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Current Affairs Today — April 18, 2026

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TODAY'S EDITION AT A GLANCE

— April 18, 2026

April 18, 2026 — In a major political setback, the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill seeking Lok Sabha expansion was defeated in the Lok Sabha on April 17 (298 votes for, 230 against, against the 352 special-majority threshold) — the first constitutional amendment defeat for the Modi government in 12 years. Separately, the CEA Chairperson announced India's 100 GW nuclear power roadmap by 2047 (current 8.8 GW); India formally withdrew its COP33 hosting bid; the Supreme Court issued notice on a PIL seeking Article 21A extension to ages 3-6; and Meghalaya granted official status to Khasi and Garo languages.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

131st Amendment Bill DEFEATED in Lok Sabha — Major Political Setback The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, which proposed to expand Lok Sabha from 543 to 850 seats and operationalise the Women's Reservation Act based on the 2011 Census, was defeated in Lok Sabha on April 17, 2026. The Bill received 298 votes in favour and 230 against — well short of the **352 votes required** for the special majority under Article 368 (more than 50% of total membership AND two-thirds of members present and voting). Following the defeat, the Centre withdrew the accompanying [Delimitation Bills](#). This is the **first constitutional amendment defeat for the Modi government in 12 years** and reflects the federal-equity concerns of southern and northeastern states.

Supreme Court Notice on Article 21A Extension to ECCE (Ages 3-6) A bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant issued notices to the Centre, States, and UTs on a PIL seeking to extend the fundamental right to free and compulsory education under Article 21A from the current 6-14 age range to children aged 3-6 years. The PIL argues that early childhood care and education (ECCE) is foundational and aligns with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**'s emphasis on Foundational Stage learning. The Court ruled out implementation for the ongoing 2026 Assembly polls but agreed to consider it for future elections.

Women's Quota Law Implemented in J&K and Puducherry UTs The Centre formally notified the operationalisation of the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023 — the [Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam](#) — in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Puducherry on April 17. With the failure of the 131st Amendment, full national implementation continues to depend on the post-Census delimitation exercise.

ECONOMY

India Targets 100 GW Nuclear Power by 2047 – Tenfold Expansion **Central Electricity Authority (CEA) Chairperson Ghanshyam Prasad** announced on April 17, 2026, that India targets scaling nuclear capacity from the current **8.8 GW to 100 GW by 2047** – a more than ten-fold expansion. **NPCIL** (Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited) is expected to provide 54 GW through indigenous Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs), Light Water Reactors (LWRs), and international cooperation. The roadmap requires new legislation (amendments to the Atomic Energy Act 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act 2010), streamlined procedures, and private sector entry.

PFBR Kalpakkam Achieves First Criticality (April 6, 2026) The 500 MWe **Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)** at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu attained first criticality on April 6, 2026 – a milestone in India’s three-stage nuclear programme conceptualised by Dr. Homi Bhabha. The PFBR uses plutonium-uranium mixed oxide (MOX) fuel and a sodium coolant, and is designed to “breed” more fissile material than it consumes – moving India toward Stage II of its nuclear programme.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

India Withdraws Bid to Host COP33 Climate Summit (2028) The Ministry of External Affairs formally confirmed India’s withdrawal of its bid to host the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) **Conference of Parties COP33** scheduled for 2028. The bid was originally announced by PM Modi at COP28 (Dubai, December 2023). South Korea and the Korean province of Jeollanam-do have expressed interest in hosting. The decision raises questions about India’s climate leadership ambitions and the Global South host rotation.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

AICTE-VAANI Scheme Third Edition – Indian Languages in Technical Education The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) launched the third edition of the VAANI (Vidwat Aastha – Academic Network for Inclusive Knowledge) scheme to strengthen Indian languages in technical education. The scheme aligns with the **NEP 2020** mandate of mother-tongue instruction in higher education and supports translation of technical content into 12+ Indian languages.

US Plans Space Nuclear Reactors by 2030 The United States announced plans to deploy nuclear reactors in space orbit by 2028 and on the Moon by 2030, accelerating the strategic competition for cislunar dominance. This intensifies the Artemis vs International Lunar Research Station (China-Russia ILRS) competition and creates new strategic considerations for India’s Chandrayaan and Gaganyaan programmes.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

India-China Resume SCO Bilateral Consultations India and China held bilateral consultations under the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** framework on April 16-17, 2026 — the first such bilateral after the Ladakh disengagement framework concluded in late 2024. The meeting signals continued normalisation of ties without prejudicing India's outstanding boundary concerns under the Special Representatives mechanism.

SOCIAL ISSUES

Meghalaya Grants Official Status to Khasi and Garo Languages The Meghalaya state cabinet approved official administrative recognition for indigenous languages **Khasi and Garo** on April 16, 2026. While both languages are widely spoken (Khasi by ~14 lakh speakers, Garo by ~10 lakh), neither is yet in the **Eighth Schedule** of the Constitution. The state-level recognition is a step toward eventual Eighth Schedule inclusion — a long-standing demand from the Northeast.

Tipra Motha Wins TTAADC Elections (Tripura) The Tipra Motha Party secured a strong second consecutive term in the **Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC)** elections. TTAADC is constituted under the **Sixth Schedule** of the Constitution and governs ~70% of Tripura's geographical area, home to indigenous Tripuri tribes.

DEFENCE & SPACE

SpaceX to Launch Rosalind Franklin Rover to Mars in 2028 SpaceX is preparing to launch the European Space Agency's Rosalind Franklin rover to Mars in 2028, named after the British chemist whose X-ray crystallography work was foundational to DNA structure discovery. The mission resumes after multiple delays and represents continued US-Europe cooperation in deep-space exploration.

FACTS CORNER

TOPIC	KEY FACT
131st Amendment defeat	298 vs 230 votes; 352 needed; first defeat in 12 years
131st Amendment provisions	Lok Sabha 543→850 seats; women's reservation; based on 2011 Census
Article 368 special majority	>50% total membership AND 2/3 present + voting + state ratification (federal-affecting)
India nuclear capacity (2026)	8.8 GW (current)
India 2047 nuclear target	100 GW (NPCIL: 54 GW share)
PFBR Kalpakkam	500 MWe; first criticality April 6, 2026; Stage II of three-stage programme
COP33 status	India withdrew bid; original offer at COP28 (Dec 2023); South Korea interested
Article 21A ECCE PIL	Seek extension from 6-14 to include 3-6 age group; CJI Surya Kant bench
Women's Reservation operationalisation	J&K and Puducherry notified April 17
AICTE-VAANI 3.0	12+ Indian languages; aligned with NEP 2020
India-China SCO bilateral	April 16-17; first after Ladakh disengagement
Meghalaya official languages	Khasi (~14 lakh speakers) + Garo (~10 lakh); neither yet in Eighth Schedule
TTAADC	Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council; Sixth Schedule body

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