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Down to Earth April 2026 — No Chill & Rural Energy Deficit

15 April 2026 ·

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Down to Earth April 2026 — No Chill & Rural Energy Deficit

**Down to Earth**

April 2026 (15 Apr & 30 Apr issues)

GS2**GS3****Down to Earth**

CSE · Fortnightly

EDITION

April 2026 (15 Apr & 30 Apr issues)

MAINS:

GS Paper 2**GS Paper 3**

Down to Earth's two April 2026 fortnightly editions cover India's disappearing winter ("No Chill"), the ongoing energy crisis in rural households ("Rural Energy Deficit"), and the E20 ethanol blending mandate.

[Source: Down to Earth archive — Centre for Science and Environment — April 2026 — <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/magazine/archive/archives>]

APRIL 15, 2026 EDITION — "NO CHILL"

[Source: NEXT IAS Down to Earth Summary — April 1-15, 2026 — <https://www.nextias.com/survey/down-to-earth/down-to-earth-01-15-april-2026>]

Articles in This Issue

#	ARTICLE TITLE	KEY FACTS
1	Food in the Age of Climate Change	Climate-smart agriculture; low-input farming; millet promotion; soil health
2	Sanitary Waste Management in India	Extended Producer Responsibility reforms; reusable alternatives; Waste Warriors Initiative (active since 2022)
3	E20 Ethanol Blending in India	Mandatory 20% ethanol blending from April 2026; vehicle compatibility issues with pre-2023 models; NOx and aldehyde emission concerns; food vs fuel debate
4	A Warmer, Shorter Winter in India	Cold wave frequency decline; temperature anomaly patterns; elevation-dependent warming signals
5	Energy Warfare in the Strait of Hormuz	India's crude oil import dependency: ~88.6% (PPAC, FY2024-25); ~30% of crude imports via Hormuz (Petroleum Ministry, March 2026 — 70% now sourced outside Hormuz); LPG: 60% imported, 90% via Hormuz (PIB, March 11, 2026); oil price spike from \$80 to \$120/barrel
6	India's Fertiliser Dependence	Domestic fertiliser production: 52.46 million tonnes (2025); urea domestic production: 306.67 lakh tonnes in 2024-25; urea imports: 56.47 lakh tonnes in 2024-25; DAP import from China: 8.47 LMT (2024-25); supply chain concentration risks
7	Ecocide: Environmental Harm in Warfare	White phosphorus and glyphosate in warfare; ICC Rome Statute implications; proposal to recognise ecocide as 5th international crime
8	West Asia War: Impact on India's Pharmaceuticals Sector	API import dependency from China: ~74% of API import bill (2024); antibiotic API from China: ~87% by value; generic medicine supply threats
9	MC Mehta Case & Delhi's Air Pollution Governance	Origins: 1985 Oleum gas leak; absolute liability doctrine established in M C Mehta v. Union of India (1987); CNG public transport conversion; PM2.5 reduction trend: $-1.35 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}/\text{year}$ over 2007-2021 (peer-reviewed analysis using CPCB data)
10	Fuelwood Resurgence Amid LPG Crisis	Fuelwood usage: ~33% households nationally; ~46.7% rural households (NSS 78th Round); informal market economics

#	ARTICLE TITLE	KEY FACTS
11	Declining Camel Population in Rajasthan	Population: 2.5 lakh (20th Livestock Census, 2019) — down 37.1% from 2012 census; overall decline of ~75% since 1992; 2015 protection law; pastoral community impacts [Note: 7.5 lakh (2004) figure cited in original DTE article — not verified in official DAHD census tables]
12	Energy Conservation Rules Amendment (2021-22)	Oil equivalent valuation; PAT scheme mechanisms; ESCert trading systems; NDC alignment
13	Firefly Diversity in India	92 species documented; 60% endemic; first comprehensive checklist; bioindicator significance
14	Cattle Disease Emergency in Russia	Pasteurellosis bacterial infection; cross-border transmission risks

APRIL 30, 2026 EDITION — “RURAL ENERGY DEFICIT”

[Source: Down to Earth official website — Centre for Science and Environment — April 2026 — <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/energy/rural-indias-energy-crisis-access-alone-does-not-define-energy-security-village-economies-reveal>; <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/energy/rural-indias-energy-crisis-in-mandlas-forest-villages-mud-stove-still-burns-strong>]

Cover Story: India’s rural energy crisis — access to clean cooking fuels does not translate to energy security when affordability barriers persist.

Key Investigation: Rural Energy Deficit

Field reporting across rural India (February 2026), covering villages in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Uttar Pradesh:

Author: Puja Das

STATISTIC	FIGURE	SOURCE
Rural monthly per capita energy spending (2022-23)	₹536 (13.8% of total consumption)	NSSO/HCES 2022-23
Comparison: 2011-12	₹174 (12% of total consumption)	NSSO 2011-12
Rural biomass fuel dependence	46.7% of households	NSS 78th Round, 2019-21
National biomass dependence	33.8% of households	NSS 78th Round, 2019-21
State: Chhattisgarh biomass dependence	84.2%	NSS 78th Round
State: Odisha biomass dependence	76%	NSS 78th Round
State: West Bengal biomass dependence	76%	NSS 78th Round
State: Madhya Pradesh biomass dependence	72.5%	NSS 78th Round
Households still using solid fuels (national)	41%	NFHS-5
Rural solid fuel use	56.1%	NFHS-5
Urban solid fuel use	9.5%	NFHS-5
Traditional chulhas share of solid-fuel stoves	94.8%	NFHS-5
People relying primarily on traditional biomass	650 million	IEA India Energy Outlook 2021
PMUY beneficiaries (as of Jan 1, 2026)	103.4 million	PMUY data
Over half of PMUY beneficiaries	Never refilled cylinders	CSE 2023 Report
LPG refill cost	~₹1,100 per cylinder	Article
Monthly per capita energy spending (2023-24)	₹565	HCES 2023-24
Energy cost increase (2011-12 to 2023-24)	225%	Calculated from NSSO data

Also in April 30 Edition

“In Mahua Territory” — Author: Bhagirath [Source: Down to Earth — 16 April 2026 — <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/forests/in-mahua-territory>]

- Mahua (*Madhuca longifolia*) begins flowering after 10-15 years
- Peak season: March-April, when food reserves are depleted
- Individual collectors gather ~150 kg per season

- Critical to Gond communities in Central India
- Reference: Verrier Elwin's 1936 work *Leaves from the Jungle: Life in a Gond Village*

KEY TERMS

TERM	MEANING
E20	20% ethanol blended with 80% petrol — mandatory from April 2026
PAT Scheme	Perform Achieve and Trade — energy efficiency certificates
ESCCerts	Energy Saving Certificates traded under PAT
Ecocide	Large-scale environmental destruction; proposed 5th international crime under Rome Statute
Absolute Liability	Doctrine from <i>M C Mehta v. Union of India</i> (1987): enterprises engaging in hazardous activities bear absolute liability for harm
PMUY	Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana — free LPG connections for BPL women
Chronic Poverty	Poverty sustained over extended periods, potentially inherited across generations

UPSC GS RELEVANCE

PAPER	TOPICS
GS3	E20 ethanol blending; energy security; Strait of Hormuz; fertiliser dependence; ecocide; environmental governance; rural energy access
GS2	MC Mehta environmental jurisprudence; absolute liability; pharmaceutical supply chains
GS1	India's changing winter patterns; climate-driven regional shifts
GS3	Biomass energy; PMUY implementation gaps; LPG affordability; solid fuel dependence

FACTCHECK LOG (WEB-VERIFIED AGAINST PRIMARY SOURCES, MAY 7, 2026)

CLAIM	ORIGINAL	VERIFIED FIGURE	SOURCE
India crude oil import via Hormuz	“~50% via Hormuz”	~30% via Hormuz; Petroleum Ministry says 70% now sourced outside Hormuz	PIB/Petroleum Ministry, March 11, 2026
India crude oil import dependency	“~85% crude imports”	88.6% (FY2024-25)	PPAC, Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell
India LPG import %	60%	Confirmed 60%	PIB official statement, March 2026
India LPG via Hormuz	90%	Confirmed 90%	PIB official statement, March 2026
API imports from China	70-75%	~74% of API import bill; antibiotics ~87%	Pharmabiz.com citing official trade data, 2023-24
Camel population 2004	7.5 lakh	Not verifiable in official DAHD census tables — confirmed: 2.5 lakh (2019, 20th Census), down 37.1% from 2012	DAHD, 20th Livestock Census 2019
Camel population 2021	1.5 lakh	Not verifiable — 21st Census (2024) results not yet released as of May 2026	DAHD (21st Census enumeration underway)
Fertiliser demand 64.9 MT	64.9 MT demand	Domestic production 52.46 MT (2025); urea production 306.67 LMT, imports 56.47 LMT (2024-25)	Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers / Business Standard
PM2.5 reduction ~46% since 2012	~46%	Not verified in CPCB data — peer-reviewed data shows modest declining trend; NCAP target is 20-30% reduction vs 2017 by 2024	CPCB/scientific literature
Firefly: 92 species, 60% endemic	Both	Confirmed — Zootaxa (peer-reviewed); 60.86% endemic	Zootaxa journal; Mongabay/DTE citing the paper



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