



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 04-05-2026

Mapping Perspective

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Prelims Perspective

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Mains Perspective

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Easter Island

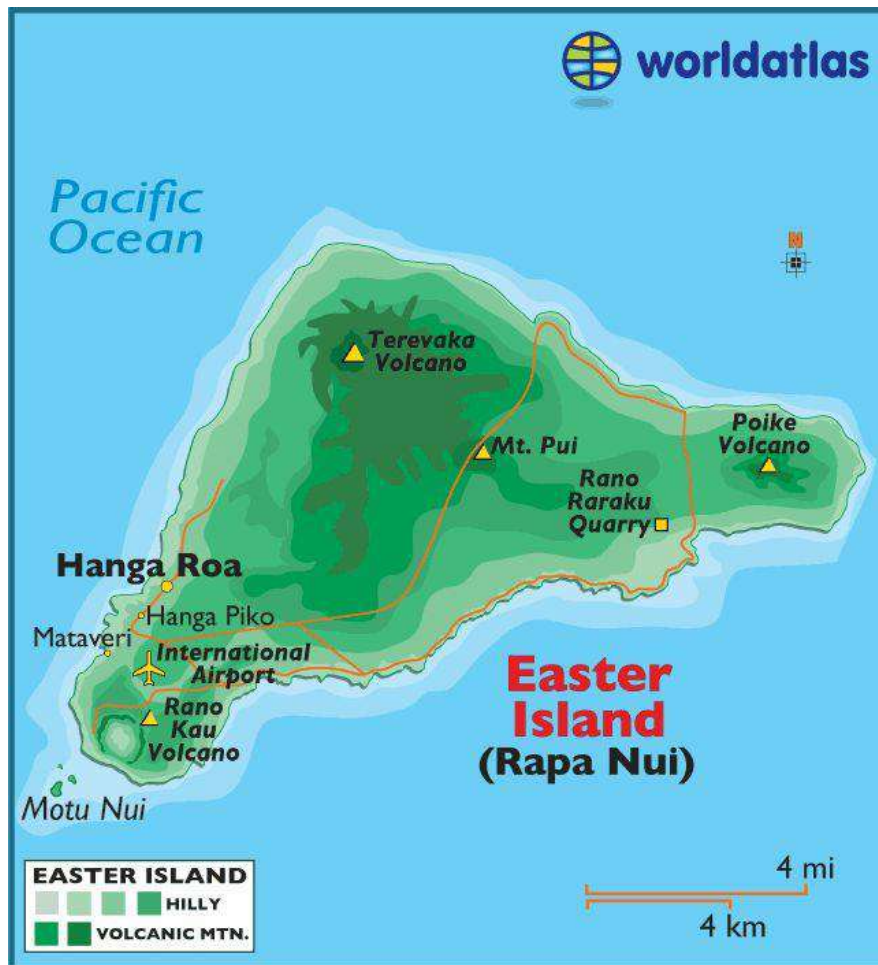
Syllabus: Prelims Bits – Mapping.

Context:

- A groundbreaking study suggests that the ancient **Rongorongo script** of Easter Island could be independently developed and **predates the arrival of Europeans** on the island

About Easter Island

- It is a **Chilean dependency** in the eastern Pacific Ocean
- It is the **easternmost outpost of the Polynesian island world**
- Named **Rapa Nui** by its earliest residents; one of the **most isolated inhabited islands in the world**
- Discovered by Europeans on **Easter Sunday (1722)** by Dutch explorer **Jacob Roggeveen**, hence the name “Easter Island”



- Between Roggeveen's arrival and annexation to Chile, **Rapanui population declined drastically** due to **enslavement by Peruvians** and **smallpox & tuberculosis epidemics**
- Covers **163.6 sq. km**; located about **3,540 km west of Chile** and **1,900 km east of Pitcairn Island**
- A **small, triangular-shaped volcanic island** with **tropical rainforest climate**
- Comprises three extinct volcanoes: **Terevaka, Poike, Rano Kau**
- No permanent rivers; contains **three crater lakes: Rano Aroi, Rano Raraku, Rano Kau**
- Known for **Moai statues** carved by indigenous Rapa Nui people
- Declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site (22 March 1996)**; protected under **Rapa Nui National Park**

Moai Statues

- Rapa Nui is famous for large statues called **moai**
- Shaped like **large human heads**, erected on **stone pedestals**
- Notable for carved heads and **"Pukao" (hat-like covering)** made from soft red stone
- Some moai reach **40 feet height** and weigh **~75 tonnes**
- Carved from **volcanic stone in quarries** and transported across the island
- Built between **13th and 16th centuries**; believed to represent **revered ancestors**
- **Over 900 moai** discovered on the island

Rongorongo Script

- A **writing system** comprising carved symbols (**glyphs**) on wooden tablets and artefacts
- Unique feature: **not yet deciphered**
- First noted in **1864 by Europeans**
- Structurally **very different from European writing systems**
- Some experts argue it may have **developed locally by island inhabitants** (supports recent study finding)

Analytical Insight

- **Cultural Geography:** Polynesian expansion, isolation and cultural evolution

- **Archaeology & Script Studies:** Debate on **independent invention vs diffusion of writing systems**
- **Demographic Collapse:** Impact of **colonial contact, disease, and slavery**
- **Heritage Conservation:** Role of **UNESCO and national parks** in protecting indigenous legacy

Ru-Soam Bridges

Syllabus: GS-1: Indian Heritage and Culture.

Context:

- UNESCO has partnered with the Sikkim government to document the indigenous engineering known as Ru-Soam

About Ru-Soam Bridges

- It is a cane bridge built by the Lepcha community in Sikkim, especially in the Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve
- In the Lepcha language: 'Ru' means cane or rattan; 'Soam' refers to a bridge

Materials Used

- Crafted from locally available materials such as bamboo, cane, and wood

Structural Features

- Consists of two parallel canes called *soamgyang*, tied to trees on the two ends, ensuring suspension
- Contains swinging cane loops called *ahool*
- Bamboos (*soamgur*) are used to make the deck of the bridge
- Bridges can be up to 100 metres long; two or three people can cross at a time

Significance

- Reflects a sophisticated understanding of ecological balance and structural resilience
- Not relics of the past; living expressions of indigenous engineering ingenuity

National Company Law Tribunal

Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Polity – Tribunals.

Context:

- Recently, the Supreme Court of India has taken **suo motu cognisance of delays** by National Company Law Tribunal benches in approving resolution plans under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016

About National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)

- It is a **quasi-judicial authority** incorporated for dealing with **corporate disputes of civil nature** arising under the Companies Act, 2013
- It was **constituted on 1 June 2016** under the Companies Act, 2013
- It was established based on the recommendation of the Balakrishna Eradi Committee on law relating to insolvency and winding up of companies

Composition

- It shall consist of a **President and such number of Judicial and Technical Members as may be required**

Appeal Mechanism

- Decisions of the tribunal may be appealed to the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal
- Decisions of NCLAT may further be appealed to the **Supreme Court of India on a point of law**

Powers of National Company Law Tribunal

- It is guided by the **principles of natural justice**, subject to provisions of the Act and rules made by the Central Government
- It can **enforce its orders in the same manner as a court**
- It has the power to **scrutinize its own orders**
- It has the power to **regulate its own procedure**
- It is the **adjudicating authority for insolvency resolution process** of companies and Limited Liability Partnerships under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016

Analytical Insight

- Delays in NCLT functioning affect **time-bound insolvency resolution**, undermining the core objective of IBC (maximisation of value + ease of doing business)
- Judicial intervention highlights concerns of **institutional capacity, vacancies, and procedural inefficiencies**

- Important for **GS-2 (Judiciary & Governance)** and **GS-3 (Economy - Insolvency framework)**

Komagata maru incident

Syllabus: GS-1: Indian History – Freedom Struggle.

Context:

- Recently highlighted by singer Diljit Dosanjh during his appearance on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*.

About the Incident

What it was?

- The Komagata Maru incident was a **1914 maritime standoff** involving a Japanese steamship chartered by Punjabi entrepreneur Gurdit Singh.
- The vessel carried **376 passengers—340 Sikhs, 24 Muslims, and 12 Hindus—who were British subjects attempting to emigrate to Canada to build new lives.**

Background

Punjab Crisis

- In the early 1900s, Punjab was the **primary recruiting ground for the British Indian Army**, yet the region suffered from **rural indebtedness and deadly epidemics**, pushing former soldiers and peasants toward emigration.

The Ghadar Movement

- Expatriate Punjabis in North America formed the Ghadar Movement in 1913, **dedicated to the armed overthrow of British rule**, and the voyage became intertwined with this anti-colonial politics.

Discriminatory Laws

- Canada enacted the **continuous journey regulation (1908)**, requiring a **single unbroken journey from the country of birth**, effectively barring Indian immigrants as **direct tickets were not available from India.**

Key Events

Arrival and Standoff

- The ship reached Vancouver on **May 23, 1914**, but was **refused docking**; passengers remained anchored offshore for **two months facing shortages of food and water.**

Legal and Physical Battle

- The **British Columbia Court of Appeal upheld the exclusionary laws.**
- On **July 19**, passengers **resisted an attempt by 150 armed police to board the vessel using coal and scrap metal.**

Departure

- Following the dispatch of a naval cruiser by Prime Minister Robert Borden, the ship was **forced to leave on July 23**, with **only 22 passengers allowed to stay in Canada.**

Post-Event: Return to India

The Budge Budge Riot

- When the ship reached Calcutta in September, a **confrontation with police turned violent** as authorities suspected links with the Ghadar movement.

Casualties

- Police firing **killed 20 passengers and imprisoned many others.**
- Gurdit Singh **escaped but later surrendered in 1920 at the request of Mahatma Gandhi.**

Significance

- The incident **fueled the Ghadar Movement**, leading to **increased recruitment and an attempted armed uprising in Punjab in 1915.**
- It took over a century for Canada to formally apologize; Prime Minister Justin Trudeau **delivered a formal apology in the House of Commons in 2016.**
- Demonstrated that the **British Empire's promise of equal subjecthood was a fallacy**, reinforcing **racial and colonial hierarchies.**

Ambedkar Labour Laws

Syllabus: GS-1: Indian Freedoms Struggle.

Context:

- As India observed **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's birth anniversary (April 14)**, focus on a lesser-known but important dimension — **transformative contributions to labour rights and welfare in colonial India.**

Ambedkar's Vision for Labour — Beyond Survival

- Began political journey by organising the **Independent Labour Party** to address working-class issues.

- Vision went beyond material conditions — **labour must live a life of self-development of human, cultural, and spiritual personalities, not merely survive.**
- This **philosophical foundation shaped all labour reforms** pursued by him.

Ambedkar as Labour Member (1942-46) — Watershed Moment

- Early 1940s: **industrialisation expanding** in Global South including colonial India; shift from agrarian–feudal to labour-driven capitalist economy.
- Labour rights largely ignored due to assumption that **early industrialisation cannot afford worker protections.**
- Appointment as **Labour Member in Viceroy’s Executive Council (1942)** — just before Quit India Movement — marked a **turning point in Indian labour policy.**

Key Labour Reforms Introduced

- Reduction of working hours **from 12 hours to 8 hours/day** → move towards **48-hour workweek.**
- **Maternity benefits** for women workers.
- Introduction of **Provident Fund.**
- Provision of **paid leave and Dearness Allowance (DA).**
- **Compulsory recognition of trade unions.**
- **Housing and medical facilities** for workers.
- Establishment of **Employment Exchanges.**
- Foundation for **Employee State Insurance (ESI).**
- Reduction in working hours also aimed at **reducing unemployment through work distribution without wage/DA reduction.**

Tripartite Labour Conference, 1942 — Institutional Innovation

- First-ever **Tripartite Labour Conference:** brought together **government, employers, employees.**
- Established **equal footing between labour and management** — new industrial relations paradigm.
- Raised debate on placing **labour in Concurrent List** → ensure **uniform labour laws across India.**
- Warning: without central legislation, **provincial considerations may override national importance.**
- Conferences (1942–46) shaped **future labour policy framework.**

Labour Investigation Committee, 1944

- First **fact-finding body on labour conditions** in India.
- Examined **wages, working conditions, housing, social realities**.
- Covered **neglected sectors beyond coal and cotton industries**.

Sector-Specific Welfare Measures

- 1943 visit to **Chota Nagpur mines** informed policy intervention.
- Led to **Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund (1946)** — first of its kind.
- Model extended to **coal, iron ore, manganese, limestone, dolomite, beedi industry**.

Dignity in the Workplace

- 1946 amendment: **separate bathing facilities for male and female mine workers**.
- Emphasis on **self-respect and dignity**, not just hygiene → labour rights linked with **human dignity**.

Constitutional Reflection of Labour Vision

- **Article 39**: adequate livelihood, **equal pay for equal work**.
- **Article 43**: **living wage, decent conditions, leisure, social & cultural opportunities**.
- **Article 39(b) & (c)**: prevent **concentration of wealth**, ensure **common good**.

Broader Philosophy on Labour Rights

- Labour rights **cannot survive on reforms alone**.
- Trade unionism **necessary but not sufficient**.
- Workers must have **political representation**.
- Labour must **enter political sphere** to secure long-term rights — **forward-looking vision**.

Analytical Takeaway

- Shift from **welfare-centric to dignity-centric labour policy**.
- Early articulation of **social security, industrial democracy, and inclusive growth**.
- Strong linkage between **economic rights and political empowerment** — foundational to modern labour jurisprudence in India.

04 May 2026
