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Current Affairs Today — April 15, 2026

15 April 2026

ENVIRONMENT

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CURATED & WRITTEN BY

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TODAY'S HEADLINES — APRIL 15, 2026

Samrat Choudhary sworn in as Bihar's first BJP CM (main article) · ILO flagship on Universal Social Protection (main article) · Konyak tribal herbal anti-cancer study (main article) · Bharat Steel Summit opens tomorrow (main article) · New gecko species discovered in Assam · Lake Neuchâtel Roman artefacts surface · India's food-waste bill at ₹1.55 lakh crore · Heat-wave legislative vacuum.

NEW GECKO SPECIES — *CYRTODACTYLUS RAIMONAENSIS*

A new **bent-toed gecko species**, *Cyrtodactylus raimonaensis*, was announced on **April 15, 2026** by Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma. The species was discovered near **Raimona National Park** in Kokrajhar district, Assam, and described in the journal **Zootaxa**.

Species Details

- **Genus:** *Cyrtodactylus* — “bent-toed geckos”, one of the most speciose reptile genera (>350 described species)
- **Species group:** *Cyrtodactylus septentrionalis* group
- **Max snout-vent length:** 71.1 mm
- **Distinguishing features:** Rounded, bluntly conical, weakly keeled dorsal tubercles

Raimona National Park

- **Location:** Kokrajhar district, westernmost Assam (southern foothills of Eastern Himalaya)
- **Notified:** 2021 (India's 5th and latest in Assam, after Kaziranga, Manas, Nameri, Dibru-Saikhowa, and Orang)
- **Altitude range:** 85 m – 1,042 m
- **Transboundary landscape:** Contiguous with **Bhutan's Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary** and West Bengal's **Buxa Tiger Reserve** — creates a >2,400 sq km conservation landscape
- **Key fauna:** Golden langur (endemic to this landscape), Asian elephant, clouded leopard

Cyrtodactylus raimonaensis: Discovered near **Raimona NP, Kokrajhar, Assam** · *Cyrtodactylus* is a bent-toed gecko genus · Published in **Zootaxa** · **Raimona NP (notified 2021)** · Transboundary with **Phibsoo WS (Bhutan) + Buxa TR (WB)** · Golden langur habitat · GS3: Environment.

LAKE NEUCHÂTEL ROMAN ARTEFACTS

Over **1,000 Roman artefacts** have been discovered in **Lake Neuchâtel** — the **largest lake entirely within Switzerland** — offering a significant archaeological window into Roman-era trade and settlement on the lake's shores.

Lake Neuchâtel — Geography

FEATURE	DETAIL
Location	Western Switzerland, at the foot of the Jura Mountains
Formed	~15,000 years ago (last glacial retreat)
Length	38.3 km · Width: 8.2 km · Area: 212.33 sq km
Status	Largest lake entirely within Switzerland (Lake Geneva is shared with France)
Drains into	Rhine (via the Aare) — ultimately to the North Sea

Archaeological Significance

- Previous Neolithic + Bronze Age finds in this lake led to UNESCO designation of “**Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps**” (2011) — a trans-Alpine World Heritage Site
- Roman artefacts on this scale are rarer; they suggest active trade posts along the lakeshore during ~1st–4th century CE Roman presence in *Germania Superior*

Lake Neuchâtel: Largest lake **entirely within Switzerland** · **212.33 sq km** · Formed ~15,000 yrs ago · Foot of **Jura Mountains** · >1,000 Roman artefacts discovered (April 2026) · Related UNESCO site: “**Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps**” (2011) · GS1: World Geography.

INDIA'S FOOD WASTE — THE ₹1.55 LAKH CRORE PROBLEM

Reports on **April 15, 2026** highlighted that India wastes **78–80 million tonnes of food annually** worth approximately **₹1.55 lakh crore** — the **second-highest food waste volume globally** — even as India ranks **111th on the Global Hunger Index 2023**.

The Paradox

- **Food waste:** ~80 MT/year (₹1.55 lakh crore)
- **Undernourished:** ~195 million Indians (FAO, 2022-24)
- **Child stunting:** ~35% (NFHS-5)

Where the Losses Happen

STAGE	APPROXIMATE LOSS
Farm-gate (harvest + post-harvest handling)	30–40%
Storage + transport (cold-chain gaps)	20–25%
Processing	10–15%
Retail + wholesale	5–10%
Household + food service	10–15%

Structural Causes

- **Cold-chain deficit:** Only ~10% of perishables move through cold storage (vs 60%+ in developed economies)
- **Jute Packaging (Mandatory Use) Act 1987:** Mandates jute for grain packaging — allegedly increases wastage vs modern polymers; under review
- **Fragmented supply chains** between FCI, state procurement, mandis, and retail
- **Behavioural waste** at household/hospitality level (Swachh Bharat's PRAN — Platform for Reduction of Agricultural Produce Losses — is nascent)

India Food Waste (2026): 78–80 MT/year worth **₹1.55 lakh crore** · **2nd globally by volume** · Undernourished: **~195 million** (FAO) · Child stunting: **~35%** (NFHS-5) · Global Hunger Index 2023 rank: **111/125** · GS3: Agriculture/Food Security.

HEAT CRISIS — THE LEGISLATIVE VACUUM

A Hindu analysis on April 15, 2026 mapped India’s **legislative gap on heat management**: heatwaves are **not listed** as a notified disaster under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 — restricting State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) access for heat-related relief despite rising mortality.

India’s Heat Exposure

- **~57% of Indian districts** face moderate-to-very-high heat vulnerability (CSE/ADRI 2024 index)
- **Heatwave-attributed deaths** (official): 775 in 2022, 110+ in 2023 — widely believed to be severe undercounts
- **Excess mortality models** (NEJM-India 2023) estimate ~ 100,000+ additional deaths annually linked to extreme heat

The Legal Framework

INSTRUMENT	STATUS ON HEAT
Disaster Management Act 2005	Heatwaves NOT in centrally notified disaster list → limits SDRF deployment
NDMA Heat Action Plan Guidelines (2019)	Advisory only — state/city HAPs vary widely in rigour
OSHC Code 2020 (Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions)	Indoor thermal limits — but does not bind outdoor workers (construction, delivery, agriculture)
Factories Act 1948 (Section 13)	Requires “reasonable” temperature — no binding thresholds

Reform Demands (2026)

- Notify heatwaves as a disaster under the DM Act → unlock SDRF funds
- Extend OSHWC Code protections to outdoor workers (work-rest cycles, cooling stations, hydration mandates)
- Mandatory urban cooling plans in Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities
- Integration with NDMA heat-action framework and IMD early-warning systems

Heat Crisis: 57% of Indian districts are heat-vulnerable · Heatwaves **NOT** in DM Act 2005 notified list · **OSHC Code 2020** doesn’t bind outdoor workers · **NDMA HAP Guidelines (2019)** advisory only · GS2/GS3: Governance + Climate.

UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS1 — World Geography	Lake Neuchâtel; Jura Mountains; Swiss lakes
GS2 — Governance	ILO social protection; Disaster Management Act 2005; OSHWC Code 2020
GS3 — Environment	<i>Cyrtodactylus raimonaensis</i> ; Raimona NP; transboundary conservation; heat governance
GS3 — Economy	Food waste ₹1.55 lakh crore; cold-chain deficit; jute packaging
Prelims	<i>Cyrtodactylus raimonaensis</i> + Raimona NP (2021, Kokrajhar); Lake Neuchâtel (largest lake entirely in Switzerland); Global Hunger Index 2023 — India 111/125; 57% districts heat-vulnerable

Cyrtodactylus raimonaensis · Raimona NP, Kokrajhar, Assam · Zootaxa · Transboundary with Phibsoo WS (Bhutan) + Buxa TR (WB).

212.33 sq km · Largest lake entirely within Switzerland · Jura Mountains · UNESCO “Pile Dwellings” (2011).

~**80 MT/yr** · **₹1.55 lakh crore** · 2nd globally · GHI 2023 rank **111/125**.

57% of districts heat-vulnerable · Heatwaves NOT notified under **DM Act 2005** · **OSHWC Code 2020** excludes outdoor workers.

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