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Current Affairs Today – January 4, 2026

4 January 2026

SUBJECTS COVERED

POLITY

ECONOMY

SCIENCE & TECH

SOCIAL ISSUES

SECURITY & DEFENCE

ENVIRONMENT

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WHY IN NEWS

World Braille Day (January 4) observed globally, marking Louis Braille’s 217th birth anniversary. The Indian Army declared 2026 as the “Year of Networking and Data Centricity” and launched India’s first community radio station along the Line of Control in Rajouri. SEBI tightened merchant banker regulations with phased net worth requirements, and the Galaxy frog was spotted in the Western Ghats.

WORLD BRAILLE DAY — JANUARY 4

World Braille Day was observed on **January 4, 2026** — the 217th birth anniversary of **Louis Braille** (born January 4, 1809, Coupvray, France):

Braille system: Invented **1824** (age 15); published **1829**; system of **six raised dots** in 3×2 grid → 64 possible combinations

Designation: UN General Assembly Resolution 73/161 (December 17, 2018); first WBD January 4, 2019

India: Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016 mandates accessible communication including Braille; India has ~50+ million visually impaired persons

2026 theme: National Federation of the Blind — “More Braille More Empowerment”

UPSC Angle: GS-2 Social Issues — RPWD Act 2016; UNCPRD (Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006; India ratified 2007); accessible India campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan).

INDIAN ARMY — “YEAR OF NETWORKING AND DATA CENTRICITY” (2026)

Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi declared **2026** as the “**Year of Networking and Data Centricity**”:

Focus: Digital integration, real-time decision-making, data-driven battlefield operations, indigenisation of communication platforms and battlefield management systems

Previous theme: 2024–25: “Year of Technology Absorption”

Context: Part of Indian Army’s decade-long modernisation under Theatre Commands restructuring and Mission Ranvijay doctrine

Next: 78th Army Day — January 15, 2026 (first time in Jaipur, not Delhi)

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Security – Army modernisation; theaterisation; iDEX (innovations for defence); indigenisation under Atmanirbhar Bharat for defence.

RADIO SANGAM — INDIA'S FIRST LOC COMMUNITY RADIO STATION

The **Indian Army** launched **Radio Sangam** at Keri village, Doongi block, **Rajouri district, J&K** (January 2, 2026):

Frequency: 88.8 FM

Significance: India's **first community radio station along the Line of Control (LoC)**

Content: Agricultural tips, local news, cultural programmes, awareness campaigns

Purpose: Strengthen trust between the Army, civil administration, and border communities

Background: Community Radio Stations in India are licensed by MIB; require educational/civil society entity status; not-for-profit

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Security / GS-2 Polity – Counter-insurgency civil-military relations; community radio policy (Community Radio Policy 2006); J&K development under Article 370 reorganisation.

SEBI AMENDS MERCHANT BANKER REGULATIONS — ENHANCED NET WORTH REQUIREMENTS

SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) notified the **SEBI (Merchant Bankers) (Amendment) Regulations** (December 2025, effective January 2026):

Category-I net worth: Rs 25 crore (by January 2, 2027) → Rs 50 crore (by January 2, 2028)

Category-I liquid net worth: Rs 6.25 crore (2027) → Rs 12.5 crore (2028)

Category-II: Rs 7.5 crore → Rs 10 crore (phased)

Underwriting cap: Cannot exceed 20 times liquid net worth

Minimum revenue: Rs 25 crore (Cat-I), Rs 5 crore (Cat-II) over 3 years

Purpose: Strengthen capital adequacy of investment banks handling IPOs and M&A transactions

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Economy – SEBI regulatory powers; capital market development; merchant banker role in IPO ecosystem; SEBI Act 1992.

PLI SCHEME FOR TEXTILES — APPLICATION DEADLINE EXTENDED

The **PLI (Production Linked Incentive) Scheme for Textiles** application deadline was extended to **March 31, 2026**:

Total outlay: Rs 10,683 crore (FY22–FY26)

Original launch: September 2021

Approved applications: 74 (proposed investments: Rs 28,711 crore)

Focus sectors: Man-Made Fiber (MMF) apparel/fabrics and technical textiles

Extension rationale: Allow laggard units time to qualify; attract more investment in MMF which India has under-penetrated (global shift away from cotton textiles)

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Economy — PLI Scheme and sector-wise targets; textile industry challenges; India vs Bangladesh/Vietnam in textile exports; MSME participation in PLI.

MEITY ECMS — 3RD PHASE APPROVALS WORTH RS 41,863 CRORE

MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and IT) approved **22 new proposals** worth **Rs 41,863 crore** under the 3rd tranche of the **Electronics Components Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS)**:

Cumulative total: 46 projects, Rs 56,567 crore total investment

11 product segments: PCBs (Printed Circuit Boards), capacitors, connectors, enclosures, lithium-ion cells, camera modules, display modules, optical transceivers, aluminium extrusions, anode materials, copper clad laminates

8 states: Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Economy/S&T — Electronics manufacturing ecosystem; India's semiconductor and components strategy; import substitution in electronics; PLI scheme hierarchy.

GALAXY FROG — SEVEN SPECIMENS FOUND IN WESTERN GHATS

Seven specimens of the **Galaxy frog** (*Melanobatrachus indicus*) were found in Kerala's Western Ghats:

IUCN Red List: Vulnerable

Habitat: Wet evergreen forests of Kerala and Tamil Nadu; Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot

Significance: Extremely rare; previously known from very few specimens; endemic to the Western Ghats

Discovery context: Rare sightings; specimens briefly went missing after a photographer disturbance

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Biodiversity — Western Ghats as biodiversity hotspot; endemic amphibian diversity; IUCN threat categories; Schedule I WPA species.

ICICI BANK LAUNCHES CAPITAL GAINS ACCOUNT SCHEME (CGAS)

ICICI Bank launched the **Capital Gains Account Scheme (CGAS)** from **January 1, 2026**:

Legal basis: Income Tax Act, 1961 (Capital Gains Account Scheme, 1988)

Eligible: Resident individuals and HUFs

Purpose: Park un-invested long-term capital gains with tax exemption for up to **3 years**

Account Type A: Savings account; flexible withdrawals for reinvestment

Account Type B: Term deposit; minimum Rs 10,000

Caution: Unutilised funds after 3 years become taxable

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Economy — Capital gains taxation; Section 54 (IT Act 1961); LTCG vs STCG; banking products for tax planning.

VISHNUGAD-PIPALKOTI HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT — TUNNEL ACCIDENT

Vishnugad-Pipalkoti HEP in the news after approximately **60 workers were injured** in a tunnel train collision during construction:

River: Alaknanda (Ganga tributary)

Location: Chamoli district, Uttarakhand

Capacity: Run-of-river; **444 MW**

Annual generation: ~1,665 GWh

Implementing agency: THDC India Limited (formerly Tehri Hydro Development Corporation)

UPSC Angle: GS-3 Energy — Hydropower in India; run-of-river projects; tunnelling safety in mountain infrastructure; hydropower in Himalayan states.

UPSC RELEVANCE

World Braille Day (January 4; Louis Braille born 1809; Braille system 1824; 6 dots/64 combinations; first WBD 2019; UN Resolution 73/161); Radio Sangam (Rajouri, J&K; Keri village; 88.8 FM; first LoC community radio; January 2, 2026); Army 2026 theme “Year of Networking and Data Centricity” (Gen Upendra Dwivedi; previous 2024-25 “Technology Absorption”); SEBI Merchant Banker Amendment (Cat-I net worth Rs 25 cr→50 cr by Jan 2028; underwriting cap 20x liquid NW); PLI Textiles (Rs 10,683 crore; extended to March 31, 2026; 74 approved; MMF focus); ECMS 3rd tranche (22 proposals; Rs 41,863 crore; total 46 projects Rs 56,567 crore; 11 segments; 8 states); Galaxy frog (*Melanobatrachus indicus*; Vulnerable; Western Ghats; Kerala); ICICI CGAS (January 1, 2026; 3 years; Type A savings/Type B term; Income Tax Act 1961); Vishnugad-Pipalkoti HEP (444 MW; Alaknanda; Chamoli, Uttarakhand; THDC)

MAINS GS-2:

India’s disability rights framework — RPWD Act 2016 vs UN CRPD obligations | Community radio and civil-military relations in conflict zones

MAINS GS-3:

India’s electronics manufacturing ecosystem — PLI, ECMS, and the import substitution challenge | SEBI’s role in strengthening capital market intermediaries

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
WORLD BRAILLE DAY:

Date: January 4 (Louis Braille's birthday, 1809)

UN designation: UNGA Resolution 73/161 (December 17, 2018); first WBD January 4, 2019

Braille system: invented 1824 (age 15); published 1829; 6 dots in 3x2 grid; 64 combinations

India's visually impaired: ~50+ million (estimated); one of world's largest populations of visual impairment

RPWD Act 2016: replaced Persons with Disabilities Act 1995; aligns with UN CRPD (2006)

Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan: Government accessibility campaign; covers physical infrastructure and digital access

RADIO SANGAM — LOC COMMUNITY RADIO:

Location: Keri village, Doongi block, Rajouri district, Jammu & Kashmir

Frequency: 88.8 FM

Launch date: January 2, 2026

Significance: First community radio along LoC

Community Radio Policy (India, 2006): Allows non-profit educational/civil society entities to operate CRS; 50W to 100W power; coverage: ~10-15 km radius

As of 2024: ~250+ community radio stations in India

SEBI MERCHANT BANKER NORMS:

SEBI (Merchant Bankers) (Amendment) Regulations — December 2025

Category-I: Rs 10 crore net worth currently → Rs 25 crore (Jan 2027) → Rs 50 crore (Jan 2028)

Role of merchant banker: Lead manager for IPOs/FPOs, book building, M&A advisory, rights issues, QIPs

SEBI Act 1992: empowers SEBI to regulate capital market intermediaries

ELECTRONICS COMPONENTS MANUFACTURING SCHEME (ECMS):

Ministry: MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology)

Total 3 tranches: 46 projects; Rs 56,567 crore

3rd tranche: 22 proposals; Rs 41,863 crore; 11 segments; 8 states

Context: India's electronics imports ~\$80 billion annually; significant share are components

PLI TEXTILES:

Outlay: Rs 10,683 crore (FY22-26); extended to March 31, 2026

Target: Man-Made Fiber (MMF) and technical textiles

74 approved applications; Rs 28,711 crore proposed investment

India's textile industry: ~\$110 billion (domestic + exports); 2nd largest employer after agriculture

VISHNUGAD-PIPALKOTI HEP:

River: Alaknanda (joins Bhagirathi at Devprayag to form Ganga)

Capacity: 444 MW (run-of-river)

Annual generation: ~1,665 GWh

Implementing: THDC India Limited (a joint venture of Govt. of India and Govt. of UP; now primarily GoI owned)

Uttarakhand hydro: ~27,000 MW potential; one of India's most hydro-rich states

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

ICICI Capital Gains Account Scheme: under IT Act 1961; Capital Gains Account Scheme rules 1988; allows parking gains when property not yet reinvested

Galaxy frog (*Melanobatrachus indicus*): IUCN Vulnerable; Western Ghats endemic; nocturnal; extremely rare amphibian

Army 2026 Theme: emphasis on Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) capability; joint connectivity and data integration with IAF and Navy

ESAF Small Finance Bank: licensed 2017; HQ Thrissur, Kerala; focuses on microfinance and financial inclusion

Sources: AffairsCloud, PIB, SEBI, MeitY

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