



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

MoEFCC Releases Draft Rules for Coastal Tar Ball Management 2026

8 April 2026 · ENVIRONMENT · GS3

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com →**ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

epicbharat@gmail.com

MoEFCC Releases Draft Rules for Coastal Tar Ball Management 2026

 8 April 2026 · 4 min read · 2 tags

▼ On this Page

01 Why in News

02 What Are Tar Balls?

03 Impact on Indian Coastlines

04 What the Draft Rules Propose

- Key Provisions

05 MARPOL — The International Framework

06 Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Linkage

07 UPSC Relevance

- GS Paper 3 — Environment
- GS Paper 2 — International Relations

08 Facts Corner

WHY IN NEWS

The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** released **draft rules for the management of tar balls** along India's coastline in April 2026. Tar balls — sticky lumps of **petroleum residue** that wash ashore from oil spills and ship discharges — regularly contaminate India's beaches, harm marine ecosystems, and damage coastal tourism and fisherfolk livelihoods. The draft rules propose a structured framework for identification, cleanup, source attribution, and reporting, linked to India's existing obligations under **MARPOL** (the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships).



WHAT ARE TAR BALLS?

Tar balls (also called **petroleum tarballs**) are:

- Hardened lumps of **crude oil or refined petroleum products** that have been weathered by sunlight and seawater
- Formed when oil spills at sea undergo **evaporation, oxidation, and emulsification** — lighter fractions evaporate and the residue hardens
- Typically **black to brown, waxy or rubbery**, ranging from pea-sized to football-sized
- **Not from a single event** — many tar balls are chronic pollution from ship bilge pumping, tank cleaning at sea, and slow seeps from sunken wrecks

IMPACT ON INDIAN COASTLINES

ASPECT	DETAIL
States most affected	Kerala, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka
Season	Monsoon and post-monsoon (south-west winds push them ashore)
Tourism	Tar balls deter beach tourism — Goa beaches lose lakhs of visitors annually
Fisherfolk	Tar on fishing nets, traps, and boats — loss of gear and income
Marine life	Sea turtles, seabirds, and filter feeders ingest tar — lethal
Composition	PAHs (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons) — carcinogenic
Cleanup cost	Manual removal by coastal municipalities — uncoordinated

WHAT THE DRAFT RULES PROPOSE

Key Provisions

1 Identification Protocol

- State coastal authority (CRZ implementation bodies) must maintain **tar ball monitoring calendars** — seasonal onset/peak mapping
- Mandatory **sampling and chemical fingerprinting** of tar balls for source identification

2 Cleanup Responsibilities

- District administrations must constitute **Coastal Tar Response Teams (CTR Ts)**
- **Beach clean-up timelines:** within 72 hours of confirmed tar ball event
- **Hazardous waste disposal** – collected tar balls classified as hazardous under Hazardous Waste Management Rules, 2016

3 Source Attribution

- Cooperation with **Indian Coast Guard** (operational arm) and **Directorate General of Shipping (DGS)** to trace originating vessels via **MARPOL Oil Record Books**
- Integration with **VTMS (Vessel Traffic Management System)** data

4 Reporting Mechanism

- State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) report tar ball incidents quarterly to MoEFCC
- Data to be shared with **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** for global incident tracking

5 Polluter-Pays Principle

- If originating vessel/operator identified – **cost recovery** from the polluter
- Linked to CLC (Civil Liability Convention) and India’s position on MARPOL Annex I compliance

MARPOL — THE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

MARPOL (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships) is the principal international treaty governing **ship-source marine pollution**, administered by the **IMO**.

ANNEX	SUBJECT	KEY RULE
Annex I	Oil	Prohibits oil discharge in special areas; oil record books mandatory
Annex II	Noxious Liquid Substances	Standards for carriage and discharge
Annex III	Packaged Harmful Substances	Packaging and labelling
Annex IV	Sewage	Discharge restrictions near shore
Annex V	Garbage	Plastics overboard ban
Annex VI	Air Pollution	SOx, NOx limits; ECA zones



India ratified MARPOL Annexes I and II in **1983**, and Annexes III, IV, V in subsequent years.

COASTAL REGULATION ZONE (CRZ) LINKAGE

Tar ball management intersects with India's **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2019**:

- The **500m High Tide Line (HTL) buffer** restricts construction but doesn't regulate pollution response
- **Coastal Zone Management Plans (CZMPs)** – State documents – are being updated to include tar ball response protocols
- **Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Project** (World Bank-funded) has developed databases of coastal hazards including chronic pollution

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 3 — Environment

- **Marine pollution** – sources, impacts, international conventions
- **MARPOL** – India's obligations, IMO, Annex I (oil pollution)
- **Coastal ecosystems** – mangroves, beaches, intertidal zones
- **Hazardous Waste Management Rules, 2016** – classification of petroleum waste
- **Polluter-pays principle** – environmental law

GS Paper 2 — International Relations

- India's role in **IMO governance** (India is a Category C IMO Council member)
- Coastal security – overlap of Indian Coast Guard, DGS, MoEFCC



FACTS CORNER

ITEM	FACT
Draft rules issuer	MoEFCC
Pollution regulated	Tar balls (petroleum hydrocarbon residue)
India's coastline	7,516 km
Most affected states	Kerala, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka
Health risk	PAHs – Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (carcinogenic)
International convention	MARPOL (under IMO)
MARPOL relevant annex	Annex I (oil pollution)
India ratified MARPOL Annexes I & II	1983
Cleanup waste category	Hazardous (under HWM Rules, 2016)
Source tracking tool	MARPOL Oil Record Books + VTMS

← **PREVIOUS ARTICLE**

ZSI Discovers Two New Marine Nematode Species off Tamil Nadu...

NEXT ARTICLE →

Current Affairs Today — April 7, 2026



RELATED EDITORIALS

THE HINDU

[The Gangotri Crisis: When Glaciers Retreat, Water Wars Begin](#)

4 Apr

THE HINDU

[From Price Discovery to Risk Management: India's Gas Market Comes of Age](#)

4 Apr

INDIAN EXPRESS

[Between Oil Shock and El Nino: How High Can India's Inflation Go?](#)

4 Apr

DOWN TO EARTH

[Rethinking E20 — India's Ethanol Mandate, Climate Trade-offs, and the Food-Fuel Tension](#)

1 Apr





CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/daily/2026/04/08/tar-ball-management-rules-mefcc-draft/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](https://bharatnotes.com)

📌 OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · bharatnotes.com

