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TODAY'S EDITION — APRIL 20, 2026

Key developments: India and Russia operationalise the RELOS defence logistics pact; India extends OCI Card eligibility to 6th-generation Indian-origin Sri Lankans; Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool gets Union Cabinet approval; gene drive mosquito technology achieves “transmission zero” in malaria trials; India’s first private gold mine inaugurated in Andhra Pradesh; female LFPR rises to 40% but leadership gap persists; India’s first Petroglyph Conservation Park opens in Ladakh.

INDIA–SOUTH KOREA SUMMIT: FROM CHIPS TO SHIPS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South Korean President **Lee Jae Myung** held bilateral talks in New Delhi on April 20, 2026 — the first South Korean presidential visit to India in eight years. Both sides agreed to raise bilateral trade from **\$27 billion to \$50 billion by 2030** and announced new institutional mechanisms: the **India-Korea Financial Forum, Industrial Cooperation Committee, and Economic Security Dialogue**. Key focus sectors include semiconductors, shipbuilding, steel, and green energy. The existing **CEPA (2010)** will be modernised within one year, with India seeking expanded access for IT services and pharmaceuticals. A **Mumbai-Korea Centre** for cultural exchange and an **India-South Korea Digital Bridge** for AI collaboration were also announced.

INDIA–RUSSIA RELOS PACT OPERATIONALISED

India and Russia **operationalised the Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS)**, allowing both militaries to access each other’s bases and infrastructure. The pact permits up to **3,000 military personnel** and deployment of **five warships and ten aircraft** simultaneously in each other’s territory. India gains access to **Russian Arctic facilities**; Russia strengthens its **Indo-Pacific presence** through Indian ports. Costs are reimbursed through exchange of goods and services rather than direct payment. RELOS is comparable to India’s **LEMOA** with the United States. *(Full article below)*

OCI CARD EXPANDED TO 6TH GENERATION IN SRI LANKA

Vice-President **C. P. Radhakrishnan** announced during his bilateral visit to Sri Lanka that India is extending **OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) card eligibility** from the fourth to the **sixth generation** of Indian-origin people in Sri Lanka. The OCI scheme, introduced in 2005, provides lifelong multiple-entry visa access to India but does not confer voting rights or the right to own agricultural land. India also announced a **\$450 million package** for cyclone recovery and discussed cooperation on energy, trade, fisheries, and housing. *(Full article below)*

BHARAT MARITIME INSURANCE POOL

The Union Cabinet approved the **Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMIP)** with a **₹12,980 crore sovereign guarantee**, creating a domestic alternative to International Group P&I Clubs. The pool covers hull and machinery, cargo, war risk, and protection and indemnity risks for Indian-flagged vessels and cargo to/from Indian ports. India's maritime trade handles **~95% of its trade by value**. The BMIP aims to reduce foreign exchange outflow on marine insurance premiums and enhance **resilience** of India's shipping sector. *(Full article below)*

GENE DRIVES FOR MALARIA — CRISPR ACHIEVES “TRANSMISSION ZERO”

Studies in Tanzania using **CRISPR-Cas9 gene drive** mosquitoes have achieved **“transmission zero”** — eliminating malaria transmission in test conditions. Gene drives work by ensuring **90% of offspring inherit the modified trait**, either suppressing mosquito populations or making them incapable of transmitting the parasite. No gene-drive mosquitoes have yet been released into the wild; regulatory review and community engagement remain prerequisites. *(Full article below)*

JONNAGIRI GOLD MINE — INDIA'S FIRST PRIVATE GOLD MINE

India is set to launch its first large-scale **private gold mine** since independence at **Jonnagiri in Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh**. The project, backed by Geomysore Services India Pvt Ltd, holds **13.1 tonnes certified gold resources** and potential reserves up to **42.5 tonnes**, with production capacity of ~1,000 kg annually for 15 years. India currently imports over **800 tonnes of gold** annually; domestic production is only ~1.5 tonnes (Hutti Gold Mines, Karnataka). *(Full article below)*

FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RISES, BUT LEADERSHIP GAP PERSISTS

India's **female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)** rose from 33.9% (2022) to **40% (2025)** — but still trails the global average of 49% and peers like Brazil (53%) and Vietnam (69%). The gap is even wider in leadership: only **14% of IIT faculty** are women; **77% of leading firms** have only 1-2 female directors; women hold **13 per 100** high-level manager positions relative to men. The World Bank notes India needs ~8% annual growth to reach developed-economy status by 2047 — a target requiring female economic participation to rise substantially. *(Full article below)*

PETROGLYPH CONSERVATION PARK — LADAKH

India inaugurated its **first Petroglyph Conservation Park** in Ladakh on **April 19, 2026 (World Heritage Day)**. Ladakh has approximately **400 petroglyph sites** — prehistoric rock carvings depicting hunting scenes, ibex, snow leopards, and Buddhist symbols. The park is being developed under an MoU between the **Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museums** and the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**. The initiative aims to protect these carvings from tourism pressure, road construction, and climate-driven weathering while developing heritage tourism circuits. *(Full article below)*

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Startup India Record FY26: Over **55,200 startups** recognised in FY 2025-26 — a 51.6% YoY growth, generating 23.36 lakh jobs. Total recognised startups now exceed **2.23 lakh** since the scheme's launch in January 2016. Fund of Funds corpus: ₹10,000 crore.

Deportation Policy for Illegal Migrants: The Ministry of Home Affairs introduced a **90-day verification timeline** for suspected foreign nationals, with district-level task forces, biometric capture via the **Foreigners Identification Portal**, and holding centres to expedite deportation of illegal migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Indigenous 1,000-kg Aerial Bomb: The Ministry of Defence initiated development of an **indigenous 1,000-kg aerial bomb** under the **Make-II route** of DAP 2020, with a 50% indigenous content mandate. The bomb is compatible with both Russian and Western-origin aircraft and is expected to reduce dependence on imported Mk-84 class munitions.

Yellow Line — Israel: Israel has established a **“Yellow Line” buffer zone** extending to the Litani River in southern Lebanon, restricting civilian return and maintaining two IDF divisions to enforce it. Approximately **58% of Gaza** is under direct Israeli military control, raising international humanitarian law concerns.

Delhi Semiconductor Policy: The Delhi government is developing a **semiconductor policy** focused on chip design, IP development, ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging), and OSAT units — positioning the capital as a design and packaging hub aligned with India’s Semiconductor Mission.

UPSC RELEVANCE AT A GLANCE

TOPIC	PAPER	KEY TERMS
India-Russia RELOS	GS2 IR, GS3 Defence	LEMOA, logistics pact, Arctic access
OCI Card Sri Lanka	GS2 IR	OCI, PIO, Citizenship Act 2005
Maritime Insurance Pool	GS3 Economy	P&I Club, sovereign guarantee, BMIP
Gene Drives	GS3 S&T	CRISPR-Cas9, gene drive, malaria
Jonnagiri Gold Mine	GS3 Economy	Atmanirbhar, Kolar, mineral security
Female LFPR	GS1 Society	LFPR, gender gap, board representation
Petroglyph Park	GS1 Culture	Petroglyphs, ASI, World Heritage Day
Korea Summit	GS2 IR	CEPA, Special Strategic Partnership
Startup India FY26	GS3 Economy	Fund of Funds, DPIIT, startup ecosystem
1000-kg Bomb	GS3 S&T	Make-II, DAP 2020, Atmanirbhar defence

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