

# CURRENT AFFAIRS: 28.04.2026

DAY AFTER 7 RAJYA SABHA MEMBERS CROSS OVER TO BJP

## Mann seeks meeting with President, focus on AAP's 3 Lok Sabha members

Source: The Hindu

### Anti-Defection Law and Merger Clause Constitutional Validity

#### Why in News?

Seven former MPs of the Aam Aadmi Party joined the Bharatiya Janata Party and have cited the **"merger" provision under the anti-defection law to avoid disqualification**. This has raised constitutional questions on whether a legislature party alone can claim a valid merger without the involvement of the original political party.



#### What is Anti-Defection Law?

- A law in the **Indian Constitution** to prevent MPs/MLAs from **changing political parties** after election
- Ensures **stable government**

#### Why was it introduced?

- 1960s–70s: Frequent defections
- Known as **"Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram"** politics
- Governments were falling repeatedly
- Around **2000 defections (1967–72)**

#### Grounds for Disqualification

1. Leaving the Party
2. Violating Party Whip
3. Independent Member
4. Nominated Member

#### ▪ Exceptions to Disqualification:

- **The 'Merger' Clause:** If a political party merges with another party, and at least **two-thirds** of the legislators of that party agree to the merger, they are protected from disqualification.
- To claim protection under the **'Merger' Clause** of the Anti-Defection Law (Paragraph 4 of the Tenth Schedule), a specific **"Twin Test"** must be strictly satisfied. It is not enough for legislators to simply switch sides in large numbers.
  - **Test One (The Origin):** There must be a formal merger of the *original political party* (the broader organizational entity) with another political party.
  - **Test Two (The Numbers):** Following that party-level merger, at least **two-thirds** of the members of its legislature party (the elected MPs or MLAs in the House) must agree to and adopt the merger.
  - The act of merging must originate from the political party itself. A group of elected legislators **cannot independently engineer a merger solely to ward off anti-defection proceedings**.

Evolution of Defection Law

Period	Development/Event	Speaker's Role	Examples
1985	<b>52nd Constitutional Amendment Act</b> inserts the <b>Tenth Schedule</b> into the Constitution.	Speaker given <b>sole adjudicatory powers</b> on disqualification of members.	Speaker acts as <b>quasi-judicial authority</b> under Tenth Schedule.
1992	<b>Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu</b> (SC) upholds the <b>constitutionality of Tenth Schedule</b> , but allows <b>judicial review</b> of Speaker's decision.	Speaker's decision subject to <b>judicial review</b> , though he remains the initial authority.	SC: "Speaker acts as tribunal; not above the Constitution".
1998-2003	Rise in coalition politics; loopholes like <b>split (1/3rd rule)</b> used to avoid disqualification.	Speaker's bias becomes evident; mass defections legalized under 'split' provision.	Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Goa saw misuse of split clause.
2003	<b>91st Constitutional Amendment</b> removes the <b>split provision (1/3rd)</b> and introduces <b>merger provision (2/3rd)</b> .	Speaker continues to decide on disqualification, including verifying mergers.	Aimed at tightening law but allowed mass defections under 'merger' loophole.
2020	<b>Keisham Meghachandra v. Speaker, Manipur</b> : SC suggests Speaker should not have exclusive powers.	SC recommends <b>independent tribunal headed by a retired judge</b> .	Speaker delayed decision for over 3 years; defector became Minister.

<b>2023</b>	SC in <b>Maharashtra case</b> (Shinde vs. Thackeray): directs Speaker to decide within reasonable time.	Court sets <b>specific deadlines</b> for Speaker's decision.	October 2023: SC orders Maharashtra Speaker to decide within 2 weeks.
<b>Ongoing Debate</b>	Law Commission (1999), Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990), and others suggest reforms.	Push to remove Speaker's adjudicatory power; proposal for independent authority.	Recommendations remain unimplemented; discussed in Presiding Officers' Conferences.

## National Panchayati Raj Day 2026

Ministry of Panchayati Raj



### National Panchayati Raj Day to be celebrated Pan India on 24th April 2026

Message of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to be Read Out during the National Event in New Delhi Tomorrow

Posted On: 23 APR 2026 7:27PM by PIB Delhi

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj will celebrate National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD) on 24th April 2026 at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. **Observed every year on 24th April, the day commemorates the enactment of the landmark 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, that gave constitutional status and legal recognition to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across India. This year marks 33 years of that defining milestone in India's democratic journey.**

**In a significant highlight of the national event, message of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will be read out** at the function being held in New Delhi. Through the State/UT Panchayati Raj Departments, Prime Minister's message will be disseminated among the elected representatives and functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Rural Local Bodies across the country. **The national event will be graced by Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj Prof. S. P. Singh Baghel.** Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj Shri Vivek Bharadwaj along with other senior officials of the Ministry will be present on the occasion. Elected representatives of PRIs from Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Haryana will also participate in the event.

On this occasion, **Report on Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI)-2.0** and 3 books on 'Meri Panchayat Meri Dharohar' will be released. Under the Ministry's, 'Panchayat Dharohar Initiative', the three illustrated publications on rural heritage to be released are: a **Monograph on Rural Heritage of Tripura**, a **Monograph on Rural Heritage of Tirupati** and 'Uttarkashi: Saumya Kashi: The Soul of Himalayan Heritage'.

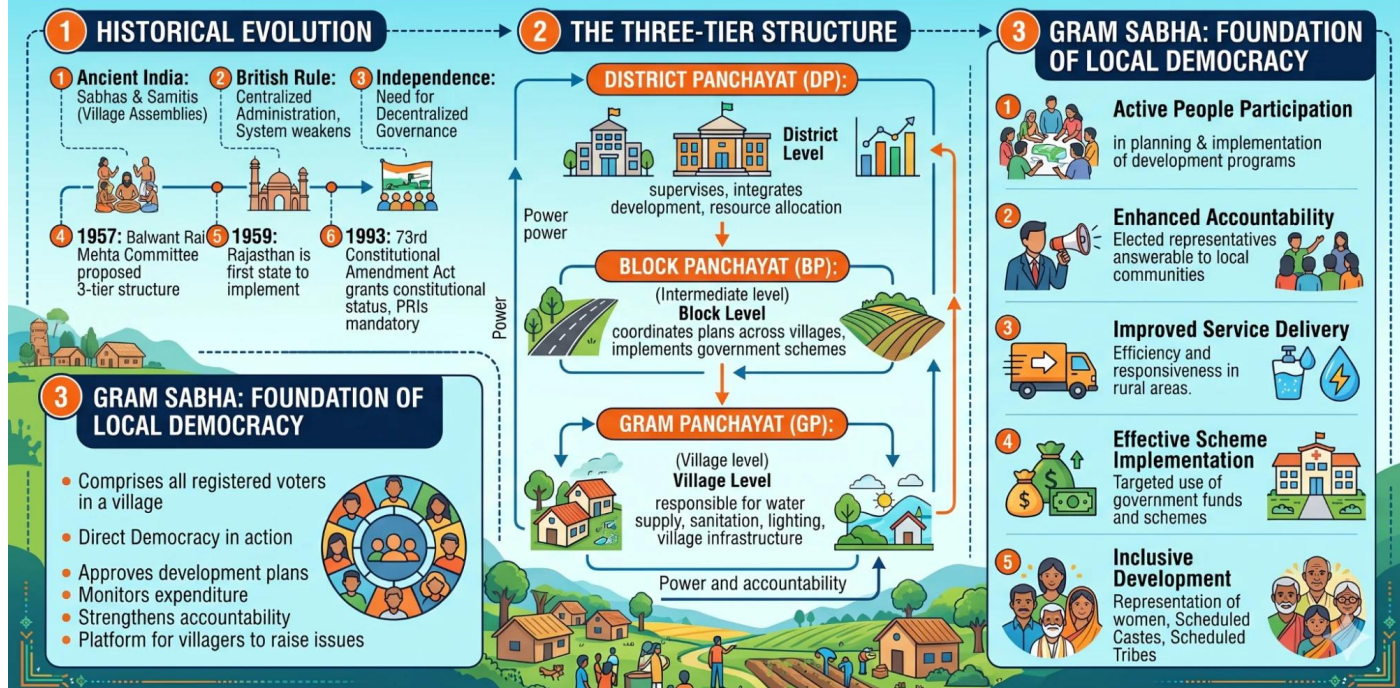
National Panchayati Raj Day will be observed with much fervour across the country at State, District, Block and Gram Panchayat levels wherein Gram Panchayats will hold Gram Sabha meetings, reaffirming the spirit of participatory democracy at the grassroots. The day provides an occasion to recognize the role of the three tier Panchayati Raj system in accelerating progress towards Viksit Bharat.

**MoPR Highlights**

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# PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM IN INDIA: EMPOWERING GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY



## India's Initiatives Related to PRIs

- SVAMITVA Scheme:** Launched in April 2021, it uses drones and **Geographical Information System (GIS)** to map inhabited village areas and issue property cards.
  - As of March 2026, surveys are complete in 3.29 lakh villages, and 2.65 crore property cards have been distributed.
- SabhaSaar:** An AI-powered tool integrated with **Bhashini** that automatically transcribes and structures Gram Sabha meeting minutes in 23 regional languages. It is currently used by over 1 lakh Gram Panchayats.
- eGramSwaraj:** A portal available in 22 languages for planning, financial management, and real-time payments and it is linked with the **Public Financial Management System**.
- Gram Urja Swaraj:** A dashboard tracking renewable energy assets in real-time. It monitors solar, hydel, wind, and biogas usage across 2,080 Gram Panchayats.
- Meri Panchayat App:** An m-Governance platform developed by **NIC** to improve citizen participation and accountability, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA):** A scheme designed to build leadership and governance capabilities to meet SDGs.
- Model Women-Friendly Gram Panchayat (MWFGP):** An initiative under **SDG Theme 9** aiming to develop one model women-friendly Panchayat per district, focusing on safety, rights, and inclusive governance.
- Sashakt Panchayat–Netri Abhiyan:** A special interactive training module that has trained around 1.5 lakh Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) to enhance their leadership, communication, and negotiation skills.
- Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS):** A program engaging Class 9 and 10 students from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Eklayva Model Residential Schools in mock Gram Sabhas to foster participatory democracy among the youth.

## WHO Approves First Malaria Drug for Newborns

The World Health Organization (WHO) has granted prequalification approval to the first malaria treatment specifically designed for newborns and infants. The medicine, artemether-lumefantrine, marks a major step in reducing malaria deaths among the youngest and most vulnerable children, especially in Africa where the disease remains a major public health challenge.



### First Infant-Specific Malaria Treatment

Artemether-lumefantrine is the first antimalarial formulation created specifically for newborns and infants. Until now, babies were treated using medicines designed for older children, which increased the risk of dosage mistakes, side effects, and toxicity. The new formulation is expected to improve treatment safety and effectiveness for infants suffering from malaria.

### WHO Prequalification and Its Importance

WHO stated that prequalification confirms the medicine meets international standards of quality, safety, and efficacy. This approval is important because it allows governments and public health agencies to procure the medicine for public sector use. It also helps improve access in countries where national regulatory systems are weak or underdeveloped.

### Malaria Burden Remains Severe

In 2024, the world recorded an estimated 282 million malaria cases and around 610,000 deaths across 80 countries. Africa accounted for 95 percent of these cases and deaths. Children under five years of age represented nearly three-fourths of all malaria deaths, showing the urgent need for better treatment options for infants and young children.

### Important Facts for Exams

Malaria is caused by Plasmodium parasites and is transmitted mainly through the bite of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.

Artemether-lumefantrine is a commonly used combination therapy for treating uncomplicated malaria.

The WHO prequalification programme ensures medicines and vaccines meet global quality and safety standards.

Sub-Saharan Africa carries the highest malaria burden in the world.