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School of Research Based Learning & Competition

Current Affairs - 04 April 2026

JAN VISHWAS AND THE SHIFT FROM “DANDA” TO “DATA”

- In 2024, the Prime Minister of India, while addressing the Director Generals of Police conference, advocated replacing **coercive** enforcement (“danda”) with **data-driven** governance to prioritise citizens, dignity, and justice.
- This vision has culminated in the **Jan Vishwas framework**, aimed at large-scale decriminalisation of minor offences and improving ease of living and doing business.

The Jan Vishwas Project - Scope and Significance:

- **Largest decriminalisation exercise:**
 - It reviewed over 950 laws leading to removal of over 12,500 criminal compliance provisions. It covers both citizens and enterprises, making it one of the world’s largest decriminalisation reforms.
- **Key legislative and policy measures:**
 - Passage of the Jan Vishwas Bill.
 - Amendments to the Companies Act.
 - Notification of Labour Codes.
 - Identification and removal of obsolete laws.
- **Illustrative reforms:**
 - Removal of jail provisions for ticketless railway travel, minor factory compliance issues (canteen distance, spittoons, registers), publishing and reporting lapses, and minor traffic violations.
 - **For example**, prescribing jail for cheque bouncing accounts for 43 lakh cases out of total 5-crore case backlog in courts.

Why Decriminalisation Matters?

- **Inequality:** Unenforced laws disproportionately harm the poor and unconnected, while the powerful evade consequences.
- **Informality:** Excessive regulation leads to disregard for rule of law. Only 10 lakh out of 7 crore enterprises contribute to social security.

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- **Corruption:** It creates scope for rent-seeking and discretion in enforcement.
- **Judicial burden:** It contributes to India's 5 crore pending cases, undermining access to justice.

Jan Vishwas Siddhant - 3-Phase Reform Strategy:

- **Principle formulation:** Focus on nature of offence (procedural vs serious harm), intent (malicious vs inadvertent), proportionality of punishment, and availability of civil penalties.
- **Inventory creation:** Identification of all criminal provisions across laws.
- **Application of principles:** Systematic removal or conversion to civil penalties.

Challenges and Limitations:

- **Partial decriminalisation:** Some ministries retain personal criminal liability for offences already covered under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.
- **Bureaucratic resistance:** Administrative tendency to expand regulatory control persists.
- **Enforcement gaps:** Laws often remain symbolic, neither enforced nor repealed.
- **Lack of awareness:** Businesses and citizens may not fully benefit without legal literacy and clarity.

Way Forward - Next Phase of Reforms:

- **Digitisation:** Reduce human discretion and improve transparency.
- **Deregulation:** Rationalise compliance burden further.
- **Single source of truth:** Unified, accessible database of all laws and rules.
- **State-level replication:** Adoption by State governments to ensure nationwide impact.
- **Principles-based governance:** Institutionalising proportionality and necessity in law-making.

Conclusion:

- The Jan Vishwas initiative marks a **paradigm shift** in governance—from a coercive, compliance-heavy state to one rooted in trust, proportionality, and justice.
- By pruning excessive criminalisation, it not only reduces judicial burden and corruption but also strengthens **economic formalisation** and citizen-state trust.

KERALA'S DEVELOPMENT DECADE

- Kerala has distinguished itself as the only Indian state to continue a **structured planning process** after the dissolution of the Planning Commission.
- This approach enabled the State to increase capital expenditure from 2017 onwards, in contrast to the declining trend observed in many other states.
- The State's growth rates have remained comparable to, and in some years higher than, the national average.
- Development has been broad-based, with all sectors experiencing expansion.
- Special attention has been given to **marginalised communities**, as reflected in the allocation of funds for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), which consistently exceeds their population share.

Kerala's Development Trajectory

- **Infrastructure Development and Institutional Innovation**
 - Infrastructure expansion has been driven by innovative mechanisms such as the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (**KIIFB**), which has financed over 1,200 projects.
 - Local governments have evolved into key agents of economic growth, complementing their traditional participatory role.
 - Institutional innovation is further evident in the creation of **Kerala Bank** through the consolidation of district cooperative banks.
- **Advancements in Education**
 - The State has achieved universal elementary education with zero dropout rates at the preparatory and middle-school levels.
 - Dropout rates among SC/ST students are also among the lowest in India.
 - The State's transition to becoming India's first fully **digital school** education system highlights its commitment to modernisation.

- **Public Health Achievements**

- The State has achieved an infant mortality rate of just five per 1,000 live births, outperforming many developed countries.
- Major initiatives such as the **Aardram Mission** and **Karunya Arogya Suraksha Padhathi** have strengthened health infrastructure and expanded access to affordable care.

- **Poverty Alleviation and Housing**

- Housing initiatives, particularly the LIFE Mission, have played a critical role, with over five lakh houses constructed for the poor.
- These efforts have set new standards for inclusive welfare and improved living conditions, reflecting the State's commitment to equitable development.

Fiscal Constraints and Challenges

- Despite its achievements, Kerala faces significant fiscal challenges due to structural imbalances in the federal system.
- The centralisation of taxation under the Goods and Services Tax (GST), reduced fiscal transfers, and restrictive borrowing limits have constrained the State's financial capacity.
- The increasing **reliance on conditional grants** has further limited fiscal autonomy and reduced policy flexibility.
- These challenges pose a threat to the sustainability of Kerala's development model.

Conclusion

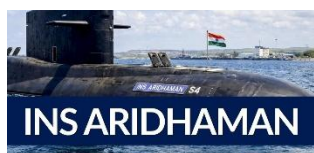
- Kerala's development trajectory from 2016 to 2026 presents a **comprehensive model** of inclusive and sustainable growth.
- By integrating economic progress with social justice, human development, and democratic governance, the State has established itself as a unique example.
- However, sustaining this model requires **addressing fiscal constraints** and preserving the principles of cooperative federalism. Kerala's experience offers **valuable lessons** for policymakers, demonstrating that equitable growth and economic advancement can go hand in hand.

NAMO DRONE DIDI YOJANA



- It is a central sector initiative to empower **women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** promoted under **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** by providing them with **drone technology for agricultural services**.
- It aims to provide drones to selected SHGs for rental services to **farmers for agriculture purposes** (application of liquid fertilizers and pesticides for the present).
- **Financial Assistance:** Central Financial Assistance @ **80% of the cost** of drone package will be provided to the women SHGs. For the remaining 20% cost, SHGs can seek loans from the **National Agriculture Infrastructure Financing Facility (AIF)** with a 3% interest subvention.
- **Training:** One of the members of the **women SHGs will be selected for 15 day training** comprising of mandatory drone pilot training and additional training for agriculture purpose for nutrient and pesticide application.
- It is **implemented by converging the resources of:**
 - Department of Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare (DA&FW), Department of Rural Development (DoRD) and Department of Fertilizers (DoF) and Lead Fertilizer Companies (LFCs).

INS ARIDHAMAN



- It is India's third indigenously built **nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine**.
- It is the second **submarine in the Arihant class** of SSBNs (Submersible Ship Ballistic Nuclear).
- It is built under the **Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV)** project to build nuclear submarines at the Ship Building Centre in Visakhapatnam.

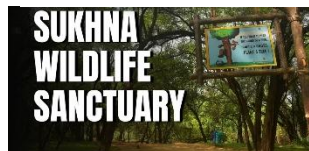
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- **Features of INS Aridhaman**
 - It consists of an **83 MW pressurized water reactor** supplied by the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre.
 - **Armaments:**
 - Equipped with eight vertical launch tubes, it is designed to carry **more long-range nuclear-tipped missiles** than INS Arihant and INS Arighaat.
 - It has four launch tubes capable of deploying up to **24 K-15 Sagarika submarine**.
 - It also has **anechoic tiles** for acoustic damping and advanced sonar suites enhancing its survivability against detection.

SUKHNA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



- **Location:** It is a **protected area located in Chandigarh**, near the famous Sukhna Lake at the foothills of **the Shivalik range**.

The lake was created by the architect Le Corbusier in 1958 by diverting the Sukhna Choe, a seasonal stream that flows down from the Shivalik hills.
- The sanctuary was **developed as a result of afforestation** done for soil conservation around Sukhna Lake. The Sanctuary was established in 1998.
- The **place is quite unstable geographically** and becomes prone to soil erosion by surface runoff during rains.
- It has sandy soil of Shivalik with pockets of clay embedded at places.
- **Vegetation:** It is characterized by a **mix of forests, grasslands, and wetlands**, with the Sukhna Lake forming an important part of the ecosystem.
- **Flora:** The common flora of the sanctuary includes Khair, Phulai, Kikar, Shisham, Moonj, Amaltas, Jhingan, Amla, Rati, Vasaka, and many more.
- **Fauna:**
 - Squirrel, Common-Mongoose, Indian Hare, Porcupine, Jungle Cat, Jackal, Wild boar, etc, are the mammals found in the sanctuary.

RONGALI BIHU



- It is one of the **major festival of Assam** which is commonly known as **Bohag bihu**
- It is the most popular Bihu that celebrates the **onset of the Assamese New Year** and the coming of spring.
- The word 'Rongali' is derived from 'Rong' which means **happiness and celebrations**.
- This festival reflects the rich culture of Assamese society.
- **Celebration of Rongali Bihu:**
 - During the celebration, traditional **pat or muga silk or cotton mekhela** chadors are worn by ladies (the two-piece attire).
 - As a **sign of affection and respect**, **gamocha**, the traditional Assamese towel, also known as Bihuwaan, is exchanged.

Key facts about Bihu

- Bihu is celebrated by people from all parts of Assam irrespective of caste creed or religious background.
 - The first Bihu is known as the **Rongali Bihu or Bohag Bihu**, which is celebrated in the **month of April**.
 - The second Bihu is known as **Kati Bihu or Kongali Bihu**, which is celebrated during the month of **October**
 - Finally there is **Magh Bihu**, which is observed during the month of **January**.

KAR SAATHI



- It is the **Income Tax Department's AI chatbot**, designed to serve as a virtual tax assistant available round-the-clock through the department's official website.
- It is aimed at simplifying compliance **under the Income Tax Act, 2025**.
- It functions as a **digital assistant integrated** within the new income tax website.

- Its primary purpose is to address **user inquiries**, **provide step-by-step guidance**, and streamline procedures such as filing returns.
- **Features of Kar Saathi:**
 - The tool is **available 24x7** and can explain processes such as filing returns, understanding updated provisions, and navigating forms.
 - It's positioned as a **"one-stop solution" for taxpayers** — covering everything from understanding tax rules to walking you through return filing and resolving queries about direct tax compliance.

RAJA RAVI VARMA



- He was born on 29 April 1848, in the village of Kilimanoor in Kerala to a family of chieftains known as **the Koil Thampurans**.
- Ravi Varma was an **Indian painter** celebrated for blending Hindu mythological themes **with European realism and naturalism**.
- He was among the **first Indian artists to use oil paints and master lithographic reproduction**.
- **Themes:** Varma painted scenes from Hindu mythology and portraits of Indian and British figures in India.
- **Notable Works:** His notable works include **Shakuntala Writing a Love Letter to Dushyanta** and **Shri Rama Vanquishing the Sea**.
- He is also known for **having mastered the reproduction of his work on the lithographic press**— through which his paintings spread far and wide. He set up his own **printing press in Maharashtra** — first in **Ghatkopar** and eventually in **Lonavala in 1894**.
- **Awards:**
 - In 1904, he **received the Kaiser-i-Hind medal** and was popularly known as Raja Ravi Varma. His 1873 painting, **Nair Lady Adorning Her Hair**, won Varma prestigious awards including Governor's Gold Medal when it was presented in the **Madras Presidency**, and Certificate of Merit at an exhibition in Vienna.

COMMISSION FOR AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT



- It is a **statutory body** established under the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region (NCR) and Adjoining Areas, Act 2021.
- **Mandate:** Better coordination, research, identification, and resolution of problems surrounding the air quality index and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- It undertakes action for the prevention and **control of Air pollution in Delhi-NCR & Adjoining Areas.**
- **Powers:**
 - Restricting activities influencing air quality
 - **Investigating and conducting research** related to environmental pollution impacting air quality, preparing codes and guidelines to prevent and control air pollution,
 - **Issuing directions on matters** including inspections, which will be binding on the concerned person or authority?
 - All the directions and orders by the **Commission are of binding nature**, and any person, officer, or authority shall be bound to comply with the same.
 - The commission is **directly accountable to the parliament.**
- **Composition:**
 - **Chairperson:** To be chaired by a government official of the rank of **Secretary or Chief Secretary**. He will hold the post for **three years** or until s/he attains **age of 70 years**.
 - It also has **five ex officio members** who are either **Chief Secretaries or Secretaries** in charge of the department dealing with environment protection in the States of **Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.**