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# Current Affairs Today — April 16, 2026

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# Current Affairs Today — April 16, 2026

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## TODAY'S EDITION AT A GLANCE

— April 16, 2026

*April 16, 2026 — Parliament introduced the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill to expand Lok Sabha seats from 543 to 850; the IMF cut its global growth forecast to 3.1% citing West Asia energy risks; KABIL received Argentina environmental clearance for lithium exploration; and a 1,500-year-old stepped reservoir was discovered on Elephanta Island.*

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

**Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill — Lok Sabha Expansion to 850 Seats** The government introduced the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill proposing to expand Lok Sabha seats from 543 to 850 based on the 2011 Census. A separate [Delimitation](#) Bill was also introduced. The Women's Reservation Act's 33% quota for women is linked to this delimitation exercise. Critics argue the reallocation will tilt political power toward northern states at the expense of southern states that have better managed population growth. The Bill requires ratification by at least half the state legislatures under Article 368.

**NHRC on Digital Lending Apps** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) took cognizance of a complaint against the Gleeden extramarital dating app (~40 lakh Indian users), flagging it as a threat to marital harmony and family dignity under human rights norms. Separately, the NHRC noted rising harassment cases linked to illegal loan apps.

## ECONOMY

**IMF Cuts Global Growth Forecast — India at 6.5%** The IMF revised its 2026 global growth forecast downward to 3.1%, citing the West Asia conflict as a potential trigger for the largest energy crisis in modern times. In an adverse scenario (oil at \$100/barrel), global growth could fall to 2.5%, with oil potentially reaching \$125/barrel by 2027. India's growth was projected at 6.5% — among the fastest major economies but below the 7%+ pre-conflict trajectory.

**KABIL Gets Environmental Clearance in Argentina** Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) — a JV of NALCO, HCL, and MECL — received environmental clearance from the Argentine government for deep exploration of five brine lithium blocks. Argentina is part of the “Lithium Triangle” (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile) holding over 50% of global lithium reserves. This is a major step in India’s critical mineral security strategy.

**NBCFDC — Record Disbursement ₹613 Crore** The National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC) disbursed ₹613 crore in FY 2025-26 — a 16% YoY increase and its highest-ever annual disbursement. Under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment; provides credit support to economically backward OBC sections.

## ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

**Sundarbans Loses 10–15% Ecological Resilience (2000–2024)** A new study found the Sundarbans mangrove ecosystem lost 10–15% of its ecological resilience over 24 years, amounting to 610–990 sq km of degraded forest. Drivers: sea-level rise, increasing cyclone frequency (Amphan 2020, Remal 2024), and salinity intrusion. The Sundarbans spans ~10,000 sq km across India and Bangladesh and is home to the Royal Bengal Tiger and Irrawaddy dolphin.

**Shongtong–Karchham Hydroelectric Project (450 MW) — Himachal Pradesh** The 450 MW run-of-river (RoR) hydroelectric project on the Satluj River in Kinnaur district came under focus. Developed by HPPCL (Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited); 3 × 150 MW Francis turbines. RoR design avoids large reservoirs, reducing ecological disruption. Kinnaur is also known for its apple orchards and tribal communities.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

**Direct-to-Device (D2D) Satellite Communication Workshop — DoT** DoT and Telecom Engineering Centre (TEC) organised a national workshop on D2D technology, enabling standard smartphones to connect directly to Low-Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites without ground-based towers. Technology uses Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTN), compatible with existing LTE/5G spectrum. Significance: digital connectivity in remote/rural areas, disaster response, and national security.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**BRICS Health Working Group — India as BRICS Chair 2026** India chaired the First BRICS Health Working Group Meeting under its BRICS Chairship 2026 in New Delhi. Nine BRICS nations participated. BRICS 2026 theme: “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability.” Focus areas: global health security, NCDs, mental health, and healthy lifestyles.

**Scarborough Shoal — South China Sea Tensions** China deployed floating barriers and vessels to block Philippine access to Scarborough Shoal (Bajo de Masinloc/Huangyan Island). The shoal lies within the Philippines' 200 nm EEZ under UNCLOS. The 2016 Arbitral Tribunal ruled in the Philippines' favour — China has consistently rejected the ruling. India's stance: freedom of navigation and overflight; UNCLOS compliance.

## BIODIVERSITY

**New Snake Species — *Calamaria garoensis* — Meghalaya** Scientists discovered a new burrowing reed snake species, *Calamaria garoensis*, in West Garo Hills, Meghalaya. Characteristics: small, secretive, non-venomous, endemic to Garo Hills. Northeast India falls within the Indo-Burma global biodiversity hotspot. This brings India's total snake species count to over 330.

## HISTORY & HERITAGE

**ASI Discovers 1,500-Year-Old Stepped Reservoir — Elephanta Island** The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) discovered a T-shaped stepped reservoir (~5th–6th century CE) with 20 stone steps on Elephanta Island (Gharapuri), Maharashtra. Stones were transported from the mainland — evidence of advanced ancient water management and maritime capability. Elephanta Island is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (inscribed 1987) known for its rock-cut cave temples dedicated to Shiva.

## FACTS CORNER

TOPIC	KEY FACT
Lok Sabha expansion	543 → 850 seats (Constitution 131st Amendment Bill)
IMF global growth 2026	3.1% baseline; 2.5% in adverse oil shock scenario
KABIL	JV: NALCO 40% + HCL 30% + MECL 30%; under Ministry of Mines
Lithium Triangle	Argentina + Bolivia + Chile = 50%+ global lithium reserves
Sundarbans degradation	610–990 sq km lost (2000–2024); sea-level rise key driver
Shongtong–Karchham	450 MW RoR, Satluj River, Kinnaur, HPPCL
D2D satellite	NTN technology; LEO satellites; compatible with LTE/5G
BRICS 2026 Chair	India; theme: “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability”
Calamaria garoensis	New snake species; West Garo Hills, Meghalaya; non-venomous
Elephanta Island	UNESCO WHS 1987; T-shaped reservoir ~1,500 years old
NBCFDC	₹613 crore disbursed FY26 (record); Ministry of Social Justice

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