He combined European realism with traditional Indian subjects, creating a unique style that brought mythological figures to life with human emotions.
- **His most famous works -** such as *Damayanti Talking to a Swan* and *Shakuntala*, depict scenes from the **Ramayana and Mahabharata**. These paintings defined the visual identity of Hindu deities for generations.
- **The Lithographic Revolution -** In 1894, he established the **Ravi Varma Fine Art Lithographic Press** in Bombay. By mass-producing affordable prints, he made high art accessible to common households, democratizing religious and cultural imagery across India.
- **Legacy and Honors -** In 1904, he was awarded the **Kaisar-i-Hind Gold Medal**. His legacy is built on cultural nationalism and aesthetic excellence, bridging the gap between traditional heritage and modern artistic expression.

Polity & Governance

Historic Language Reform

On April 2026, Meghalaya approved an ordinance giving **Khasi and Garo** equal official status alongside English.

- **Meghalaya Official Languages Ordinance, 2026** - repeals the 2005 Act. While English remains the main link for administration, local languages will now be used for broader government communication.
- **Governance -** Citizens can now receive official orders and notifications in their mother tongues. This change makes government services more accessible and easier to understand for everyone across the state.
- **Legislative Changes -** The state plans to allow Khasi and Garo in the **State Assembly**. This ensures that local leaders can debate and represent their communities using their native languages.
- **Impact on Students -** Competitive exams may soon be held in these indigenous languages. This helps rural and tribal students compete fairly, though full implementation requires building new translation systems first.
- **Constitutional Goals -** This move strengthens Meghalaya's demand to include Khasi and Garo in the **Eighth Schedule** of India's Constitution. It is a powerful statement on cultural identity and federal recognition.

Economy

New Maritime Insurance Pool

The Indian Government approved the **Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool** with a ₹12,980 crore fund. This sovereign guarantee helps protect India's shipping industry from rising global risks.

- **Why It Is Necessary -** Conflicts in the Middle East have caused insurance costs to spike. This pool ensures Indian companies aren't left without coverage when foreign insurers become too expensive or restrictive.
- **Comprehensive Coverage -** The fund covers damage to ships (hull), cargo, and third-party liabilities (P&I). Crucially, it includes **war risks**, keeping ships moving during international instability.
- **Targeted Shipping -** Coverage applies to India-flagged ships, India-controlled vessels, and any trade where India is the starting or ending point.
- **Long-Term Stability -** The framework lasts up to 15 years. By using domestic insurance, India saves foreign exchange and becomes less dependent on overseas providers.
- **Securing Trade -** With 90% of India's trade moving by sea, this initiative secures vital routes like the *Strait of Hormuz*, ensuring economic resilience.

New Urban Challenge Fund

The government launched the **Urban Challenge Fund (UCF)** to improve city infrastructure. With a ₹1 lakh crore central budget, it aims to trigger a total investment of ₹4 lakh crore over five years.

- **Smart Funding Mix -** The central fund covers **25%** of project costs. Cities must raise at least **50%** from private markets, while the remaining **25%** comes from state budgets or additional market loans.
- **Eligible locations** - include cities with over 10 lakh people, all state capitals, and major industrial hubs. The scheme runs from *2025 to 2031* to transform cities into growth centers.
- **Reform-Based Support -** Funding isn't automatic; projects are chosen through a competition. Money is released only after cities prove they have improved their local governance and financial planning.
- **Helping Smaller Cities -** The *Credit Repayment Guarantee Sub-Scheme* helps smaller Tier-II and Tier-III cities. It provides a guarantee for up to 70% of loans, making it easier for them to borrow money.
- **High-Quality Outcomes -** The UCF focuses on water, sanitation, and creative urban development. By linking funds to measurable results, the scheme ensures that infrastructure projects are completed efficiently and effectively.

Environment

Galactic Navigators Dung Beetles

Dung beetles are the first known animals to navigate using the *Milky Way.* By following this bright band of stars, they can travel in straight lines across the dark African savanna.

- **Why Speed Matters -** Beetles must roll dung balls away from piles quickly to avoid thieves. Moving in a straight line is the fastest way to escape competitors and find a safe spot to bury their food.
- **Daylight Guidance -** During the day, beetles use the **Sun** to stay on track. They possess special eyes that detect polarized light patterns invisible to humans, helping them maintain a fixed direction.
- **Nighttime Survival -** When the Sun sets, beetles switch to the stars. Research on the species *Scarabaeus satyrus* proved they stay oriented even on moonless nights by using the galaxy's glow.
- **Scientific Testing -** To confirm this, scientists put tiny hats on the beetles to block their view of the sky. Without seeing the stars, the insects became lost and wandered in circles.
- **Evolutionary Success -** This discovery shows that even tiny insects use complex celestial cues. These advanced survival strategies allow them to navigate harsh environments using the very edge of our galaxy.

Streamlining Biodiversity Funds

National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has updated its guidelines under *the Biological Diversity Act, 2002*. This overhaul improves how financial returns from bio-resources are managed and distributed.

- **Equitable Fund Sharing -** The new formula ensures local communities receive **60–75%** of funds when the resource source is identified. This prevents institutions from monopolizing profits and supports grassroots conservation.
- **Managing Repositories -** Designated repositories must now follow strict *Standard Operating Procedures*. They are tasked with documenting the history and origin of every biological specimen they hold.
- **Digital Innovation -** To protect sensitive materials, the NBA is promoting *digitized voucher specimens*. Digital records allow for remote scientific verification without the risks of moving physical samples.
- **Fighting Biopiracy -** By focusing on provenance and documentation, the framework ensures all commercial bio-resources are legally tracked. It will significantly reduces the risk of illegal resource exploitation.
- **Local Development -** In line with **Section 27**, funds are channeled back into the specific areas where resources originate. This supports both biodiversity management and the development of local communities.

Landmark Wildlife Conviction

A Delhi court recently convicted an individual for illegally exporting **Shahtoosh shawls**. The conviction followed a joint operation involving the CBI and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau to enforce the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.

- **The Cost of Shahtoosh -** wool is made from the fine underfleece of the **Tibetan Antelope**, known as the Chiru. Unlike other wools, it can only be obtained by killing the animal, making its production inherently lethal.
- **Understanding the Chiru -** Scientifically named *Pantholops hodgsonii*, these antelopes live in freezing climates like the Tibetan plateau. In India, the population is migratory, and all attempts to breed them in captivity have failed.
- **Global and Local Bans -** The trade of Shahtoosh has been banned worldwide since 1975 under **CITES**.
- In India, the Chiru is protected under **Schedule I** of the Wildlife Protection Act to prevent its extinction.
- **Conservation Status -** Currently listed as **Near Threatened** by the IUCN, the Chiru faces severe dangers from illegal poaching and habitat loss.
- **Fighting Illegal Trade -** Global initiatives like the **Wild for Life Campaign** work to reduce consumer demand. In India, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau leads efforts to stop the organized trafficking of endangered animal products.

Miscellaneous

Meet Generation Beta

Born between **2025 and 2039**, Generation Beta is the newest cohort identified by researcher Mark McCrindle.

- By adulthood, they will represent nearly **36% of the global population**, living in a world defined by advanced technology.
- **Defining -** Sociologist Karl Mannheim's "The Problem of Generations" suggests that shared historical events shape these groups.
- Generations typically span 15–20 years, moving from *Baby Boomers and Gen X to the digital-first Gen Z and Alpha.*
- **AI-Native Thinking -** Unlike previous groups, Betas are "AI-natives." Artificial intelligence will be a fundamental tool for their education and problem-solving from early childhood, making automated systems a seamless part of their daily routine.

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering