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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

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IMPORTANT DAYS**Zero Discrimination Day is celebrated on March 1**

- **Zero Discrimination Day 2026 is observed on the 1st of March.**
- Zero Discrimination Day aims to promote inclusion, compassion, and peace and it is a movement for change.
- Zero Discrimination Day was **first celebrated and observed on March 1st, 2014.**
- Zero Discrimination Day was **launched by UNAIDS.**

World Civil Defence Day is observed on the 1st of March

- **World Civil Defence Day 2026 is celebrated on March 1st.** It is celebrated annually on March 1st every year all over the world.
- World Civil Defence Day 2026 is a day to celebrate the importance of civil defense and it is time to commemorate the people who have sacrificed their lives for it.
- In 1958, the **International Association of Geneva Zones became the International Civil Defense Organization (ICDO)** and was given a new status as a non-governmental organization with objectives such as establishing a liaison between national civil defense organizations, undertaking and promoting studies and research on population protection matters, and facilitating the exchange of experience and the coordination of efforts in the area of disaster prevention, preparedness, and intervention.

Self-Injury Awareness Day 2026 is observed on the 1st of March

- **Self-Injury Awareness Day is celebrated on March 1st, 2026.** The **Self-Injury Awareness Day (SIAD)** is a global event that is conducted every year on March 1st.
- It has been celebrated for more than 20 years on this day every year.
- Later in **1959, the Mental Health Organization** passed the Mental Health Act to remove the barriers against the treatment of mental illness in hospitals.

World Hearing Day 2026 Observed on 3 March

- **World Hearing Day 2026** will be observed globally on **3 March 2026** to raise awareness about **prevention of deafness and hearing impairment** and to promote **ear and hearing care worldwide.**
- The day is observed across countries to encourage **early detection, timely intervention, and accessible hearing healthcare services.**
- In the late **1816, Laurent Clerc** helped establish one of the earliest recorded permanent institutions for deaf students in the United States, marking a significant milestone in deaf education.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

World Wildlife Day 2026 Observed on 3 March

- **World Wildlife Day 2026** is observed globally on **3 March 2026** to raise awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation.
- The day commemorates the signing of the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora**.
- The observance highlights the **multiple ecological, economic, and social benefits provided by wild animals and plants**, and promotes their conservation.
- The proposal to designate World Wildlife Day was made by **Thailand** at the **United Nations General Assembly on 20 December 2013**.

March 4th is observed as National Safety Day every year

- **National Safety Day** is celebrated on **March 4th, 2026**.
- National Safety Day is a national event observed all over India to make people understand the importance of safety, and we all want ourselves and our family members to remain safe.
- The **theme for the 55th National Safety Day** (celebrating the National Safety Council's Diamond Jubilee) is **“Engage, Educate & Empower People to Enhance Safety”**.
- The foundation day of the **National Safety Council** was decided to observe as **National Safety Day** in 1972.

International Women’s Day 2026 Observed on 8 March

- **International Women's Day** is observed globally on **8 March every year** to recognize the **historical, cultural, social and political achievements of women**.
- **International Women’s Day 2026** was celebrated worldwide on **8 March 2026** with the theme **“Rights. Justice. Action For ALL Women and Girls.”**
- The day is an official holiday in several countries and is marked through events, campaigns and discussions promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Central Industrial Security Force Raising Day 2026 Observed on 10 March

- **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Raising Day** is observed every year on **10 March** across **India** to mark the establishment of the force.
- **CISF Raising Day 2026** was observed on **10 March 2026**, commemorating the anniversary of the force dedicated to protecting critical industrial and strategic infrastructure.
- The **Central Industrial Security Force** was established on **10 March 1969** under the **Central Industrial Security Force Act, 1968** passed by the **Parliament of India**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

National No Smoking Day 2026 Observed on March 11

- **National No Smoking Day 2026** is observed on **March 11, 2026**, which falls on the **second Wednesday of March** each year.
- The day aims to **encourage smokers to quit tobacco by providing support, resources and awareness about the health benefits of quitting smoking.**
- **World No Tobacco Day 2026** is expected to focus on the theme **“Unmasking the appeal – countering nicotine and tobacco addiction.”**
- The observance was **first introduced in 1984 in the United Kingdom**, originally held on **Ash Wednesday**, and later adopted as an **annual event on the second Wednesday of March.**

World Sleep Day 2026 – March 13

- In **2026, World Sleep Day was observed on March 13** with the theme **“Sleep Well, Live Better.”**
- **World Sleep Day** is observed annually to raise awareness about the importance of healthy sleep and sleep-related disorders.
- The observance is organised by the **World Sleep Day Committee of the World Sleep Society.**
- **World Sleep Day was first launched in 2008** by the **World Sleep Day Committee.**
- The **first World Sleep Day was observed on March 14, 2008.**

International Day of Action for Rivers 2026 – March 14

- **International Day of Action for Rivers** is observed **annually on March 14** to raise awareness about the importance of rivers and promote their protection and conservation.
- The **29th International Day of Action for Rivers** is observed on **March 14, 2026**, with the theme **“#ProtectRiversProtectPeople.”**
- The day focuses on **saving rivers, celebrating their ecological value, and creating awareness about the need for sustainable water management.**
- The event was originally known as the **International Day of Action Against Dams and For Rivers, Water and Life.**

Pi Day / International Day of Mathematics 2026 – March 14

- **Pi Day** is observed **annually on March 14** to celebrate the **mathematical constant π (pi)**, which is approximately **14.**
- In **2026, Pi Day is observed on March 14**, recognising the importance of **mathematics in science, technology and everyday life.**
- The day commemorates the mathematical constant **π** , which represents the **ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter.**

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The **first Pi Day celebration was organised in 1988** by American physicist Larry Shaw at the San Francisco Exploratorium in San Francisco, United States.

World Consumer Rights Day 2026 – March 15

- **World Consumer Rights Day** is observed globally on **March 15** every year to raise awareness about consumer rights and promote fair and ethical market practices.
- In **2026, World Consumer Rights Day** is observed on **March 15**, highlighting the need to **protect consumer interests and address market abuses and social injustices** that affect consumers.
- The observance aims to **ensure that the rights of consumers are respected and protected across the world.**

National Vaccination Day 2026 – March 16

- **National Vaccination Day** is observed across India on **March 16** every year to highlight the importance of vaccination and its role in protecting public health.
- In **2026, National Vaccination Day** is observed on **March 16**, marking the launch of the **Pulse Polio** immunisation programme in India in 1995.
- The day commemorates the **administration of the first dose of the Oral Polio Vaccine** in India on **March 16, 1995** as part of the **Pulse Polio Campaign** launched by the Government of India.

Ordnance Factories Day 2026 – March 18

- **Ordnance Factories Day** is observed across India on **March 18** every year to commemorate the establishment of the first ordnance factory in colonial India.
- The day marks the **foundation of the first ordnance factory set up in 1801 at Cossipore near Kolkata.**
- The ordnance factories operate under the **Ministry of Defence**, and the day highlights their role in strengthening India's defence manufacturing capabilities.
- **Ordnance** Factories Day provides an opportunity to showcase the research, development, production, and marketing logistics of a wide range of arms and ammunition manufactured in the country.

World Social Work Day 2026 Observed on 17 March

- **World Social Work Day 2026** was observed globally on **March 17, 2026.**
- The day recognises the **contributions of social workers in building stronger, inclusive, and sustainable communities.**

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- World Social Work Day is **observed annually on the third Tuesday of March** to honour the dedication and work of social workers across the **world**.
- The **theme for 2026** is “**Co-Building Hope and Harmony: A Harambee Call to Unite a Divided Society.**”

World Sparrow Day 2026 Observed on 20 March

- **World Sparrow Day** is observed annually on **20 March** to raise awareness about the **House Sparrow and other common urban birds**.
- It highlights the need for **conservation of sparrows** and protection of **urban biodiversity**.
- The initiative was launched by the **Nature Forever Society of India** in collaboration with the **Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France)** and other international organisations.
- **World Sparrow Day** was first observed in **2010**, marking the beginning of a **global campaign to protect sparrows**.

World Oral Health Day 2026 Observed on 20 March

- **World Oral Health Day (WOHD)** is observed annually on **20 March** to promote **oral hygiene and awareness about oral diseases**.
- The theme for **World Oral Health Day 2026** is “**A Happy Mouth is a Happy Life**”.
- The day is organized by the **Fédération Dentaire Internationale (FDI) World Dental Federation**, serving as a **global platform to promote dental care and oral health awareness**.

International Day of Happiness 2026 Observed on 20 March

- **International Day of Happiness 2026** is observed globally on **20 March 2026** to promote **happiness, well-being, and positivity**.
- The day encourages people to **spread happiness** and urges nations to **prioritise the well-being of citizens in public policy**.
- The concept was proposed in **2011** to the **United Nations (UN)** by **Jayme Illien**.
- He also founded the **United Nations New Economic Paradigm project** and promoted the concept of ‘**happytalism**’, focusing on **well-being over economic growth**.

International Day of Forests 2026 Observed on 21 March

- **International Day of Forests**, also known as **World Forest Day**, is observed annually on **21 March** to raise awareness about the **importance of forests and their benefits**.
- The day emphasizes conservation, sustainable management, and protection of all types of forests.
- The observance is held under the **United Nations (UN)**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The concept of **World Forestry Day** was introduced in **1971** during the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** conference.

World Poetry Day 2026 Observed on 21 March

- **World Poetry Day** is observed annually on **21 March** to honour poets and promote the reading, writing, and teaching of poetry.
- The day celebrates poetry recitals, music, theatre, dance, painting, and other cultural expressions.
- It aims to highlight how poetry **builds emotional connections, preserves history, and promotes cultural understanding.**

World Down Syndrome Day 2026 Observed on 21 March

- **World Down Syndrome Day (WSD)** is observed annually on **21 March** to raise awareness about **Down syndrome and promote inclusion of persons with disabilities.**
- The theme for **2026** is “**Together Against Loneliness**”, focusing on **social exclusion, isolation, and loneliness** faced by individuals with Down syndrome.
- The date **21 March (21/3)** signifies the **triplication of the 21st chromosome**, which causes Down syndrome.

World Meteorological Day 2026 Observed on 23 March with Theme “Observing Today, Protecting Tomorrow”

- **World Meteorological Day 2026** was observed globally on **23 March 2026** to highlight the importance of **meteorology and weather-related services** in protecting lives and supporting sustainable development.
- The theme for **2026** is “**Observing Today, Protecting Tomorrow**”, emphasizing the role of **weather observations and forecasting systems** in safeguarding the future.
- The day commemorates the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization, which focuses on the **study of Earth’s atmosphere, climate, and hydrological systems.**

World Water Day 2026 Observed on 22 March with Theme “Water and Gender: Where Water Flows, Equality Grows”

- **World Water Day 2026** was observed globally on **22 March 2026** to highlight the **importance of freshwater resources** and promote their **sustainable management.**
- The theme for **2026** is “**Water and Gender: Where water flows, equality grows,**” emphasizing the role of **equitable access to water in promoting gender equality.**

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The idea for observing World Water Day originated during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in **Rio de Janeiro in 1992**.

World Tuberculosis Day 2026 Observed on 24 March

- **World Tuberculosis Day 2026** was observed globally on **24 March 2026** to raise awareness about the **global epidemic of Tuberculosis** and efforts to eliminate the disease.
- The **theme for World Tuberculosis Day 2026** was “**Yes! We can end Tuberculosis!**”.
- The day is observed every year to highlight the **health, social and economic consequences of Tuberculosis** and to strengthen global efforts to **end the Tuberculosis epidemic**.

United Nations French Language Day Observed on 20 March

- United Nations **French Language Day** is observed annually on **20 March** across the globe.
- The day aims to **promote multilingualism, cultural diversity, and equal recognition of the six official languages of the United Nations**.
- The date commemorates the **establishment of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACCT)** on **20 March 1970** in **Niamey, Niger**.

International Day of the Unborn Child Observed on 25 March 2026

- The **International Day of the Unborn Child** is observed annually on **25 March** across the world.
- The day commemorates **unborn children** and promotes **respect for human dignity before birth**.
- **El Salvador** was the **first country** to recognize a **Day of the Right to Be Born** in **1993**.
- **Argentina** declared the **Day of the Unborn** in **1998**.

International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade – 25 March 2026

- The **International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade** is observed annually on **25 March** across the world.
- It is an international observance designated by the United Nations in **2007**.
- The day aims to **honour and remember the victims of the transatlantic slave trade** and to **preserve the memory of this tragic chapter in human history**.
- It seeks to **raise awareness about the dangers of racism, prejudice, and intolerance**.

World Theatre Day 2026 Observed on 27 March

- **World Theatre Day** was observed globally on **27 March 2026**.
- **Theme for 2026:** “**Theatre and a Culture of Peace**.”

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- The day highlights the **importance of theatre arts in educating, entertaining and promoting social change** across societies.
- **World Theatre Day** was designated in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute (ITI).

NATIONAL AND STATE NEWS

Sarbananda Sonowal Inaugurates Key Projects on National Waterway-2 in Assam

- Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways **Sarbananda Sonowal** inaugurated **three major infrastructure projects** on **Brahmaputra River** under **National Waterway 2** in Dibrugarh, Assam.
- The projects include the **Bogibeel Customs and Immigration Complex**, the **Dhubri Customs and Immigration Complex**, and the renovated **IWAI Heritage Building**.
- Describing the initiative as a model of “**Vikas and Virasat**”, Sonowal stated that the projects will strengthen inland water transport, enhance cross-border trade, and promote tourism in the Northeast under the leadership of Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**.
- Projects inaugurated on **National Waterway-2 (NW-2)**, a key economic corridor along the Brahmaputra.
- **Bogibeel Customs and Immigration Complex** developed as a **tourist-cum-cargo terminal** with customs, immigration and administrative facilities of the **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)**.

Soundala Village in Maharashtra Declares Itself ‘Caste-Free’ Through Gram Sabha Resolution

- Soundala village in **Maharashtra**, located about 350 km from **Mumbai**, has declared itself a “**caste-free village**” after passing a **unanimous resolution** in the gram sabha.
- The village is situated in **Ahilyanagar district** (formerly Ahmednagar).
- The guiding motto adopted by the village is “**My caste is humanity.**”
- **Unanimous gram sabha resolution** passed on **5 February 2026** declaring Soundala a **caste-free village**.
- Ban on **inquiring about caste or using caste-based slurs**; caste-based boycotts not tolerated.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Inaugurate India’s First Semiconductor ATMP Plant in Sanand

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate India’s first semiconductor **ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging)** facility set up by **Micron Technology** at Sanand in **Gujarat**.
- Project involves an **investment of ₹22,516 crore**.
- First semiconductor **ATMP plant in India** focused on memory and storage products.
- Will assemble and test **DRAM and NAND memory chips**, and produce **Solid State Drives (SSDs)**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

Indian Railways Launches Rail Tech Policy 2026, Rail Tech Portal and e-RCT

- The **Indian Railways** has launched the **Rail Tech Policy 2026**, **Rail Tech Portal**, and **e-Railway Claims Tribunal (e-RCT)** in New Delhi.
- The announcement was made by Union Minister for Railways **Ashwini Vaishnaw** as part of the “**52 Reforms in 52 Weeks**” initiative aimed at accelerating technology adoption, enhancing safety, and promoting digital governance in railway operations.
- **Rail Tech Policy 2026** launched to promote large-scale adoption of advanced technologies.

Rajasthan Renames Mount Abu as Aburaj; Kaman and Jahazpur Also Renamed

- The **Rajasthan Government** has approved the **renaming of three towns in the state as part of its cultural heritage initiative**.
- The announcement was made by **Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma** in the Rajasthan Assembly.
- Under the decision, **Mount Abu will now be officially called Aburaj, Kaman as Kamvan, and Jahazpur as Yagyapur**.
- Renaming intended to **reconnect modern administrative names with historical references**.

About Rajasthan:

- Capital: Jaipur
- Governor: Haribhau Bagade
- Chief Minister: Bajan Lal Sharma
- National Parks: Ranthambhore National Park, Sariska Tiger Reserve, Keoladeo National Park (Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary), Desert National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Darrah Wildlife Sanctuary, Ranthambore Wildlife Sanctuary, Bassi Wildlife Sanctuary

Raksha Rajya Mantri Inaugurates Restored Chungthang–Lachen Axis and Taram Chu Bridge in North Sikkim

- Raksha Rajya Mantri **Shri Sanjay Seth** inaugurated the restored **28 kilometre Chungthang–Lachen Axis** and the **400 feet Bailey Suspension Taram Chu Bridge** in North Sikkim.
- The infrastructure was rebuilt by the **Border Roads Organisation** after severe damage caused by **Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (October 2023)**, **Cyclone Remal (June 2024)**, and **cloudbursts (May–June 2025)**.
- Under **Project Swastik**, the Border Roads Organisation cleared **96 landslides**, completed **8 kilometres of fresh formation cutting**, and created multiple diversions to bypass unstable stretches.

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Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- Chief Minister: Prem Singh Tamang
- Governor: Om Prakash Mathur
- Capital: Gangtok
- National Parks: Khangchendzonga National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Fambong Lho Wildlife Sanctuary, Kyongnosla Alpine Sanctuary, Maenam Wildlife Sanctuary

Maharashtra Launches Divyang Sahayak Portal for Digital Delivery of Disability Welfare Schemes

- The **Government of Maharashtra** launched the **Divyang Sahayak Portal** in, described as **India's first fully integrated online platform for disability welfare schemes**.
- The portal eliminates **paperwork and physical visits**, enabling **online applications, real-time tracking, automatic approvals, and artificial intelligence-based grievance redressal**.
- It aims to strengthen implementation of the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016** and ensure **faster and transparent delivery of benefits**.
- The platform uses **Application Programming Interfaces** to connect with government databases and is integrated with the **Unique Disability Identity system**.
- It is linked with **Aadhaar through Meri Pehchan and Direct Benefit Transfer platform**, with integration of **Permanent Account Number, Goods and Services Tax, bank details, and electronic signature systems**
- Artificial intelligence tools are used to **scan uploaded documents, flag incomplete applications, and sort and summarise grievances** for faster resolution.

Varanasi Sets Guinness World Records by Planting 2,51,446 Saplings in One Hour

- **Varanasi** has created a new **Guinness World Records** milestone by planting **2,51,446 saplings within one hour** at the **Sujabad Domari area**, surpassing China's **2018 record of 1,53,981 saplings**.
- The plantation drive was conducted over nearly **350 bighas of land**, developed as an urban forest.
- The record was verified through **drone surveillance and digital counting system**.
- Guinness adjudicator **Rishinath** officially confirmed the record.
- The certificate was presented to **Mayor Ashok Kumar Tiwari** and **Municipal Commissioner Himanshu Nagpal**.
- A total of **27 native species** were planted, including **sheesham, Arjun, teak, bamboo, mango, guava, papaya, ashwagandha, shatavari, and giloy**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The forest area has been divided into **60 sectors**, each named after prominent ghats of Kashi such as **Dashashwamedh, Manikarnika, Kedar, and Lalita**.

Chhattisgarh Finance Minister O. P. Chaudhary Presents ₹1.72 Lakh Crore Budget for Financial Year 2026–27

- **Chhattisgarh Finance Minister Om Prakash Chaudhary** presented the **₹1,72,000 crore** annual Budget for the **Financial Year 2026–27** in the State Legislative Assembly at **Raipur, Chhattisgarh**.
- The Budget outlay is **4.2 percent higher** than the previous year's Budget of ₹1,65,000 crore.
- The Budget is centred around the theme '**SANKALP**' (**Samaveshi Vikas, Adhosanrachna, Nivesh, Kushal Manav Sansadhan, Antyoday, Livelihood and Policy se Parinam tak**).
- Total **Revenue Receipts** are estimated at **₹1,43,000 crore** for Financial Year 2026–27.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari Launches Upgraded Rajmarg Pravesh Version 2.0 Web Portal

- Union Minister **Nitin Gadkari**, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, launched the upgraded **Rajmarg Pravesh Version 2.0** web portal to facilitate easy issuance of **No Objection Certificates for facilities and utilities along National Highways**.
- The portal enables **online applications** for permissions related to **fuel stations, wayside amenities, private properties, rest area complexes, connecting roads and other facilities** along National Highways.
- It also allows applicants to seek approval for laying **water pipelines, gas pipelines, optical fibre cables, electrical lines and other utility services** along or across National Highways.

Tamil Nadu Inaugurates First Dark Sky Park at Kolli Hills

- **Tamil Nadu Forest Minister R S Rajakannappan** inaugurated the **State's first Dark Sky Park** at **Ariyur Shola Reserve Forest, Kolli Hills, in Namakkal district**, positioning Tamil Nadu as an emerging **astro-tourism destination**.
- The park has been established at a cost of **₹1 crore** with **three advanced telescopes** and **solar-powered infrastructure**.
- It facilitates **night-time observation of stars, planets, the Milky Way and the Moon**, while promoting **scientific literacy and astronomy awareness** among students, researchers and the general public.

President Droupadi Murmu Launches Four Women-Centric Welfare Schemes under 'Sashakt Nari, Samridh Delhi' Programme

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The Hon'ble President of India, Droupadi Murmu, launched four women-centric welfare schemes of the Delhi Government at the “Sashakt Nari, Samriddh Delhi” programme held in New Delhi.

Pink National Common Mobility Card

- The **Pink National Common Mobility Card** was launched to provide **seamless and integrated access to public transport** for women.

Free LPG Cylinders Scheme

- The Delhi Government announced provision of **two free Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders annually** to ration card-holding families.

Delhi Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana

- Under the **Delhi Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana**, an amount of **₹56,000 will be deposited in instalments** in the name of a girl child.

Meri Punji Mera Adhikaar

- The **Meri Punji Mera Adhikaar** initiative focuses on **clearing pending financial dues** and ensuring citizens' **financial rights are addressed transparently**.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Launches HPV Vaccination Programme and Inaugurates Major Projects; Dr Jitendra Singh Unveils Biotechnology Facilities

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi visited Rajasthan and Gujarat** to launch a major **healthcare initiative** and inaugurate **large-scale development and industrial projects**.
- He launched the **nationwide Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Programme** at Kayad in Ajmer, Rajasthan, targeting **14-year-old girls across all States and Union Territories** to prevent cervical cancer.
- The programme uses **single-dose Gardasil 4 vaccine**, which protects against **Human Papillomavirus types 16 and 18 (high-risk cancer-causing types) and types 6 and 11**.

Bureau of Energy Efficiency Celebrates 25th Foundation Day in New Delhi

- The **Bureau of Energy Efficiency** celebrated its **25th Foundation Day** at India Habitat Centre, marking a milestone in India's energy conservation journey.
- Union Power Minister **Manohar Lal Khattar** unveiled the **BEE@25 commemorative logo**, launched the **BEE Star Label Mobile Application**, and introduced the **Renewable Consumption Obligation Portal**.
- India has achieved a **36 per cent reduction in emissions intensity of Gross Domestic Product from 2005 levels**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- India has reached **52 per cent non fossil fuel installed power capacity**, achieving the target ahead of the 2030 timeline.

Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary to Host Second Indian Bison Fest on 8 March 2026

- The second edition of the **Indian Bison Fest** will be held on **8 March 2026** at Zeropoint inside **Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary** in Sambalpur, Odisha
- The festival is organised by the **Hirakud Wildlife Division** to promote conservation of the **Indian bison (gaur)** and highlight the sanctuary as a key conservation hub.
- Latest census conducted in **January 2026** recorded **848 gaurs**, marking a **net increase of 190 animals within one year**.
- Around **235 juveniles below two years**, accounting for nearly **30 per cent of the population**, indicating strong breeding success and healthy herd dynamics.

Project HANUMAN Launched in Andhra Pradesh to Address Human–Wildlife Conflict

- Deputy Chief Minister of **Andhra Pradesh Pawan Kalyan** launched **Project HANUMAN** to tackle the rising incidents of **human–wildlife conflict** in the state.
- The initiative aims to **reduce man–animal clashes**, **protect rural communities**, and ensure the **safety of wildlife**, amid increasing cases of animals entering human settlements.
- Project HANUMAN focuses on **vulnerable districts** experiencing frequent wildlife intrusion and crop damage.
- Deployment of **Rapid Response Teams** for emergency handling of wildlife movement and conflict situations.
- Use of **technology-based monitoring systems** to track animal movement and strengthen early warning mechanisms.

About Andhra Pradesh:

- Chief Minister: N. Chandrababu Naidu
- Governor: S. Abdul Nazeer
- Capital: Amaravati
- National Parks: Sri Venkateswara National Park, Papikonda National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary, Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary, Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary, Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary

India to Host Bharat Steel 2026 Summit in New Delhi from 16 April 2026

- **India will host the Bharat Steel 2026 Summit** in **New Delhi** from **16 April 2026** for two days, bringing together global leaders from **steel, technology, mining and trading sectors** to **deliberate on the future of the next-generation steel ecosystem**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The summit aims to build a **next-generation steel ecosystem**, strengthen collaboration between policymakers and industry leaders, promote sustainable and green steel production, expand India's global steel footprint, and enhance technological innovation in manufacturing.

Haryana Budget 2026–27 Presented with ₹2.23 Lakh Crore Outlay

- Chief Minister and Finance Minister **Nayab Singh Saini** presented **the Haryana Budget 2026–27** with a total outlay of **₹2,23,658 crore**, marking a **10.28 percent increase** over the revised estimate of ₹2,02,816 crore for 2025–26.
- The Budget projects a **fiscal deficit of ₹40,293 crore**, which is **2.65 percent of Gross State Domestic Product**. Revenue deficit is estimated at **0.87 percent**, effective revenue deficit at **0.41 percent**, capital expenditure at **1.86 percent**, and effective capital expenditure at **2.32 percent**. The government reiterated its vision of making Haryana a **trillion-dollar economy by 2047**.
- An allocation of **₹474 crore** has been made for the **Haryana Artificial Intelligence Mission 2026**, aimed at training **1 lakh youth in Artificial Intelligence**, integrating Artificial Intelligence-based models into government departments, and strengthening digital governance.

About Haryana:

- Chief Minister: Nayab Singh Saini
- Governor: Ashim Kumar Ghosh
- Capital: Chandigarh
- National Parks: Sultanpur National Park, Kalesar National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary, Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary, Nahar Wildlife Sanctuary

Central Warehousing Corporation Celebrates 70th Foundation Day; Reports Record Financial Performance

- The **Central Warehousing Corporation** celebrated its **70th Foundation Day** at **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**.
- The event was inaugurated by **Union Minister Pralhad Joshi**, in the presence of Minister of State **B. L. Verma** and senior officials.
- The Union Minister praised the Central Warehousing Corporation for strengthening **India's food security and logistics system**, and encouraged the organisation to aspire for **Maharatna status** in the future.

India Becomes Second Highest Country Globally in Childhood Obesity: World Obesity Atlas 2026

- According to the **World Obesity Atlas** released by the **World Obesity Federation**, India has **overtaken the United States** to become the **second highest country globally for childhood obesity**, ranking **just behind China**.
- As per data compiled till 2025, **41 million Indian children** have high **Body Mass Index (BMI)**, including **14 million living with obesity**.
- In 2025, **14.9 million children (5–9 years)** and **over 26 million adolescents (10–19 years)** in India were overweight or obese.

Maharashtra Launches Saksham Skill Census, India's First Artificial Intelligence-Powered Skill Survey

- **Ashish Shelar**, Minister of Information Technology and Cultural Affairs, Government of Maharashtra, launched the **Saksham Skill Census** at **R. D. National College**, Bandra West, Mumbai.
- The Saksham Skill Census is described as **India's first Artificial Intelligence-powered skill census**, aimed at assessing the employability of youth aged 18 to 40 years.

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology Launches Indigenous 30 Kilowatt Wide Band Gap-Based Integrated Drive System at Indian Institute of Technology Madras

- **S. Krishnan**, Secretary of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**, launched an indigenously developed **30 kilowatt Wide Band Gap- based Integrated Drive System** for electric vehicle applications at **Indian Institute of Technology Madras**, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- The initiative aims to strengthen **self-reliance in the electric vehicle powertrain segment** and reduce dependence on imported systems.

NITI Aayog and Japan International Cooperation Agency Sign Record of Discussions for Phase Two of Sustainable Development Goals Cooperation

- The **NITI Aayog** and the **Japan International Cooperation Agency** signed a **Record of Discussions for Phase Two of the Japan–India Cooperative Actions towards Sustainable Development Goals**.
- The agreement aims to strengthen development interventions in **Aspirational Districts and Aspirational Blocks** across India.
- The objective of Phase Two is to enhance **India–Japan collaboration for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals** by improving **institutional capacity and governance systems** at district and block levels.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi Launches Development Projects Worth Over Rs 7,100 Crore in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

- **Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi**, visited the State of **Tamil Nadu (TN)** and the Union Territory (UT) of **Puducherry** to inaugurate, dedicate to the nation and lay foundation stones for multiple infrastructure and development projects worth **over Rs 7,100 crore**, with a strong focus on **regional connectivity, economic growth and public welfare**.
- In **Madurai, Tamil Nadu**, the Hon'ble Prime Minister inaugurated, dedicated and laid foundation stones for projects worth **over Rs 4,400 crore**, aimed at **enhancing road connectivity, improving mobility and accelerating regional economic development**.

Under the National Highway development initiatives:

- The **Marakkanam–Puducherry project on National Highway-332A (NH-332A)** is a four-laning project with an investment of **over Rs 2,100 crore**. It is expected to **reduce travel time by nearly 50%** and improve connectivity to important locations such as **Mamallapuram, Kalpakkam Atomic Power Station and Auroville**.
- The **Paramakudi–Ramanathapuram project on National Highway-87 (NH-87)** is another four-laning project with an investment of **over Rs 1,800 crore**. It will **reduce travel time by around 40%** and strengthen access to **Madurai, Rameswaram, Dhanushkodi and Indian Naval Station (INS) Parundu**.

About Tamil Nadu:

- **Capital:** Chennai
- **Chief Minister:** M. K. Stalin
- **Governor:** Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar
- **National Parks:** Mudumalai National Park, Mukurthi National Park, Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park, Indira Gandhi (Anamalai) National Park, Guindy National Park
- **Wildlife Sanctuaries:** Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, Vettangudi Bird Sanctuary, Kalakad Wildlife Sanctuary, Sathyamangalam Wildlife Sanctuary, Vallanadu Wildlife Sanctuary, Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary

About Puducherry (Union Territory):

- **Chief Minister:** N. Rangasamy
- **Lieutenant Governor:** K. Kailashnathan
- **Capital:** Puducherry
- **Districts:** Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe, and Yanam
- **Famous Wildlife Sanctuary:** Ousteri Wetland and National Park (also known as Oussudu Lake)

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Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Announces New Seed Act 2026 and Revised Pesticide Act 2026

- **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, Union Minister of the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoAFW)**, announced two major legislative reforms — the **New Seed Act 2026** and the **Revised Pesticide Act 2026** in **Mussoorie, Uttarakhand**.
- The reforms aim to **modernise the regulatory framework of Indian agriculture**, ensure **quality agricultural inputs**, and **protect farmers from substandard seeds and pesticides**.
- The **Revised Pesticide Act 2026** is set to replace the **Insecticides Act**, thereby updating and modernising the regulatory system governing pesticides in India.

About Uttarakhand:

- **Chief Minister:** Pushkar Singh Dhama
- **Governor:** Gurmit Singh
- **Capital:** Dehradun
- **National Parks:** Jim Corbett National Park, Nanda Devi National Park, Rajaji National Park, Gangotri National Park, Valley of Flowers National Park
- **Wildlife Sanctuaries:** Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary, Askot Wildlife Sanctuary, Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary, Govind Wildlife Sanctuary, Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary, Nandi Devi Wildlife Sanctuary

Gujarat Launches herSTART 5.0 Programme to Promote Women-Led Startups

- The Government of **Gujarat** launched **herSTART 5.0**, a major initiative aimed at **strengthening women-led startups and entrepreneurship** in the state.
- The programme was inaugurated by **Chief Minister (CM) Bhupendra Patel** at **Gujarat University** in **Ahmedabad**.
- The event also marked the **inauguration of a new research park** at Gujarat University to promote **innovation, research, and entrepreneurship**.
- The **herSTART 5.0** programme is implemented by the **Gujarat University Startup and Entrepreneurship Council**.

Andhra Pradesh Announces ₹25,000 Incentive for Second and Third Child to Address Declining Fertility Rate

- The Government of **Andhra Pradesh** has announced a **financial incentive of ₹25,000** for couples who have a **second or third child** as part of a **population boost policy**.
- The initiative was announced by **Chief Minister (CM) N. Chandrababu Naidu** to address the **declining fertility rate and rising ageing population** in the state.

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- The announcement was made while speaking in the **Legislative Assembly of Andhra Pradesh**, where the CM stated that the scheme aims to **encourage families to have more children and maintain demographic balance**.
- Under the scheme, **couples will receive ₹25,000 at the time of delivery** for having a **second or third child**.
- The initiative aims to **increase the Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** in the state and provide **financial support to families**.

About Andhra Pradesh:

- Chief Minister: N. Chandrababu Naidu
- Governor: S. Abdul Nazeer
- Capital: Amaravati
- National Parks: Sri Venkateswara National Park, Papikonda National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary, Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary, Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary, Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary

Adani Group Selected as Official Partner for World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development 2026

- The **Adani Group** has been selected as the **official partner for World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development (WED) 2026**.
- **World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development** is an international observance recognized by **UNESCO** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and coordinated by the **World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO)**.

Operation Centre (ENOC) using Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning technologies.

- **Waterless robotic cleaning systems** will be used to clean solar panels, helping address **water scarcity in the Kutch region**.
- **World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development** is observed globally on **4 March every year**.
- It was proclaimed by **UNESCO in 2019** to highlight the role of engineering in achieving the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- The **theme of World Engineering Day 2026** is **“Smart engineering for a sustainable future through innovation and digitalization.”**

About UNESCO

- Founded: 16 November 1945, London, United Kingdom
- Headquarters: Paris, France

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- Deputy Director-General: Xing Qu

Kerala Launches ‘MeHEALTH’ Mobile Application to Improve Access to Public Healthcare Services

- The Kerala Health Department launched the MeHEALTH mobile application to help citizens easily access information about public healthcare facilities and services in nearby locations.
- The initiative was announced by Veena George, Health Minister of Kerala.

Sarvam AI Launches ‘Sarvam Startup Program’ to Support Generative AI Startups in India

- Indian generative Artificial Intelligence startup Sarvam AI launched the Sarvam Startup Program to support early-stage startups developing Artificial Intelligence based products in India.
- The programme aims to strengthen the Artificial Intelligence startup ecosystem in India by providing Application Programming Interface (API) credits, advanced Artificial Intelligence tools and direct engineering support.

GI-Tagged Karbi Anglong Ginger from Assam Exported to London for the First Time

- Assam achieved a major milestone in agricultural exports as GI-tagged Karbi Anglong Ginger was exported to London for the first time.
- The export consignment was flagged off by Assam Agriculture Minister Atul Bora at Krishi Bhawan, Khanapara in Guwahati, Assam.
- The shipment consisted of a trial consignment of 1.2 metric tonnes, marking the international debut of Karbi Anglong Ginger from Assam.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah Unveils ‘Pragati’ and ‘Vikas’ Mascots and Digital Tools for Census 2027

- Shri Amit Shah, Union Minister of Home Affairs, soft launched digital tools and unveiled the official mascots ‘Pragati’ and ‘Vikas’ for Census 2027 in New Delhi.
- ‘Pragati’ (female) and ‘Vikas’ (male) have been introduced as the official mascots of Census 2027.
- The mascots symbolize gender equality and equal participation of women and men in national development.

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Lays Foundation Stone for India’s First Riverine Lighthouses on Brahmaputra

- Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), laid the foundation stone for India’s first Riverine Lighthouses on the Brahmaputra River, marking a major step in strengthening inland water navigation infrastructure.

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- The project will establish **four modern Riverine Lighthouses** along **National Waterway 2 (NW-2)** at **Pandu, Bogibeel, Silghat, and Biswanath Ghat**.
- The **Brahmaputra Riverine Lighthouses Project** will be developed with an **investment of ₹84 crore** and aims to ensure **24×7 safe navigation, improve cargo movement, and promote tourism in North-East India**.

Government Suspends Television Rating Points for TV News Channels for Four Weeks

- The **Government of India** directed the **Broadcast Audience Research Council** to **suspend Television Rating Points (TRP) reporting for TV news channels for four weeks**.
- The directive was issued by the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** on **7 March 2026** amid concerns about coverage of the **Israel–Iran conflict in West Asia**.
- The decision aims to **prevent sensational reporting and reduce panic among viewers, particularly those with family or personal connections in conflict-affected regions**.
- Authorities observed that **intense competition for higher TRP ratings was encouraging sensational or exaggerated news coverage** by some television channels.

Punjab Budget 2026–27 Presented with ₹2,60,437 Crore Outlay; Mukh Mantri Mawan Dhiyan Satkar Yojana Announced

- The **Punjab Budget 2026–27** was presented by Finance Minister **Harpal Singh Cheema** in **Punjab** with a **total outlay of ₹2,60,437 crore**.
- The budget introduced a major welfare scheme **Mukh Mantri Mawan Dhiyan Satkar Yojana** aimed at strengthening **financial security for women**.
- Under the scheme, **women will receive ₹1,000 per month, while Dalit women will receive ₹1,500 per month**.
- The scheme is expected to **cover around 97% of women in the state with a total allocation of ₹9,300 crore**.

About Punjab:

- Chief Minister: **Bhagwant Mann**
- Governor: **Gulab Chand Kataria**
- Capital: **Chandigarh**
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: **Abohar Wildlife Sanctuary, Aishvan Wildlife Sanctuary, Bir Bhadson Wildlife Sanctuary, Bir Bunerheri Wildlife Sanctuary, Bir Dosanjh Wildlife Sanctuary**

Karnataka Proposes Social Media Ban for Children Under 16 in Budget 2026

- The Government of **Karnataka** proposed a **ban on social media usage for children below 16 years** in the **Karnataka Budget 2026–27**.

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- The proposal was announced by **Chief Minister Siddaramaiah** with the aim of **protecting children** from harmful online content, digital addiction and excessive screen exposure.
- If implemented, **Karnataka would become the first Indian state to introduce a restriction on social media access for children under 16 years.**
- The government stated that the measure is intended to **reduce the negative effects of excessive mobile and social media usage among children and teenagers.**

About Karnataka:

- Capital: Bengaluru
- Chief Minister: Siddaramaiah
- Governor: Thaawarchand Gehlot
- National Parks: Bandipur National Park, Nagarhole National Park, Kudremukh National Park, Anshi (Kali) National Park, Bannerghatta National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary, Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary, Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, Pushpagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary

Government e-Marketplace Celebrates Seven Years of SWAYATT Initiative to Promote Inclusive Public Procurement

- The **SWAYATT Initiative** on the **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** completed **seven years**, marking a major milestone in promoting **inclusive public procurement in India.**
- The **SWAYATT Initiative (Startups, Women and Youth Advantage Through e-Transactions)** was **launched on 19 February 2019** to support **startups, women entrepreneurs, youth, Self Help Groups (SHGs), and micro and small enterprises** by enabling their participation in **government procurement markets.**
- The initiative aims to **democratize public procurement, improve market access, and create greater business opportunities for emerging enterprises.**

Karnataka Budget 2026–27 Presented with ₹4.48 Trillion Outlay

- The **Karnataka Budget 2026–27** was presented by **Siddaramaiah**, Chief Minister of Karnataka, with a **total outlay of ₹4.48 trillion for Financial Year 2026–27 (FY27).**
- The budget introduced several major policy initiatives including a **proposal to ban social media usage for children below 16 years**, increased spending on **education infrastructure**, expansion of **women welfare programmes**, a **₹2,000 crore electric bus programme**, and new **technology and infrastructure projects.**

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- The total budget size of ₹4.48 trillion represents a 13.3% increase compared with the Financial Year 2025–26 revised estimates.

India Expands Network of Free Trade Agreements with 38 Countries

- India has significantly expanded its Free Trade Agreement (FTA) network over the last decade, reaching **nine FTAs covering 38 countries**, strengthening its global trade presence.
- The expansion began with the **India–Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA)** in 2021.
- This was followed by the **India–United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement** implemented in **May 2022** with the **United Arab Emirates**.
- The **India–Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement** came into force in **December 2022** with **Australia**.

Ministry of Panchayati Raj Launches ‘Say No To Proxy Sarpanch’ Campaign

- The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** launched the “**Say No To Proxy Sarpanch**” campaign on **International Women's Day** to address the issue of proxy leadership in village governance.
- The campaign will run **until 18 March 2026** and aims to raise awareness about the “**Sarpanch Pati**” practice, where male relatives exercise authority on behalf of elected women sarpanches.
- The “**Sarpanch Pati**” practice refers to situations where **husbands or male relatives of elected women leaders control decision-making in Gram Panchayats**, despite women being officially elected.
- These male relatives are often referred to as “**Sarpanch Pati**”, “**Pradhan Pati**” or “**Mukhiya Pati**.”

Maharashtra Celebrates International Women’s Day 2026 with Guinness World Record Lezim Dance

- **Maharashtra** celebrated **International Women's Day 2026** with rallies, marathons, sports events, awareness campaigns and cultural programmes under the theme “**Give to Gain**.”
- Various districts organized activities promoting **women’s empowerment, health awareness and community participation**, including bike rallies, athletics competitions and vaccination drives.
- A major highlight was a **Guinness World Record Lezim dance performance** held in **Dombivli**, where **9,111 women and girls from Dombivli and Kalyan** performed the traditional **Lezim** simultaneously at the **Savalaram Maharaj Sports Complex**.
- The performance **broke the previous record of 7,338 participants**, showcasing collective participation while celebrating Maharashtra’s cultural heritage.

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About Maharashtra:

- Chief Minister: Devendra Fadnavis
- Governor: Jishnu Dev Varma.
- Capital: Mumbai
- National Parks: Tadoba National Park, Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Chandoli National Park, Gugamal National Park, Navegaon National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary, Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary, Karnala Bird Sanctuary, Melghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary

Kerala Introduces Cyber Safety Protocol 2026 for Schools

- The government of **Kerala** has introduced the **Cyber Safety Protocol 2026**, a comprehensive framework aimed at protecting students in the era of **Artificial Intelligence** and digital learning.
- The initiative has been developed by **Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE)**, the technology wing of the **General Education Department of Kerala**, to create a **safe digital learning environment in public schools**.
- The protocol was designed after analysing emerging cyber threats associated with AI and online platforms, including **AI-generated misinformation, deepfakes, digital grooming and cyber fraud**.
- It aims to improve **cybersecurity awareness, digital literacy and responsible online behaviour** among students and teachers while ensuring **protection of student privacy**.

About Kerala:

- Chief Minister: Pinarayi Vijayan
- Governor: Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar
- Capital: Thiruvananthapuram
- National Parks: Eravikulam National Park, Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, Silent Valley National Park, Parambikulam Tiger Reserve
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary

India's First Ring Metro Inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in Delhi

- **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi**, inaugurated **India's first Ring Metro corridor** in **Delhi**, marking a major expansion of the **Delhi Metro**
- The project completes the **Majlis Park–Maujpur-Babarpur section of the Delhi Metro Pink Line**, making it a **fully operational circular (ring) metro route** around the national capital.

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- The newly completed corridor is **about 12.3 km long** and includes **10 stations**: Majlis Park, Burari, Jharoda Majra, Jagatpur–Wazirabad, Soorghat, Nanaksar–Sonia Vihar, Khajuri Khas, Bhajanpura, Yamuna Vihar and Maujpur–Babarpur.

India Notifies Green Ammonia and Green Methanol Standards under National Green Hydrogen Mission

- The **India Government** has officially notified **standards for green ammonia and green methanol** under the **National Green Hydrogen Mission** to accelerate the adoption of **hydrogen-based fuels and support the transition to cleaner energy systems**.
- The new standards define how **green ammonia and green methanol must be produced using renewable energy sources**, ensuring that these fuels meet **strict environmental sustainability criteria**.
- The **National Green Hydrogen Mission** is the **flagship initiative of the Government of India** aimed at making **India a global hub for green hydrogen production, utilisation and export**.

Uttar Pradesh Launches Project GANGA to Expand Rural High-Speed Internet Connectivity

- The **Uttar Pradesh Government** launched **Project GANGA** to provide **high-speed internet connectivity to more than 20 lakh households** over the next **two to three years**.
- The initiative aims to **expand digital connectivity in rural and semi-urban areas**, improve access to online services and create new employment opportunities.
- For the implementation of the project, a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** was signed between the **State Transformation Commission (STC)** and **One OTT Entertainment Limited**, a subsidiary of the **Hinduja Group**.
- The project will focus on improving broadband connectivity in villages, enabling better access to online education, digital platforms and communication services.

About Uttar Pradesh:

- **Chief Minister**: Yogi Adityanath
- **Governor**: Anandiben Patel
- **Capital**: Lucknow
- **National Parks**: Dudhwa National Park
- **Wildlife Sanctuaries**: Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Kaimoor Wildlife Sanctuary, Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary (Shahid Chandra Shekhar Azad Bird Sanctuary), Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary, Sur Sarovar Bird Sanctuary, Chandraprabha Wildlife Sanctuary, Mahavir Swami Wildlife Sanctuary, Ranipur Wildlife

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India Plans to Increase Inter-Regional Power Transmission Capacity to 143 Gigawatts by 2027

- The **India** Government announced that the country's **inter-regional power transmission capacity** will increase to **143 Gigawatts (GW) by 2027** to strengthen electricity flow across regions.
- Currently, India's **inter-regional transmission capacity** stands at **around 120 GW as of December 2025**.
- The expansion is part of efforts to strengthen the **National Power Grid** and support the **rapidly rising electricity demand** across the country.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates 11th Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi

- Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi**, inaugurated the **11th edition of the Raisina Dialogue** in **New Delhi**.
- **Alexander Stubb**, President of **Finland**, attended the inaugural session as the **Chief Guest** and delivered the **keynote address**.
- The **Raisina Dialogue** is India's **flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics**, focusing on major global challenges and international policy issues.
- The **theme of Raisina Dialogue 2026** is **“Saṁskāra – Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement.”**

Indian Railways Launches SHINE App to Report Workplace Sexual Harassment

- **Indian Railways** launched the **SHINE App** on **International Women's Day (8 March 2026)** to strengthen **workplace safety for women employees**.
- **SHINE** stands for **Sexual Harassment Incident Notification for Empowerment**.
- The app enables **women employees to report incidents of sexual harassment confidentially** through the **Human Resources Management System (HRMS)** used by railway staff.
- Through the **Employee Self Service portal**, women employees can **register complaints directly**, which are automatically **forwarded to designated committees responsible for handling such cases**.

Narcotics Control Bureau Dismantles Pan-India Drug Trafficking Network “Team Kalki”

- The **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** dismantled a major **pan-India drug trafficking network** named **“Team Kalki”** that operated through **darknet marketplaces and encrypted messaging platforms**.
- The network had allegedly been **active since January 2025** and distributed **narcotic drugs across India using courier and parcel delivery services**.

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- Acting on intelligence gathered over the **past three months**, the NCB conducted a **targeted operation in New Delhi**, which led to the dismantling of the network.

Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Passes Land Revenue Code Amendment Bill and Stamp Amendment Bill 2026

- The **Maharashtra Legislative Assembly** passed two important bills: the **Maharashtra Land Revenue Code Amendment Bill** and the **Maharashtra Stamp Amendment Bill 2026** to improve **administrative efficiency and better utilisation of government land**.
- The **Maharashtra Land Revenue Code Amendment Bill** allows **municipal corporations and municipal councils to use unused grazing land (gairan land) for public development projects** in urban areas.
- **Gairan land** refers to **government-owned grazing land** that often remains unused within municipal boundaries.

Mizoram Legislative Assembly Passes Resolution to Include Mizo Language in Eighth Schedule of the Constitution

- The **Mizoram Legislative Assembly** unanimously passed a resolution seeking the **inclusion of the Mizo language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India**.
- The resolution was introduced by **Vanlalhlana**, Education Minister of **Mizoram**, and received **support from all members of the Assembly**.
- The initiative aims to secure **official national recognition for the Mizo language and promote its linguistic development**.

About Mizoram:

- Capital: Aizawl
- Chief Minister: Lalduhoma
- Governor: Vijay Kumar Singh
- National Parks: Murlen National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Dampa Wildlife Sanctuary, Ngengpui Wildlife Sanctuary, Tawi Wildlife Sanctuary, Lengteng Wildlife Sanctuary, Thorangtlang Wildlife Sanctuary

India Sends 1,000 Metric Tons of Rice to Malawi as Humanitarian Assistance after El Niño Drought

- **India** has dispatched **1,000 metric tons of rice** to **Malawi** as **humanitarian assistance** to help the country address food shortages caused by a severe drought.
- The shipment was sent from **Nhava Sheva Port** in **Maharashtra**, highlighting India's humanitarian outreach and commitment to food security.

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- Malawi has been facing **serious food insecurity due to prolonged drought conditions linked to the El Niño climate phenomenon.**

Cheetah Population in India Reaches 53 after Birth of Five Cubs at Kuno National Park

- The **cheetah population in India has reached 53** after **Cheetah Jwala**, a Namibian cheetah, gave birth to **five cubs at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.**
- The development was announced by **Bhupender Yadav**, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- The minister described the development as a **major milestone for Project Cheetah India**, which aims to restore the cheetah population in India.
- With the birth of the five cubs, the **number of Indian-born cheetah cubs has increased to 33.**

About Madhya Pradesh:

- Chief Minister: Mohan Yadav
- Governor: Mangubhai Chhaganbhai Patel
- Capital: Bhopal
- National Parks: Kanha National Park, Bandhavgarh National Park, Pench National Park, Panna National Park.
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Bori Wildlife Sanctuary, Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Ken Gharial Sanctuary, Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary.

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs Approves ₹3,630.77 Crore Greenfield Connectivity Corridor to Noida International Airport

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs**, chaired by **Narendra Modi**, approved the **revised total capital cost of ₹3,630.77 crore** for the **Greenfield connectivity corridor to Noida International Airport (Jewar International Airport).**
- The **Greenfield connectivity corridor project will be implemented across Uttar Pradesh and Haryana** under the **Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM).**
- The project involves the **construction of a 31.42 km long corridor** connecting the **Delhi–Faridabad–Ballabgarh–Sohna spur of the Delhi–Mumbai Expressway** to the airport.
- The corridor will provide **direct and faster connectivity for passengers and cargo between the National Capital Region and the new international airport at Jewar**, significantly reducing travel time.

Union Cabinet Approves Extension of Jal Jeevan Mission till 2028 with Revised Outlay

- The **Union Cabinet of India** chaired by **Narendra Modi** approved the **extension of the Jal Jeevan Mission till December 2028** with an enhanced financial outlay.

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- Under the extended framework called **Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0**, the focus will shift from **infrastructure creation to service delivery and sustainable rural drinking water supply**.
- The **revised mission outlay has been increased to ₹8.69 lakh crore** to strengthen water supply infrastructure and service delivery systems across rural India.
- When the Jal Jeevan Mission was launched in **2019**, the **total central assistance was ₹2.08 lakh crore**. With the restructuring, the **central government share has been increased by ₹1.51 lakh crore to ₹3.59 lakh crore**.

Chhattisgarh Cabinet Approves Draft Freedom of Religion Bill 2026

- The **Chhattisgarh State Cabinet** approved the **draft Freedom of Religion Bill 2026** aimed at **preventing illegal religious conversions in the state**.
- The decision was taken during a **Cabinet meeting held in Raipur**, chaired by **Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai**.
- The **Freedom of Religion Bill 2026** seeks to **curb religious conversions carried out through force, inducement, fraud or undue influence**.
- After Cabinet approval, the **bill will be introduced in the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly** for further discussion and approval.

About Chhattisgarh:

- Chief Minister: Vishnu Deo Sai
- Governor: Ramen Deka
- Capital: Raipur
- National Parks: Indravati National Park, Kanger Valley National Park, Guru Ghasidas (Sanjay) National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Achanakmar Wildlife Sanctuary, Badakhhol Wildlife Sanctuary, Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary, Sitanadi Wildlife Sanctuary

Gujarat Launches 'Lake and Air Watch' Initiative to Monitor Urban Air Quality and Lake Health

- The **Gujarat Government** launched the **'Lake and Air Watch' initiative to monitor and improve air quality and lake health in urban areas** across the state.
- The project will be **implemented by the Gujarat Urban Development Mission under the Urban Development and Urban Housing Department**.
- Under the initiative, **air quality monitoring systems will be installed in 17 municipal corporations and 152 municipal areas**.
- These systems will provide **real-time Air Quality Index data**, enabling authorities to monitor **urban air pollution levels continuously**.

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India Becomes Largest Exporter of Cotton Products to the United States in 2025

- India overtook China to become the largest exporter of cotton products to the United States in 2025, according to analysis by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- Cotton products include apparel, garments and home textiles, which form a significant share of global textile trade.
- In 2025, United States imports of cotton products from India reached around 0.6 million tonnes, surpassing China's exports of about 0.5 million tonnes.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Launches Development Projects Worth ₹5,600 Crore in Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for multiple development projects worth about ₹5,600 crore in Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu.
- The projects focus on strengthening clean energy infrastructure, petroleum manufacturing, highways, railways and rural connectivity, aiming to improve energy access, transport connectivity and economic opportunities in the state.
- The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the City Gas Distribution network project of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited in Nilgiris district and Erode district.

Unique Identification Authority of India Launches First Structured Bug Bounty Program to Strengthen Aadhaar Security

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) launched its first structured Bug Bounty Program to strengthen the security of the Aadhaar digital ecosystem.
- The initiative aims to identify potential vulnerabilities in key UIDAI digital platforms with the help of cybersecurity professionals and ethical hackers.
- The program is designed to proactively detect security weaknesses in Aadhaar-related systems before they can be exploited by cyber attackers.
- Under the program, selected cybersecurity experts will test UIDAI systems and responsibly report any vulnerabilities discovered.

NITI Aayog Releases Fiscal Health Index 2026 Assessing Financial Performance of States

- NITI Aayog released the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026, which evaluates the fiscal performance and financial sustainability of Indian states.
- The index classifies states into four categories – Achiever, Performer, Aspirational and Front Runner (for North-Eastern and Himalayan states) based on indicators such as revenue mobilization, expenditure quality, fiscal deficit and debt management.

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- In the **Performer category**, the states include **Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan**.
- These states maintain **relatively balanced fiscal structures**, but still face **moderate fiscal deficits and limited fiscal flexibility**.
- The **Aspirational category** includes **West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab**, which continue to face **significant fiscal pressures**.

New Delhi Deploys India's First Microalgae-Based PureAir Tower to Combat Urban Air Pollution

- **New Delhi** has deployed **India's first microalgae-based PureAir Tower** along the **Aerocity highway corridor** to address **urban air pollution caused by vehicular emissions**.
- The tower has been **installed on a busy road median**, converting conventional road infrastructure into an **active air purification system**.
- The project serves as a pilot initiative to reduce pollution on one of the capital's high-traffic corridors.

Supreme Court Clarifies Criteria for Creamy Layer Exclusion in Other Backward Classes Reservation

- The **Supreme Court of India** clarified that **parental income alone cannot be the sole criterion for determining "creamy layer" status in the Other Backward Classes reservation system**.
- The Court stated that authorities must also consider factors such as the nature of employment, social status and position held by the parents while determining whether a candidate falls under the creamy layer category.
- The judgment aims to **ensure that reservation benefits reach genuinely disadvantaged sections within the Other Backward Classes community**.
- The **"creamy layer"** refers to the **economically and socially advanced members of the Other Backward Classes who are excluded from reservation benefits**.

President Droupadi Murmu Addresses Global Conference on the Role of Women in Agri-Food Systems 2026

- President of **India, Droupadi Murmu**, addressed the **inaugural session of the Global Conference on the Role of Women in Agri-Food Systems 2026** held in **New Delhi**.
- The conference focuses on **strengthening women's participation in agriculture and promoting gender-inclusive development in the agri-food sector**.
- The three-day conference with the theme **'Driving Progress, Attaining New Heights'** will be held at the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Convention Centre** in the national

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capital. Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will also be present on the occasion.

India Plans ₹1 Trillion Semiconductor Fund to Boost Domestic Chip Manufacturing

- India is preparing to launch a **₹1 trillion (about \$11 billion) semiconductor fund** to strengthen **domestic chip manufacturing** and develop a strong semiconductor ecosystem.
- The proposed fund aims to **support semiconductor design, manufacturing equipment and supply chain development** across the semiconductor industry.
- This initiative builds on the **\$10 billion semiconductor incentive programme** launched in **2021** under the **India Semiconductor Mission**.
- The new **₹1 trillion semiconductor fund** will provide **subsidies and financial support for chipmaking projects**, helping India reduce **dependence on imported semiconductor components**.

Prime Minister Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme: 22nd Installment Released to Over 9 Crore Farmers

- The **22nd installment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme** was released by **Shri Narendra Modi** from **Guwahati, Assam**.
- Under this installment, **₹2,000** has been transferred directly to the bank accounts of eligible farmers through the **Direct Benefit Transfer system**.
- The government transferred **more than ₹18,600 crore**, benefiting **over 9 crore farmer families across India**.
- The **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme**, launched in **February 2019**, provides **financial support to farmers for agricultural and household expenses**.

International Rail Coach Expo 2026 Inaugurated at Integral Coach Factory in Chennai

- The **International Rail Coach Expo 2026** was inaugurated at the **Integral Coach Factory** premises in **Chennai**.
- The expo was inaugurated by **Subba Rao**, General Manager of the Integral Coach Factory.
- The event is organised by the **Integral Coach Factory in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry**.
- The exhibition is being held from **March 12 to March 14, 2026**, bringing together **railway manufacturers, technology providers and industry experts from India and other countries**.

V. O. Chidambaranar Port Launches India's First Digital Twin Platform for Port Management

- **V. O. Chidambaranar Port** launched the **Digital Twin initiative**, becoming the **first port in India to adopt this advanced technology for port management**.

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- The platform was **inaugurated**, by **Sarbananda Sonowal**, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- A **Digital Twin** is a **real-time virtual replica of physical infrastructure and operations**, enabling authorities to **monitor, analyse and optimise port activities using real-time data and predictive insights**.
- The platform digitally replicates **port infrastructure, operational assets, vessel movements, cargo operations and the entire maritime ecosystem** of the port.

Andhra Pradesh Launches ‘Araku Kouni’, State’s First Tribal Millet-Based Food Menu

- **N. Chandrababu Naidu**, Chief Minister of **Andhra Pradesh**, launched ‘**Araku Kouni**’, the state’s **first tribal millet-based food menu**, during the **Collectors’ Conference at the State Secretariat**.
- The initiative aims to bring traditional millet-based diets of tribal communities into mainstream food culture and highlight the culinary heritage of tribal **regions in Andhra Pradesh**.
- **Araku Kouni** is a **curated menu of authentic tribal millet recipes** sourced from indigenous communities in **Alluri Sitarama Raju district**.

About Andhra Pradesh:

- Chief Minister: **N. Chandrababu Naidu**
- Governor: **S. Abdul Nazeer**
- Capital: **Amaravati**
- National Parks: **Sri Venkateswara National Park, Papikonda National Park**
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: **Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary, Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary, Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary, Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary**

Supreme Court Allows Withdrawal of Life Support in Harish Rana Passive Euthanasia Case

- The **Supreme Court of India** permitted the **withdrawal of artificial life support in the Harish Rana passive euthanasia case**, marking an important development in the **legal and ethical debate on end-of-life decisions in India**.
- The judgment was delivered by a bench comprising **Justice J. B. Pardiwala** and **Justice K. V. Viswanathan**.
- The Court directed the **All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi**, to **admit Harish Rana and provide the required medical facilities to carry out the process of withdrawing artificial life support** following legal and medical guidelines.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Announces ₹24,000 Crore Development Projects During Assam Visit

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** began a **two-day visit to Assam** and **inaugurated and laid foundation stones for development projects worth more than ₹24,000 crore** aimed at strengthening **infrastructure, energy, transport, and welfare of local communities**.
- **Land ownership certificates** were distributed to **tea garden workers**, benefiting around **3.5 lakh families** living in **825 tea gardens**, giving them **legal ownership rights** over the land where they **reside**, addressing a long-standing issue faced by these communities for nearly two centuries.
- **Tea tribes and Adivasi communities** account for **nearly 20 percent of Assam's population** and influence **voting in about 35 of the 126 assembly constituencies**, making them an important social and political group in the state.

About Assam:

- Chief Minister: Himanta Biswa Sarma
- Governor: Lakshman Prasad Acharya
- Capital: Dispur
- National Parks: Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park, Dibru-Saikhowa National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Orang National Park, Bura-Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary, Nameri Wildlife Sanctuary

Purple Fest 2026 Celebrated at Rashtrapati Bhavan to Honour Divyangjan

- A special celebration called **Purple Fest** was organised at **Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi** to recognise the **talent, achievements, and aspirations of Divyangjan (persons with disabilities)** and promote **inclusion, respect, and awareness about their abilities**.
- Thousands of participants attended the event, which featured **various activities designed to celebrate and empower persons with disabilities**.
- **More than 8,000 Divyangjan** visited **Amrit Udyan**, which was **opened exclusively for them during the day-long celebration**.

Bokaro Steel Plant Receives Bureau of Indian Standards Certification for Four New High Strength Low Alloy Steel Grades

- The **Bokaro Steel Plant**, a unit of the **Steel Authority of India Limited**, received certification from the **Bureau of Indian Standards** for four new steel grades – **ISC 440 LA, ISC 470 LA, ISC 510 LA, and ISC 550 LA**.

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- The approval enables the plant to **expand production of High Strength Low Alloy cold-rolled steel**, strengthening its **range of high-value steel products**.

Chirag Paswan Inaugurates Common Incubation Centre at Tezpur University under Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme

- **Chirag Paswan, Union Minister of Food Processing Industries**, inaugurated a modern **Common Incubation Centre at Tezpur University in Sonitpur district, Assam**.
- The centre has been established with **full financial support from the Ministry of Food Processing Industries under the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PMFME)**.
- The initiative aims to **strengthen food processing innovation, entrepreneurship, and skill development in the North-Eastern region of India**.
- The **Common Incubation Centre is a state-of-the-art facility designed to support micro food processing enterprises by providing technical assistance, training, and infrastructure for product development and testing**.

AMRUT Mitra Mahotsav 2026 Celebrates Women SHGs' Role in Urban Water Services

- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** organised the **AMRUT Mitra Mahotsav 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi** to recognise the contributions of **women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) working as AMRUT Mitras under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 (AMRUT 2.0)**.
- The national-level event witnessed **participation of over 1,000 women and 300 officials from 30 States and Union Territories**.
- **AMRUT Mitras from states including Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, and Karnataka** shared their experiences of **improving urban water services and livelihoods through community participation**.

Government Launches Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0 to Strengthen Rural Drinking Water Supply

- The **Ministry of Jal Shakti** is implementing **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0** to ensure **safe drinking water supply to every rural household in India**.
- The **Union Government has extended the mission till December 2028** with an increased **financial outlay and structural reforms** focusing on **digital transformation, quality infrastructure, community participation, and sustainability**.
- A key meeting on **JJM 2.0 implementation** was chaired by **C. R. Paatil, Union Minister for Jal Shakti**, with participation from **State and Union Territory Ministers of Public Health**

Engineering Department (PHED), Rural Water Supply (RWS), and Panchayati Raj Departments.

Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi Launches Inland Waterway Projects Worth ₹526 Crore in Assam

- Prime Minister of India **shri Narendra Modi**, dedicated an elevated road corridor connecting **Pandu Port to National Highway-27** and laid the foundation for key inland waterway projects in Assam.
- These projects aim to **boost tourism, trade, and employment in Assam** while strengthening the **Brahmaputra River under National Waterway-2** as a major transport and economic corridor.
- A total of **four major projects worth ₹526 crore** have been launched under the **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)**.
- The projects include:
 - **Elevated Road Corridor from Pandu Port to NH-27** with an investment of **₹180 crore**
 - **Cruise Terminal at Biswanath Ghat** (foundation stone laid)
 - **Regional Centre of Excellence at Bogibeel in Dibrugarh** with an investment of **₹188 crore**
 - **Cruise Terminal at Neamati** (foundation stone laid)

Government Initiatives to Prevent Child Marriage in India

- **Child marriage remains a serious social issue in India**, affecting the **rights, health, education, and overall development of children**, particularly **girls**.
- The **Government of India** has introduced **laws, awareness campaigns, and digital platforms** to **prevent child marriage and promote the empowerment of young girls**.
- The main legal framework to prevent child marriage is the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006**, which **prohibits child marriages and prescribes punishment for those who conduct, arrange, or participate in them**.
- The **Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986** also supports **child protection by enabling authorities to act against violations involving children**.

Union Public Service Commission Clarifies Rules for Appointment of State Director General of Police

- The **appointment process for State Director General of Police (DGP)** has been clarified following new directions involving the **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)** and the **Supreme Court of India**.

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- The **UPSC** stated that state governments cannot delay sending the names of eligible **DGP-rank officers** for empanelment without prior approval from the **Supreme Court**.
- This clarification came after concerns that **several states** were violating earlier **Supreme Court guidelines** and delaying the **DGP appointment process**.
- The **Supreme Court** also emphasised that there is no legal concept of an “**acting DGP**” under the existing police reform framework.

Indian-Origin Entrepreneur Surya Midha Becomes Youngest Self-Made Billionaire in 2026

- **Indian-origin entrepreneur Surya Midha** has gained global attention after matching the **youngest self-made billionaire milestone**, which was earlier associated with **Mark Zuckerberg**.
- Surya Midha achieved this milestone at the **age of 22** and was featured in the **Forbes 2026 World’s Billionaires List** with a **personal net worth of \$2.2 billion**.
- He is the **co-founder of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) hiring startup Mercor**, which was founded in **2023** along with **Brendan Foody** and **Adarsh Hiremath**.
- **Surya Midha** was **born in Mountain View, California** and raised in **San Jose, United States**. From a young age, he demonstrated **exceptional academic ability and strong communication skills**.

Government Approves Perpetual Validity for Food Safety and Standards Authority of India Licences to Ease Business Compliance

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has approved **perpetual validity for registrations and licences issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India** to improve the **ease of doing business in India**.
- The reform has been implemented based on recommendations of the **NITI Aayog** to simplify regulatory compliance and reduce administrative burden for food businesses.
- Earlier, **Food Business Operators** had to **periodically renew their Food Safety and Standards Authority of India registrations or licences**, involving documentation, fees, and regulatory procedures.

National Highways Authority of India Revises FASTag Annual Pass Fee from April 1, 2026

- The **National Highways Authority of India** announced a revision in the **FASTag Annual Pass fee for private non-commercial vehicles**.
- The **revised fee will come into effect from April 1, 2026**, as per the official order issued on **March 12, 2026**.

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- Vehicle owners will now pay ₹3,075 for the FASTag Annual Pass, compared to the earlier fee of ₹3,000.
- The FASTag Annual Pass scheme was introduced to simplify toll payments for frequent highway travellers.
- The scheme was officially launched on Independence Day in 2025 to promote digital toll collection across India's national highways.

SATHEE Application Launched by Ministry of Education and Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur for Competitive Exam Preparation

- The SATHEE Application has been developed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur to support students preparing for major competitive examinations.
- The platform is especially designed to support students who cannot afford expensive coaching for competitive examinations.
- SATHEE stands for “Self Assessment Test and Help for Entrance Examinations.”

Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden Opens for Visitors in Srinagar

- The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden in Srinagar, known as Asia's largest tulip garden, was opened to visitors.
- The garden was inaugurated by Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The opening of the garden marks the official beginning of the spring tourism season in Kashmir.
- The garden is located at the foothills of the Zabarwan Range overlooking the Dal Lake.
- Every year, the blooming of tulip flowers transforms the Kashmir Valley into a colourful landscape, attracting tourists from across India and abroad.

About Jammu & Kashmir:

- Chief Minister: Omar Abdullah
- Lieutenant Governor: Manoj Sinha
- Capital: Srinagar (Summer), Jammu (Winter)
- National Parks: Dachigam National Park, Hemis National Park, Kishtwar National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Overa-Aru Wildlife Sanctuary, Gulmarg Wildlife Sanctuary, Nandini Wildlife Sanctuary, Surinsar-Mansar Wildlife Sanctuary

Gujarat Launches Statewide Foot and Mouth Disease Vaccination Drive

- The Gujarat Government launched a statewide vaccination drive against Foot and Mouth Disease to protect livestock and prevent the spread of the disease.

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- The **vaccination campaign began on March 1, 2026 and will continue until April 15, 2026 across the state.**
- **Foot and Mouth Disease is a highly contagious viral infection that mainly affects cloven-hoofed animals, including cattle, buffaloes, sheep, and goats.**
- **Animals infected with the disease often develop fever, mouth ulcers, excessive salivation, and reduced appetite.**

Kusunpur Village in Odisha to Become State's First Smart Village Under Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Initiative

- **Kusunpur village in Kendrapada district of Odisha is set to become the first smart village in the state under an initiative of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research functioning under the Ministry of Science and Technology.**
- **The project aims to transform the village, which has around 130 families and a population of about 700, into a model of sustainable and self-reliant rural development.**
- **The initiative seeks to bring advanced technology and scientific solutions directly to rural communities.**

About Odisha:

- **Chief Minister: Mohan Charan Majhi**
- **Governor: Hari Babu Kambhampati**
- **Capital: Bhubaneswar**
- **National Parks: Simlipal National Park, Bhitarkanika National Park**
- **Wildlife Sanctuaries: Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary, Nandankanan Zoological Park, Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary, Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Kotagarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Lakhari Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, Baisipalli Wildlife Sanctuary**

India's Unemployment Rate Declines to 4.9% in February 2026: Periodic Labour Force Survey

- **India's unemployment rate declined marginally to 4.9 percent in February 2026, according to the National Statistics Office through the Periodic Labour Force Survey.**
- **The unemployment rate in January 2026 was recorded at 5 percent, indicating a slight improvement in the labour market during February 2026.**
- **The overall unemployment rate among persons aged 15 years and above declined to 4.9 percent, reflecting stable employment trends across rural and urban areas.**
- **Urban unemployment rate among persons aged 15 years and above declined to 6.6 percent in February 2026, compared to 6.7 percent in January 2026, indicating a marginal recovery in employment opportunities in urban areas.**

Department of Posts Launches '24 Speed Post' Service for Next-Day Delivery

- The **Department of Posts**, under the **Ministry of Communications**, has launched the '**24 Speed Post**' service to provide **next-day guaranteed delivery for urgent consignments**.
- The service was launched at **Akashvani Bhawan**.
- The **24 Speed Post service is designed for time-sensitive parcels and important documents**, ensuring faster delivery compared to standard postal timelines.
- The service will initially operate in **six major metropolitan cities of India**.
- **Cities covered in the first phase include:**
 - New Delhi
 - Mumbai
 - Chennai
 - Kolkata
 - Bengaluru
 - Hyderabad

India Submits First National Report on Nagoya Protocol to Convention on Biological Diversity

- **India has submitted its first National Report on the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing to the Convention on Biological Diversity.**
- The report was submitted on February 27, 2026 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in collaboration with the National Biodiversity Authority.
- The report highlights India's progress in **implementing global biodiversity agreements between November 1, 2017 and December 31, 2025**.
- The submission has been made under **Article 29 of the Nagoya Protocol**, which requires countries to **monitor** and report progress in implementing Access and Benefit Sharing rules.

APEDA Facilitates First Export of GI-Tagged Joha Rice from Assam to United Kingdom and Italy

- **The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority** under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry facilitated the **first export consignment of 25 metric tonnes of Geographical Indication tagged Joha rice from Assam to the United Kingdom and Italy**.
- The shipment was **dispatched**, in collaboration with the **Department of Agriculture, Government of Assam**.
- Joha rice is an indigenous aromatic rice variety known for its **distinct fragrance and fine grain texture**.

About APEDA

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- Founded: 13 February 1986
- Headquarters: New Delhi, India
- Preceding Statutory body: Processed Food Export Promotion Council (PFEPCC)
- Statutory body executives: Abhishek Dev, IAS, Chairman; Dr. Saswati Bose, General Manager

NMDC Limited Becomes First Mining Company in India to Produce 50 Million Tonnes of Iron Ore in a Financial Year

- **NMDC Limited**, a Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the **Ministry of Steel**, has become the **first mining company in India to produce 50 million tonnes of iron ore in a single financial year (Financial Year 2025–26)**.
- The milestone was achieved **days before the close of the Financial Year 2025–26**, marking a historic achievement for the company.
- Established in **1958**, NMDC Limited was created to **develop and utilise India’s iron ore resources**.

Government Sanctions ₹100 Crore Integrated Aqua Park in Jammu and Kashmir to Boost Cold-Water Fisheries

- **Rajiv Ranjan Singh**, Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Panchayati Raj, announced the sanction of a **₹100 crore Integrated Aqua Park Project in Anantnag district, Jammu and Kashmir**.
- The announcement was made during the **National Conference on Cold Water Fisheries** organised by the **Department of Fisheries, Government of India** at the **Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Centre in Srinagar**.
- During the event, the **“Model Guidelines for the Development of Cold-Water Fisheries”** and **Model Guidelines for Reservoir Fisheries and Aquaculture Management** were also released.

About Jammu & Kashmir:

- Chief Minister: Omar Abdullah
- Lieutenant Governor: Manoj Sinha
- Capital: Srinagar (Summer), Jammu (Winter)
- National Parks: Dachigam National Park, Hemis National Park, Kishtwar National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Overa-Aru Wildlife Sanctuary, Gulmarg Wildlife Sanctuary, Nandini Wildlife Sanctuary, Surinsar-Mansar Wildlife Sanctuary

Supreme Court Removes Age Limit on Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers

- The **Supreme Court of India** has **struck down the age restriction on maternity leave for adoptive mothers**, declaring the provision unconstitutional.

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- The Court ruled that **all adoptive mothers are entitled to 12 weeks of maternity leave, regardless of the age of the adopted child.**
- The judgment was delivered in the case of **Hamsaanandini Nanduri V. Union of India.**
- The Court declared **Section 60(4) of the Code on Social Security, 2020 unconstitutional**, which earlier restricted maternity benefits to adoption of children below three months.
- The ruling held that such restriction **violates Article 14 (Right to Equality) and Article 21 (Right to Life)** of the Constitution.
- The Court emphasized that **motherhood is based on caregiving, bonding and emotional support, not merely childbirth.**

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati Develops MXene-Based Material for Hydrogen Fuel and Desalination

- Researchers at the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati** developed a **MXene-based material** capable of both **hydrogen fuel production** and **seawater desalination**.
- The innovation addresses two major challenges: **clean energy generation** and **safe drinking water**, using **solar-powered technology**.
- The material is based on **MXenes**, a class of **two-dimensional materials** known for **high electrical conductivity**.
- Researchers enhanced performance by creating **ultra-thin ribbon-like structures** and adding **ruthenium atoms**, improving **charge movement and catalytic efficiency**.

India Tourism Development Corporation Tribal Homestay Capacity Building Programme 2026 Launched

- The **India Tourism Development Corporation**, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**, launched the **Tribal Homestay Capacity Building Programme 2026** in **New Delhi**.
- The initiative aims to **promote community-based tourism** and **empower tribal communities** by improving **hospitality skills and service quality**.
- The programme focuses on **skill development and capacity building** of tribal homestay owners to:
 - Enhance hospitality and service standards
 - Improve tourist experience in tribal regions
 - Promote sustainable and community-based tourism
 - Generate employment and income opportunities

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Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA) Scheme Approved by Union Cabinet to Develop 100 Industrial Parks

- The **Union Cabinet** approved the **BHAVYA (Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana) Scheme** to develop **100 plug-and-play industrial parks** across India.
- The scheme will be implemented with a budget of **₹33,600 crore** to **strengthen industrial infrastructure and boost manufacturing growth**.
- It aims to provide **ready-to-use industrial facilities**, reducing **setup time and investment hurdles**.
- Under the scheme, industrial parks will be developed over **100–1,000 acres**, with **financial assistance up to ₹1 crore per acre**.

Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Bill 2026 Passed

- The Bill was passed by **voice vote** and targets conversions through **coercion, fraud, inducement, or marriage**.
- The State Government stated that the law aims to **ensure transparency and protect constitutional rights**, and is **not against any religion**.
- The Bill focuses on ensuring that **religious conversions are voluntary** and free from **illegal influence**, while promoting **legal accountability and freedom of choice**.

Transgender Rights Amendment Bill 2026 Introduced in Parliament

- The **Transgender Rights Amendment Bill 2026** has been introduced in Parliament to amend the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019**, proposing **major changes in recognition of transgender identity** in India.
- The Bill has sparked **widespread debate**, especially due to the proposed removal of **self-identification rights**, a principle established in the **2014 Supreme Court judgment (NALSA v. Union of India)**.
- The existing framework (2019 Act), based on the **NALSA (2014) judgment**, provides:
 - Recognition of **transgender persons as the third gender**
 - **Right to self-identify** as male, female, or third gender
 - Issuance of **transgender identity cards**
 - Access to **government welfare schemes**
- As per official data, over **32,000 transgender identity cards** have been issued in India.

Small Hydro Power Development Scheme Approved by Union Cabinet

- The **Union Cabinet** approved the **Small Hydro Power Development Scheme** for the period **Financial Year 2026–27 to Financial Year 2030–31** with an outlay of **₹2,584.60 crore**.

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- The scheme aims to develop **around 1,500 megawatts of small hydro power capacity** across India.
- Focus is on promoting **clean and renewable energy**, especially in **hilly and North Eastern regions**.
- The scheme supports **decentralised hydropower projects** with capacity ranging from **1 megawatt to 25 megawatt**.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited Launches India's First Liquefied Petroleum Gas Automated Teller Machine in Gurugram, Haryana

- **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited**, under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, launched **India's first Liquefied Petroleum Gas Automated Teller Machine** in **Gurugram, Haryana**.
- The initiative was launched under the **BharatGas Insta Liquefied Petroleum Gas** pilot project to enable **automated round-the-clock Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinder distribution** in urban areas.
- The Liquefied Petroleum Gas Automated Teller Machine ensures **continuous availability of Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders**, especially during **supply disruptions and emergency situations**.

About Haryana:

- Chief Minister: **Nayab Singh Saini**
- Governor: **Ashim Kumar Ghosh**
- Capital: **Chandigarh**
- National Parks: **Sultanpur National Park, Kalesar National Park**
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: **Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary, Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary, Nahar Wildlife Sanctuary**

Lok Sabha Extends JPC Tenure on One Nation One Election Proposal till Monsoon Session 2026

- **The Lok Sabha extended the tenure of the Joint Parliamentary Committee** examining the **One Nation One Election** proposal until the **first day of the last week of the Monsoon Session 2026**.
- The motion for extension was moved by **P. P. Chaudhary** passed through a **voice vote**.

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- The extension allows the committee additional time to examine **constitutional, legal, and logistical challenges** involved in implementing **simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies**.
- It will facilitate **detailed consultations with experts and stakeholders** before finalizing recommendations.

Kalinjar Fort Hill in Banda, Uttar Pradesh Declared National Geo-Heritage Site by Geological Survey of India (GSI)

- The **Kalinjar Fort Hill** in **Banda district, Uttar Pradesh** has been declared a **National Geo-Heritage Site** by the Geological Survey of India.
- The designation recognizes the site's **rare geological formations, historical significance, and tourism potential**.
- The site preserves **billions of years of Earth's geological history**, making it scientifically valuable and globally significant.
- The declaration highlights India's commitment to **protecting rare geological landmarks** and promoting **natural heritage conservation**.
- A **National Geo-Heritage Site** is a location recognized for its **unique geological features and scientific importance**, identified and protected by the **Geological Survey of India** to support **research, conservation, and public awareness of Earth's history**.

RELIEF Scheme 2026 Launched under Export Promotion Mission (EPM) to Support Exporters Amid West Asia Crisis

- **The Government of India** launched the Resilience and Logistic Intervention for Export Promotion (**RELIEF**) **Scheme 2026** on **19 March 2026** under the **Export Promotion Mission (EPM)** to support exporters affected by disruptions in **West Asia**, especially near the **Strait of Hormuz**.
- The scheme aims to protect exporters from **rising freight charges, higher insurance premiums, and logistics delays** due to geopolitical tensions.
- The scheme was introduced following disruptions in maritime trade routes around the **Strait of Hormuz**, which led to **vessel diversions, port congestion, and increased operational risks**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- An **Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG)** was activated on **2 March 2026** to monitor the situation and recommend corrective measures.
- **Financial support under the RELIEF Scheme 2026:**
 - **100% risk coverage** for shipments already insured under **Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India Limited (ECGC)** between **14 February and 15 March 2026**
 - Up to **95% risk coverage** for upcoming exports between **16 March and 15 June 2026**
 - Up to **50% reimbursement** for **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) exporters** without **ECGC** insurance
 - Maximum reimbursement limit of **₹50 lakh per exporter**
- The **Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India Limited (ECGC)** acts as the **nodal implementing agency** responsible for **verification, claim processing, and fund disbursement**.

National Productivity Council (NPC) Designated as Environment Audit Designated Agency (EADA) under Environment Audit Rules, 2025

- The **National Productivity Council (NPC)** signed an agreement with the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** to function as the **Environment Audit Designated Agency (EADA)**.
- The agreement was announced on **20 March 2026** under the **Environment Audit Rules, 2025**.
- The designation assigns **NPC** responsibility for **managing India's environmental audit system**.
- Under the agreement, **NPC** will:
 - Design **eligibility criteria for environmental auditors**
 - Conduct **certification examinations**
 - Maintain a **transparent auditor registration system**
 - Support effective implementation of the **Environment Audit Rules, 2025**

About NPC:

- The **National Productivity Council (NPC)** is an **autonomous organisation** under the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

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- It works in areas of **productivity improvement, sustainability, capacity building, consultancy, and policy support**, with presence across **13 offices in India**.

Telangana Budget 2026: Indiramma Family Life Insurance Scheme and Cashless Health Scheme Announced

- The **Telangana State Budget 2026** was presented by Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka in the State Assembly.
- The government announced major welfare initiatives including the **Indiramma Family Life Insurance Scheme** and a **cashless health scheme**.
- These initiatives aim to provide **financial security and healthcare support** to families and government employees.
- **Indiramma Family Life Insurance Scheme:**
 - To be launched on **2 June 2026**
 - Provides **₹5 lakh insurance coverage per family**
 - Covers around **1.15 crore families** across the state
 - Ensures financial protection in case of **death of the primary earning member**

About Telangana:

- Capital: Hyderabad
- Governor: Shiv Pratap Shukla
- Chief Minister: Anumula Revanth Reddy
- National Parks: Kasu Brahmananda Reddy National Park, Mrugavani National Park, Mahavir Harina Vanasthali National Park
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Kawal Wildlife Sanctuary, Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuary, Manjira Wildlife Sanctuary

New Income-tax Rules 2026 Notified; Effective from 1 April 2026 under Income-tax Act, 2025

- The **New Income-tax Rules 2026** will come into effect from **1 April 2026** as part of reforms under the **Income-tax Act, 2025**.
- The rules aim to **improve transparency, strengthen reporting standards, and modernise tax compliance**, especially for **digital and cross-border businesses**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The new compliance framework introduces **streamlined procedures, uniform reporting systems, and clearer definitions** across taxation areas.
- It ensures **standardised compliance requirements for businesses and taxpayers**.

Tata Steel Limited Inaugurates India's First Scrap-Based Electric Arc Furnace Facility in Ludhiana, Punjab

- **Tata Steel Limited** inaugurated **India's first scrap-based Electric Arc Furnace facility** in **Ludhiana, Punjab**, marking a major step towards **sustainable steel production in India**.
- The project was developed with an investment of **₹3,200 crore (approximately 341.62 million United States dollars)**.
- The facility has a **production capacity of 0.75 million tonnes per annum**.
- It uses **100 percent steel scrap as raw material**, supporting **circular economy practices in the steel sector**.
- The plant is designed to operate with **nearly 50 percent renewable energy**, reducing dependence on **conventional energy sources**.

About Punjab:

- Chief Minister: **Bhagwant Mann**
- Governor: **Gulab Chand Kataria**
- Capital: **Chandigarh**
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: **Abohar Wildlife Sanctuary, Aishvan Wildlife Sanctuary, Bir Bhadson Wildlife Sanctuary, Bir Bunerheri Wildlife Sanctuary, Bir Dosanjh Wildlife Sanctuary**

National District Mineral Foundation Summit 2026 Held in New Delhi

- The **National District Mineral Foundation Summit 2026** was scheduled to be held on **23–24 March 2026** at **SCOPE Convention Centre, New Delhi**.
- The summit was organized by the Ministry of Mines.
- The summit focused on improving the **utilisation of District Mineral Foundation funds in mining-affected regions**.
- The **District Mineral Foundation** is a **statutory body created under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957**.
- District Mineral Foundation funds are financed through **contributions from mining companies**.
- These funds are utilised for the **welfare of people affected by mining-related activities**.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Becomes India's Longest-Serving Elected Head of Government

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- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** became the **longest-serving elected head of government in India**, completing **8,931 days in office** and entering his **25th year in executive leadership**.
- He surpassed Pawan Kumar Chamling, who previously held the record with **8,930 days** in office.
- The milestone combines his tenure as **Chief Minister of Gujarat (from 7 October 2001 to May 2014)** and **Prime Minister of India (since May 2014)**.
- This achievement reflects **continuous leadership at both State and national levels**, making it a rare milestone in Indian politics.
- He served for **more than 13 years as Chief Minister of Gujarat**, becoming the **longest-serving Chief Minister of the State**.

Long-Serving Global Leaders (Elected/De facto):

Leader	Country	Position	Years in Power
Lee Kuan Yew	Singapore	Prime Minister	31 years (1959–1990)
Hun Sen	Cambodia	Prime Minister	38 years (1985–2023)
Narendra Modi	India	Prime Minister (also former Chief Minister)	Nearly 25 years
Sheikh Hasina	Bangladesh	Prime Minister	17+ years (recent consecutive terms)
Angela Merkel	Germany	Chancellor	16 years (2005–2021)

Chandigarh University Uttar Pradesh Launches Centre of Excellence in Smart Healthcare

- **Chandigarh University, Uttar Pradesh, India's first private Artificial Intelligence-augmented multidisciplinary university**, launched a **Centre of Excellence in Smart Healthcare**.
- The initiative aims to **strengthen the state's vision of Artificial Intelligence-driven healthcare and governance**.
- The **Centre of Excellence** is headed by **Thipendra P. Singh**, Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Pro Vice Chancellor.
- The initiative is supported by **Aseem Arun**, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Department of Social Welfare, Uttar Pradesh.

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- The infrastructure is powered by **advanced Graphics Processing Unit systems with 168 Gigabyte memory**, based on **NVIDIA Blackwell architecture**, enabling **high-end research and Artificial Intelligence model development**.

Central Electricity Authority Releases National Generation Adequacy Plan 2026–27 to 2035–36

- The **Central Electricity Authority** under the Ministry of Power released the **midterm review of the 20th Electric Power Survey** titled “**National Generation Adequacy Plan (2026–27 to 2035–36)**”.
- The report was released during the **Bharat Electricity Summit 2026** held at **Yashobhoomi, New Delhi**.
- India’s **installed power generation capacity** is projected to increase from around **520 Gigawatt (as of 31 January 2026)** to **1,121 Gigawatt by 2035–36**.

Department of Telecommunications Launches 5G Innovation Hackathon 2026 under 100 5G Use Case Laboratories Programme

- The **Department of Telecommunications** under the Ministry of Communications launched the **5G Innovation Hackathon 2026**, the **second edition** of its flagship initiative under the **100 5G Use Case Laboratories Programme**.
- The hackathon **aims to promote indigenous and scalable solutions** using **5G (Fifth Generation)**, **Artificial Intelligence** and **Internet of Things technologies**.
- The competition is open to **students, start-ups, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and independent innovators across India**.
- The hackathon is being conducted from **20 March 2026 to 17 April 2026**, with **final results to be announced on 1 October 2026**.

National Biodiversity Authority Constitutes Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species

- The **National Biodiversity Authority**, a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, constituted a **multi-disciplinary Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species** under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002 (amended in 2023)**.
- The committee has been formed to address **rising ecological and socio-economic threats to biodiversity and food security in India** caused by **Invasive Alien Species**.
- The decision followed proceedings by the National Green Tribunal, which highlighted the **serious threats posed by Invasive Alien Species to biodiversity, ecosystems, agriculture, food security and public health**.

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About NBA

- The National Biodiversity Authority is a statutory autonomous body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India established in 2003 to implement the provisions under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, after India signed Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992.

Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 Proposed to Retain Indian Police Service Leadership in CAPFs

- The Government of India is set to introduce the **Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026** to formalise the **administrative control and leadership structure in Central Armed Police Forces**.
- The Bill proposes to **retain the leadership role of Indian Police Service officers** in senior positions of Central Armed Police Forces, reversing earlier efforts aimed at reducing their deputation.
- The proposal has triggered debate regarding **control, promotions, and career growth opportunities of cadre officers within Central Armed Police Forces**.

Delhi Budget 2026–27 Presented with Green Development Focus and Outlay of ₹1.03 Trillion

- **Rekha Gupta**, Chief Minister of **Delhi**, presented the **Delhi Budget 2026–27** with a total outlay of **₹1,03,700 crore (₹1.03 trillion)**.
- The Budget reflects a **3.7% increase compared to the previous financial year** and has been described as a **“Green Budget”** with strong emphasis on **environmental sustainability, education, healthcare, infrastructure, and civic services**.
- About **21% of the total Budget allocation** has been earmarked for **green initiatives** to address **air pollution and environmental challenges**, especially during winter months.

About Delhi:

- Chief Minister: Rekha Gupta
- Lieutenant Governor: Vinai Kumar Saxena
- Capital: New Delhi
- Wildlife Sanctuaries: Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary, Yamuna Biodiversity Park, Aravalli Biodiversity Park

Gujarat Becomes Second State After Uttarakhand to Pass Uniform Civil Code Bill 2026

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- The Government of Gujarat passed the **Uniform Civil Code Bill, 2026** in the State Assembly, becoming the **second state after Uttarakhand (2024)** to pass a **Uniform Civil Code law**.
- The Bill was tabled by **Bhupendra Patel**, Chief Minister of Gujarat.
- The legislation proposes a **common legal framework governing marriage, divorce, succession, inheritance, and live-in relationships across all religions** to ensure **equality before law**.
- The **Uniform Civil Code Bill, 2026** aims to replace **religion-based personal laws** with a **uniform legal structure for civil matters** such as **marriage, divorce, inheritance, and succession**.

About Gujarat:

- **Chief Minister:** Bhupendra Patel
- **Governor:** Acharya Devvrat
- **Capital:** Gandhinagar
- **National Parks:** Gir National Park, Blackbuck National Park, Vansda National Park, Marine National Park
- **Wildlife Sanctuaries:** Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary, Velavadar Blackbuck Sanctuary, Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary, Barda Wildlife Sanctuary, Purna Wildlife Sanctuary

Government of India Constitutes Seven Empowered Committees to Address Impact of West Asia Crisis

- The Government of India constituted **seven empowered committees** to manage the **economic, energy, trade, logistics, inflation, and national security impact** arising from the escalating **West Asia crisis**.
- The committees will function under the direction of **Narendra Modi** with participation of **senior officials from key ministries**, reflecting a **coordinated multi-sectoral preparedness strategy**.
- The move aims to address possible disruptions in **oil supplies, shipping routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, trade flows, supply chains, and inflation**, given India's dependence on **energy imports**.

Indian Railways Revises Ticket Cancellation and Refund Policy 2026

- **Ashwini Vaishnaw**, Union Minister for Railways, introduced **major reforms in the ticket cancellation and refund policy of Indian Railways**.

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- Under the revised rules, **no refund will be provided if tickets are cancelled within 8 hours before train departure**, replacing the earlier **4-hour rule**.
- The revised policy will be implemented between **1 April and 15 April 2026**.
- The reforms aim to **curb misuse of tickets, prevent black marketing, improve seat utilisation, and ensure fair access to tickets during peak seasons**.

GHADC Makes Scheduled Tribe Certificate Mandatory to Contest Council Elections in Meghalaya

- The **Garo Hills Autonomous District Council** in Meghalaya passed an amendment making a **Scheduled Tribe certificate mandatory** to contest its elections.
- The development was announced on **24 March 2026** by **Conrad Sangma**.
- The amendment aims to **reinforce the tribal character of the council** by restricting eligibility to **members of recognised Scheduled Tribes of Meghalaya**.
- As per the amendment, **non-tribal residents, even if permanent residents of the region, are no longer eligible to contest council elections**.

NITI Aayog Sanctions ₹1.55 Crore to Rural Innovations Incubation Skilling and Entrepreneurship Centre in Andhra Pradesh to Promote Rural Women Entrepreneurship

- The **NITI Aayog** sanctioned **₹1.55 crore** for the **Rural Innovations Incubation Skilling and Entrepreneurship (RISE) Centre** located at **Guntupalli** in **NTR District**.
- The announcement was made by **Dr. G. Lakshmitha**.
- The funding followed a **detailed proposal submitted by the district administration** to promote **rural women entrepreneurship**.
- The initiative aligns with the **State Government's vision of "One Family–One Entrepreneur"**.

About NITI Aayog

- NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) is the premier policy think tank of the Government of India, established on January 1, 2015, to replace the Planning Commission. It promotes cooperative federalism through bottom-up planning, providing strategic, technical advice, and fostering innovation to achieve sustainable development goals.
- NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery and CEO Nidhi Chhibber

Government Revamps PM Internship Scheme 2026: Expands Scope, Eases Eligibility & Increases Stipend

- The Government revamped the **PM Internship Scheme** in **March 2026** to improve **participation and outcomes**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The updated scheme includes **new-age sectors such as semiconductors, renewable energy and Global Capability Centres (GCCs)**.
- The reforms aim to address **low participation and high drop-out rates**, making the scheme **more inclusive and accessible**.

Lok Sabha Passes Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026

- The Lok Sabha passed the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026**.
- The Bill **redefines the term “transgender”** by **excluding sexual orientation and self-perceived gender identity** from its scope.
- The amendment aims to bring clarity in implementation of welfare schemes, but it has triggered debate on identity rights, legal recognition and inclusivity.
- The amended definition focuses on **traditionally and socially recognised transgender communities**, including:
 - **Hijras**
 - **Kinnars**
 - **Aravanis**
 - **Jogtas**
 - **Persons with intersex variations**

India’s Sports Economy Crosses \$2 Billion Mark in 2025: Reaches ₹18,864 Crore

- India’s **sports economy crossed the \$2 billion mark in 2025**, reaching **₹18,864 crore (\$2.13 billion)**.
- According to the **WPP Media** report titled **“Sporting Nation: Building a Legacy”**, the growth reflects **rapid commercialization, rising investments, expanding media rights and increasing fan engagement**.
- The sector recorded a **13.4% year-on-year growth** compared to **₹16,633 crore in 2024**.
- Growth trend in India’s sports economy:
 - **2023: ₹15,766 crore**
 - **2024: ₹16,633 crore**
 - **2025: ₹18,864 crore**

Supreme Court Rules SC Status Lost After Conversion to Christianity; Reaffirms Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950

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- The **Supreme Court of India** ruled in **March 2026** that **Scheduled Caste (SC) status is limited to persons professing Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism.**
- The Court clarified that **conversion to Christianity results in immediate loss of SC status, irrespective of birth background.**
- The judgment **upheld an earlier decision of the Andhra Pradesh High Court.**
- The ruling reinforced the **constitutional framework governing caste-based reservations and protections.**
- A Bench comprising **Justice P. K. Mishra and Justice Manmohan** held that a person **ceases to be a Scheduled Caste member after conversion to Christianity and active practice of the new religion.**

Gujarat Digitises 20 Citizen Services under Sugam Digital Gujarat Initiative (Faceless, Cashless, Paperless Governance)

- The **Government of Gujarat** digitised **20 high-demand citizen services** under the **Sugam Digital Gujarat Initiative** to promote **faceless, cashless and paperless governance.**
- The initiative was **announced on 23rd March 2026** and enables **end-to-end online service delivery** through the **Digital Gujarat Portal.**
- It uses technologies such as **Aadhaar authentication, DigiLocker, eSign, and UPI** to improve **transparency and ease of access.**

Union Cabinet Approves India's Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for 2031–2035

- The **Union Cabinet**, under the leadership of **Shri Narendra Modi**, approved **India's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for 2031–2035.**
- The updated targets will be submitted to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.**
- The revised NDC supports India's long-term goal of achieving **Net Zero emissions by 2070.**
- The updated targets focus on three major pillars:
 - **Emission reduction**
 - **Clean energy transition**
 - **Carbon sequestration**
- **Key Targets for 2031–2035**
 - **47% reduction in emissions intensity of GDP**

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- **60% installed power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources**
- Creation of an additional **3.5–4 billion tonnes carbon sink** through forests and tree cover.

Prime Minister Modi to Inaugurate Noida International Airport Phase I, Boost NCR Connectivity

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate **Phase I** of the **Noida International Airport** on **March 28**, marking a major milestone in India's **aviation** and **infrastructure development**.
- During the visit, he will **tour the terminal, formally inaugurate, and address a public gathering**.
- Developed at a cost of **₹11,200 crore**, the airport is one of India's largest **greenfield airport projects**.

Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 introduced in Lok Sabha by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry

- The Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, **Jitin Prasada**, introduced the **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026** in the Lok Sabha after receiving approval from the Union Cabinet.
- The Bill represents a significant step toward improving **Ease of Doing Business** and **Ease of Living**, while promoting a governance model based on trust and proportionate regulation.
- It proposes amendments to **784 provisions across 79 Central Acts**, administered by 23 Ministries.
- The Bill also proposes **67 amendments under the New Delhi Municipal Council Act, 1994 and the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988**, focusing on simplifying procedures and improving citizen convenience in areas such as municipal taxation and vehicle compliance.

Government Directs Over ₹1.77 Lakh Crore Toward Fertilizer Subsidies in 2024-25

- The Department of Fertilizers highlighted the successful implementation of the **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system**, along with the Government's continued financial commitment to keeping agricultural inputs affordable for farmers.
- In the financial year 2024–25, the Government allocated and utilized **₹1,77,129.50 crore** for fertilizer subsidies.
- This ensured that fertilizers were available to farmers at subsidized rates without any denial.

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- The subsidy expenditure shows a declining trend from **₹1,95,420.51 crore in 2023–24** and **₹2,54,798.93 crore in 2022–23**, indicating a strategic rationalization while maintaining supply security.

Government Notifies TV Rating Policy (TRP) 2026 to Strengthen Transparency, Accountability and Credibility of Television Audience Measurement in India

- The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting released the **TV Ratings Policy 2026**, introducing comprehensive guidelines to regulate television audience measurement in India.
- The policy establishes clear standards for the **registration, functioning, audit, and oversight** of TV rating agencies, with the objective of ensuring **transparency, independence, and accountability**.

Adani Ports Operationalises India's First Port of Refuge to Strengthen Maritime Emergency Response Framework

- **Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited** operationalised India's first **Port of Refuge (PoR)**, marking a major step towards strengthening **India's maritime security and emergency response infrastructure**.
- The initiative establishes a **structured mechanism to assist ships in distress**, addressing a long-standing gap in India's maritime **safety framework**.

Government Extends PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement Scheme till 2028; Incentives for Electric Two-Wheelers Available Only till July 2026

- The **Government of India** has extended the **PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE Scheme)** till **31st March 2028**, with a **financial outlay of ₹10,900 crore**, to support the growth of **India's electric vehicle (EV) ecosystem**.
- The announcement was made by the Ministry of Heavy Industries.
- The extension reflects a **policy shift prioritising electric three-wheelers such as e-rickshaws and commercial vehicles**, while limiting incentives for **electric two-wheelers**.

India Reported 24,700 Maternal Deaths in 2023; Lancet Study Estimates Maternal Mortality Ratio at 116 per 1 Lakh Live Births

- **India** reported **24,700 maternal deaths in 2023**, placing it among the countries with the **highest maternal mortality burden globally**, according to a global analysis **published in The Lancet**.
- The study, led by researchers from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, estimated India's **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** at **116 per 1 lakh live births**.

Supreme Court Panel Urges Centre to Withdraw Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill 2026

- A panel appointed by the Supreme Court of India has urged the Union Government to withdraw the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, raising serious concerns over its impact on transgender rights.
- The recommendation was submitted to the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Virendra Kumar, on the same day the Lok Sabha passed the Bill, intensifying the debate.
- The advisory committee was chaired by former judge Asha Menon, who highlighted that the proposed amendments could roll back existing protections for transgender persons.
- The committee was constituted in October 2025 by the Supreme Court of India while hearing a case involving a transgender woman dismissed from teaching jobs in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat due to her gender identity.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Attend G7 Summit 2026 in France from June 15–17

- The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi, will attend the G7 Summit 2026, scheduled to be held from 15th to 17th June 2026 in France.
- The summit will take place at Evian-les-Bains, bringing together leaders of major advanced economies along with invited partner countries.
- India's participation was confirmed through an official communication by the French Foreign Ministry following diplomatic discussions involving the External Affairs Minister of India, S. Jaishankar.
- The Group of Seven is an informal bloc of leading industrialised economies, comprising: United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada along with the European Union.

Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad Launches Krishnamurthy Tandon School of Artificial Intelligence with ₹100 Crore Endowment

- The Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad launched the Krishnamurthy Tandon School of Artificial Intelligence marking a major boost to India's education and technology ecosystem.
- The initiative is supported by a ₹100 crore endowment from Chandrika Krishnamurthy Tandon and Ranjan Tandon.

- The new school aims to **bridge the gap between rapid advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and their practical applications across sectors.**

India's First Hydrogen-Powered Trainset Successfully Completes Oscillation Trials

- **India's first hydrogen-powered trainset** successfully completed **oscillation trials**, marking a major milestone in **sustainable transportation** and **clean energy adoption by Indian Railways.**
- The development was confirmed by the **Union Minister of Railways**, Ashwini Vaishnaw.
- The oscillation trial was conducted by the Research Designs and Standards Organisation, which plays a key role in **safety and performance validation** of railway systems.
- With this achievement, **India** is set to join the select group of countries such as Germany, Japan and China that operate **hydrogen-powered trains.**

Rajasthan Launches Industrial Park Promotion Policy 2026 to Boost Investment and Employment

- The **Rajasthan Government** has launched the **Industrial Park Promotion Policy 2026** under the leadership of Bhajanlal Sharma to **attract investments, generate employment and develop world-class industrial parks.**
- The policy aims to **position Rajasthan** as a **future-ready industrial destination** and aligns with national initiatives like Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- The policy provides a **structured and flexible framework** for industrial development with participation from both **public and private sectors.**

Great Indian Bustard Chick Hatched in Wild in Gujarat After Nearly a Decade

- A **Great Indian Bustard chick** was successfully hatched in the wild in **Gujarat** after nearly a **decade**, marking a major milestone in wildlife conservation.
- The chick hatched in the **grasslands of Kutch**, offering renewed hope for the survival of one of India's most **critically endangered bird species**, the Great Indian Bustard.
- The Great Indian Bustard is among the **heaviest flying birds in the world** and is native to the **grasslands of India**, especially in Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- It is listed as **Critically Endangered** by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Indian Railways Imposes ₹10 Lakh Fine on Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Over Food Quality Complaint on Patna–Tatanagar Vande Bharat Express

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- **Indian Railways** imposed a **₹10 lakh penalty** on Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation following a **food quality complaint** on the **Patna– Tatanagar Vande Bharat Express**.
- The incident was reported on **Train No. 21896**, where a passenger raised concerns regarding **poor onboard food quality**.
- After investigation, authorities identified **deficiencies in service standards**, leading to strict action.

Amrit Bharat Station Scheme to Redevelop 1,338 Railway Stations Across India

- The **Amrit Bharat Station Scheme** has been launched by the **Government of India** to **modernise railway infrastructure** and improve **passenger amenities across railway stations**.
- The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Railways and aims to **redevelop 1,338 railway stations** across the country with **modern facilities, improved connectivity and enhanced passenger experience**.
- Indian Railways continues to strengthen passenger connectivity and undertake large-scale infrastructure modernisation across the country, with focused interventions **in Maharashtra, Goa and the Konkan region**.

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) Scheme Provides ₹3,000 Monthly Pension to Unorganised Workers

- The **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM)** is a **voluntary pension scheme** launched in **2019** by the **Government of India** to provide **social security to unorganised sector workers**.
- Under the scheme, eligible workers receive a **minimum assured monthly pension of ₹3,000 after attaining 60 years of age**.
- The scheme is applicable to workers **not covered under EPFO, ESIC or NPS**, ensuring **financial security during old age**.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS**Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi Visits Israel on Invitation of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Strengthen Bilateral Ties**

- The **Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi**, visited **Israel** at the invitation of **Benjamin Netanyahu**, accompanied by a **high-level ministerial and official delegation (26–27 February 2026)**.
- During the visit, **PM Modi** visited the **Yad Vashem** in **Jerusalem**, where he paid tribute to **Holocaust victims** by laying a wreath and placing a **commemorative stone**.
- **PM Narendra Modi** became the **first Indian Prime Minister** to address the **Israeli Parliament (Knesset)**, highlighting strong **India–Israel diplomatic relations**.

About Israel :

- President : Isaac Herzog
- Prime Minister : Benjamin Netanyahu
- Capital : Jerusalem
- Currency : New shekel

India and European Union to Exchange Most Favoured Nation Status for 5 Years

- The **Government of India** and the **European Union** agreed to grant **Most Favoured Nation (MFN)** status to each other for a period of **five years** starting from the date the **India–EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** comes into force.
- The **MFN provision** will remain valid for **five years** from the FTA's entry into force, subject to a **fourth-year Joint Committee review**, and will be **automatically terminated** unless mutually extended by both parties.
- The **MFN status** excludes benefits arising from **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAA)**, **recognition and licensing measures** under **General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)** rules, and **sensitive agricultural products** such as **soya, beef, sugar, rice, and dairy products**.

Iran–United States–Israel Conflict Disrupts Oil and Gas Flow Through Strait of Hormuz

- The **Strait of Hormuz** is a **strategic maritime chokepoint** carrying about **one-fifth of global oil and LNG trade**, and is currently facing **disruption** due to **geopolitical tensions** involving **Iran, the United States, and Israel**.
- Even without a **formal blockade**, **shipping companies** and **insurance firms** have **suspended operations**, leaving hundreds of **oil tankers anchored**, creating **volatility** and **uncertainty** in **global energy markets**.

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- India is highly dependent on this route, with about **50% of its crude oil imports (5–2.7 million barrels per day)** and around **60% of its LNG imports** passing through the **Strait of Hormuz**, highlighting India's **energy security vulnerability**.

Scotland Becomes First United Kingdom Nation to Legalise Water Cremation

- **Scotland** has become the **first nation in the United Kingdom** to legalise **water cremation (Alkaline Hydrolysis)**, marking the **biggest funeral law reform since 1902** when traditional cremation was introduced.
- The reform was approved by the **Scottish Parliament** due to growing demand for **environmentally sustainable funeral practices** and green end-of-life options.
- **Water cremation (Alkaline Hydrolysis)** is considered a **green alternative** to flame cremation and burial, as it reduces **carbon emissions** and environmental pollution.
- In the process, the body is placed in a **sealed chamber** containing **water + potassium hydroxide** (alkaline solution) and heated to about **150°C** for approximately **90 minutes**.

About Scotland :

- Capital : Edinburgh
- Currency : Pound sterling

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's India Visit Overview (Feb 27 – Mar 2, 2026)

- **Mark Carney**, the **Prime Minister of Canada**, visited **India** from **27 February to 2 March 2026** at the invitation of **Narendra Modi**.
- This was his first official visit to India since 2018.
- The visit aimed to strengthen **bilateral cooperation** between India and Canada in areas such as **trade, energy security, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) cooperation**.
- On **27 February 2026**, **PM Mark Carney** arrived in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**, to promote **economic and strategic partnership** between the two countries.

About Canada :

- Capital : Ottawa
- Currency : Canadian dollar

India–Finland Sign Mobility and Migration Pact During Finnish President's India Visit

- **India and Finland** signed a **Mobility and Migration Partnership Agreement** during the visit of **Alexander Stubb**, President of Finland, to India.
- The agreement aims to facilitate the **mobility of professionals, students, researchers, entrepreneurs, and academics** between India and Finland, strengthening **human resource exchange** and **skill collaboration**.

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- Both countries set a target to **double bilateral trade to USD 2.6 billion by 2030**, supported by progress in **India–EU Free Trade Agreement**
- **India and Finland** will co-host the **2026 World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF)** in India in collaboration with **Sitra** and the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.

United Nations Report Says Women Have Only 64% of Legal Rights Compared to Men Globally

- The **United Nations (UN)** released a report titled “**Ensuring and Strengthening Access to Justice for All Women and Girls**”, highlighting global **gender inequality** in legal rights.
- The report revealed that women globally hold only **64% of the legal rights of men** in nearly **70% of surveyed countries**, leading to **systemic discrimination** and **social exclusion**.
- In **54% of countries**, **rape** is not legally defined based on **consent**, weakening legal protection for women against **sexual violence**.

World Health Organization Confirms Chile as First Country in the Americas to Eliminate Leprosy

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)**, in collaboration with the **Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)**, verified that **Chile** has **eliminated leprosy** as a public health problem.
- This makes **Chile** the **1st country in the Americas** and the **2nd country globally** (after **Jordan**) to achieve this public health milestone.
- **Chile** becomes the **61st country globally** and the **6th country in the Americas** to eliminate at least one **Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD)** under global disease control efforts.

About Chile :

- President : Gabriel Boric
- Capital : Santiago
- Currency : Chilean peso

Mobile World Congress 2026 Concludes in Barcelona, Showcasing Global Telecom and Tech Innovations

- The **Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2026**, the world’s largest mobile and technology event, was held from **March 2–5, 2026** at **Fira Barcelona Gran Via, Barcelona, Spain**.
- **MWC 2026** brought together **global telecom leaders, technology companies, and policymakers**.
- The theme of **MWC 2026** was “**The IQ Era**”, highlighting the integration of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** with **advanced connectivity** to enable **smarter networks, digital innovation, and societal transformation**.

About Spain :

- Prime Minister : Pedro Sánchez

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- Capital : Madrid
- Currency : Euro

World Health Organization Certifies Denmark as First European Union Country to Eliminate Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV and Syphilis

- Denmark has been certified by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** as the **first country in the European Union** to achieve **elimination of mother-to-child transmission (EMTCT)** of **HIV and syphilis**.
- Denmark successfully met all required targets from **2021 to 2024**, including maintaining **very low transmission rates** and **high coverage** of **prenatal testing** and treatment for pregnant women.
- With this achievement, **Denmark** joins **22 other countries and territories** validated by **WHO** for eliminating or progressing toward elimination of mother-to-child transmission of **HIV, syphilis, or hepatitis B**.

About Denmark :

- Prime Minister : Mette Frederiksen
- Capital : Copenhagen
- Currency : Danish krone

Romania Confirms Ratification of the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement

- **Sena Latif, Ambassador of Romania**, submitted the **Instrument of Ratification** to **P. S.Gangadhar, Joint Secretary and Head of Depository** at the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)**, confirming **Romania's ratification** of the **Framework Agreement** of the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.
- In **December 2023**, the **ISA** announced that **Romania** signed the **Framework Agreement**, making it the **118th member country** of the alliance.
- The **ratification** was completed after **Romania** deposited its **Instrument of Ratification**, officially becoming a **member of the ISA**.

About Romania :

- **President : Nicușor Dan**
- **Prime Minister : Ilie Bolojan**
- **Capital : Bucharest**
- **Currency : Romanian leu**

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Summary of Finland President Alexander Stubb's India Visit (4–7 March 2026)

- **Alexander Stubb, President of Finland**, paid a **four-day State Visit** to India from **4–7 March 2026** at the invitation of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, accompanied by a high-level delegation.
- The visit aimed to strengthen cooperation in **digitalisation, sustainability, innovation, and trade**, and elevated bilateral ties to a **Strategic Partnership for Digitalisation and Sustainability**.
- This visit marked **Alexander Stubb's first visit** to India in his current capacity as **President of Finland**.

About Finland :

- President : Alexander Stubb
- Prime Minister : Petteri Orpo
- Capital : Helsinki
- Currency : Euro

India, Uzbekistan Launch Pharma-Nutraceutical Corridor to Access USD 7–10 Billion CIS and Eurasian Healthcare Market

- **India and Uzbekistan** jointly launched a **structured pharmaceutical and nutraceutical corridor** to expand access to the **CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States)** and the wider **Eurasian healthcare market**, valued at **USD 7–10 billion**.
- The **trade corridor** was formalised through a **partnership** between the **Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan, Nutrify Today** (Bengaluru-based nutraceutical platform), and **Pharma Eurasia** (Tashkent-based trade and exhibition platform).
- The **Indo–CIS Pharma-Nutraceutical Corridor** serves as a **policy-backed platform** to promote **regulatory alignment, trade facilitation, investment, and commercial engagement** between **India and the CIS/Eurasian region**.

About Uzbekistan :

- President : Shavkat Mirziyoyev
- Prime Minister : Abdulla Aripov
- Capital : Tashkent
- Currency : Uzbek sum

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India Retains Position as Second-Largest Global Arms Importer in Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2025 Report

- The **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)** released the report titled ‘**Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2025**’.
- During **2021–2025**, **India** remained the **second-largest arms importer**, accounting for **8.2% of global arms imports**, after **Ukraine**.
- **Ukraine** was the **largest global arms importer**, receiving **9.7% of total international arms transfers**.
- **Saudi Arabia** ranked **third**, with **6.8% of global arms imports**.

United States President Donald Trump Unveils \$300 Billion Reliance Partnership to Construct First New U.S. Refinery in Nearly 50 Years

- **Donald Trump, President of the United States**, announced the construction of the **first new major oil refinery** in nearly **50 years** with investment from **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)** led by **Mukesh Ambani**.
- The refinery will be developed at the **Port of Brownsville in Texas**, marking the **first major refinery** built in the **U.S. since 1977**.
- The **last refinery** of similar scale in the country was established by **Marathon Petroleum Corporation** at **Garyville in 1977**.

Brazil Implements Stricter Social Media Regulations for Users Under 16

- **Brazil** has begun enforcing a **new law** regulating **minors’ access to social media and online platforms**, marking a **significant step in global efforts** to safeguard children in the **digital space**.
- The **law** came into effect in **2026**, following its **approval in 2025** after a **major scandal** involving alleged **sexual exploitation** of minors on **Instagram**.
- **Brazil** has a **population** of over **212 million** with **high internet penetration**, raising concerns about the **psychological and social impact** of **online platforms** on **adolescents**.

About Brazil :

- President : Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva
- Capital : Brasília
- Currency : Real

Argentina Officially Withdraws from World Health Organization

- **Argentina** has officially **withdrawn** from the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, effective **one year** after **formal notification**.

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- The **withdrawal** was initially announced in **February 2025** under **President Javier Milei**.
- **Foreign Minister Pablo Quirno** confirmed the **formal exit**.
- The **decision** was motivated by “**profound differences**” with the **WHO** during the **COVID-19 pandemic**, with **Milei** calling the agency “**nefarious**” and an “**enforcement arm**” of **social control**.

About WHO :

- **Founded: 7 April 1948**
- **Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland**
- **Director-General: Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.**

About Argentina :

- **President : Javier Milei**
- **Capital : Buenos Aires**
- **Currency : Argentine peso (\$)**

India and Italy Hold 9th Foreign Office Consultations in New Delhi to Boost Strategic Partnership

- The **9th India–Italy Foreign Office Consultations (FOC)** were held in **New Delhi** on **20 March 2026** to review **bilateral relations** and discuss regional and global issues.
- The **Indian delegation** was led by **Shri Sibi George**, Secretary (West), **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)**, and the **Italian delegation** by **Ambassador Nicoletta Bombardiere**, Director General at Italy’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.
- The consultations were held in the backdrop of **high-level engagements**, including meetings between **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **Italian PM Giorgia Meloni** at the **G20 Summit 2025 (Johannesburg)**, and between **Dr. S. Jaishankar** and **Antonio Tajani** in December 2025.

Asia Africa Agri Alliance Launched in New Delhi by Senior Diplomats and Agribusiness Leaders

- **Senior ambassadors, diplomats, policymakers, and agribusiness leaders** from over ten nations formally launched the **Asia Africa Agri Alliance (AAAA)** in **New Delhi, Delhi**.
- The **Asia Africa Agri Alliance (AAAA)** is a new **institutional platform** aimed at strengthening **trade, agricultural cooperation, investment, and technology exchange** between **Asia and Africa**.
- The initiative seeks to create a **structured framework** for **trade partnerships** and **policy alignment** across the **agri-food value chain**.

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- The **AAAA** has been established as a **Section 8 Not-for-Profit Organisation (NPO)** under the **Companies Act, 2013**.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Raises Concerns Over Aghanashini River-Linking Project

- The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)** has raised concerns over the proposed **Aghanashini–Vedavathi river-linking project**, urging India to strictly follow **World Heritage conservation norms** under the **World Heritage Convention, 1972**.
- **UNESCO's advisory** came after a representation by **environmental activists**, highlighting **ecological risks** in the **Western Ghats**, a sensitive and globally recognised **biodiversity hotspot**.

About United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization:

- Formation: 16 November 1945
- Headquarters: Paris, France
- Director-General: Khaled El-Enany
- Parent organization: United Nations Economic and Social Council

United Nations Declares 2026 as International Year of the Woman Farmer to Recognise Their Role in Agriculture

- **Agriculture** is central to **India's economy**, with **80% of rural women** engaged in agriculture and allied sectors (**33% as labourers, 48% as self-employed farmers**).
- The **United Nations** has declared **2026** as the **International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF 2026)** to recognise their **critical role** in agriculture.
- **India** hosted the **Global Conference on Women in Agri-Food Systems (GCWAS-2026)** in **New Delhi**, focusing on **gender-inclusive policies, women leadership, climate-smart agriculture, and technology-driven solutions**.

India & European Union ink aviation manufacturing pact to enhance safety; Airbus helicopter unit planned in Karnataka

- The **Government of India (GoI)** signed a **working arrangement** with the **European Union (EU)** in the field of **industrial aviation production** to strengthen **bilateral cooperation**.
- The agreement aims to align India's **aviation manufacturing processes** with **global safety standards** and enhance **regulatory harmonisation**.

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- The arrangement was signed ahead of a **regional aviation workshop** in **New Delhi** under the **EU-South Asia Aviation Partnership Project**.
- The agreement was exchanged between the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)** under the **Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)** and the **European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)**.

BANKING AND BUSINESS

Securities and Exchange Board of India Introduces Age-Based Investment Framework Through Life Cycle Funds

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** introduced **Life Cycle Funds** with regulated **equity and debt exposure limits** based on **investor age** and **time to maturity**.
- **Life Cycle Funds** are **open-ended target-date funds** that follow a **glide path investment strategy**, investing across multiple asset classes such as **Equity, Debt, InvITs, ETCDs, Gold ETFs, and Silver ETFs**.

Securities and Exchange Board of India Introduces Major Reforms to Strengthen Transparency and Discipline in ₹81 Lakh Crore Mutual Fund Industry

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** introduced sweeping reforms in the **₹81 lakh crore Indian mutual fund industry** to improve **transparency, portfolio discipline, and investor protection**.
- **Solution-oriented schemes** such as **retirement funds** and **children's funds** will stop accepting **fresh inflows** and will be merged with similar schemes, affecting funds worth about **₹60,000 crore**.
- SEBI introduced “**true-to-label**” **investment norms** to ensure mutual fund schemes invest strictly according to their **stated investment objectives** and reduce **misleading fund categorization**.

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation Introduces New National Accounts Series with 2022–23 Base Year to Improve GDP Accuracy and Economic Measurement

- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** introduced **India's New National Accounts Series (Base Year 2022–23)** to improve accuracy of **GDP and GVA estimation** and reflect structural economic changes.

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- **GST data, e-Vahan vehicle registration data, Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE), and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data** are now used for more accurate **non-corporate sector estimation**.
- The **Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics (ACNAS)**, chaired by **Biswanath Goldar**, guided the revision through **five specialised sub-committees**.

Cyprus-Based Ellinas Finance to Become First Overseas Firm to List on NSE International Exchange at GIFT City

- **Ellinas Finance**, a **Cyprus-based financial services firm**, will become the **first overseas company** to list equity shares on the **NSE International Exchange (NSE IX) at GIFT City, Gujarat**.
- This listing marks the **first cross-border equity listing** in **GIFT IFSC**, strengthening India's goal of developing a **global capital market hub**.
- The company is already listed on the **Cyprus Stock Exchange (CSE)** and will now achieve a **dual listing** with **NSE IX**.
- Founded in **1992**, **Ellinas Finance** provides **lending services, private equity funding, investor services, and business financing** to individuals and corporate clients.

Sri Lanka's First Blue Bond Secures Dual Listing on NSE International Exchange at GIFT City

- **Sri Lanka's first-ever Blue Bond**, an **LKR 3 billion** issuance by **DFCC Bank Plc**, has been **dually listed** on the **NSE International Exchange (NSE IX) at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City)**.
- This marks the **first Blue Bond** admitted for trading within India's **International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)**
- The bond is **primarily listed** on the **Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE)**, and its **dual listing** enhances **international investor access** and visibility.
- The **dual listing** was facilitated under a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** signed between **NSE IX and CSE at GIFT City** to promote **cross-border capital market collaboration**.

West Bengal Approves ₹4,648 Crore Asian Development Bank Funded Projects to Upgrade Education and ICDS Infrastructure

- The **Mamata Banerjee-led West Bengal Government Cabinet** approved **two major development projects** worth **₹4,648 crore** in partnership with the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**.
- The projects aim to strengthen **secondary education infrastructure** and improve **child nutrition and early childhood development services** in West Bengal.

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- The **funding pattern** follows a **70:30 model**, where **ADB** will finance **70%** of the cost and the **West Bengal Government** will provide **30%**.

Sarvam Ties Up with SBI Life to Roll Out AI Solutions Across Insurance Distribution Network

- Indian AI startup **Sarvam** has entered into a **strategic partnership** with **SBI Life Insurance Company Limited**, a subsidiary of the **State Bank of India (SBI)**.
- The partnership focuses on the **large-scale deployment** of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** tools across **SBI Life's nationwide insurance distribution network**.

IIFL Home Finance Secures USD 300 Million Asian Development Bank Loan to Boost Affordable Housing Finance in India

- **IIFL Home Finance Limited** secured a **USD 300 million loan agreement** from the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** to expand **affordable housing finance access** in India.
- The financing package represents IIFL Home Finance's first **syndicated External Commercial Borrowing (ECB)** aimed at addressing India's **housing deficit crisis** and supporting **low-income borrowers**, especially **women borrowers**.

Gnani.ai Partners with Razorpay to Launch Agentic AI-Powered Payment Collections Platform

- Indian AI firm **Gnani.ai** partnered with fintech company **Razorpay** to launch an **Agentic Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered collections platform**.
- The new platform enables **real-time completion** of **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** payments during **live customer calls**, improving **digital payment efficiency**.
- The system integrates **ai's agentic AI technology** directly with **Razorpay's Model Context Protocol (MCP) server**, an **AI-native layer** linked to **Razorpay's payment infrastructure**.

Central Bank of India Partners with Canara Robeco Asset Management Company to Distribute Mutual Fund Products

- **Central Bank of India (CBI)** signed a **Distribution Agreement** with **Canara Robeco Asset Management Company Limited (CRAMC)** to offer a wide range of **Mutual Fund (MF) products** to its customers.
- The partnership aims to enhance **wealth creation opportunities** for **retail and institutional investors** across the bank's **branch banking** and **digital platforms**.
- Through this agreement, **CBI** will distribute **MF schemes** managed by **Canara Robeco AMC**, allowing customers to invest in **diversified equity, debt, and hybrid mutual fund products**.

About Central Bank of India :

- **Established** : 21 December 1911
- **Headquarters** : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

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- MD & CEO : Kalyan Kumar
- Owner : Ministry of Finance, Government of India (89.27%)

Jio Financial Services Subsidiary Launches 'Finsider' Financial App for Early Access Users

- Jio Financial Services Limited (JFSL) subsidiary Jio Finance Platform and Service Limited (JFPSL) launched the 'Finsider' financial app for early access users.
- The app is powered by **Agentic Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Neural Networks** to provide **hyper-personalized, real-time, and always-on financial services** to users.
- The platform acts as a **financial marketplace aggregator**, offering products from **JFSL group entities** and **third-party financial institutions**.
- The **Finsider app** provides **personalized financial recommendations** based on **user financial profiles, behaviour, and financial intent** using **agent-based AI models**.

Reserve Bank of India Imposes Fine on Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services for Regulatory Violations

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed a **monetary penalty of ₹11.50 lakh** on **Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Limited (MMFSL)** for **regulatory non-compliances** observed during its annual inspection with reference to the financial position as on **31 March 2025 (FY25)**.
- The penalty was imposed under **Section 58G(1)(b)** read with **Section 58B(5)(aa)** of the **RBI Act, 1934**.
- The **RBI** found that **MMFSL** violated the **Fair Practices Code** by charging **revised foreclosure fees** on certain loan accounts without including the **required terms and conditions** in the **loan agreements**.

About RBI :

- Established : 1 April 1935
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Governor : Sanjay Malhotra

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation Releases New GDP Series; FY26

Economic Growth Projected at 7.6%

- The **National Statistics Office (NSO)** under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** released the new series of **Annual and Quarterly Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** with a new **base year 2022-23**, replacing the previous base year of **2011-12**.
- The **NSO** released the **Second Advanced Estimates (SAE)** for **Financial Year 2025-26 (FY26)** along with quarterly estimates from **Q1 of FY23 to Q3 of FY26** and annual estimates for **FY23, FY24, and FY25**.

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- As per the estimates, **India's Real GDP** (GDP at Constant Prices) is expected to grow by **6%** to reach **₹322.58 lakh crore** in **FY26**, which is higher than the **First Advance Estimate (FAE)** growth of **7.4%** for **FY25**.

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs Rolls Out SWIFT 2.0 and Traveller Facilitation Tools to Boost Customs Efficiency

- The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** launched the upgraded **SWIFT 2.0 platform**, the revamped **Atithi 2.0 app**, and the **Digital Travellers Guide** during **International Customs Day 2026** celebrations in **New Delhi** under the theme “**Customs protecting society through vigilance and commitment**”.
- The **SWIFT 2.0 (Single Window Interface for Facilitating Trade)** is a **digital customs clearance platform** designed to improve **export-import trade facilitation**, enhance **transparency**, reduce **processing time**, and enable **end-to-end digital integration** among regulatory agencies.
- **SWIFT 2.0** is part of broader **customs digital governance reforms** aimed at strengthening **trust-based compliance systems**, improving **coordination** between regulatory authorities, and supporting **export growth**.

Agriculture and Allied Gross Value Added Growth Forecast Falls to 2.4% in FY26

- **Agriculture and allied sector Gross Value Added (GVA)** growth is projected at **2.4% in real terms** for **FY 2025–26**, lower than **4.9%** in **FY 2024–25**, indicating weak agricultural sector momentum.
- In **nominal terms**, agriculture **GVA growth** is projected at only **0.3% in FY26**, sharply lower than **9.2% in FY25**, reflecting **weak price realization** and lower **commodity price gains**.
- Under the **new GDP base year 2022–23 series**, the agriculture sector share in **total GVA** is expected to rise slightly to **18%**, compared to **17%** under the old **2011–12 base year series**.

India Records 16.6% Growth in Foreign Direct Investment Equity Inflows in October–December FY26

- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) equity inflows** into India increased by **16.6% year-on-year** to **\$12.69 billion** in **October–December (Q3) FY 2025–26**, compared to **\$10.88 billion** in the same quarter last year.
- **Total FDI inflows** (including **equity**, **reinvested earnings**, and **other capital**) reached **\$21.52 billion**, registering a **13% increase** from **\$18.98 billion** in **Q3 FY25**.
- **December 2025** recorded the **highest monthly equity inflows** of the quarter at **\$5.48 billion**, showing strong **end-period investment momentum**.

Reserve Bank of India Allows NUCFDC to Function as Umbrella Organisation for Urban Co-operative Banks

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued the **NBFC–Miscellaneous Amendment Directions, 2026** to support the functioning of the **National Urban Co-operative Finance and Development Corporation Ltd. (NUCFDC)** as the **Umbrella Organisation (UO)** for **Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs)**.
- **NUCFDC's core mandate** is to strengthen the **UCB sector** by providing **liquidity support, technology services, capacity building, and other fund-based and non-fund-based services**.
- **NUCFDC** aims to onboard over **1,400 UCBs** as members; however, the **Companies Act, 2013** limits **private placement offers** to **200 persons** per financial year, creating a **regulatory bottleneck**.

India and Japan Renew USD 75 Billion Bilateral Swap Arrangement

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and **Bank of Japan (BoJ)**, acting as agents of the **Ministry of Finance, Japan**, signed the **Third Amendment and Restatement Agreement** of the **Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA)**.
- The **renewed BSA** became effective from **28 February 2026**, with the **facility size** maintained at up to **USD 75 billion**.
- The **BSA** is a **two-way currency swap framework**, allowing both countries to exchange their **local currencies** for the **US dollar**.

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation Retains 8.25% Interest Rate on EPF Deposits for 2025–26

- The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** approved an **8.25% interest rate** on **EPF deposits** for **2025–26**, retaining the same interest rate for the **second consecutive year**, ensuring **stability of retirement savings returns**.
- The decision was taken during the **239th meeting** of the **Central Board of Trustees (CBT)** chaired by **Mansukh Mandaviya**, Union Labour Minister.
- **EPF interest** is calculated on a **monthly running balance basis** and is **credited annually** to members' accounts.

About EPFO:

- **EPFO:** Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, India's largest retirement fund body.
- **Under:** Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India.

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- **Key Purpose:** Manages Employees' Provident Fund (EPF), Pension (EPS), and Insurance (EDLI) for salaried employees.
- **CEO:** Ramesh Krishnamurthi
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi

Securities and Exchange Board of India Imposes ₹10 Lakh Penalty on Coffee Day Over Financial Misstatements

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** imposed a **₹10 lakh penalty** on **Coffee Day Enterprises** for **financial misstatements** in its financial reporting.
- **Nine other individuals**, including current and former **directors** and **key managerial personnel (KMPs)**, were also penalised, with fines ranging from **₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh**
- **SEBI** found that **Coffee Day Enterprises** had **understated reported losses** by not accounting for **interest expenses** in its financial statements.

Current Account Deficit Rises to 1.3% of GDP in Q3 FY26

- **India's Current Account Deficit (CAD)** widened to **\$13.2 billion (1.3% of GDP)** in **Q3 FY2025–26**, compared to **\$11.3 billion (1.1% of GDP)** in **Q3 FY25**, mainly due to a **widening merchandise trade deficit**.
- The **merchandise trade deficit** expanded to **\$93.6 billion** in **Q3 FY26**, compared to **\$79.3 billion** in the same quarter last year, driven by **higher imports** compared to exports.
- **Goods exports** stood at **\$111.7 billion**, while **imports** rose to **\$205.3 billion**, indicating **import-driven trade imbalance**.

Pine Labs to Launch Stablecoin-Backed Prepaid Card Across 9 Countries

- **Pine Labs** will launch a **stablecoin-backed prepaid card** across **9 countries** in **Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia** by **April 2026**, marking the first such initiative by a **listed Indian fintech company**.
- The product will **not be launched in India or China** due to **regulatory restrictions** on **virtual currency products**.
- The **prepaid card** will be funded through users' **digital wallets** holding **stablecoins**, enabling **real-time conversion** of stablecoins into **local currencies** at the **point of sale (POS)**.

India INX Global Access Ties Up with HSBC IBU to Broaden Global Investment Access through GIFT City

- **India INX Global Access IFSC Limited (India INX GA)**, a subsidiary of **India International Exchange (India INX)**, entered into a **strategic partnership** with **HSBC International Financial Services Centre Banking Unit (HSBC IBU)** to expand **structured access** to **global**

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investment products for Indian investors through **Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City)**.

- The partnership operates under a **referral model**, enabling **HSBC IBU clients** to use the **India INX GA platform** for **international portfolio diversification** within a regulated framework.
- **India INX GA** is registered as a **Global Access Provider (GAP)** with the **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** to facilitate **overseas investments** through the **International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)**.

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs Introduces Eligible Manufacturer Importers Scheme Under Union Budget 2026–27

- The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** has introduced the **Eligible Manufacturer Importers (EMI)** scheme as announced in the **Union Budget 2026–27**.
- Under the **EMI scheme**, eligible importers can clear goods **without immediate Customs duty payment** and instead pay duties **monthly** under the **Deferred Payment of Import Duty Rules, 2016**, improving **cash flow** and **working capital management**.
- The scheme will be operational from **1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028**, with applications open from **1 March 2026** on the **AEO portal**.

Asian Development Bank To Provide \$1.2 Billion Loan to India for Climate and Infrastructure Projects

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** plans to provide **\$1.2 billion in loans** to India in **2026**, maintaining last year's funding level to support **climate resilience** and **sustainable infrastructure development**.
- The funding will support **clean energy transition** projects, including **renewable power generation, transport electrification, green hydrogen production, and power distribution system modernization**.
- **ADB financing** will also provide **technical assistance** to strengthen **policy frameworks, institutional capacity building, and energy sector governance reforms** in India.
- The **PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana** is the flagship **rooftop solar energy programme** promoting residential solar power adoption.

About ADB :

- Formation : 19 December 1966
- Headquarters : Mandaluyong, Philippines
- President : Masato Kanda
- Membership : 69 countries

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India Proposes Ind AS Implementation for Insurers from April 1, 2026

- The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** released an **exposure draft** of the **IRDAI (Actuarial, Finance and Investment Functions of Insurers) (Amendment) Regulations, 2026** to implement **Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS)** in the insurance sector.
- The **proposed implementation** will be effective from **1 April 2026** and will apply to **all categories of insurers**, including **Life Insurers, General Insurers, Health Insurers, and Reinsurers**.
- The transition to **Ind AS (Indian Accounting Standards)** aims to improve **global financial comparability**, introduce **market-consistent valuation** of insurance liabilities, and enhance **financial reporting transparency**.

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation To Invest in National Highways Authority of India's Infrastructure Investment Trust

- The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** will become a **strategic investor** in the **Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT)** promoted by the **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)**.
- **EPFO** will invest in **16.6% of total units** in the **maiden public issue** of the **Rajmarg Infrastructure Trust (InvIT)**.
- The **InvIT** aims to raise approximately **₹10,000 crore**, out of which **₹6,000 crore** will be raised through the **public issue route**, supporting **infrastructure financing**.

Controller General of Accounts Unveils Government Bank Dashboard and Manual for Better Transaction Monitoring

- **T. C.A. Kalyani, Controller General of Accounts**, launched two major initiatives — the **Government Bank Dashboard** and the **Government Bank Manual** — in **New Delhi, India**, to improve **government banking governance** and efficiency.
- The initiatives aim to strengthen **transparency, standardisation of banking procedures, and monitoring efficiency** in government financial transactions across India.
- The **Government Bank Dashboard** is a **real-time monitoring system** designed to shift from **reactive corrections** to **proactive financial oversight** of government banking operations.

Axis Bank Becomes Preferred electric vehicle Financing Partner for Tesla in India

- **Axis Bank** has been named a **preferred financing partner** for **Tesla Inc.** in India, strengthening financing support for the **premium electric vehicle (EV)**

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- This partnership makes **Axis Bank** the **first lender** in India to offer **vehicle loan tenures of up to 10 years** for premium electric vehicles, improving **EV affordability**.
- The collaboration was announced in **Mumbai** on **4 March 2026** and will be expanded across **major metropolitan cities** and **emerging EV markets** in India.
- **Axis Bank** will provide **fully digital loan processing**, enabling customers to complete financing from **vehicle booking to delivery** without physical paperwork, promoting **paperless digital banking services**.

About Axis Bank:

- Founded Year: 1993
- Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- CEO: Amitabh Chaudhry
- Slogan: "Badhti Ka Naam Zindagi" (A Life of Progress)

Bank of Baroda Launches ₹10,000 Crore Green Bond Issue for Sustainable Projects

- **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** raised **₹10,000 crore** through **Series I Long-Term Green Infrastructure Bonds** to support **sustainable infrastructure financing** in India.
- The bond issue received **strong investor response**, attracting bids worth **₹16,415 crore**, which is more than three times the **base issue size of ₹5,000 crore**.
- The bonds were issued at a **coupon rate of 7.10%**, reflecting a **Green Premium (Greenium)** due to strong demand for **sustainable financial instruments**.

About Bank of Baroda (BoB):

- Founded: 1908
- Headquarters: Vadodara, Gujarat, India
- Managing Director & CEO: Debadatta Chand
- Tagline: "India's International Bank"

State Bank of India Ranked Strongest Indian Bank Globally in Brand Finance Banking 500 Report 2026

- **State Bank of India (SBI)** has been ranked the **strongest Indian bank globally**, securing **16th position worldwide** and **7th position in Asia Pacific** with an **AAA+ brand strength rating** in the **Brand Finance Banking 500 Report 2026**.
- **HDFC Bank** remains the **most valuable Indian banking brand** with a brand value of **USD 12.4 billion**, though it slipped to **31st position globally**.
- **SBI's brand value** increased by **2% to USD 8.1 billion**, ranking **56th** among the world's most valuable banking brands.

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- **ICICI Bank** recorded the **fastest brand value growth** among Indian banks, increasing by **19%** to **USD 5.5 billion**.

Securities and Exchange Board of India Uses AI Tool ‘Sudarshan’ to Remove Over 1.2 Lakh Misleading Finfluencer Posts

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has deployed an in-house **Artificial Intelligence (AI) system** named ‘**Sudarshan**’ to strengthen **digital surveillance** of financial content across online platforms.
- The **AI system** has helped in removing more than **1.20 lakh misleading social media posts** posted by **unregistered financial influencers**, strengthening **investor protection mechanisms**.
- The **AI-based monitoring system** can scan large volumes of **audio, video, and text content** across multiple **digital platforms and languages** to detect **financial advisory violations**.

Shriram Finance Receives USD 76 Million Co-Financing from DEG and Citi

- **DEG (Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH)** and **Citibank N.A.** jointly provided a **co-financing lending facility** of **USD 76 million (around Rs 630 crore)** to **Shriram Finance Limited (SFL)**, one of India’s largest **Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)**, to promote **financial inclusion** and **sustainable mobility** in India.
- This initiative marks the **second collaboration** between **DEG and Citi**, following their previous co-financing transaction supporting **CreditAccess Grameen** in 2024.
- The funding structure has been arranged through **External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs)** to mobilize **international capital** for financing activities in India.
- Under the arrangement, **DEG** extended a loan of **USD 46 million (EUR 40 million)**, while **Citi** provided an additional loan of **Rs 260 crore** to **Shriram Finance Limited**.

Motilal Oswal Home Finance Limited Secures USD 100 Million Funding from Asian Development Bank for Affordable Housing Finance

- **Motilal Oswal Home Finance Limited (MOHFL)** signed a **USD 100 million debt financing agreement** with the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** to expand **affordable housing finance** in India.
- The funding will be raised through **Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs)** as **Indian Rupee (INR)-equivalent debt**, strengthening **MOHFL’s borrowing profile** and funding base.

Generali Central Insurance Launches ‘Happy Women’s Pay’ Campaign for Gender Pay Equality

- **Generali Central Insurance Company Limited**, a joint venture between **Assicurazioni Generali (Generali Group)** and **Central Bank of India**, launched the “**Happy Women’s Pay**” campaign to promote **gender pay equality**.
- The campaign was launched to mark **International Women’s Day**, emphasising **equal pay** and **workplace gender equity** as core **organisational values**.
- The initiative highlights that **gender equality in pay** should be implemented as a **policy-level commitment**, not just a social aspiration.

Reserve Bank of India Introduces New Rules to Strengthen Customer Protection in Digital Banking Transactions

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued the **RBI (Commercial Banks – Responsible Business Conduct) Third Amendment Directions, 2026** to strengthen **customer protection** in electronic banking transactions effective from **1 July 2026** under the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949**.
- The rules protect customers from **fraud** across **digital banking channels** including **UPI payments, internet banking, mobile banking, debit/credit cards, and ATM transactions**.
- Banks must send **mandatory SMS alerts** for all electronic transactions **above ₹500** to improve **fraud awareness** and transaction monitoring.
- Customers will receive **zero liability protection** and **transaction reversal** if fraud occurs due to **bank negligence**, even if the customer does not report the fraud immediately.

Yes Bank Introduces ‘YES Essence’ Salary Account for Women’s Financial Empowerment

- **Yes Bank** launched a specialised salary account named “**YES Essence Women’s Salary Account**” aimed at supporting the **financial and lifestyle needs** of working women ahead of **International Women’s Day (March 8)**.
- The account provides a comprehensive suite of services including **financial protection, preventive healthcare benefits, lifestyle privileges, and wealth-creation opportunities** on a single banking platform.
- Key benefits for eligible account holders include a **free locker facility** for the first year, **₹5 lakh complimentary top-up health insurance** for one year, and an **annual preventive health check-up**.

About YES Bank:

- **Founded:** 2004
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

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- **Managing Director & CEO:** Prashant Kumar
- **Tagline :** "Life Ko Banao Rich"

SBI General Insurance Launches “Chuniye Bharosa, Apno Sa” Campaign Emphasizing Health and Family Protection

- **SBI General Insurance Company Limited**, a leading general insurance provider in India, launched an integrated brand campaign titled “**Chuniye Bharosa, Apno Sa**”, focusing on **health insurance** and **family financial protection**.
- The campaign positions the insurer as a **trusted family protector** providing reliable financial security solutions for customers.
- The company appointed **Pankaj Tripathi** as its **Brand Ambassador** to strengthen brand visibility and customer engagement.
- The campaign aims to improve **brand recall**, build **customer trust**, and reinforce **SBI General Insurance’s** image as a dependable insurance service provider.

About SBI General Insurance:

- It was established in **2009** and began operations in **2010** as a **Joint Venture (JV)** between **State Bank of India (SBI)** and **Napean Opportunities LLP**.
- The company is regulated under the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** and is **headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

Federal Bank Launches ‘Fed Wealth’ Platform to Strengthen Presence in Wealth Management Segment

- **Federal Bank** has launched a new **wealth management platform** named ‘**Fed Wealth**’ to expand its presence in the wealth management segment.
- The bank inaugurated its first **Wealth Hub** in **Kochi**, providing **specialized investment services** and a **premium client environment**.
- **Fed Wealth** platform offers a **curated suite of investment solutions** including **fixed income products, equities, mutual funds, alternative investments**, and opportunities through **GIFT City**.
- **Federal Bank** has **restructured** its existing partnership with **Equirus Capital Private Limited** to enhance **product offerings** and **service architecture** for **affluent and UHNI clients**.

About Federal Bank:

- **Founded:** 1931
- **Headquarters:** Aluva, Kerala, India
- **Managing Director & CEO:** KVS Manian

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- Tagline: "Your Perfect Banking Partner"

AU Small Finance Bank Allowed to Transition into Universal Bank Without NOFHC Requirement by Reserve Bank of India

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has modified a **key condition** for **AU Small Finance Bank's transition** into a **universal bank**, relaxing the earlier requirement related to **Non-Operative Financial Holding Company (NOFHC)**.
- Earlier, **RBI** required that **promoter and promoter group shareholding** be held through a **NOFHC** under the proposed **universal bank structure**.
- Under the **revised condition**, the **NOFHC requirement** will apply only if the bank or its promoters establish any **additional group financial services entity** in the future.
- **AU Small Finance Bank** had received **in-principle approval** from **RBI** on **7 August 2025** to convert from a **small finance bank (SFB)** into a **universal bank**.

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Gates Foundation & Dalberg Advisors Initiate National Climate Stack Innovation Challenge for Rural Climate Resilience

- **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** launched the "**National Climate Stack Innovation Challenge**" in collaboration with **Gates Foundation** and **Dalberg Advisors** to strengthen **climate intelligence** and **resilience** in rural India.
- The main objective of the initiative is to build the **foundational layers** of a **National Climate Stack** to support **agriculture, rural finance, and public planning** with **decision-ready climate data**.
- The project is anchored in **DiCRA (Data in Climate Resilient Agriculture)**, **NABARD's climate data platform**, which is being transformed from a **Digital Public Good** into a **Digital Public Infrastructure**.

About NABARD:

- It is an All India Development Financial Institution (DFI) and an apex Supervisory Body for overall supervision of Regional Rural Banks, State Cooperative Banks and District Central Cooperative Banks in India.
- Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Founded: July 12, 1982 by the Government of India under the NABARD Act 1981
- Chairman: Shaji K V

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State Bank of India Launches \$500 Million Social Loan Facility to Boost Women's Economic Empowerment

- **State Bank of India (SBI)**, India's largest **Public Sector Bank (PSB)**, launched a **USD 500 million syndicated social term loan facility** with a **greenshoe option** to promote **women's economic empowerment**.
- The **USD 500 million social loan** was announced on the eve of **International Women's Day**, highlighting **SBI's commitment to gender equality and inclusive growth**.
- The **loan facility** focuses on supporting sectors such as **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**, **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**, and **women-focused livelihood initiatives**.
- The initiative aims to increase **women's participation in entrepreneurship, employment, and economic activities** across India.

About State Bank of India (SBI):

- Founded Year: 1955
- Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Chairman: Challa Sreenivasulu Setty
- Slogan: "The Banker to Every Indian"

Financial Action Task Force Updates High-Risk and Monitored Jurisdictions List – February 9-13, 2026

- The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** issued updated public statements on **13 February 2026** identifying jurisdictions with **weaknesses in anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CFT)**
- In its document "**High-Risk Jurisdictions subject to a Call for Action**", **FATF** reaffirmed that **North Korea, Iran, and Myanmar** remain **high-risk jurisdictions** with serious **strategic deficiencies** in their **AML/CFT regimes**.
- **Myanmar**, added to the **Call for Action list** in **October 2022**, continues to remain on the list; countries are advised to apply **enhanced due diligence** measures while ensuring that **humanitarian aid and remittance flows** are not disrupted.
- **FATF** also released a list of "**Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring**" (**Grey List**), referring to countries working with **FATF** to address strategic **AML/CFT deficiencies** through **agreed action plans**.

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HDFC Bank and Swiggy Introduce Two New Co-Branded Credit Cards for Travel and Daily Expenses

- **HDFC Bank Limited** and **Swiggy**, a food delivery and quick commerce platform, jointly launched **two new co-branded credit cards: Swiggy BLCK HDFC Bank Credit Card and Swiggy Ornge HDFC Bank Credit Card.**
- These cards are aimed at providing **travel and daily spending rewards** across food, shopping, and lifestyle categories.
- The launch expands their **existing co-branded credit portfolio**, which was introduced in **2023.**

About HDFC Bank:

- Founded: 1994
- Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Managing Director & CEO: Sashidhar Jagdishan
- Tagline: "We understand your world"

Jammu & Kashmir Bank Joins Hands with non-banking financial companies to Boost Home and Gold Loan Business

- **Jammu and Kashmir Bank (J&K Bank)** has partnered with **two non-banking financial companies (NBFCs)** to expand its **retail lending business**, especially **outside Jammu and Kashmir.**
- The bank signed a **co-lending agreement** with **Home First Finance Company India Limited** to provide **home loans.**
- **J&K Bank** also partnered with **IIFL Finance** to expand **gold loan services.**
- The agreements aim to **increase credit outreach** and strengthen **retail loan offerings** across India.

About Jammu & Kashmir Bank:

- Founded: 1938
- Headquarters: Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, India
- Managing Director & CEO: Amitava Chatterjee
- Tagline: "Serving to Empower"

Government Enhances Agricultural Credit Flow with Focused Policy Initiatives

- The **Government of India (GoI)** sets **Ground Level Credit (GLC) targets** annually for the **agriculture and allied sectors**, which banks must achieve during the financial year.

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- **GLC targets** are set **region-wise, agency-wise** (Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Rural Cooperative Banks), and **loan category-wise** (crop loans and term loans).

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India Approves Allianz Jio Reinsurance and Kiwi General Insurance to Begin Operations in India

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) granted **Certificates of Registration (CoR)** to **Allianz Jio Reinsurance Limited (AJRL)** and **Kiwi General Insurance Limited** to commence insurance operations in India.
- The approvals were granted during the **134th Board Meeting of IRDAI**, held in **Hyderabad, Telangana**.
- **Allianz Jio Reinsurance Limited (AJRL)** is a **50:50 Joint Venture (JV)** between **Allianz Group (Munich, Germany)** and **Jio Financial Services Limited**.
- **AJRL** will operate as a **domestic reinsurer**, providing risk coverage to insurance companies in India.

About IRDAI:

- Headquarters (HQ): Hyderabad, Telangana, India
- Chairperson: Ajay Seth
- Founded: 1999

Nashik Municipal Corporation Lists State's First Urban Local Body Green Municipal Bond on National Stock Exchange of India

- **Nashik Municipal Corporation (NMC)** achieved a **historic milestone** by listing **Maharashtra's first-ever Urban Local Body (ULB) Green Municipal Bonds** on the **National Stock Exchange of India (NSE)** in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.
- The **listing ceremony** included the traditional **bell ringing** by **Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister of Maharashtra**, along with **Ashishkumar Chauhan, Managing Director of NSE**.
- The **funds raised** through the **Green Municipal Bonds** will be used for **sustainable urban infrastructure projects** such as **renewable energy, waste management, clean transportation, sustainable water management, and climate resilience initiatives**.

PhonePe Introduces 'RuPay On-The-Go' National Common Mobility Card for Contactless Transit Payments

- **PhonePe Limited** launched the **RuPay 'On-The-Go' Card**, a **National Common Mobility Card (NCMC)** designed for **contactless payments** across public transport systems in India.

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- The RuPay ‘On-The-Go’ Card supports the Government of India’s ‘One Nation One Card’ initiative, which aims to create a **single interoperable transit payment system**.
- The card enables **contactless tap-and-pay transactions** at **NCMC-enabled services** such as **metro, buses, trains, toll plazas, and parking facilities**.
- It supports **offline payments** without internet connectivity, allowing fast and seamless transactions for commuters.

About PhonePe:

- Headquarters: Bengaluru, Karnataka, India
- Founded: 2015
- CEO: Sameer Nigam
- Subsidiaries: PhonePe Payments, PhonePe for Business, PhonePe Insurance, PhonePe Wealth, PhonePe Bharat BillPay
- Key Products: PhonePe App, PhonePe Wallet, UPI Payments, PhonePe for Business, PhonePe Insurance, PhonePe Gold, PhonePe Bharat BillPay

Reserve Bank of India Issues 2026 Prudential Norms to Regulate Dividend Declaration by Commercial Banks

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued the **RBI (Commercial Banks – Prudential Norms on Declaration of Dividend and Remittance of Profits) Directions, 2026** to regulate how **commercial banks** declare dividends.
- The **RBI** repealed the **2025 dividend framework** and introduced **revised prudential norms**, which will come into effect from the **Financial Year 2026–27 (FY27)**.
- Under the **new dividend payout rules**, the **maximum dividend payout** for banks incorporated in India is **capped at 75%** of the **Profit After Tax (PAT)** for the financial year.

Securities and Exchange Board of India Forms High-Level Panel to Develop Technology Roadmap for Securities Market

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has set up a **high-level expert working group** to prepare **short-term and long-term technology roadmaps** for India’s **securities market ecosystem**.
- The **Working Group** is chaired by **Dr D B Phatak**, Professor Emeritus at **IIT Bombay**, and the announcement was made by **SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey**.
- The group will examine **future technology architecture** needed to support the next phase of growth in India’s **capital markets**.

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- **SEBI** has developed internal technology tools like “**SEBI Sudarshan**”, a **real-time surveillance system** for monitoring **unauthorised digital market activity**.

About SEBI :

- Established : 12 April 1988 as an executive body and was given statutory powers on 30 January 1992 through the SEBI Act, 1992
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Chairman : Tuhin Kanta Pandey
- SEBI is the regulatory body for securities and commodity markets in India under the ownership of the Ministry of Finance (MoF), Gol.

Axis Max Life Insurance Teams Up with Saarathi Finance to Provide Credit-Linked Insurance for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

- **Axis Max Life Insurance Limited** has entered into a strategic **Corporate Agent partnership** with **Saarathi Finance and Credit Private Limited** to strengthen **financial protection** for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (**MSMEs**) in India.
- Under the partnership, **Group Credit Life Secure (GCLS)** insurance will be integrated with **loans** provided to **MSMEs**, ensuring borrowers receive **financial protection** along with **credit support**.
- The **insurance coverage** provides a **safety net** for entrepreneurs by **protecting loan obligations** in case of unexpected events, thereby reducing **financial stress** on businesses and families.

Bank of Baroda Introduces ‘bob Women Sapphire Savings Account’ Offering Banking, Health, and Lifestyle Benefits for Women

- **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** launched a special savings account for women named ‘**bob Women Sapphire Savings Account**’ to provide **banking, healthcare, and lifestyle benefits** for women customers in India.
- The **bob Women Sapphire Savings Account** is **exclusively available** for **women customers** and requires a **Monthly Average Balance (MAB)** of **₹1 lakh**.
- The account offers **health and wellness benefits**, including **₹10 lakh cancer care coverage** for women aged between **18 and 60 years**.
- It also provides **complimentary online doctor consultations** for up to **six family members**.

South Indian Bank Launches Digital Loan Against Mutual Funds (LAMF) Facility for Secured Credit

- **South Indian Bank (SIB)** has launched a **digitally integrated Loan Against Mutual Funds (LAMF)** facility to provide **secured credit** to investors using their **mutual fund holdings** as **collateral**.
- The bank has partnered with **smallcase**, a **fintech firm** providing the **secured credit technology stack** and **API-based digital infrastructure** for the **LAMF service**.
- The **loan facility** starts at an **interest rate of 9.99% per annum**, allowing customers to access **liquidity** without **redeeming long-term investments**.

PayU and GoKwik Collaborate to Introduce India's First Integrated Conversion-to-Completion Stack for Direct-to-Consumer Brands

- **PayU**, a leading **digital payments** and **financial services provider** in India, partnered with **GoKwik**, a **checkout optimization platform** for **Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) brands**.
- The partnership aims to launch **India's first Integrated Conversion-to-Completion (C2C) stack** to enhance **checkout efficiency** and **payment completion** for online shoppers.
- The **Integrated Commerce Platform** combines **GoKwik's conversion intelligence** and **checkout tools** with **PayU's digital payment infrastructure**, enabling **D2C brands** to manage **customer conversion** and **payments** through a single platform.

State Bank of India, MUFG Bank Forge Strategic Alliance to Boost India–Japan Economic Cooperation

- The **State Bank of India (SBI)** signed a **strategic partnership** with **MUFG Bank, Ltd. (MUFG)**, a leading **Japanese global financial institution**, to strengthen **cross-border capital flows** and expand **financing opportunities**.
- The partnership aims to enhance **economic cooperation** between **India and Japan**, supporting **Japanese companies investing in India** and **Indian enterprises expanding internationally**.
- The collaboration focuses on **Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A)**, **aviation financing**, **real estate financing**, **M&A advisory**, **trade finance**, and **retail banking services**.

Nomura Cuts India's FY27 Gross Domestic Product Growth Forecast to 7% Due to West Asia Tensions

- **Nomura Holdings Inc.**, a **Japanese brokerage firm**, has revised **India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast** for **Financial Year 2026-27 (FY27)** to **7%**, down from the earlier estimate of **7.1%**.

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- The **downward revision** is mainly due to the **ongoing conflict in West Asia**, which poses risks to **energy supplies** and may increase **inflationary pressures**.
- **Nomura** has raised **India's inflation forecast** for **FY27** from **3.8%** to **4.5%**, an increase of **70 basis points (bps)**.

Reserve Bank of India Cancels Registration of 36 Non-Banking Financial Companies, 9 Others Surrender Licences Voluntarily

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** cancelled the **Certificate of Registration (CoR)** of **36 Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)** between **16 and 24 February 2026**.
- The cancellation **prohibits** these NBFCs from conducting **NBFC activities** under the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**.
- Some key **NBFCs** affected by cancellation include **Excellence Broking & Finance Private Limited, Gibraltar Traders Ltd, Bahubali Leasing Limited, and Wintech Telecom Pvt Ltd**.

Reserve Bank of India Updates Counterparty Credit Risk Framework for Banks to Align with Basel Standards

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued the **RBI (Commercial Banks – Prudential Norms on Capital Adequacy) Third Amendment Directions, 2026**, revising the **capital adequacy framework for commercial banks**.
- The **amendment** provides clearer guidelines for **calculating and maintaining capital** to cover **Counterparty Credit Risk (CCR)**
- **Compliance Levels:** Banks must comply with **capital adequacy ratio (CAR)** requirements at both the **standalone level** and **consolidated level**.
- **Consolidated Computation:** For capital requirement on a consolidated basis, banks must include the **CCR exposures** of all entities under **Basel III framework**.

CRED Gets Reserve Bank of India Nod to Function as Payment Aggregator

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has granted authorisation to **CRED**, operated by **Dreamplug Technologies Private Limited**, to function as a **Payment Aggregator (PA)** under the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act (PSSA), 2007**.
- This approval will help **CRED** expand its role in **India's digital payments ecosystem**.
- **Function:** As a **Payment Aggregator**, **CRED** can **onboard merchants directly** and **manage payment flows** without relying on intermediaries or partner banks.

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EASE 8.0 Reforms Propel Modernisation and Efficiency in Public Sector Banks

- The **EASE Reform Agenda** has significantly transformed India's **Public Sector Banks (PSBs)** by improving **customer service, asset quality, operational efficiency, and digital capabilities**.
- **PSBs' financial performance** has improved, achieving a record **net profit of ₹1.78 lakh crore** in **FY2024-25**, compared to a loss of **₹85,371 crore** in **FY2017-18**.
- **Gross NPAs** declined to **2.10%** in **December 2025** from a peak of **14.58%** in **March 2018**, reflecting stronger **asset quality**.
- In **FY2025-26**, **EASE 8.0 Common Reforms** were launched as **EASERise** with four themes: **Risk & Resilience, Innovation, Socio-economic Impact, and Excellence**.

CRISIL Intelligence Forecasts India's GDP Growth to Reach 7.1% in FY27

- **CRISIL Limited** (formerly **Credit Rating Information Services of India Limited**) released a report titled "**India Outlook: Wading through Squally Waters**" through its **CRISIL Intelligence**
- The report was released at the **10th India Outlook Conclave** held in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.
- **CRISIL** projected that **India's real GDP growth** will moderate to **7.1%** in **FY27**, compared to **7.6%** in **FY26**.

Reserve Bank of India Launches 'Awareness Program on Digital Payments' During Digital Payments Awareness Week 2026, Engages with Payment Systems Operators

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** is observing the **6th edition of Digital Payments Awareness Week (DPAW)** from **March 9–13, 2026** to promote **safe digital payment usage**.
- **Governor Sanjay Malhotra** launched a **pilot initiative** titled "**Awareness Program on Digital Payments**" in **Maharashtra** in partnership with **CSC e-Governance Services India Limited**.
- **Deputy Governors T Rabi Sankar, Dr Poonam Gupta, and S C Murmu** along with other senior **RBI officers** attended the launch event.
- **Governor Malhotra** interacted with **Managing Directors/CEOs** of select **Payment Systems Operators (PSOs)** to discuss **strengthening public confidence in digital payments adoption**.

Reserve Bank of India Imposes ₹2.70 Lakh Penalty on Manappuram Finance for Regulatory Non-Compliance

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed a **monetary penalty of ₹2.70 lakh** on **Manappuram Finance Limited** for **non-compliance with RBI guidelines**.
- The penalty pertains to violation of **RBI directions** on "**Guidelines on Compensation of Key Managerial Personnel – Deferral of Variable Pay**."

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- **RBI** found that **Manappuram Finance Ltd** paid the **entire variable pay upfront** to certain **Key Managerial Personnel (KMPs)** without **deferring a portion**, which was against **regulatory guidelines**.

Public Sector Banks Earn Over ₹28,000 Crore in Five Years via Third-Party Financial Product Sales

- **Public Sector Banks (PSBs)** in India earned over **₹28,600 crore** in the last **five years** by selling **third-party financial products** such as **insurance (life and non-life)**, **mutual funds**, **credit cards**, and **demat accounts**.
- As per data presented in the **Rajya Sabha** by the **Finance Ministry**, **State Bank of India (SBI)** was the **highest earner**, generating about **₹17,043.49 crore** from **third-party product sales**.
- Other major earners include **Punjab National Bank (₹2,865.54 crore)**, **Canara Bank (₹2,059.54 crore)**, **Bank of Baroda (₹1,904.52 crore)**, and **Union Bank of India (₹1,832.69 crore)**.

Private Banks Earn Over ₹11,000 Crore in Three Years from Minimum Balance Penalties

- **Private sector banks** in India collected about **₹11,000 crore** between **FY2022-23** and **FY2024-25** as **penalties** for **non-maintenance of minimum balance** in savings accounts.
- **Public Sector Banks (PSBs)** collected around **₹8,000 crore** during the same period, which is lower than private banks.
- Among **private banks**, **HDFC Bank** was the **highest earner**, collecting over **₹3,800 crore**, followed by **Axis Bank (₹2,700 crore)** and **ICICI Bank (₹1,200 crore)**.
- Among **PSBs**, **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** collected the **highest penalties (~₹1,500 crore)**, followed by **Bank of Baroda (~₹1,200 crore)** and **Indian Bank (~₹1,100 crore)**.

Razorpay Unveils World's First AI-Powered Agent Studio for Payment Management

- **Razorpay**, India's **omnichannel payments and banking platform**, launched the world's first **Agent Studio for payments** at **FTX 2026**, built using the **Claude Agent SDK from Anthropic**.
- **Razorpay** also introduced the **Agentic Experience Platform**, an **AI-native system** to simplify **onboarding**, **payment integration**, and **payment management** for businesses.
- **Agent Studio** functions as a **B2B marketplace and builder platform**, allowing businesses to deploy **AI agents** to manage payments, **recover revenue**, and automate **financial operations** in real time.

National Stock Exchange of India Selects 20 Merchant Bankers for Managing Its Upcoming Initial Public Offering

- **National Stock Exchange of India (NSE)** has moved forward with its long-awaited **Initial Public Offering (IPO)** by completing the selection of **key intermediaries** for the proposed listing.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- **NSE** appointed **20 merchant bankers** through a structured and competitive process approved by the **NSE IPO Committee** to manage the share sale.
- **NSE** also appointed **eight leading law firms**, including **Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, Khaitan & Co, AZB & Partners, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co, and Trilegal**, to handle **legal and regulatory aspects** of the IPO.

Bank of Baroda Secures \$500 Million Five-Year Syndicated Term Loan

- **Bank of Baroda** raised a **USD 500 million five-year syndicated term loan** through its **IFSC Banking Unit** in **GIFT City, Gujarat**.
- The transaction marks the bank's **return** to the **global syndicated loan market** after a **one-year gap**.
- The **funds raised** will be used for **general banking operations** and **corporate purposes**.
- **MUFG Bank** and **HSBC** acted as **mandated lead arrangers, underwriters, and book-runners** for the deal.

South Indian Bank Launches EPF Payment Facility via SIBerNet Internet Banking

- **South Indian Bank (SIB)** has launched **Employees' Provident Fund (EPF)** payment services through its **internet banking platform SIBerNet**.
- The service is introduced in **collaboration** with the **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** to facilitate **digital remittances**.
- **Employers and establishments** can now remit **EPF contributions, dues, and related charges** online using the bank's **net banking facility**.

India's Retail Inflation Jumps to 3.21% in February Driven by Food and Housing Prices

- India's **retail inflation** rose to **3.21%** in **February 2026**, compared to **2.74%** in **January 2026**, according to provisional data released by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**.
- The **inflation rise** was driven by higher prices of **food and beverages, clothing, housing, and utility services**.
- **Rural inflation** increased to **3.37%** in **February** from **2.73%** in **January**, while **urban inflation** rose to **3.02%** from **2.75%**, both remaining below the **RBI's medium-term target of 4%**.
- The **February reading** was the **second inflation print** under the **revised CPI series** with **2024** as the **base year**.

PayU Partners with CoRover.ai to Launch Multilingual Voice-Enabled Payments

- **PayU** has entered into a **strategic partnership** with **ai**, the creator of **BharatGPT**, to enable **AI-driven agentic payments** in India.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- Under the collaboration, **PayU's secure payment infrastructure** will be integrated with **CoRover's BharatGPT-powered conversational AI platform**, enabling **voice-first** and **multilingual payment experiences**.
- The system will support **over 100 Indian languages and dialects**, allowing users to make payments through **natural voice conversations** with **AI agents**.
- The partnership is one of the first collaborations between a **sovereign large language model (LLM) provider** and a **payment aggregator** for **AI-based payment execution**.

Agriculture & Allied Sector Gross Value Added Surpasses ₹48.7 Lakh Crore in 2023–24 as India's Foodgrain Output Keeps Growing

- According to the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**, the **Agriculture & Allied Sector** contributes about **18%** to India's **Gross Value Added (GVA)**.
- As per **National Accounts Statistics**, the **GVA of Agriculture & Allied Sector** increased from **₹20,93,612 crore** in **2014–15** to **₹48,77,867 crore** in **2023–24**, recording a **compound annual growth rate (CAGR)** of **83%** at **current prices**.
- The **sectoral composition** within the **Agriculture & Allied Sector** includes **Crops (54.39%)**, **Livestock (30.87%)**, and **Fishing & Aquaculture (7.55%)**.

About Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare :

- Cabinet Minister : Shivraj Singh Chouhan
- Minister of State : Bhagirath Choudhary, Ram Nath Thakur

National Stock Exchange of India Launches Gold 10 Grams Futures Contract in Commodity Derivatives Segment

- The **National Stock Exchange of India (NSE)** has launched a **Gold 10 Grams Futures Contract** in its **Commodity Derivatives Segment**, effective **March 16, 2026**, after receiving **SEBI approval**.
- The **trading unit** and **delivery unit** of the contract are fixed at **10 grams**, and it will be traded under the **symbol "GOLD10G."**
- The **contract price** will be quoted **per 10 grams** of gold, with a **minimum tick size of ₹1** per 10 grams.

About NSE :

- Established : **1992**
- Location : **Mumbai, Maharashtra**
- MD & CEO : **Ashish Kumar Chauhan**

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- **NSE** operates from **Monday to Friday**, trading between **9:00 am and 11:30/11:55 pm**, based on the **US daylight saving time period**.

Fitch Ratings Projects India's Gross Domestic Product Growth at 7.5% for FY26 in Global Economic Outlook – March 2026

- **Fitch Ratings** released its “**Global Economic Outlook – March 2026**”, projecting **India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth at 7.5% for FY 2025–26 (FY26)**.
- The **GDP forecast for FY26** was slightly increased to **7.5%** from **7.4%** estimated in **December 2025**, mainly due to **strong domestic demand** and **stable economic indicators**.
- **Domestic demand** is expected to remain the **main growth driver**, with **consumer spending** projected to rise by **8.6%** and **investment growth** estimated at **6.9%** in **FY26**.
- For **FY 2026–27 (FY27)**, **Fitch Ratings** revised its **GDP growth forecast** upward to **6.7%**, compared to **6.4%** projected earlier in **December 2025**.

Department of Economic Affairs Revises Minimum Public Shareholding Rules for Large Companies Listing on Stock Exchanges

- The **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)** under the **Ministry of Finance (MoF)** has revised the rules related to **Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS)** for large companies planning to list on **stock exchanges**.
- The **amendment** introduces a **graded framework**, allowing companies to offer a **smaller proportion of shares** to the public during their **Initial Public Offering (IPO)**.
- The **reform** was implemented through an **amendment to the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957**.

Government Boosts Financial Inclusion Through Key Flagship Schemes

- The **Government of India** launched the **National Mission for Financial Inclusion (NMFI)** under **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** in **August 2014** to provide **universal banking services** to every unbanked household, following the principles of **banking the unbanked**, **securing the unsecured**, and **funding the unfunded**.
- Under **PMJDY**, as on **02.2026**, **57.78 crore Jan-Dhan accounts** have been opened with a **deposit balance of Rs. 2,94,702 crore**, of which **32.21 crore (55.8%)** accounts belong to **women** and **45.17 crore (78.2%)** accounts are in **rural and semi-urban areas**.
- Under **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)**, as on **02.2026**, **26.88 crore cumulative enrolments** have been done, providing **life insurance cover of Rs. 2 lakh** for death due to any reason.

DCM Shriram Secures USD 90 Million from IFC via Sustainability-Linked Non-Convertible

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

Debentures

- **DCM Shriram Limited** secured **USD 90 million** funding from the **International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, the private sector arm of the **World Bank Group (WBG)**, through **Sustainability-Linked Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs)**.
- **Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs)** are **long-term debt instruments** issued by companies to raise funds from investors in the market.
- **NCDs** carry a **fixed rate of interest** and a **specified maturity period**, providing **stable and predictable returns** to investors.
- A **Non-Convertible Debenture** represents a **loan taken by a company** from investors, with an **obligation to pay periodic interest** and **repay the principal** at maturity.

Government, Reserve Bank of India and National Payments Corporation of India Drive Rapid Growth in Digital Payments

- **Digital payment transactions** in India have grown exponentially due to coordinated efforts of the **Government, Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, and **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**.

Key Highlights :

- The total **retail digital payment transactions** and growth rate over the last four financial years are:
- **FY 2021-22: 7,176.90 crore** transactions, **₹457.44 lakh crore**
- **FY 2022-23: 11,369.56 crore** transactions, **₹587.39 lakh crore** value; growth **Volume 58.42%**, **Value 28.41%**.
- **FY 2023-24: 16,416.02 crore** transactions, **₹719.37 lakh crore** value; growth **Volume 44.39%**, **Value 22.47%**.
- **FY 2024-25: 22,167.90 crore** transactions, **₹849.12 lakh crore** value; growth **Volume 35.04%**, **Value 18.04%**.
- The **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** accounted for **81%** of total retail digital payments in **FY2024-25**, making it the **largest real-time retail payment system** in the world.

World Bank Sanctions \$300 Million Loan for Uttar Pradesh Clean Air Programme

- The **World Bank** approved a **loan of USD 300 million** to support **Uttar Pradesh's** efforts to improve **air quality** through a **Clean Air Transition Programme**.
- The funding supports the **Uttar Pradesh Clean Air Management Program (UP CAMP)**, targeting pollution in **transport, agriculture, and industry sectors**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The initiative aims to strengthen **environmental sustainability** and generate **employment opportunities** for youth and women in the state.
- The programme focuses on **integrated interventions** across sectors:

About World Bank:

- The World Bank is an international financial institution that provides loans and grants to the governments of low and middle-income countries for the purpose of pursuing capital projects.
- The World Bank consists of 5 institutions: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), The International Development Association (IDA), The International Finance Corporation (IFC), The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).
- Founded Year: 1944
- Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States
- President: Ajay Banga
- Members: 189 countries

Shriram General Insurance Introduces New Indemnity-Based Health Insurance Plan

- **Shriram General Insurance Company (SGIC)** launched **Shri Health Suraksha 2.0**, an **upgraded health insurance plan** designed to provide **flexible and comprehensive medical coverage** while reducing **out-of-pocket expenses**.
- The plan addresses gaps in traditional health policies by removing restrictions and offering benefits such as **unlimited restoration of the sum insured** within a policy year.
- **Shri Health Suraksha 2.0** provides a **cumulative bonus of up to 250%** for claim-free years, increasing the **base sum insured** over time.
- The policy **eliminates room rent capping** and **ICU charge limits**, allowing policyholders to choose hospital rooms based on **medical necessity** without financial restrictions.

Reserve Bank of India Honoured with 'Initiative of the Year' Award for Launching '.bank.in' Domain

- The **Reserve Bank of India** won the **'Initiative of the Year'** award from **Central Banking** at the **13th annual Central Banking Awards** for its innovative **'.bank.in' domain rollout initiative**.
- The **'.bank.in' domain** was launched in **February 2025** to combat rising **cyber frauds** and enhance **security** in **India's digital financial ecosystem**.
- Only **RBI-licensed banks** are allowed to use the **exclusive and secure domain**, making **India the first country in the world** to mandate a **dedicated banking internet domain**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The Institute for Development and Research on Banking Technology (IDRBT) was appointed as the **sole registrar** for the **.bank.in** domain rollout.

Securities Board of India Suggests Streamlined Nomination Norms for Demat and Mutual Fund Accounts and Exchange

- **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has proposed changes to **nomination rules** for **demat accounts** and **mutual fund (MF) folios** to **simplify onboarding**, **reduce compliance burden**, and **align with banking norms**.
- Under the **new proposal**, **nomination** will be the **default option** for new accounts, and investors must **explicitly opt out** if they do not wish to appoint a nominee.
- The **number of nominees** will be **capped at four**, replacing the earlier proposal to allow up to ten nominees, due to **operational constraints** and **low usage** of multiple nominees.

Reserve Bank of India Compounds FEMA Violations by Metrocorp Infrastructure, Ending Directorate of Enforcement Proceedings

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has **compounded FEMA violations** by **Metrocorp Infrastructure Limited**, resulting in the **termination of adjudication proceedings** initiated by the **Directorate of Enforcement (ED)**.
- The **violations** were related to **non-compliance** under the **Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA)**, specifically **delays in reporting foreign inward remittances**.

Scapia Introduces 'Scapia Pay' UPI Service for Rewards on RuPay Credit Cards

- **Scapia** launched '**Scapia Pay**', an **in-application UPI payment service** that allows users to earn **rewards** on transactions made using **RuPay credit cards**.
- The initiative aims to integrate **daily payments, credit, and travel rewards** within a **unified platform**, enhancing **financial convenience** and **user engagement**.
- Users can link their **Scapia Federal RuPay** and **Scapia BOBCARD RuPay** credit cards to the app for **quick UPI payments** and earn benefits on **qualifying transactions**.

India's Cumulative Exports (Merchandise & Services) Rise 5.79% to US\$ 790.86 Billion in April–February FY26

- **Total Exports (Merchandise + Services)** for **April–February FY26** reached **US\$ 790.86 Billion**, up **5.79%** from **US\$ 747.58 Billion** in the previous year.
- **Total Imports** for **April–February FY26** stood at **US\$ 900.51 Billion**, registering a **growth of 7.37%** over the previous year.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- **Merchandise Exports** for April–February FY26 were **US\$ 402.93 Billion**, compared to **US\$ 395.66 Billion** last year, while **Merchandise Imports** were **US\$ 713.53 Billion**, up from **US\$ 657.46 Billion**.

Health Insurance Is Government Priority, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Targets Universal Coverage by 2033

- **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** stated that **health insurance** is a **priority of the government**, aiming to provide **insurance coverage for all by 2033**.
- A **major rural outreach plan** will cover **25,000 Gram Panchayats**, treating **villages as the basic unit** for **insurance coverage** under **IRDAI norms (2024)**.
- **India's insurance penetration** remains **low**, with **per capita premium at \$97**, compared to the **global average of \$943**.

NPCI International Payments Limited Extends India's UPI Payment Acceptance to Merchants in Sri Lanka

- **NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL)** expanded the **acceptance of India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** across **merchant establishments in Sri Lanka**.
- The **initiative** aims to improve **cross-border payment experiences** for **Indian tourists** and strengthen **economic and cultural ties** between **India and Sri Lanka**.
- **Indian tourists** can now make **real-time account-to-account payments** by scanning **Lanka Quick Response (QR) codes** through their preferred **UPI-enabled mobile applications**.

SBI Securities Introduces 'Women's Mode' Feature to Boost Women-Centric Investing

- **SBI Securities** launched **'Women's Mode'** on its **mobile app** to promote **women-centric investing**.
- The **feature** was developed under the **Infinity8 initiative** and **validated** using **feedback** from **6,000+ women investors**.
- **Women's Mode** offers **goal-based investment journeys**, **simplified investment tools**, and a **special brokerage plan** tailored for women.
- The **launch** aims to make **investing more accessible**, build **financial confidence**, and promote **independence** among **women investors**.
- The **feature** is based on **direct feedback** from women to enhance **decision-making clarity**.

Reserve Bank of India Revises Capital Adequacy Framework for Banks to Strengthen CCR Risk Management

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** amended its **capital adequacy framework** for commercial banks, providing clearer guidelines on **calculating and maintaining capital** against **Counterparty Credit Risk (CCR) exposures**.
- The **amendment** was issued under **Section 35A** of the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949** and became effective immediately on **March 10, 2026**.
- **Banks** must include **CCR exposures** of all consolidated entities while computing **capital requirements**.
- Under the **updated framework**, **equity contracts** carry **add-on factors** of **6%** for up to one year, **8%** for one to five years, and **10%** for over five years.

Reserve Bank of India Holds 622nd Central Board Meeting in Patna Under Governor Sanjay Malhotra

- The **622nd meeting** of the **Central Board of Directors** of **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** was held in **Patna** under the **Chairmanship** of **Governor Sanjay Malhotra**.
- The **Board** assessed the **emerging global and domestic economic scenario**, including **evolving geopolitical developments** and their impact on **financial markets**.
- During the meeting, the **Board** approved the **RBI's budget** for the **accounting year 2026-27**.
- The **Board** also approved the **Medium Term Strategy Framework (Utkarsh 3.0)** for the period **2026-29**.

Reserve Bank of India Imposes ₹3.10 Lakh Penalty on Cashfree Payments for Violating PA & PG Guidelines

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed a **monetary penalty** of **₹3.10 lakh** on **Cashfree Payments India Private Limited** for **non-compliance** with **RBI guidelines** on **Payment Aggregators (PAs)** and **Payment Gateways (PGs)**.
- The **penalty** was issued under the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**, specifically under **Section 30(1)** read with **Section 26(6)**.
- The action followed a **statutory inspection** covering the company's operations from **April 2024 to June 2025**, which revealed **regulatory deficiencies**.
- **RBI** issued a **show-cause notice** to the company, and after considering the company's reply and additional submissions, it sustained the **charge** related to **impermissible debits from the escrow account**, warranting the **penalty**.

Reserve Bank of India and Government Tighten Rules to Curb Illegal Digital Lending Apps

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** constituted a **Working Group on Digital Lending**, covering loans through **Online Platforms** and **Mobile Apps**.
- Based on the **Working Group's** recommendations, RBI issued regulatory guidelines on **digital lending** to strengthen the **regulatory framework**, enhance **customer protection**, and ensure a **safe digital lending ecosystem**.
- All **Regulated Entities (REs)** must **comply** with these **digital lending guidelines**, with **supervisory checks** conducted on a sample basis, and **enforcement action** initiated for **non-compliance**.
- **RBI** launched the **Digital Lending Apps (DLA) directory** on **July 1, 2025**, allowing users to **verify authorized digital lending apps** linked to **REs**.
- The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** can **block fraudulent loan apps** under **Section 69A of IT Act, 2000**, following due process under the **IT Rules, 2009**.
- The **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**, **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** proactively monitors **digital lending apps** and launched a **National Cybercrime Reporting Portal** and a **helpline number 1930** for reporting **illegal apps**.
- The **SACHET portal** and **State Level Coordination Committees (SLCCs)** facilitate citizens in **lodging complaints** against entities involved in **illegal deposit or collection of money**.

Securities and Exchange Board of India Permits Mutual Funds to Carry Out Intraday Borrowing Operations

- **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has **tightened rules** on **intraday borrowings** by **mutual funds** to manage **temporary cash mismatches** during **redemptions**.
- **Intraday borrowing** is used to bridge the **timing gap** between **morning redemption payouts (T+1)** and **evening inflows** from **TREPS (Triparty Repo in Government Securities)** and **reverse repo**.
- **SEBI** has **mandated** that **mutual funds** must frame a **formal intraday borrowing policy**, approved by the **AMC board and trustees**.

State Bank of India Raises ₹6,051 Crore via Basel III-Compliant Tier-2 Bond Issue

- The **State Bank of India (SBI)** raised **₹6,051 crore** through the issuance of **Basel III-compliant Tier-2 bonds**.
- The **bonds** carry a **coupon rate of 7.05%** and have a **tenor of 10 years**, with a **call option** after **5 years** and on each anniversary thereafter.

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- The **bonds** received **excellent investor response**, with **bids** of approximately **2 times** the **base issue size** of **₹5,000 crore**.

Edelweiss Asset Management Company Introduces India's First Hybrid Passive Index Fund

- **Edelweiss Asset Management Company (EAMC)** launched India's first hybrid passive index fund named **'Edelweiss Nifty LargeMidcap250 Plus 8–13 yr G-sec 70:30 Index Fund'**.
- The **fund** integrates **equities** and **Government Securities (G-Secs)** within a **unified index-based structure**.
- The **New Fund Offer (NFO)** is open for **subscription** from **March 18 to April 01, 2026**.
- The **fund** follows a **rule-based investment strategy** with **automatic monthly rebalancing** to maintain a **70:30 equity-debt allocation**.

Reserve Bank of India Revises Prudential Guidelines Linking Bank Dividend Payouts to CET1 Capital Ratios

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued **revised prudential directions** linking **dividend payouts** by **commercial banks** to their **CET1 (Common Equity Tier 1)** capital ratios, replacing guidelines issued in **November 2025**.
- The new framework is titled **"RBI (Commercial Banks – Prudential Norms on Declaration of Dividend and Remittances of Profits) Directions, 2026"**, which will take effect from **April 1, 2027**.

Jio Payments Bank Introduces Cardless UPI Cash Withdrawal at Business Correspondent Points

- **Jio Payments Bank (JPBL)**, a subsidiary of **Jio Financial Services**, has launched **UPI-based cash withdrawal** at **Business Correspondent (BC)** points.
- The **feature** allows **customers** to **withdraw cash** by **scanning a UPI QR code** and **authorising transactions** through **UPI apps**, **without debit cards or ATMs**.
- The **initiative** is particularly **beneficial for rural and semi-urban users**, improving **access to banking services** and **financial inclusion**.
- The **service** enables **cardless cash withdrawal**, **bridging the gap** between **digital payments** and **physical cash access**.

Government Launches Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions 2.0 (CGSMFI-2.0)

- The **Government of India** has introduced **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions-2.0 (CGSMFI-2.0)** to support lending to **small borrowers**.

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- The scheme provides **guarantee cover** to **Banks/FIs** through **National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC)** against expected losses on loans extended to Non-Banking Financial Company-Microfinance Institutions (NBFC-MFIs) **and MFIs**.
- **Eligible borrowers** include existing or new **small borrowers** as per the **RBI's microfinance regulatory definition**.
- **Guarantee coverage** under the scheme is **80% for small, 75% for medium, and 70% for large** NBFC-MFIs/MFIs.
- The **guarantee fee** is **0.50% per annum**, calculated on the **sanctioned amount** (1st year) and **outstanding amount** thereafter.

Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman Launches 'PRARAMBH 2026' — Nationwide Awareness Drive on Income Tax Act, 2025

- **Union Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman** launched **PRARAMBH 2026**, the Income Tax Department's nationwide awareness campaign on the **Income Tax Act, 2025**, in New Delhi.
- The campaign is a **multimedia initiative** spanning print, radio, television, outdoor, digital, and social media, designed to build awareness about key features of the **Income Tax Act, 2025**, effective from **01.04.2026**.
- The initiative includes **creative communication, guidance notes, tutorial videos, brochures**, and digital & on-ground engagement, including the **MyGov Quiz** initiative.

About Ministry of Finance:

- Cabinet Minister: Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman
- Minister of State (MoS): Shri Pankaj Chaudhary

Reserve Bank of India Imposes ₹31.80 Lakh Penalty on HSBC for Regulatory Non-Compliance

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed a **monetary penalty of ₹31.80 lakh** on **The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC)** for **non-compliance** with its directions.
- The penalty was levied due to non-compliance with RBI directions on **"Inoperative Accounts / Unclaimed Deposits in Banks – Revised Instructions."**

Agriculture Insurance Company of India Limited Introduces 'Krishi Sakhi' Initiative to Strengthen Women Farmers' Empowerment

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- **Agriculture Insurance Company of India Limited**, a **Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)** under the **Ministry of Finance (MoF)**, launched the '**Krishi Sakhi Initiative**'.
- The initiative aims to **empower women farmers**, enhance their **participation in agriculture**, and promote **crop insurance awareness**.
- The programme aligns with the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** declaration of **2026** as the **International Year of the Woman Farmer** by the **United Nations (UN)**.
- The initiative follows a **structured year-long approach** with **month-wise activities** across head office and regional offices.
- Key activities include **awareness campaigns, workshops, walkathons, articles, and interviews** to promote **agricultural participation** and **insurance literacy**.

World Trade Organization Trade Outlook 2026: Global Goods Trade Growth Expected to Ease to 1.9%

- The **World Trade Organization (WTO)** released its '**Global Trade Outlook and Statistics – March 2026**' report.
- The report projects **global merchandise trade growth** to **slow sharply to 1.9% in 2026**, down from **4.6% in 2025**.
- The **slowdown** is attributed to **geopolitical tensions in West Asia, normalization of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-related demand, and tariff-driven front-loading** of shipments.
- **Global merchandise trade growth** is expected to **recover to 2.6% in 2027**.

About World Trade Organization (WTO):

- **Founded:** 1 January 1995
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **Director-General:** Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (since 2021)
- **Membership:** 166 members (162 UN member states, the European Union, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan)

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade Releases NIRYAT Trade Data for FY 2024–25 under Commerce Ministry

- The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade**, under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I)**, released the **NIRYAT (National Import-Export Record for Yearly Analysis of Trade)** data for **FY 2024–25**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- As per the report, **Tamil Nadu** emerged as the **top textile-exporting state**, with exports worth **USD 7,997.17 million**, accounting for **21.84%** of India's total textile exports.
- **India's total textile exports** stood at **USD 36,610 million** in **FY25**.
- **Top exporting states** after Tamil Nadu include **Gujarat** (USD 5,646.01 million) and **Maharashtra** (USD 3,831.28 million).
- **NIRYAT portal**, launched in **2022** by **Narendra Modi**, provides **real-time comprehensive foreign trade data**.

Government Revises Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme to Boost MSME Manufacturing and Exports under Budget 2025-26

- The **Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs (MCGS-MSME)** was launched in **January 2025** to improve **credit access for MSMEs** through **National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC)**.
- The scheme provides **60% guarantee coverage** to **Member Lending Institutions (MLIs)** for loans up to **₹100 crore** for purchase of **plant and machinery**.
- **5% upfront contribution** by borrowers is now **refundable in instalments** from the **4th year**, subject to **satisfactory loan performance**.
- **Service sector MSMEs** are now included, and the **minimum machinery investment requirement** has been reduced to **60% of project cost**, making the scheme more flexible.
- The **guarantee tenure** is fixed at **10 years**, providing **long-term support for MSMEs**.
- **Exporter MSMEs** that have exported at least **25% of turnover** in each of the last three financial years are eligible for **special provisions** under the scheme.
- **Guaranteed loan amount** for eligible exporter MSMEs is up to **₹20 crore**.

Lloyd's of London to Launch Operations in GIFT City, Boosting India's Role as Regional Reinsurance Hub

- **Lloyd's of London** is set to **establish operations in GIFT City**, marking a major step in developing **India as a regional reinsurance hub**.
- The proposal is under review with the **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** under **IFSCA Insurance Business Regulations, 2021** to set up a **statutory insurance and reinsurance entity**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- **Lloyd's** is a leading underwriting marketplace dealing with **complex risks** in sectors like aviation, shipping, energy, and catastrophe insurance.
- As of **December 2025**, the number of **IFSC Insurance Offices (IIOs)** increased to **24** from **19**, while **Insurance Intermediary Offices (IIIOs)** reached **31**, up from **25**, highlighting growth in **GIFT City**.

Bank of Baroda Launches UPI-Based Overdraft Facility for Women SHG Members with PMJDY Accounts

- **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** has launched an **Overdraft (OD)** facility on **Credit Line via UPI** for verified **women Self-Help Group (SHG)** members holding **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** accounts.
- **BoB** becomes the **first bank in India** to introduce such a **UPI-based digital credit solution**.
- The facility allows eligible women to access up to **₹5,000 overdraft**, promoting **financial inclusion** and **women-led economic empowerment**.
- The initiative was launched by **Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan** during the **25th Central Level Coordination Committee (CLCC)** Meeting held in **Hyderabad**.
- The scheme is implemented in collaboration with **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, **Indian Banks' Association (IBA)**, and **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**.

RNFI Services Launches UPI QR-Based Cash Withdrawal Service Nationwide with Jio Payments Bank

- **RNFI Services**, through its platform **Relipay**, has launched a nationwide **UPI QR-based cash withdrawal service** in partnership with **Jio Payments Bank**.
- The service eliminates the need for **ATM cards or biometric authentication**, providing a simple and accessible **assisted banking solution**.
- The facility offers a **per transaction limit of ₹5,000**, a **daily limit of ₹10,000**, and a **monthly limit of ₹50,000**.
- The launch marks a significant expansion of **RNFI's assisted digital banking** offerings and strengthens its partnership with **Jio Payments Bank**.

About Jio Payments Bank Limited :

- It is operating since **2018**, is a subsidiary of **Jio Financial Services**

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- MD & CEO : Vinod Easwaran

Securities and Exchange Board of India Relaxes Rules for InvITs and REITs to Enhance Investment Efficiency

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has amended regulations for **Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs)** and **Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs)** to improve **operational flexibility** and **investment efficiency**.
- **InvITs** are now allowed to **continue holding investments** in **Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs)** even after the underlying infrastructure project is completed, easing **exit-related constraints**.
- A clear **exit timeline** has been introduced, requiring **InvITs** to exit or acquire **SPVs** within **one year**, with **regulatory approval delays** excluded and **enhanced disclosures** mandated.
- **SEBI** has allowed **privately listed InvITs** to invest up to **10% of assets** in **under-construction or greenfield projects**, increasing growth opportunities.

Reserve Bank of India, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India and Securities and Exchange Board of India Strengthen Frameworks to Facilitate Claiming of Unclaimed Financial Assets

- As on **February, 2026**, the total **unclaimed amount** transferred by **Public Sector Banks (PSBs)** to the **Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund** of **RBI** is **₹60,518 crore**, while the **unclaimed insurance amount** with insurers is **₹8,973.89 crore**, and the value of **unclaimed amounts in mutual funds** under **SEBI** regulations is **₹3,749.34 crore**.
- The **Financial Sector Regulators – Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)**, and **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** have undertaken measures to **identify rightful claimants**, reduce existing **unclaimed assets**, prevent fresh accretion, and **simplify the claim process** for citizens.
- **RBI** has issued consolidated **RBI Responsible Business Conduction Directions, 2025** for **settlement of claims** for deceased customers of banks.
- An **incentive scheme** effective from **1.10.2025** provides a **payout of 5%–7.5%** of the unclaimed deposit amount (subject to a cap) for **successful settlement of claims**.

Securities and Exchange Board of India Lowers Minimum Investment in Social Impact Funds to ₹1,000 and Relaxes Rules for NPOs on Social Stock Exchanges

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has reduced the **minimum investment threshold** in **Social Impact Funds (SIFs)** from **₹2 lakh to ₹1,000**, making them accessible to **retail investors**.
- **SIFs** are a subcategory of **Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs)** that channel investments into **social enterprises** and **impact-driven projects**.
- The move aligns **SIF investment norms** with **Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP)** instruments listed on **Social Stock Exchanges (SSEs)**.
- **SEBI** has approved an **extension of registration validity** for **NPOs** on the SSE from **two years to three years** without the requirement to raise funds during this period.
- The extension for **NPOs** is subject to approval by the **social stock exchanges**.

Reserve Bank of India and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Enhance Oversight and Governance Framework for Cooperative Banks

- The **regulatory and supervisory framework** of **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** and **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** ensures that **cooperative banks** operate with **financial transparency**.
- The **Banking Regulation Act** has been amended to **limit the term of Board of Directors** of cooperative banks (excluding Chairperson and Whole-time directors) to a **maximum of 10 consecutive years**.
- The **Multi-State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) Act, 2002** was amended to include the appointment of a **Cooperative Ombudsman** to address complaints or appeals from members regarding **deposits, equitable benefits, or individual rights**.
- A **Cooperative Election Authority** has been established to **strengthen governance and accountability** by conducting free and fair elections in all **Multi-State Cooperative Societies**.

Reserve Bank of India Announces Schedule of Monetary Policy Committee Meetings for FY 2026-2027

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** announced the **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** meeting schedule for **FY 2026-2027**, with the **first meeting on April 6-8, 2026**, and the final meeting on **February 3-5, 2027**.
- The **second MPC meeting** will be held on **June 3-5, 2026**, the **third on August 3-5, 2026**, and the **fourth on October 5-7, 2026**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The **RBI Act, 1934**, was amended by the **Finance Act, 2016**, providing a **statutory framework** for the **MPC**.
- Under **Section 45ZB**, the **Central Government** constitutes a **six-member MPC**, responsible for fixing the **benchmark policy rate (repo rate)** to contain **inflation** within the specified target.
- **Current MPC members** include: **Governor of RBI – Sanjay Malhotra** (Chairperson, ex officio), **Deputy Governor – Poonam Gupta**, **Executive Director – Indranil Bhattacharyya**, **Ram Singh**, **Saugata Bhattacharya**, and **Nagesh Kumar**, with a **term of four years**.
- The **MPC** is required to meet **at least four times a year**, with a **quorum of four members**, and each member has **one vote**, while the **Governor has a casting vote** in case of equality.

Securities and Exchange Board of India Proposes Gift Cards and Prepaid Payment Instruments for Mutual Fund Investments to Enhance Financial Inclusion

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has proposed allowing **gift cards / prepaid payment instruments (PPIs)** for investing in **mutual funds** to boost **financial inclusion**.
- Under the proposal, individuals can purchase **gift PPIs** and transfer them to recipients, who can then use them to **invest in mutual fund units**.
- Each **gift PPI** will have a **validity of one year** from the date of issuance, ensuring timely utilisation.
- **Funding of PPIs** will be allowed only via **electronic bank transfer or UPI** from an **Indian bank account**, reducing misuse and enhancing **traceability**.
- A **cap** has been proposed where **total investments** through gift PPIs cannot exceed **₹50,000 per investor annually**.

Karnataka Grameena Bank Honoured with National Award for Outstanding Self-Help Groups-Bank Linkage 2024-25

- The **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)** conferred the **National Award for Outstanding Performance in Self-Help Groups (SHG)-Bank Linkage 2024-25** to **Karnataka Grameena Bank (KGB)** for its significant contribution to **rural economic empowerment** and **financial inclusion**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The **award** was presented by **Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan**, MoRD, to **V. M. Rukmini Devi**, General Manager (GM) of KGB, during the **National Conference on Financial Literacy and Capacity Building** and the **25th Central Level Coordination Committee (CLCC)** meeting held in **Hyderabad, Telangana**.

About Karnataka Grameena Bank :

- **KGB** is a **Regional Rural Bank (RRB)** formed on **1 May 2025** through the **amalgamation** of **Karnataka Gramin Bank** and **Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank**, headquartered in **Ballari, Karnataka**, and **sponsored by Canara Bank**.
- Headquarters : Ballari, Karnataka, India
- Chairman : Sri Shrikant M Bhandiwad
- Owner : Government of India (50%), Government of Karnataka (15%), Canara Bank (35%)

Securities and Exchange Board of India Approves Key Regulatory Reforms at 213th Board Meeting in Mumbai

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** approved a wide-ranging set of **regulatory changes** covering **market intermediaries, foreign investors, alternative investment funds (AIF)**, and **governance norms** at its **213th board meeting** held in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.
- **Social Impact Fund (SIF)** is a **sub-category of Category-I AIF** introduced in **July 2022**, which primarily invests in **Not-for-Profit (NPOs)** registered or listed on the **Social Stock Exchange (SSE)** and in **for-profit social enterprises**.
- **SEBI** amended the **AIF Regulations, 2012**, to reduce the minimum investment value by individual investors in **SIFs of AIF** from **Rs 2 lakh to Rs 1,000**.

Reserve Bank of India Revises Guidelines to Limit Liability in Unauthorised Electronic Banking Transactions

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued instructions in **2017** on **limiting customer liability** in **unauthorised electronic banking transactions**.
- In view of rapid adoption of technology in banking and payments, **RBI reviewed its instructions** and issued **revised instructions**, including a **compensation mechanism** for small value **fraudulent transactions**, for public/stakeholder consultation.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The **Indian Digital Payment Intelligence Corporation (IDPIC)** was incorporated as a **Section 8 company** under the **Companies Act, 2013**.
- The primary mandate of **IDPIC** is to **detect, prevent, and analyse fraud** in India's **digital payments ecosystem** in **real time** using **Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and Big Data Analytics**.

Razorpay Teams Up with Sarvam AI to Introduce Voice-First Multilingual Digital Commerce in India

- **Razorpay**, an Indian fintech company, partnered with **Sarvam AI**, an Indian AI startup, to introduce **voice-led, multilingual digital commerce solutions** in India.
- The collaboration enables users to **discover products, place orders, and complete payments** through **voice commands** in their preferred language.
- **Razorpay** also partnered with **Gnani.ai**, an Indian AI startup, focusing on a more **specific voice-commerce use case**.
- **Sarvam AI**, based in **Bengaluru**, develops **speech, language, and multimodal AI systems** tailored for **Indian languages** and use cases.

L&T Finance Joins United Nations Global Compact as Signatory

- **L&T Finance Limited. (LTF)** has become a **signatory** to the **United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)**, strengthening its **sustainability** and **Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)** framework.
- The move reaffirms **LTF's ethical practices** and aligns its **long-term strategy** with **UNGC principles** on **human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption**.
- **LTF** will **report annually** on its progress in implementing the **Ten Principles of the Global Compact** as part of its participation in the **UNGC**.
- **LTF** is also a **signatory** to the **Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF)** to **measure and manage financed emissions**.

About L&T Finance Ltd :

- **L&T Finance Ltd. (LTF)**, formerly **L&T Finance Holdings Ltd. (LTFH)**, is a leading **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)** in India, offering a range of financial products and services.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- Headquartered in Mumbai, LTF has been rated 'AAA', the highest credit rating, by four leading domestic rating agencies.

Goldman Sachs Cuts India's Gross Domestic Product Growth Projection for CY26 to 5.9%

- Goldman Sachs has lowered India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast for 2026 to 5.9%, down from 7% before the US-Iran conflict.
- They had earlier reduced it to 6.5 per cent in March; the revision follows rising crude oil prices due to supply disruptions, especially near the Strait of Hormuz.
- The investment bank expects Brent crude to average \$105 per barrel in March and \$115 in April if the disruption continues until mid-April.

Health Insurance Sector Shows Strong Growth Momentum; Premiums Cross ₹1.2 Lakh Crore in 2024–25

- India's health insurance sector is witnessing robust growth of around 9%, with total premiums exceeding ₹1.2 lakh crore in 2024–25, driven by rising awareness and increasing demand for financial protection.
- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has introduced strict timelines for cashless health insurance claim processing to ensure efficiency.
- Under IRDAI norms, cashless pre-authorization must be completed within 1 hour, ensuring quick approval at the time of hospital admission.

S&P Global Raises India's FY27 Gross Domestic Product Growth Forecast to 7.1% with Improved Outlook

- S&P Global has raised India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) forecast by 40 basis points (bps) to 7.1% for FY27, reflecting strong economic momentum despite global uncertainties.
- For FY28, S&P Global increased the growth projection by 20 bps to 7.2%, indicating continued economic expansion.
- For FY29, the agency projected 7.0% GDP growth, also revised upward by 20 bps, showing medium-term growth stability.
- Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation is projected to rise to 4.3% in FY27, compared to 2.5% in FY26, reflecting normalisation of inflation levels.

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- **HDFC Securities Limited** launched a next-generation trading platform “NxtOption” for retail investors to analyse, build, and execute Futures & Options (F&O) strategies.
- **NxtOption** is an integrated platform that combines strategy building, real-time analytics, and trade execution into a single interface, eliminating fragmented workflows.

Securities and Exchange Board of India and Google Introduce ‘Verified’ Badge for Investment Apps to Curb Digital Fraud

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has partnered with **Google** to introduce a ‘verified’ badge for investment apps on the **Play Store**, aimed at combating rising digital financial frauds and scams.
- The **verified badge** will be issued **only to SEBI-registered entities**, enabling users to identify **genuine stock broker and financial apps**, with the feature already rolled out for over **600 apps**.
- The move addresses the **rise in fake investment apps, lookalike platforms, and social media-driven scams**, where fraudsters lure investors with **false promises of assured returns**.

Japan International Cooperation Agency Inks Four ODA Loan Deals Worth ₹16,420 Crore to Support Major Development Projects in India

- **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** signed **Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan agreements** worth **₹16,420 crore** with the **Government of India (GoI)** for **4 major projects**.
- The **agreement** was signed in **New Delhi** between **Alok Tiwari** (Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs) and **Takeuchi Takuro** (Chief Representative, **JICA India Office**).
- The **projects** cover key sectors including **healthcare, agriculture, and urban infrastructure** across **Punjab, Maharashtra, and Karnataka**.

National Highways Authority of India-Backed Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust Listed on BSE in Presence of Union Minister Nitin Gadkari

- **Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari** launched the **Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust (RIIT)**, sponsored by the **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)**, which was listed on the **Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The maiden public issue of RIIT witnessed a highly successful response, being oversubscribed nearly 14 times, reflecting strong investor confidence in India's infrastructure sector and highway assets.
- The RIIT aims to monetise national highway assets, with a target to monetise 1,500 km of highways over the next 3 years, strengthening infrastructure financing mechanisms.

Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority and Digital India BHASHINI Division Ink Memorandum of Understanding to Enhance Multilingual Access in Pension Services

- The Digital India BHASHa Interface for India (BHASHINI) Division (DIBD) under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) under Ministry of Finance (MoF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under the initiative “BHASHINI for Seva–Sanchalan”.
- The objective of the MoU is to enhance multilingual accessibility of pension services across India, improving inclusion and outreach.
- The initiative enables pension service access in all 22 Eighth Schedule languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, and Sanskrit, expanding reach to rural, informal sector, and first-time pension savers.
- BHASHINI acts as a Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) using APIs and Artificial Intelligence (AI) models for real-time translation and contextual language processing.

About PFRDA:

- Established: 2003 (Statutory status from PFRDA Act, 2013)
- Under which Ministry: Ministry of Finance, Government of India
- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Chairman: Sivasubramanian Ramann
- The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) is a statutory body under the Government of India, responsible for regulating, promoting, and developing the pension sector in India.

Department of Financial Services Reviews Unsatisfied CPGRAMS Complaints Against Banks and Insurers to Strengthen Ethical Governance

- The Department of Financial Services (DFS), under the chairmanship of the Secretary (Financial Services), has been conducting video conferences since 2024 with Reserve Bank of India, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India, Public & Private Sector

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

Banks, Insurance Companies, Financial Institutions, and **20 randomly selected CPGRAMS complainants**.

- Till date, **18 such meetings** have been conducted, reviewing a total of **360 grievances**, with the objective of assessing **grievance redressal efficiency** through a ‘**dip-stick survey**’ at the highest level.

Nippon India ETF Gold BeES Secures 6th Position Globally in Gold ETF Fund Inflows

- **Nippon India ETF Gold BeES**, the flagship fund of **Nippon India Mutual Fund**, ranked **6th globally** among the top 15 gold ETFs by fund flows, as per the **World Gold Council**.
- The **ETF** recorded strong inflows of **USD 1,085.2 million (≈6.6 tonnes of gold demand)** as of **28 February 2026**, making it the **only Indian ETF** in the global top 10.
- The fund holds a total of **36.2 tonnes of gold**, highlighting its strong position as a leading **gold investment vehicle** in India.
- The ranking is based on data compiled by the **World Gold Council**, **Bloomberg**, and company filings, reflecting **global ETF fund flow trends**.

Reserve Bank of India Issues Master Direction on Unique Identifiers in Financial Markets, 2026 to Streamline and Consolidate Regulatory Framework

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued the **Master Direction – Unique Identifiers in Financial Markets, 2026** to consolidate multiple circulars into a **single comprehensive framework** for improved clarity and compliance.
- The **primary objective** is to enhance **transparency, traceability, and quality of financial data**, thereby strengthening **risk management** and **regulatory oversight** in financial markets.
- The framework is based on two **global identifiers**: **Legal Entity Identifier (LEI)** and **Unique Transaction Identifier (UTI)** for **standardised reporting** of financial transactions.
- The **Legal Entity Identifier (LEI)** is a **20-character alphanumeric code** that uniquely identifies entities participating in financial transactions, helping regulators **track counterparties** and **reduce systemic risk**.
- The **LEI is mandatory** for all entities (**excluding individuals**) undertaking **OTC transactions** in markets such as **government securities, money market instruments, foreign exchange, and derivatives**.

Reserve Bank of India Unveils Payments Vision 2028, Continuing Long-Standing Roadmap for Payment System Development

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- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** released **Payments Vision 2028**, continuing its practice of issuing **strategic payment system roadmaps** since 2001.
- The **Payments Vision 2028** will guide India's payment systems development till **December 2028**, covering **15 key initiatives**.
- The Vision focuses on **user empowerment, fraud prevention, cross-border payment efficiency**, and **ease of doing business**.
- The **core theme** of the document is "**Shaping India's Payment Frontier**", emphasising both **strengthening existing systems** and **driving future innovations**.

Oriental Insurance Company Limited Achieves ₹20,000 Crore Gross Premium Milestone in FY 2025–26

- The **Oriental Insurance Company Limited (OICL)** crossed **₹20,000 crore** in **Gross Premium** for **FY 2025–26**, reflecting strong trust of policyholders, intermediaries, and stakeholders in **public sector insurance**.
- The achievement aligns with the **Government of India's** goal to promote **financial inclusion** and ensure **Insurance for All by 2047**.

Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs Conducts Outreach Programme in New Delhi on Duty Deferment Scheme for Eligible Manufacturer Importers

- The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC)** organised a hybrid outreach programme in **New Delhi** on the **Duty Deferment Scheme for Eligible Manufacturer Importers (EMI)** under the **Union Budget 2026–27** trade facilitation initiative.
- The programme focused on explaining the **EMI Scheme**, with participation from senior officials including **Shri Yogendra Garg (Member, Customs, CBIC)** and other **Chief Commissioners of Customs** along with industry stakeholders and trade bodies.
- The scheme promotes a **trust-based compliance approach** aimed at **faster customs clearances, reduced dwell time**, and **improved trade efficiency**.

Government of India Retains 4% Inflation Target for 2026–31 Period

- The **Government of India (GoI)** has retained the **inflation target at 4%** for the next **5 years** (April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2031).

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- This marks the **second consecutive instance** of keeping the inflation target **unchanged**, after a similar decision in March 2021.
- The decision was notified by the **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance (MoF)** in consultation with the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**.
- The decision has been taken under **Section 45ZA of the RBI Act, 1934**, which empowers the government to set the inflation target.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Lowers India's Financial Year 2026-27 Growth Forecast to 6.1%

- The **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development** released its **OECD Economic Outlook, Interim Report – March 2026** titled “Testing Resilience”.
- The **OECD** projected that **India's economy** will grow at **6.1% in FY 2026-27 (FY27)**.
- The **growth forecast for FY27** has been revised **downward by 10 basis points (bps)** from the earlier estimate of 6.2%, citing **global uncertainty**.

Securities and Exchange Board of India Approves Lakshya Asset Management Company to Start Mutual Fund Business

- **Lakshya Asset Management Company (AMC)** has received approval from the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** to commence its **Mutual Fund (MF)** business in India.
- The AMC is sponsored by **Wealth First Portfolio Managers**, a publicly listed wealth management company on the **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** and **Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)**.

Government Finalises Borrowing Plan for first half of Financial Year 2026–27

- The **Government of India (GoI)**, in consultation with the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, has finalised the **borrowing programme for the first half (H1) of Financial Year (FY) 2026–27**.
- The **Gross Market Borrowing (Budget Estimate 2026–27)** was set at **₹17.20 lakh crore**, which was later reduced to **₹16.09 lakh crore** due to **G-Sec switch operations**.
- Out of the total **₹16.09 lakh crore** borrowing plan, **₹8.20 lakh crore (51.0%)** will be raised in **H1 FY27** through issuance of **dated securities**.
- The **H1 borrowing** includes **₹15,000 crore** worth of **Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs)** to support **green financing initiatives**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The borrowing will be conducted through **26 weekly auctions**, ensuring **smooth and phased market mobilisation**.

Reserve Bank of India imposes ₹3.10 lakh penalty on Pine Labs Limited for regulatory non-compliance

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed a **monetary penalty of ₹3.10 lakh** on **Pine Labs Limited** for **non-compliance with regulatory guidelines**.
- The penalty was imposed for violations of RBI directions related to **Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs)**.
- The RBI exercised its powers under **Section 30(1) read with Section 26(6) of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007** to impose the penalty.

Reserve Bank of India sets ₹2.5 lakh crore Ways and Means Advances limit for H1 FY 2026–27 in consultation with Government of India

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, in consultation with the **Government of India**, has fixed the **Ways and Means Advances (WMA) limit** at **₹2,50,000 crore** for the **first half of FY 2026–27 (April–September 2026)**.
- The **Ways and Means Advances (WMA)** is a **temporary loan facility** provided by **RBI** to the government to manage **short-term mismatches** between **receipts and expenditures**.
- The **RBI** may initiate **fresh market borrowings (floatation of government securities)** when **75% of the WMA limit** is utilised, ensuring **fiscal liquidity management**.

99.92% of India's villages have banking access within 5 km radius via branches, Business Correspondents, and India Post Payments Bank outlets

- The **Government of India** aims to ensure the availability of a **banking outlet (Bank branch / Business Correspondent (BC) / India Post Payments Bank (IPPB))** within **5 kilometres** of all **inhabited villages** in the country.
- The coverage of **banking infrastructure** is monitored through a **Geographic Information System (GIS)-based application** called the **Jan Dhan Darshak (JDD) App**.
- As per data uploaded on the **JDD App**, about **99.92% of villages** in India are covered with **banking outlets** within a **5 km radius** as on **06 March 2026**.
- In the **Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli**, **100% villages** are covered with **banking access** within **5 km**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

Reserve Bank of India imposes ₹58.50 lakh penalty on Bank of India for regulatory violations

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed a monetary penalty of ₹58.50 lakh on Bank of India for regulatory non-compliance.
- The violations were related to RBI directions on Priority Sector Lending (PSL) – Targets and Classification and Interest Rate on Deposits.
- The penalty was imposed under Section 47A(1)(c) read with Sections 46(4)(i) and 51(1) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

About Bank of India:

- Founded: 1906
- Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Managing Director & CEO: Rajneesh Karnatak
- Tagline: "Relationships Beyond Banking"

Reserve Bank of India issues directions on Net Open Position in INR (NOP-INR) for Authorised Dealers under Risk Management Master Direction

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued directions on Net Open Position in INR (NOP-INR) for Authorised Dealers (ADs) under the Master Direction on Risk Management and Inter-Bank Dealings (July 05, 2016).
- As per the Master Direction, the RBI is empowered to set limits on open positions in Indian Rupee (INR) to manage exchange rate volatility based on prevailing market conditions.
- Exercising this authority, the RBI has introduced a specific cap on NOP-INR positions for Authorised Dealers operating in the onshore deliverable foreign exchange market.

Securities and Exchange Board of India extends suspension of derivatives trading in seven agricultural commodities till March 31, 2027

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has extended the suspension of trading in derivatives of seven agricultural commodities till 31 March 2027.
- The affected commodities include wheat, moong, paddy (non-basmati), chana, crude palm oil, mustard seeds, and soybean, along with their derivative contracts.
- The suspension was originally imposed in December 2021 and has been extended multiple times due to ongoing concerns regarding market stability.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The decision aims to **curb excessive speculation and volatility** in **essential agricultural commodities** that significantly influence **food prices and inflation**.

Government and Reserve Bank of India initiatives ensure smooth and uninterrupted flow of rural credit access

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** aims to maintain **sufficient liquidity** in the banking system to ensure that the **productive requirements** of the economy, including the **rural sector**, are met and that **monetary policy transmission** to market rates remains effective.
- The Government has taken various measures to ensure **uninterrupted rural credit flow**, especially for **Self Help Groups (SHGs)** and **rural development initiatives**.
- The **RBI Priority Sector Lending (PSL)** guidelines and **Government Ground Level Agriculture Credit (GLC)** targets act as key instruments for expanding **Kisan Credit Card (KCC) coverage** and enhancing **institutional credit** to farmers.

AWARDS AND HONOUR

Mangaluru International Airport Wins 2025 Airport Service Quality Award for Best Airport at Arrivals Globally

- **Mangaluru International Airport** won the **2025 Airport Service Quality Award for Best Airport at Arrivals – Globally**, presented by **Airports Council International World**.
- This marks the **second consecutive year (2024 and 2025)** that the airport has secured this global recognition.
- Only **six airports worldwide** were selected in this category in 2025.

Indian Women's Cricket Team Nominated for 2026 Laureus World Team of the Year Award

- The **India women's national cricket team** has been nominated for the **Laureus World Team of the Year Award 2026** following their historic victory at the **ICC Women's World Cup** held in India.
- This nomination marks a **landmark moment for Indian sport**, as it is the **first time a women's cricket team has been nominated in this category**.
- The team secured their **maiden ICC Women's World Cup title** in 2025.
- Led by **Harmanpreet Kaur**, the team delivered an outstanding performance throughout the tournament.

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Safeena Husain Featured in TIME Women of the Year 2026 List

- **Safeena Husain**, Founder of the Non-Profit Organisation **Educate Girls**, was featured in the **TIME Women of the Year** list for her contribution to girls' education and social equity.
- She was recognised alongside Indian-origin leaders **Reshma Kewalramani** and **Reshma Saujani** for their impact in biotechnology and social advocacy.
- Other honourees include **Teyana Taylor**, **Lucy Liu**, **Brandi Carlile**, **Sheryl Lee Ralph**, **Chloé Zhao**, and Olympic gold medallist **Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone**.

Mattel Launches Barbie Dream Team 2026 to Celebrate International Women's Day

- **Mattel** launched the **Barbie Dream Team 2026** to celebrate **International Women's Day**, observed annually on **8 March**.
- The initiative is a **month-long global campaign** that recognizes **influential women who have created history in their respective fields**.
- As part of the campaign, **Mattel created one-of-a-kind Barbie dolls in the likeness of selected global female role models** to honour their achievements.
- The **Barbie Dream Team 2026** highlights women who have **broken barriers and inspired young people to pursue ambitious dreams**.

Rashmika Mandanna Wins Best Actress at Telangana Gaddar Film Awards

- **Rashmika Mandanna** won the **Best Actress** award at the **Telangana Gaddar Film Awards** for her performance in the Telugu film **The Girlfriend**.
- The **Telangana Gaddar Film Awards** are state-backed honours introduced by the **Telangana Film Development Corporation** and supported by the **Government of Telangana** to recognize excellence in **Telugu cinema**.
- These awards were **instituted in 2025** to honour outstanding contributions by actors, directors, films and technicians in the Telugu film industry.
- The awards are named after revolutionary Telugu poet **Gaddar**, acknowledging his cultural and artistic influence.

International Women's Day 2026 Celebrated Across Maharashtra with Guinness World Record

Lezim Dance

- **International Women's Day 2026** was celebrated across **Maharashtra** with various events such as **rallies, sports competitions, awareness campaigns and cultural performances** under the theme **"Give to Gain."**
- Several districts organised **marathons, bike rallies, sports events and vaccination drives** to promote **women's empowerment, health awareness and community participation**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- A major highlight of the celebrations was a Guinness World Record Lezim dance performance held in Dombivli.

Amol Palekar to Receive META Lifetime Achievement Award 2026

- Veteran actor and filmmaker **Amol Palekar** will be honoured with the **META Lifetime Achievement Award 2026** at the **Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META)**.
- The award recognises his **outstanding contribution to Indian theatre, cinema and storytelling over several decades**.
- The honour will be presented during the **21st edition of the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards**, scheduled to be held in **New Delhi** from **19 March to 25 March 2026**.
- The **Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META)** is one of **India's most prestigious theatre festivals celebrating excellence in stage performances**.

Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation Wins Governance Now 12th Public Sector Undertaking National Award for 'Dhwani Spandana' Innovation

- The **Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation** received the **Governance Now 12th PSU National Award** in the **"Excellence in Innovation"** category for its initiative **Dhwani Spandana**.
- **Dhwani Spandana – Onboard Bus Identification and Navigation System** is an assistive technology designed to help visually impaired passengers identify buses and travel independently.

Vairamuthu Awarded Jnanpith Award 2025

- Renowned Tamil poet and lyricist **Vairamuthu** has been awarded the **Jnanpith Award for 2025**, India's **highest literary honour**.
- The award recognises his **decades-long contribution to Tamil literature, poetry, and film lyrics**.
- The Jnanpith Award is presented annually to authors for exceptional work in Indian languages.
- Vairamuthu is widely known for his **powerful poetry, literary writings, and thousands of song lyrics in Tamil cinema**.

98th Academy Awards (Oscars 2026) Held in Los Angeles

- The **98th edition of the Academy Awards (Oscars 2026)** was held at the **Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles, United States**.
- The ceremony honoured the **best films released in 2025 across 24 award categories**.
- The event was hosted by **Conan O'Brien**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The film **One Battle After Another** dominated the awards ceremony by **winning six Oscars**, including **Best Picture and Best Director**.
- The film **Sinners** received the **highest number of nominations (16)** at the ceremony and secured **four awards**.
- **Best Picture:** *One Battle After Another*.
- **Best Actor:** **Michael B. Jordan** for the film *Sinners*.
- **Best Actress:** **Jessie Buckley** for the film *Hamnet*.
- **Best Director:** **Paul Thomas Anderson** for the film *One Battle After Another*.
- **Best Supporting Actor:** **Sean Penn** for the film *One Battle After Another*, marking his **third Academy Award**.
- **Best Supporting Actress:** **Amy Madigan** for the film *Weapons*.
- **Best Original Screenplay:** **Ryan Coogler** for the film *Sinners*.
- **Best Adapted Screenplay:** **Paul Thomas Anderson** for the film *One Battle After Another*.
- **Other Major Winners:**
 - **Best Animated Feature:** *KPop Demon Hunters*
 - **Best International Feature:** *Sentimental Value*
 - **Best Documentary Feature:** *Nobody Against Putin*
 - **Best Visual Effects:** *Avatar: Fire and Ash*
 - **Best Sound:** *F1*
 - **Best Original Score:** *Sinners*
- The Norwegian film *Sentimental Value* won the **Best International Feature Film award**.
- A **tie occurred in the Best Live Action Short Film category** during the ceremony.
- **Autumn Durald Arkapaw** became the **first woman to win the Best Cinematography award** in the history of the Academy Awards.
- The **Academy introduced a new award category for Best Casting** during the ceremony.
- The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which organises the Academy Awards, recognises excellence in acting, directing, screenwriting, and filmmaking, making the Oscars the most prestigious honours in the global film industry.

Indian Animated Film 'CHYIMI' Wins Best Director Award at New York Short Animation Festival 2026

- The animated short film **CHYIMI**, directed by **Partha Sarathi Mahanta**, won the **Best Director Award at the New York Short Animation Festival 2026**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The achievement highlights the growing global recognition of Indian and Assamese animation storytelling on international platforms.
- Partha Sarathi Mahanta, a senior police officer, is currently serving as Inspector General of Police in Assam and Commissioner of Police in Guwahati.

Sahitya Akademi Announces Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 for 24 Indian Languages

- The **Sahitya Akademi**, India's National Academy of Letters, announced the **Sahitya Akademi Award 2025**, recognising **outstanding literary works in 24 Indian languages**.
- The award honours **8 poetry collections, 4 novels, 6 short story collections, 2 essay books, 1 literary criticism work, 1 autobiography and 2 memoirs**.
- The selection process began in January 2025 when Sahitya Akademi issued an open call for nominations for literary works in recognised languages.

About Sahitya Akademi

- The **Sahitya Akademi**, established in **1954**, is India's **national institution dedicated to promoting literature, translation, publishing and cultural exchange across multiple Indian languages**.
- The **Sahitya Akademi Award** is considered one of the most prestigious literary honours in India, recognising **outstanding books published in 24 recognised Indian languages**.

William Dalrymple Wins Mark Lynton History Prize 2026 for 'The Golden Road'

- Renowned historian **William Dalrymple** has been awarded the **Mark Lynton History Prize 2026** for his book **The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World**.
- The prize recognises **outstanding historical writing that combines rigorous research with engaging narrative style**.
- The award carries a **cash prize of 10,000 United States dollars** and is presented annually to works that demonstrate both **scholarly excellence and literary quality**.
- The jury praised the book for reframing global history by placing ancient India at the centre of international trade, cultural exchange and intellectual **development**, challenging narratives that focus primarily on the Silk Road.

William Dalrymple Wins Mark Lynton History Prize 2026 for *The Golden Road*

- **William Dalrymple** won the **Mark Lynton History Prize 2026** for his book **The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World**.
- The award recognizes **outstanding historical writing** that combines **deep research with engaging storytelling**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The prize carries a **cash award of USD 10,000** and is presented annually for works demonstrating **scholarly excellence and literary quality**.

Rituparna Sengupta Receives Women Empowerment Award at House of Commons United Kingdom (UK) in 2026

- Indian actress **Rituparna Sengupta** was honoured with the **Women Empowerment Award** at the **House of Commons, United Kingdom (UK)** in **2026**.
- The award was presented in recognition of her **contribution to art and culture**, on the occasion of **International Women’s Day (8 March)**.
- The honour was presented by Seema Malhotra and Virendra Sharma during a special ceremony organised in **London, United Kingdom**.
- The event was organised by **GloWomen Community Interest Company (CiC)** to recognise **women achievers across multiple sectors**.

Kaveh Madani Named Stockholm Water Prize 2026 Laureate; N. Chandrasekaran Conferred Honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire

- **Kaveh Madani**, Director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health, was **named the Stockholm Water Prize 2026 Laureate**.
- The announcement was made during the **World Water Day (22 March 2026)** event held at the UNESCO Headquarters in **Paris, France**.
- At **44 years of age**, he became the **youngest recipient in the 35-year history** of the Stockholm Water Prize.
- He is also the **first United Nations official** and the **first former politician** to receive the award.

Bhupathiraju Anmish Varma Sets Guinness World Record for Fastest Climb of Seven Volcanic Summits

- **Bhupathiraju Anmish Varma**, a native of **Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**, created history by setting a **Guinness World Records** record for the **fastest time to climb the Seven Volcanic Summits (male category)**.
- He completed the challenge in **92 days, 4 hours and 45 minutes**, setting a new global benchmark.
- He began the expedition from **Mount Elbrus (Europe)** on **23 October 2024** and completed the journey at **Mount Sidley (Antarctica)** on **23 January 2025**.

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Kalpana Soren Conferred Women Empowerment Trailblazer Award at BRICS CCI WE Summit 2026

- **Kalpana Soren**, Member of Legislative Assembly from **Gandey, Jharkhand**, was honoured with the **Women Empowerment Trailblazer Award 2026**.
- The award was presented during the **BRICS CCI WE Annual Women Summit and Felicitation 2026** held in **New Delhi**.
- The recognition was given for her **contribution to promoting women-led development and grassroots empowerment**, particularly in **rural and tribal areas of Jharkhand**.
- The Women Empowerment Trailblazer Award honours individuals who have made significant contributions to women's empowerment at the grassroots level.

Balakrishna Honoured With Lifetime Achievement Award At International Film Festival of Delhi 2026

- Veteran Telugu actor **Nandamuri Balakrishna** was honoured with the **Lifetime Achievement Award** at the **International Film Festival of Delhi 2026**, recognising his 50-year contribution to Indian cinema.
- The award ceremony was held at **Bharat Mandapam**, a key venue for international events.

Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards 2026 Presented; 24 Journalists Honoured Across 19 Categories

- The **Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards 2026** recognised **24 journalists** across **19 categories** for their outstanding contributions to **Indian journalism**.
- The awards were presented in **New Delhi** by the **Vice-President of India**, C. P. Radhakrishnan, who highlighted the **critical role of journalism in safeguarding democracy**.
- The awards are instituted by the Ramnath Goenka Foundation and honour **fearless reporting across print, digital and broadcast platforms**.

CURRENT AFFAIRS : PERSON IN NEWS

Indian Institute of Science Professor Arpita Patra Becomes Second Indian Woman to Climb Nevado Ojos del Salado, World's Tallest Volcano

- **Arpita Patra**, Professor at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, successfully summited **Nevado Ojos del Salado**, the world's **highest volcanic peak** and tallest mountain in **Chile**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- She became the **second Indian woman** to scale **Nevado Ojos del Salado**, after **Arunima Sinha** in **2019**.
- The **summit altitude** was **6,893 metres**, nearly **7,000 metres**, marking the **highest elevation** she has ever reached.

Stuti Pradhan from Sikkim Chosen to Represent India at World Youth Parliament

- **Stuti Pradhan**, a young leader from **Sikkim**, has been selected to represent **India** at the **World Youth Parliament (WYP)**, highlighting India's growing youth role in **global policy, leadership, and diplomacy**.
- The **World Youth Parliament (WYP)** is an **international platform** that brings together young delegates from countries such as **South Korea, UAE, Kuwait, Chad, Thailand, and Yemen** to discuss **global challenges** and **youth-led policy solutions**.
- The platform focuses on key **global issues** like **climate change, education, sustainable development, and international cooperation**.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

World Economic Forum Chief Børge Brende Steps Down; Alois Zwinggi Named Interim President & Chief Executive Officer

- **Børge Brende**, **President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**, officially announced his **resignation**.
- **Alois Zwinggi** has been appointed as the **Interim President and CEO** of the **WEF** following Brende's resignation.
- **Børge Brende** is a **Norwegian politician and diplomat**, widely recognized for his expertise in **international relations, diplomacy, and multilateral economic and social policy**.
- Before joining the **WEF**, he served as **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway (2013–2017)**.

About World Economic Forum :

- Formation : 24 January 1971
- Headquarters : Cologny, Switzerland

Most Decorated Gymnast Simone Biles Named Laureus Ambassador

- **Simone Biles**, a **seven-time Olympic gold medallist** and the **most decorated gymnast in history**, has been appointed as a **Laureus Ambassador**.
- She joins a **global group of sporting icons** associated with the **Laureus Sport for Good Foundation** movement, alongside athletes such as **Neeraj Chopra** and **Yuvraj Singh**.

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- The **Laureus Sport for Good Programme** supports over **300 global projects**, using sports as a tool to **fight violence, discrimination, and social inequality** while promoting **social inclusion**.

Ayatollah Alireza Arafī Appointed as Iran’s Interim Supreme Leader After Khamenei’s Death

- **Alireza Arafī**, a senior Iranian cleric, was appointed as **Interim Supreme Leader** of Iran following the death of **Ali Khamenei** in a reported **USA–Israel airstrike**.
- Ayatollah **Alireza Arafī** currently serves as **Deputy Chairman** of the **Assembly of Experts (AoE)**, the constitutional body responsible for appointing and supervising the Supreme Leader.
- He has been a member of the **Guardian Council (GC)** since 2019, which oversees **candidate vetting, legislative review, and constitutional supervision**.

B.P. Singh Takes Over as Director General of Naval Armament

- **B. P. Singh** assumed charge as **Director General of Naval Armament (DGONA)** at **Naval Headquarters, New Delhi**.
- He belongs to the **1994 batch** of the **Indian Naval Armament Service (INAS)** and succeeded **Shri Divakar Jayant**, who superannuated on **28 February 2026** after distinguished service.
- He has over **30 years of experience** in the **Naval Armament Organisation** supporting Indian Navy operational capabilities.

Jio Platforms Names Dan Bailey as President for International Business

- **Jio Platforms Limited**, the digital services arm of **Reliance Industries Limited**, appointed **Dan Bailey** as **President** to lead its **international business operations**.
- In this role, he will focus on expanding **Jio’s global footprint**, strengthening **international partnerships**, and scaling **digital services** across **global markets**.
- **Dan Bailey** brings over **35 years of experience** in **consulting** and **investment banking**.

President Orders Transfer and Appointment of Governors and Lt Governors in Major Reshuffle

- **President Droupadi Murmu** announced a **major reshuffle** of **Governors** and **Lieutenant Governors** for seven States and two Union Territories ahead of upcoming **Assembly elections**.
- **R. N. Ravi** has been appointed as the new **Governor of West Bengal**, replacing **C. V. Ananda Bose**, who resigned before the polls.
- **Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar**, Governor of Kerala, will hold **additional charge of Tamil Nadu** after Ravi’s transfer.
- **Shiv Pratap Shukla** has been transferred as **Governor of Telangana**, while **Kavinder Gupta** becomes **Governor of Himachal Pradesh**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- **Syed Ata Hasnain** has been appointed as **Governor of Bihar**, replacing **Arif Mohammed Khan**.
- **Jishnu Dev Varma**, former Governor of Telangana, will become **Governor of Maharashtra**.
- **Taranjit Singh Sandhu**, former **Indian Ambassador to the U.S.** and BJP leader, has been appointed as the new **Lieutenant Governor of Delhi**.
- **Nand Kishore Yadav**, former **Bihar Assembly Speaker** and BJP leader, has been appointed as **Governor of Nagaland**.
- **Vinai Kumar Saxena**, former Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, has been appointed as **Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh**, replacing Kavinder Gupta.
- The reshuffle aims to strengthen **administrative continuity** and manage upcoming **state elections**

Dr Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi Reappointed as Drugs Controller General of India by Appointments Committee of the Cabinet

- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)** chaired by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** approved the **reappointment of Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi as Drugs Controller General (India) (DCGI)** at the **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)**.
- The reappointment is on a **contract basis for 1 year w.e.f. 1 March 2026**, or until a regular incumbent is appointed, or until further orders, whichever is earlier..

Fino Payments Bank Chief Executive Officer Rishi Gupta Arrested Over Alleged Tax Evasion Under GST Laws

- **Fino Payments Bank Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Rishi Gupta** has been **arrested** under provisions of the **CGST and SGST Act, 2017** for alleged tax evasion.
- **Gupta** was arrested under **Section 132(1)(a)** of the **CGST Act 2017** and **Section 132(1)(i)** of the **SGST Act 2017**, which deal with **supplying goods or services** without issuing **invoices** with intent to **evade tax**.

Rapper-Turned-Politician Balendra Shah Set to Become Nepal's Next Prime Minister

- **Balendra Shah**, popularly known as **Balen Shah**, is set to become the **Prime Minister of Nepal** after his party's **landslide electoral victory**.
- His party, **Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP)**, secured a major election victory in the **first general election** after the **2025 Gen Z youth protests**.
- The **RSP** is expected to defeat former Prime Minister **P. Sharma Oli**, leader of the **Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist)**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- Early counting trends showed **RSP leading in 100+ constituencies**, surpassing the **Nepali Congress** in seat count.

President of India Names Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari as Chief Justice of Madras High Court

- **Droupadi Murmu**, the **President of India**, appointed **Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari** as the **Chief Justice (CJ)** of the **Madras High Court** under **Article 217(1)** of the Constitution of India.
- He succeeded **Manindra Mohan Shrivastava**, who retired on **5 March 2026** after attaining the age of **superannuation**.
- The **oath of office** was administered by **R. N. Ravi**, **Governor of Tamil Nadu**, at **Lok Bhavan, Chennai**, where he also handed over the **warrant of appointment** issued by the President.
- **Justice S.A. Dharmadhikari** became the **55th Chief Justice** of the **Madras High Court**, one of India's **chartered High Courts** established in **August 1862**.

Lieutenant General Dhiraj Seth Appointed as Vice Chief of Army Staff, to Take Office on 1 April 2026

- The **Indian Army** announced the appointment of **Lieutenant General Dhiraj Seth** as the next **Vice Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS)**.
- **Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth** will succeed **Lieutenant General P. P. Singh** assumed office on **1 April 2026**.
- The **Vice Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS)** is the **second-highest position** in the Indian Army after the **Chief of Army Staff (COAS)**.
- The **VCOAS** is responsible for overseeing **operational readiness, modernization, strategic planning**, and **coordination** among various Army commands.

YES Bank Names Vinay Muralidhar Tonse as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, To Assume Office on April 6, 2026

- **Yes Bank** has appointed **Vinay Muralidhar Tonse** as its **Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO)**.
- He will formally **assume charge** as **MD & CEO** from **April 6, 2026**, succeeding **Prashant Kumar**.
- The appointment has been approved by the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** for a **three-year term**.

About YES Bank:

- **Founded:** 2004
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- **Tagline :** "Life Ko Banao Rich"

Reserve Bank of India Approves Ketan Merchant as Interim Chief Executive Officer of Fino Payments Bank

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** approved the appointment of **Ketan Merchant, Chief Financial Officer (CFO)** of **Fino Payments Bank**, as the **Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of the bank.
- **Ketan Merchant** will perform the duties of **Managing Director (MD)** and **CEO** under the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949**, for a period **not exceeding four months** from the date of RBI approval.
- He succeeded **Rishi Gupta**, the MD and CEO of Fino Payments Bank, who stepped aside after being **arrested** in connection with alleged **Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Iran Names Mojtaba Khamenei as Supreme Leader of the Country

- **Mojtaba Khamenei** was appointed as the **Supreme Leader of Iran** by the **Assembly of Experts** following the death of his father, **Ali Khamenei**, in airstrikes.
- With this appointment, **Mojtaba Khamenei** became the **third Supreme Leader** of the **Islamic Republic of Iran**.
- The **Assembly of Experts**, a **constitutional body** in Iran, is responsible for **appointing and supervising** the **Supreme Leader**.

About Iran :

- Capital : Tehran
- Currency : Iranian rial

Phanindranath Kakarla Appointed CEO & MD of Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Limited (Arcil)

- **Phanindranath Kakarla** has taken charge as **Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director (CEO & MD)** of **Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Limited (Arcil)** with effect from **8 March 2026**.
- He succeeds **Pallav Mohapatra**, who had been leading **Arcil** since **March 2021**.
- **Kakarla** joined **Arcil** on **2 April 2025** as **President** under a **board-approved succession plan** to ensure a **smooth transition** with **Mohapatra's tenure**.
- Prior to **Arcil**, **Phanindranath Kakarla** held **senior leadership positions** at **Edelweiss Group**.

Rahul Bhatia Becomes Interim Chief Executive Officer of IndiGo After Pieter Elbers Resigns

- **Rahul Bhatia**, billionaire entrepreneur and **co-founder of IndiGo**, has taken charge as the airline's **interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** following the resignation of **Pieter Elbers**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The move comes amid **operational challenges** faced by **India's largest airline by market share**.
- **Bhatia** played a central role in building **IndiGo** into a **dominant aviation player** and will oversee **management responsibilities** during the transition.
- He was born in **Nainital, Uttarakhand**.

RM Nachammai Appointed First Woman Chief of a Functional Nuclear Power Plant

- **RM Nachammai** became the **first woman to head the operations** of a **functional nuclear power plant** in India under the **Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)**.
- She has been appointed **Chief Superintendent** of **Kaiga Generating Station Units 3 and 4** in **Karnataka**, effective **15 March 2026**.
- As **Chief Superintendent**, she will oversee **operations, maintenance, and engineering support divisions**, including **reactor operations, safety systems, and plant performance**.
- Her appointment is a **milestone for gender representation** in India's **nuclear energy sector**, which employs around **900 women** out of nearly **10,000 employees**.

Parthanil Ghosh Named Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of HDFC ERGO General Insurance

- **HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Limited**, a **Joint Venture (JV)** between **HDFC Limited** and **ERGO International AG**, has appointed **Parthanil Ghosh** as the new **Managing Director (MD)** and **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**.
- **Parthanil Ghosh** will succeed **Anuj Tyagi**, who resigned on **16 January 2026** to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.
- His appointment will become effective from **16 April 2026**, subject to approvals from the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** and other regulatory clearances.

Appointments Committee of the Cabinet Clears KV Ramana Murty's Appointment as Whole-Time Member of Securities and Exchange Board of India

- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved the appointment of **Kompella Venkata (K.V.) Ramana Murty** as **Whole-Time Member (WTM)** of the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**.
- **K. V. Ramana Murty** has been appointed for a **term of three years** from the date of assuming charge or until further orders.
- With this appointment, the **total number of Whole-Time Members (WTMs)** on the **SEBI board** has increased to **four**.

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- **V. Ramana Murty** is a 1991-batch officer of the Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS).

Dr. Partha Biswas Takes Charge as Member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes

- **Dr. Partha Biswas** holds a **Ph.D. in Defence & Strategic Studies** and has pursued higher education in **Defence Studies, Human Resources, and Human Rights**.
- He completed his studies at reputed institutions including the **University of Calcutta, Jadavpur University, and Kanpur University**.
- **Dr. Biswas** was awarded a **Post-Doctoral Fellowship** under the **Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)** at **Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)**, New Delhi.
- He has made **significant contributions** to **academic research** through **publications, journal articles, and books**.

About Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment :

- Cabinet Minister : Virendra Kumar Khatik
- Minister of State : Ramdas Athawale, B. L. Verma

Jose Antonio Kast Sworn in as 38th President of Chile Following 2025 Election Victory

- **Jose Antonio Kast Rist**, founder and leader of the **Republican Party of Chile**, was sworn in as the **38th President of Chile** for a **four-year term**, following his victory in the **2025 Chilean presidential election**.
- The **inauguration ceremony** took place at the **National Congress** in **Valparaíso, Chile**, in the **Hall of Honor**.
- **Kast** received the **Piocha de O'Higgins**, a traditional **symbol of the Chilean presidency**, from outgoing President **Gabriel Boric Font**, marking the **formal transfer of power**.
- **Union Minister of State Kirti Vardhan Singh (MEA)** represented the **Government of India** at the inauguration.
- **Kast, 60 years old**, defeated **Jeannette Jara**, a **communist candidate** from **Boric's coalition**, in **December 2025 run-off elections**, winning on his **third attempt**.

About Chile :

- **Capital : Santiago**
- **Currency : Chilean peso**

Election Commission of India Appoints Retired 1988-Batch IAS Officer Manjeet Singh as Assam Special Observer

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** appointed **Manjeet Singh**, a **retired IAS officer (1988 batch, Rajasthan cadre)**, as **Special Observer** for the **2026 General Election** to the **Legislative Assembly of Assam**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- The **Special Observer** will visit **Assam** regularly to **monitor poll preparedness** and the **conduct of elections**, providing inputs to the **Commission** for necessary action.
- The appointment of the **Special Observer** is under **Article 324 of the Constitution of India**, which empowers the **ECI** to ensure **free, fair, and transparent elections**.
- The **General Election in Assam** is scheduled for **9th April 2026**, with **vote counting on 4th May 2026**.

Bhumika Shrestha Elected as Nepal's First Transgender Woman Member of Parliament

- **Bhumika Shrestha**, a **37-year-old LGBTQ rights activist**, has become **Nepal's first transgender woman Member of Parliament**, marking a **historic milestone in South Asia** for **inclusivity and representation of marginalised communities**.
- **Bhumika Shrestha** was elected as a **proportional representation MP** under the **Rastriya Swatantra Party** and is a **prominent advocate** for **transgender and sexual minority rights** in **Nepal**.
- Her appointment follows **political changes in Nepal**, including **anti-corruption protests in 2025** that led to the **fall of the previous government** and the **rise of a reform-oriented leadership**, enabling **greater representation** for **underrepresented communities**, including **LGBTQ individuals**.

JP Nadda Appointed as Chairman of Reconstituted Hindi Advisory Panel in Chemicals & Fertilizers Ministry

- The **Union Government** has reconstituted the **Hindi Advisory Committee** for the **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**.
- **Union Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda** has been appointed as the **Chairman**, while **Minister of State Anupriya Patel** is the **Vice-Chairperson** of the committee.
- The **reconstitution** was officially notified through a **Gazette of India resolution**.
- The committee includes **6 Members of Parliament (MPs)** nominated from different bodies:
 - **4 MPs** nominated by the **Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs**
 - **2 MPs** nominated by the **Parliamentary Committee on Official Language**
- The panel ensures **diverse representation**, including:
 - **4 members** from the **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**
 - **3 members** from the **Department of Official Language (MHA)**
 - **1 member** each from **Vishwa Hindi Parishad** and **Hindi Prachar Sabha, Hyderabad**

BHIM Payments App Names MS Dhoni as Brand Ambassador

- **NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL)**, a subsidiary of **National Payments Corporation of India**, appointed **Indian cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni** as the **brand ambassador** for the **BHIM Payments Application (App)**.
- The **partnership** aims to enhance **trust, financial inclusion, and scale** in **India's digital payments ecosystem**, supporting the **BHIM app's next growth phase** by building **user preference and confidence**.
- **MS Dhoni**, as the **face of the campaign**, will feature in **multi-channel promotional initiatives**, highlighting **BHIM's ease of use, security features, and accessibility**.

Atanu Chakraborty Quits as HDFC Bank Part-Time Chairman Over Ethical Concerns

- **Atanu Chakraborty** resigned as **part-time chairman and independent director** of **HDFC Bank** with **immediate effect**, citing **ethical concerns**.
- In his **resignation letter**, **Chakraborty** stated that **certain practices** within the bank over the **past two years** were **not aligned** with his **personal values**.
- His **resignation** highlighted **governance standards** at one of **India's largest private sector banks**.

About HDFC Bank:

- **Founded:** 1994
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- **Managing Director & CEO:** Sashidhar Jagdishan
- **Tagline:** "We understand your world"

City Union Bank Appoints Cricketer Ravindra Jadeja as Primary Brand Ambassador

- **City Union Bank (CUB)**, a **private sector bank** headquartered in **Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu**, has appointed **cricketer Ravindra Jadeja** as its **primary Brand Ambassador**.
- The **bank** signed a **two-year agreement** on **March 16, 2026** with **Ravindra Jadeja** and **Baseline Ventures (India) Private Limited**.
- The **partnership** aims to **enhance brand visibility** and **outreach** for the bank.
- The **collaboration** is expected to **boost customer acquisition** and **expand market presence**.
- The **association** with **Jadeja**, who is known for **reliability and multifaceted excellence**, is intended to **strengthen long-term customer engagement**.
- **Managing Director and CEO of City Union Bank :Dr. N. Kamakodi**

Shri T.N. Natarajan assumes charge as Director (Commercial) at Steel Authority of India Limited

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- **Shri T.N. Natarajan** assumed charge as **Director (Commercial)** at **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)**.
- Shri Natarajan has over **32 years of leadership experience** in **production, logistics, and sales**.
- He joined **SAIL** as a **Management Trainee in 1993** and has held key roles in **manufacturing operations, supply chain management, and strategic marketing**.

About Steel Authority of India Limited :

- **Founded : 19 January 1954**
- **Headquarters : New Delhi, India**
- **Chairman & managing director : Amarendu Prakash**

Shri Krishna Kumar Thakur Assumes Charge as Director (Personnel) at NMDC

- **Shri Krishna Kumar Thakur**, a **1998 batch officer** of the **Indian Railway Personnel Service (IRPS)**, has assumed charge as **Director (Personnel)** at **NMDC Limited**, India's largest **iron ore producer**.
- Shri Thakur has over **25 years of experience** in **human resource management and administration** across **Indian Railways** and **CPSEs**.
- Prior to NMDC, as **Director (HR)** at **BHEL**, he led initiatives in **HR, Law, and HSE**, including **function restructuring, policy reforms, uniform incentive schemes, and multi-skilling programs** to enhance **workforce capability and retention**.

UNIQLO Names Indian Cricketer Jasprit Bumrah as Brand Ambassador in India for Sports-Fashion Collaboration

- **UNIQLO** has appointed Indian cricketer **Jasprit Bumrah** as its **brand ambassador** in India, marking a strategic collaboration between **sports and lifestyle fashion**.
- The partnership aligns with **UNIQLO's LifeWear philosophy**, focusing on **simple, high-quality, comfortable, and functional clothing** designed for everyday life.
- The campaign highlights **UNIQLO's AIRism collection**, particularly the **AIRism Oversized T-shirt**, known for its **breathable fabric, comfort, and versatility**.

South Indian Bank Names Former RBI Executive Director Jose Kattoor as Part-Time Chairman

- **Jose Joseph Kattoor**, appointed as **non-executive part-time chairman (Independent Director)** of **South Indian Bank** for **three years**, following **RBI approval**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March 2026

- Kattoor succeeds **V J Kurian**, who retires on **March 22, 2026**, after serving as independent director since March 23, 2018.
- Kattoor has been an **independent director** on the South Indian Bank board since **July 18, 2024**.
- In his new role, Kattoor will **strengthen governance standards** and support the bank's **long-term strategic vision**.
- **Thomson Thomas** was appointed as **non-executive independent director** for a **three-year term**, effective **March 23, 2026**.
- Board approved **elevation of senior management personnel**, effective **April 1, 2026**, reflecting an **internal succession strategy**.
- **PR Seshadri, MD & CEO**, will **step down in September 2026**, choosing not to seek reappointment.
- **Anto George T** promoted from **Chief General Manager (CGM) & COO** to **Executive Vice President**, continuing as **Chief Operating Officer**.
- **Senthil Kumar**, previously **Senior General Manager & Head of Credit**, elevated to **CGM** and now serves as **Chief Credit Officer**.
- **Sony A** elevated from **SGM & Chief Information Officer** to **CGM**, with expanded responsibilities including **Strategic Alliances, Digital Business, Marketing, and Customer Experience**.

About South Indian Bank:

- Founded Year: 1929
- Headquarters: Thrissur, Kerala, India
- CEO: P.R. Seshadri
- Slogan: "Experience Next-Gen Banking"

Yamaha Music India Appoints AR Rahman as Brand Ambassador

- **A. R. Rahman** has been appointed as the **brand ambassador** of **Yamaha Music India Private Limited**.
- **Yamaha Music India** is the **Indian subsidiary** of **Yamaha Corporation, Japan**, engaged in manufacturing **musical instruments** and **professional audio equipment**.
- The company operates a **manufacturing facility in Chennai**, a **corporate office in Gurugram**, and an **experience centre in Bengaluru**.

CA P.V. Narayana Rao Appointed Co-opted Member of Institute of Chartered Accountants of India's Sustainability Reporting Standards Board for 2026-27

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- **Chartered Accountant (CA) P.V. Narayana Rao** has been appointed as a **Co-opted Member** of the **Sustainability Reporting Standards Board (SRSB)** of the **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)** for the term **2026-27**.
- As a **co-opted member**, he will contribute to the **development and strengthening** of **sustainability reporting standards** in India.

About ICAI :

- **Headquarters : New Delhi, India**
- **President : CA. Charanjot Singh Nanda**
- **ICAI**, is India's largest professional accounting body under the administrative control of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.
- It was established on 1 July 1949 as a statutory body under the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949 enacted by the Parliament for promotion, development and regulation of the profession of Chartered Accountancy in India.

Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti Takes Charge as National Commission for Backward Classes Chairperson

- **Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti** has assumed charge as **Chairperson** of the **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)**.
- **Mrs. Kiran Umesh Mahalle** has assumed charge as **Member** of **NCBC**.
- **Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti** is a **former Member of Parliament** and has served as **Union Minister of State** in the **Ministries of Rural Development** and **Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution**.

About National Commission for Backward Classes :

- **Formed : 14 August 1993**
- **Headquarters : New Delhi, India**
- It is a constitutional body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.
- It was originally a statutory body established in 1993 through the National Commission for Backward Classes Act of 1993.

About Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment :

- **Cabinet Minister : Virendra Kumar Khatik**
- **Minister of State : Ramdas Athawale, B. L. Verma**

Balendra Shah Takes Oath as Nepal's Youngest Democratically Elected Prime Minister

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- **Balendra Shah (35)**, leader of the **Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP)** and a former rapper, was sworn in as the **youngest Prime Minister of Nepal** after a **landslide electoral victory**.
- He was administered the **oath of office and secrecy** by **President Ram Chandra Paudel** at **Sheetal Niwas, Kathmandu**.
- Balendra Shah became **Nepal's 47th Prime Minister** and the **first democratically elected PM** after the **2025 political upheaval**.
- He succeeded **Sushila Karki**, who served as the **Interim Prime Minister** for six months following the crisis.

About Nepal:

- Capital: Kathmandu
- Currency: Nepalese rupee (NPR)
- President: Ram Chandra Poudel

RANKING AND INDEX

Sapien Labs Releases 'Global Mind Health in 2025' Report; India's Youth Rank 60th Globally

- The American Non-Government Organisation **Sapien Labs** released its **global report titled Global Mind Health in 2025: Mind Health – The Ability to Navigate Life's Challenges and Function Productively**.
- As per the report, **India's youth aged 18 to 34 years ranked 60th out of 84 countries**, with a **Mind Health Quotient score of 33**.
- In contrast, **Indians aged 55 years and above ranked 49th globally**, recording a significantly higher **Mind Health Quotient score of 96**.

Top 10 Richest People in the World – March 2026 (Forbes Real-Time Billionaires List)

- According to the **Forbes Real-Time Billionaires List (5 March 2026)**, **Elon Musk** remains the **richest person in the world** with an estimated **net worth of 841.4 billion US dollars**.
- **Elon Musk's wealth is over 500 billion US dollars higher than the second richest individual**, representing **one of the largest wealth gaps ever recorded** in global billionaire rankings.

Top 10 Richest People in the World (March 2026)

Rank	Person	Net Worth	Major Business
1	Elon Musk	\$841.4 Billion	Tesla, SpaceX

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2	Larry Page	\$250.5 Billion	Google
3	Sergey Brin	\$231.2 Billion	Google
4	Jeff Bezos	\$229.7 Billion	Amazon
5	Mark Zuckerberg	\$228.9 Billion	Meta Platforms (Facebook)
6	Larry Ellison	\$197.1 Billion	Oracle
7	Jensen Huang	\$158.5 Billion	Nvidia
8	Bernard Arnault & family	\$157.1 Billion	LVMH
9	Rob Walton & family	\$145.9 Billion	Walmart
10	Warren Buffett	\$144.1 Billion	Berkshire Hathaway

India Becomes World's Second Largest Arms Importer: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Report (2021–2025)

- India emerged as the **second largest arms importer globally during 2021–2025**, accounting for **8.2% of total global arms imports**, according to a report released by the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute**.
- The report ranked India **second among global importers of major arms**, highlighting the country's efforts to modernize its armed forces and maintain strategic defence preparedness.
- Despite the high ranking, **India's arms imports declined by around 4% compared to the previous period (2016–2020)**.
- India's defence imports are mainly driven by **security challenges and border tensions with China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and with Pakistan along the Line of Control (LoC)**.

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Hurun Rich List 2026: India Ranks Third Globally with 308 Billionaires

- The **Hurun Rich List 2026** reported that **India has 308 billionaires**, placing the country **third globally after the United States and China** in terms of billionaire population.
- The list highlights the **rapid growth of wealth creation and entrepreneurship in India**.

Brand Finance Banking 500 Report 2026: Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Tops Global Banking Brand Ranking

- According to the **Brand Finance Banking 500 Report 2026**, the combined **brand value of the world's top 500 banking brands reached about 1.8 trillion US dollars in 2026**, reflecting a **13% increase compared to 2025**.
- **Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC)** ranked **first globally for the tenth consecutive year**, with a **brand value of 90.9 billion US dollars** and a **AAA+ brand rating**.
- **Chinese banks dominated the top positions**, with **four banks occupying the top four ranks**, showing **China's strong presence in global banking**.

India Submits 7th National Report to Convention on Biological Diversity

- **India submitted its 7th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** assessing progress toward **23 National Biodiversity Targets (NBTs)** and **142 indicators aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)**.
- The report states that **only two out of 23 national biodiversity targets are currently on track**, while the remaining targets have policy plans but lack **quantitative evidence or clear projections for 2030**.
- The report is **India's first full progress assessment** since the adoption of the **KMGBF in 2022**, serving as a **reality check on the country's commitment to halt biodiversity loss by 2030**.

Shah Rukh Khan Debuts in Hurun Global Rich List 2026 with Net Worth of 1.3 Billion US Dollars

- **Shah Rukh Khan**, Bollywood actor and entrepreneur, has made his **debut in the Hurun Global Rich List 2026** with an **estimated net worth of 1.3 billion US dollars**.
- The list was released, and the wealth calculation is based on data up to **January 15, 2026**.
- His inclusion reflects **decades of success in the Indian film industry as well as strong business ventures and brand investments**.
- The **Hurun Global Rich List Ranks United States dollar billionaires worldwide** and highlights influential figures from sectors such as **entertainment, technology, sports and business**.

Hurun Global Rich List 2026 Released

- The **Hurun Global Rich List 2026** reported over **4,020 billionaires globally**, with **578 new billionaires added** in one year.

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- **Elon Musk** remains the **world's richest person** with a net worth of **\$792 billion**, holding the top position for the **fifth time in six years**.
- **Mukesh Ambani**, Chairman of **Reliance Industries**, continues as the **richest person in Asia** with a net worth of **\$109 billion**.
- **Shah Rukh Khan** re-entered the billionaire list with a net worth of **\$1.3 billion**.

Tamil Nadu Emerges as India's Top Textile Exporter in 2024–25

- **Tamil Nadu** became the **leading textile exporting state** in **Financial Year 2024–25**, surpassing **Gujarat and Maharashtra**.
- The state recorded textile exports worth **\$7,997.17 million**, contributing **21.84%** to **India's total textile exports**.
- Over the last four years, exports grew by **over 29%**, reflecting **consistent policy support and sectoral expansion**.

Forbes Top 10 Youngest Billionaires 2026 Released

- The latest **Forbes list of youngest billionaires 2026** highlights **35 billionaires under 30** with a combined wealth of **\$92.4 billion**.
- The list reflects a mix of **inherited wealth and self-made entrepreneurs**, with increasing influence of **technology and start-ups**.
- From India, **Surya Midha (22)** secured the **6th position**, representing the rise of **Artificial Intelligence-based entrepreneurship**.
- **Top 10 Youngest Billionaires (Under 30):**

Rank	Name	Age	Sector
1	Amelie Voigt Trejes	20	Industrial Machinery
2	Johannes von Baumbach	20	Pharmaceuticals
3	Livia Voigt de Assis	21	Industrial Machinery
4	Clemente Del Vecchio	21	Eyeglasses
5	Kim Jung-youn	22	Online Gaming
6	Surya Midha	22	Artificial Intelligence Software
7	Brendan Foody	22	Artificial Intelligence Software
8	Adarsh Hiremath	22	Artificial Intelligence Software
9	Kevin David Lehmann	23	Drugstores
10	Pedro Voigt Trejes	23	Industrial Machinery

World Happiness Report 2026: Finland Tops for 9th Consecutive Year

- The **World Happiness Report 2026**, released by the **Wellbeing Research Centre**, ranked **Finland** as the **happiest country globally** for the **9th consecutive year**.
- The report highlights **strong performance of Nordic countries** and a **decline in happiness levels in Western nations**.
- A major concern identified is the **negative impact of social media on youth well-being**.
- **Top 10 Happiest Countries 2026:**

Rank	Country
1	Finland
2	Iceland
3	Denmark
4	Costa Rica
5	Sweden
6	Norway
7	Netherlands
8	Israel
9	Luxembourg
10	Switzerland

**Hurun Report 2026: Number of Self-Made Women Billionaires Reaches Record 150 Globally**

- As per the **Hurun Report 2026**, the number of **self-made women billionaires worldwide reached 150**, with combined wealth rising to **\$470 billion**.
- The number has **doubled from 75 in the last decade**, reflecting strong growth in **women-led entrepreneurship globally**.
- Major findings of the report:
 - Total wealth increased by **52% in the last three years**
 - **60 new entrants added in 2026**
 - Around **15 billionaires dropped** from the list
 - More than **80% of the members are new** compared to a decade ago

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- **China** ranked **first globally** with **78 self-made women billionaires**, accounting for **more than half of the total**.
- The **United States of America (USA)** ranked **second** with **40 billionaires**.
- Cities such as **Shenzhen, Shanghai, and Beijing** emerged as major hubs for **women entrepreneurship**.

China Becomes India's Third-Largest Export Destination in February 2026

- **China** became **India's third-largest export destination** in **February 2026**, overtaking Netherlands.
- India's exports to China increased by **32.4%** to **1.67 billion United States dollars** in February 2026.
- At the same time, India's **overall exports declined slightly by 0.81% year-on-year** to **36.61 billion United States dollars** during the month.
- The change reflects a **significant shift in India's trade dynamics** and indicates **growing economic engagement between India and China**, despite geopolitical tensions between the two countries **since 2020**.

Global Terrorism Index 2026 Released: Pakistan Tops List; Terrorism Deaths Decline Globally

- The **Global Terrorism Index 2026** highlighted that **terrorism remains a serious global threat despite a significant decline in deaths and incidents in 2025**.
- In **2025**, **5,582 people were killed in 2,944 terrorist attacks**, reflecting:
 - **28% decline in deaths**
 - **22% decline in incidents** compared to the previous year
- **81 countries improved**, while **19 countries recorded worsening terrorism impact**.
- The Global Terrorism Index score is calculated using **four indicators**:
 - Total number of **terrorist incidents**
 - Total number of **deaths**
 - Total number of **injuries**
 - Total number of **hostages**

Top 10 Countries in Global Terrorism Index 2026

Rank	Country	Score
1	Pakistan	8.574

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2	Burkina Faso	8.324
3	Niger	7.816
4	Nigeria	7.792
5	Mali	7.586
6	Syria	7.545
7	Somalia	7.391
8	Democratic Republic of the Congo	7.171
9	Colombia	7.116
10	Israel	6.79

India and Neighbouring Countries in Global Terrorism Index 2026

Country	Rank	Score
Pakistan	1	8.574
Afghanistan	11	6.678
India	13	6.428
Myanmar	14	6.245
Bangladesh	42	2.286
China	54	1.311
Nepal	89	0.288
Bhutan	100	0
Sri Lanka	100	0

Least Affected Countries (Rank 100)

Rank	Country	Score
100	Albania	0
100	Bhutan	0
100	Botswana	0
100	Bulgaria	0
100	Costa Rica	0
100	Croatia	0
100	Cuba	0
100	Dominican	0

	Republic	
100	El Salvador	0
100	Estonia	0

Prime Minister Modi Remains Most Popular Global Leader: US-based data analytics firm Morning Consult

- **Narendra Modi** remains the world's most popular global leader with an approval rating of **68%**, according to a survey by **Morning Consult**.
- The survey, conducted between 2–8 March 2026, is based on a rolling 7-day average of adult responses across countries.
- He recorded a disapproval rating of 26%, while 6% respondents were undecided.
- **Switzerland's President Guy Parmelin** ranked second (62%), followed by **South Korea's Lee Jae-myung** at third (62%).

Other top leaders include:

- Andrej Babis (57%)
- Javier Milei (56%)
- Sanae Takaichi (56%)
- Mark Carney (55%)
- Among major global leaders:
- Donald Trump → 39%
- Keir Starmer → 24%
- Friedrich Merz → 20%
- Emmanuel Macron → 17%

Loni Becomes World's Most Polluted City as Per 2025 World Air Quality Report

- **Loni near Ghaziabad in the state of Uttar Pradesh**, has overtaken **Delhi** to become the **world's most polluted city**, according to the **2025 World Air Quality Report** released by **IQAir**.
- The finding highlights the **worsening air pollution crisis across the National Capital Region (NCR)** and raises serious **public health concerns**.
- Loni recorded an **annual average PM2.5 concentration of 112.5 µg/m³**, which is **more than 22 times higher than the safe limit prescribed by the World Health Organization**.
- **PM2.5** refers to **fine particulate matter** that can **penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream**, posing severe health risks.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**Union Minister of State Dr. Jitendra Singh Launches India's First State Innovation Mission in Tripura**

- **Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Dr. Jitendra Singh** of the **Ministry of Science and Technology** launched **India's 1st State Innovation Mission (SIM)** at the **Hapania International Exhibition Center, Agartala, Tripura**.
- During the event, he described the **Northeast region** as the **'New Engine'** of **India's economic and innovation growth**.
- The **State Innovation Mission (SIM)** is part of the **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) 2.0** programme under **NITI Aayog's State Support Mission (SSM)**.

Dr Jitendra Singh Inaugurates Recombinant Cells and Sensors Facility at BRIC-RGCB, Kerala

- **Jitendra Singh**, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Science and Technology (**MoS&T**) and Ministry of Earth Sciences (**MoES**), inaugurated the **Central Facility for Recombinant Cells and Sensors** at **Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (BRIC-RGCB)**, **Akkulam campus, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala**, during **National Science Day 2026** celebrations (**28 February 2026**).
- The **Central Facility for Recombinant Cells and Sensors** is an **advanced biotechnology research infrastructure** aimed at strengthening **drug discovery**, **Medical Genomics (MG)**, and **Agri-Genomics (AG)** research, while accelerating **target-specific drug discovery** and **high-throughput screening technologies**.

Bharti Airtel and Google Collaborate to Introduce Secure RCS Messaging Services in India

- **Bharti Airtel**, a leading Indian telecommunications service provider partnered with **Google** to deliver a **secure and interactive messaging** experience for users in **India**.
- The collaboration marks a **world-first partnership** between a **Telecom Service Provider (TSP)** and a global technology platform to apply **telecom-grade accountability** to **Over-the-Top (OTT) messaging**.
- The initiative integrates **Airtel's network intelligence** with **Google's Rich Communications Services (RCS)** platform, enhancing **communication quality** and **digital safety**.

Scientists Find Evidence of Earth's Earliest Animals in 541-Million-Year-Old Rocks

- Scientists discovered evidence of **Earth's earliest animals** in **Precambrian rocks** that are more than **541 million years old**, pushing back the timeline of **complex life evolution** on Earth.

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- The study suggests that **soft-bodied sea sponges** were among the first animals in Earth's oceans, existing before the **Cambrian explosion**, when major diversification of animal life occurred.
- The research was conducted by scientists from the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology** and published in the **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences**.

Indian Institute of Science Bengaluru Unveils Brain–AI Co-Processor Moonshot Research Initiative

- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, launched a “moonshot” project to develop **AI-enabled brain co-processors** aimed at enhancing or restoring **brain functions**.
- The project is supported by **Pratiksha Trust**, founded by **Infosys co-founder Kris Gopalakrishnan** and **Sudha Gopalakrishnan**.
- The initiative focuses on developing **neuromorphic hardware** integrated with **Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms** to **decode brain signals**, process them using AI, and send **corrective neural feedback signals** to the brain.

Bharat Electronics Limited Partners with Bellatrix Aerospace to Build Very Low Earth Orbit Satellite Platforms

- **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, a state-owned **defence electronics company**, signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Bellatrix Aerospace**, a Bengaluru-based **space technology startup**, to develop **satellite systems and payloads**.
- The **MoU** focuses on **design, development, and manufacturing** of **satellite platforms** for **Very Low Earth Orbit (VLEO)**
- The agreement was exchanged between **Rashmi Kathuria, General Manager of BEL**, and **Rohan M. Ganapathy, CEO & CTO of Bellatrix Aerospace**.

International Business Machines Corporation Opens Sangam Artificial Intelligence & Infrastructure Innovation Centre in Bengaluru

- **International Business Machines Corporation (IBM)** launched its first **Sangam Infrastructure Innovation Center** at the **India Systems Development Lab (ISDL)** campus in **Bengaluru, Karnataka**.
- The centre aims to strengthen **India's position** as a **global hub** for **advanced infrastructure engineering** and **Artificial Intelligence (AI) development**.
- The **Sangam Infrastructure Innovation Center** focuses on accelerating the development and deployment of **enterprise-grade AI systems** by integrating **infrastructure technologies**, **hybrid cloud computing**, and **AI solutions** on a single platform.

United States Successfully Tests Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile from California Base

- The **United States Air Force Global Strike Command** conducted a successful test launch of the **LGM-30G Minuteman III** intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) from **Vandenberg Space Force Base, California**.
- The test launch was designated **GT-255** (or **Glory Trip 255**) and was part of a long-term **reliability testing programme**, with more than **300 similar tests** conducted over decades to ensure the strategic weapon system's effectiveness.
- The **unarmed missile** was equipped with **two test reentry vehicles**, which travelled approximately **4,200 miles** before striking a target zone near **Kwajalein Atoll** in the **Marshall Islands**.

Defence Research and Development Organisation Sanctions Rs 99.15 Lakh Research Project at Bharathiar University to Develop Antidotes for Toxic Organophosphorus Compounds

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** under the **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** sanctioned a research project titled '**Development of Novel Antidote(s) for Highly Toxic Organophosphorous Compounds**' with a total funding of **Rs 99.15 lakh** to **Bharathiar University, Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu, TN)**.
- The project will focus on developing **antidotes** to counteract the harmful effects of **toxic organophosphorus compounds** and is expected to be completed within **36 months**.
- The research will be conducted by the **DRDO Industry Academia-Centre of Excellence (DIA-CoE)** at **Bharathiar University**.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh Inspects India's First Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion-Powered Desalination Plant in Lakshadweep

- **Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Dr. Jitendra Singh, Ministry of Science & Technology**, reviewed the progress of India's first **Integrated Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) plant** at **Kavaratti, Lakshadweep**.
- During the visit, the Minister examined key components of the **OTEC plant**, including the **seawater intake system, deep-sea cold-water pipeline, turbine-generator unit, and desalination modules**.

Indian Institute of Science Partners with Pratiksha Trust to Launch Brain Co-Processor Moonshot Project

- The **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** launched a **Moonshot Project** on **Brain Co-Processors**, aimed at developing advanced technologies to **enhance or restore brain function**.

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- The project is funded by the **Pratiksha Trust**, founded by **Senapathy ‘Kris’ Gopalakrishnan** and **Sudha Gopalakrishnan**.
- The initiative integrates **neuromorphic hardware** and **AI algorithms** to create **implantable and non-invasive brain co-processors** capable of **decoding neural signals**, processing them using AI, and **sending feedback** to the brain.

Indian Space Research Organisation and European Space Agency Ink Pact to Enhance Collaboration in Earth Observation Missions

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and the **European Space Agency (ESA)** virtually signed an agreement titled “**ESA–ISRO Arrangement concerning Joint Calibration and Validation Activities and Scientific Studies for Earth Observation Missions.**”
- The agreement was signed by **M. Ganesh Pillai**, Scientific Secretary of ISRO, and **Simonetta Cheli**, Director of Earth Observation Programmes at ESA.
- The objective of the agreement is to improve the **accuracy and reliability** of **satellite data** used for **climate monitoring, environmental research, and Earth science studies**.
- The **ISRO–ESA cooperation** began in **1978** and was renewed in **2002**, strengthening long-term collaboration between the two major space agencies.

About ISRO:

- Established: 15 August 1969
- Headquarters: Bengaluru, Karnataka
- Chairman: V. Narayanan

Researchers Develop Sunlight-Driven Method to Turn Plastic Waste into Acetic Acid

- **Researchers** at the **University of Waterloo, Canada**, have developed an innovative method to convert **plastic waste** into **acetic acid**, the main component of **vinegar**, using only **sunlight**.
- The breakthrough provides a promising solution to tackle **plastic pollution** while producing a valuable **industrial chemical**.
- The technique relies on a **light-driven chemical reaction** that breaks down plastic materials into useful compounds without requiring **extreme heat** or **toxic chemicals**.
- **Sunlight-powered plastic conversion**: The research team, led by **Professor Yimin Wu**, designed a **photocatalysis system** where **sunlight** acts as the primary energy source to transform **plastic polymers** into **acetic acid**.

AquaAirX Launches India’s First Amphibious Surveillance Drone ‘AVATAAR’

- **AquaAirX Autonomous Systems**, a Bengaluru-based deep-tech startup, introduced ‘**AVATAAR (Amphibious Vehicle for Autonomous Tactical Aerial & Aquatic**

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Reconnaissance)’, India’s first amphibious drone capable of operating in **both air and underwater**.

- The **AVATAAR drone** is designed to support **Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR)** missions in **maritime and coastal environments**.
- **Dual-Domain Operation:** The drone can **fly like a conventional aerial drone, land on water, and then dive underwater** to continue its mission, enabling **real-time maritime monitoring**.
- The drone can **transition between air and underwater environments** within seconds, allowing **seamless multi-domain operations** without external assistance.

Forest Survey of India Halts Fortnightly Deforestation Alerts via AI-Based Anavaran Portal

- The **Forest Survey of India (FSI)**, under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, has stopped issuing fortnightly **deforestation alerts** through its **AI-based Anavaran portal**.
- The **Anavaran-Deforestation Alert System** was operational from **January 2024** and provided **near-real-time alerts** on **forest cover loss** using **satellite imagery** and **machine learning**.
- The system used **Google Earth Engine** for data processing and sent **precise location alerts** to **state forest departments** for targeted **field inspections**.
- The **Anavaran portal** ceased active monitoring in **January 2026**, and the alerts have not been updated since **November 2025**.

Coursera Collaborates with Mission Karmayogi to Provide Skill Development for Civil Servants via iGOT Platform

- **Coursera**, a global edtech platform, partnered with the **Government of India’s Mission Karmayogi** to provide **advanced upskilling** for **civil servants** and government officials.
- Under this collaboration, **Coursera** will deliver **curated online courses** through the **Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) Karmayogi Platform**, specifically via the **iGOT Marketplace gateway**.
- The partnership was announced by **Chhavi Bhardwaj, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of **Karmayogi Bharat**.

NITI Aayog Collaborates with Tata Electronics to Strengthen India’s Electronics and Semiconductor Sector

- **Niti Aayog** has strengthened its commitment to positioning India as a **global leader in electronics manufacturing** through **strategic industry partnerships**.

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- **Vice Chairman Suman Bery** met with **Tata Electronics** leadership, including **MD & CEO Randhir Thakur**, to discuss collaboration aimed at **accelerating growth** in India's **electronics sector**.
- The collaboration focuses on **scaling electronic production**, strengthening **resilient supply chains**, and enhancing India's role in **global value chains**.
- The initiative aligns with the **Atmanirbhar Bharat** campaign in the **semiconductor** and **advanced electronics sectors**.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Double Asteroid Redirection Test Mission Alters Didymos Asteroid's Solar Orbit for First Time

- In **2022**, The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) conducted the **Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART)** by intentionally crashing a spacecraft into the **asteroid moonlet Dimorphos** to test **asteroid deflection capabilities**.
- **Dimorphos** measures about **170 meters**, orbits the larger asteroid **Didymos** (~805 meters), forming a **binary asteroid system**.
- Before impact, **Dimorphos** had a **12-hour orbital period** around **Didymos**, which **shortened by 33 minutes** after the impact, proving that spacecraft can **alter asteroid motion**.

India Secures Major Defence Export as Indonesia Greenlights BrahMos Missile Purchase for Maritime Security

- **Indonesia** has agreed to procure **BrahMos missiles** from India, marking a **major defence export deal**.
- **Indonesia** becomes the **second country** after the **Philippines** to acquire the **BrahMos missile system** from India.
- Initially, **Indonesia** is expected to purchase **one coastal defence battery** of the **BrahMos system**.
- The **BrahMos missile** is **jointly developed** by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** of India and **NPO Mashinostroyeniya, Russia**.
- **BrahMos Aerospace**, an **Indian-Russian joint venture**, manufactures **BrahMos missiles** for **land, sea, air, and submarine platforms**.

About Indonesia :

- President : **Prabowo Subianto**
- Capital : **Jakarta**
- Currency : **Indonesian rupiah**

WHO Foundation Joins Hands with Novo Nordisk to Fight Childhood Obesity in India

- **WHO Foundation**, an independent organisation established in **2020** to support the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, has partnered with **Novo Nordisk**, a **Danish multinational pharmaceutical company**, to tackle **childhood obesity** in India.
- **Purpose of Partnership**: The initiative aims to **reduce childhood obesity** by promoting **healthier lifestyles**, strengthening **early risk identification**, and supporting **obesity prevention** and **health-system readiness** through a **scalable school-based health programme**.

Devon Island Serves as Earth's Mars-Like Testing Ground for Space Exploration

- **Devon Island**, located in **Nunavut, Canada**, is the **world's largest uninhabited island** and is used as a **Mars analog site** for research.
- The island features the **Haughton Impact Crater**, approximately **20 kilometres wide**, providing a **Mars-like barren terrain**.
- **Devon Island** has a **polar desert environment** with **extremely low temperatures**, **minimal precipitation**, and almost no vegetation, resembling **conditions on Mars**.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Van Allen Probe A Completes Final Re-Entry After 14 Years in Orbit

- The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** announced that **Van Allen Probe A** made its **final re-entry** into **Earth's atmosphere** after nearly **14 years** in orbit.
- The satellite was launched in **August 2012** along with its twin **Van Allen Probe B** to study the **Van Allen Radiation Belts** around Earth.
- **Van Allen Probe A** weighed about **600 kg (1,323 pounds)** and repeatedly flew through the **radiation belts** to measure **high-energy particles** trapped by **Earth's magnetic field**.

IRNSS-1F Satellite of India's NavIC Stops PNT Services After Atomic Clock Failure Completing 10-Year Mission

- **IRNSS-1F**, a satellite of India's **NavIC navigation system**, stopped providing **Position, Navigation, and Timing (PNT) services** after its last operational **atomic clock failed**, completing its **10-year design life**.
- The satellite had **three onboard atomic clocks**, of which two had already **malfunctioned earlier**; the final clock failure limits **IRNSS-1F** to **one-way broadcast messaging services**.
- Only **three satellites**—**IRNSS-1B, IRNSS-1L, and IRNSS-1J (NVS-01)**—are currently providing **PNT services**, whereas at least **four fully operational satellites** are required for **reliable NavIC coverage**.

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- Since 2013, ISRO has launched 11 NavIC satellites costing nearly ₹2,250 crore, but six satellites experienced failures, mainly due to defective imported atomic clocks, while others faced orbital issues.

Indian Space Research Organisation Performs 22-Tonne Thrust Sea-Level Hot Test of CE20 Cryogenic Engine in Tamil Nadu

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully conducted a sea-level hot test of the Cryogenic Engine (CE20) at 22-tonne thrust at the ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu.
- The 165-second test used a Nozzle Protection System (NPS) and a multi-element igniter to safely conduct the engine test at sea level.
- The CE20 cryogenic engine powers the upper cryogenic stage of the Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3), India's heavy-lift launch vehicle.
- The test supports the development of the updated Cryogenic Stage (C32), which will operate the engine at 22-tonne thrust to increase the payload capacity of LVM3 for future missions.

Technology Hub Partners with Japan External Trade Organisation to Strengthen India-Japan Deep-Tech Startup Collaboration

- Technology Hub (T-Hub), India's largest startup incubator based in Hyderabad, Telangana, has entered into a strategic partnership with the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) to enhance collaboration between Indian and Japanese deep-tech startups.
- The partnership aims to create high-impact innovation networks across deep-tech and manufacturing sectors.
- **Market Access:** Japanese startups, corporates, and investors will gain access to India's innovation ecosystem, while Indian startups will receive structured pathways to expand into Japan.

National Council for Cement and Building Materials, TraceXero Join Hands to Develop Carbon Capture and Utilisation Technologies for Cement Industry

- The National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCB), under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I), partnered with TraceXero Technologies Private Limited, an Indian technology startup, to support Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) technologies in the cement sector.
- The collaboration agreement was signed by Dr. S.K. Chaturvedi, Joint Director and Secretary of NCB, and Reetam Chaudhary, Co-founder of TraceXero Technologies, at NCB Ballabgarh, Haryana.

North East Region Institutions and Japan's Gifu University Sign Lol to Form International Academic & Research Consortium

- **22 institutions** from **NorthEast (NE) India**, led by **IIT-Guwahati, Assam**, and **Japan's Gifu University** signed a **Letter of Intent (Lol)** to establish the **North East Region (NER)-Japan International Academic and Research Consortium**.
- The **Lol** was signed during the **Japan-North East Academic Industry Cooperation Symposium (JNTCS 2026)** held at **IIT-Guwahati**.
- **Aim:** The **consortium** aims to foster **collaboration in research and innovation** among institutions in the **NER** and contribute to the region's **development**.

Netflix Launches Eyeline Studios in Hyderabad to Boost India's Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics Ecosystem

- **Netflix** has launched **Eyeline Studios**, its **global production and innovation studio**, in **Hyderabad**, strengthening India's **Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics (AVGC) ecosystem**.
- The **Hyderabad studio** will function as part of **Eyeline Studios' global network**, which includes centres in **Los Angeles, Vancouver, Seoul, and London**.
- The initiative aims to strengthen **India's global production pipelines**, promote **technology adoption**, and support **talent development** in the **AVGC sector**.
- The launch aligns with the government's "**Orange Economy**" initiative, which focuses on **creative and cultural industries**, including plans for **15,000 content creator labs** across India.

Indian Space Research Organisation Expands Student Involvement in Space Missions for Satellite and Payload Development

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** is expanding **student participation** in space missions, allowing students to **design satellites** and develop **payloads** under mentorship programs.
- The **Student Satellite Programme**, led by **U R Rao Satellite Centre**, provides **technical mentorship** from **ISRO scientists** to universities for satellite development.
- The **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe)** has authorised **17 student satellites and payloads**, out of which **11** have already been **successfully launched**.

India Approves Quantum Teaching Labs in 23 Institutions, 100 More Planned for Advanced Research and Training

- The **National Quantum Mission** has approved the establishment of **quantum teaching laboratories** in **23 academic institutions** across India, with **100 more under consideration**, to support **advanced research and training** in emerging **quantum technologies**.
- The **approval and updates** were disclosed during the **joint monthly meeting of Secretaries of Science Ministries and Departments**, chaired by **Union MoS Dr. Jitendra Singh**.
- The meeting included **Principal Scientific Adviser Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood**, **DST Secretary Prof. Abhay Karandikar**, **DBT Secretary Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale**, **DSIR Secretary Dr. N. Kalaiselvi**, **MoES Secretary Dr. M. Ravichandran**, and **ISRO Chairman Dr. V. Narayanan**.

Gujarat Achieves Historic Space Milestone with Launch of First Sounding Rocket at Dholera

- **Gujarat** achieved a major milestone in the **space sector** with the **successful launch** of its **first sounding rocket** at **Bavaliyari village** near **Dholera**, marking its entry into **India's private space technology ecosystem**.
- The launch was conducted by **Ahmedabad-based startup OmSPACE Rocket and Exploration Private Limited (OSRE)**, highlighting the role of **private players** in **India's space sector**.
- The **single-stage sub-orbital rocket** was launched from a **temporary launch facility/complex** and successfully reached an **altitude** of approximately **3 kilometres (km)**.

Reliance Industries Limited Inks \$3 Billion Green Ammonia Supply Agreement with South Korea's Samsung C&T

- **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)** signed a **binding long-term Supply and Purchase Agreement (SPA)** with **Samsung C&T Corporation** for the supply of **green ammonia** over a **15-year period** starting from the **second half of FY2028-29**.
- The deal is **valued at over USD 3 billion**, making it one of the **world's largest long-term green ammonia offtake agreements**.
- Under the **SPA**, **RIL** will supply **green ammonia** produced through a **fully integrated clean energy ecosystem** established in India.

India Tests Indigenous Floating LiDAR Buoy System, Achieving Key Technological Milestone Off Tamil Nadu Coast

- **India** achieved a **technological milestone** with the **successful testing** of an **indigenously developed Floating LiDAR Buoy System** by the **National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)** off the coast of **Muttom, Tamil Nadu**.

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- The **Floating LiDAR Buoy System** is an advanced ocean-based instrument designed to measure **wind conditions** over the sea using **LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging)**
- The **system** emits **laser pulses** from a **buoy** on the ocean surface, which interact with **airborne particles** and are reflected back to **sensors** to determine **wind speed, direction, and atmospheric variations** at different **altitudes**.

Shipping Corporation of India Inks Deal with Mazagon Dock to Build Green Methanol-Powered Vessel

- **Shipping Corporation of India** signed a shipbuilding contract with **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited** for a **3,000 Deadweight Tonnage (DWT) Platform Supply Vessel (PSV)**.
- The **vessel** will be **powered** by **green methanol dual-fuel technology**, allowing operation on **conventional marine fuel and green methanol** to **reduce emissions**.
- This will be the **first alternative-fuel vessel** in **SCI's fleet** and **India's first methanol dual-fuel PSV**.

ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute Initiates Deep-Sea Survey of Seamount Fisheries in the Arabian Sea

- The **ICAR–Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)** has launched a **deep-sea expedition** in the **Arabian Sea** to study **seamount fisheries**.
- The **project** focuses on **cephalopods** such as **squid, cuttlefish, and octopus**, aiming to study their **diversity, ecology, distribution, and biology**.
- The **expedition** is funded by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** with a total **cost of ₹4.986 crore** for a **two-year duration**.

India Sets Up Pilot Plant for Nd-Fe-B Rare Earth Permanent Magnets at ARCI, Hyderabad

- The **Government of India (GoI)** established a **pilot plant** for manufacturing **Neodymium-Iron-Boron (Nd-Fe-B)** rare earth permanent magnets at the **International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI), Hyderabad**, under the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**, Ministry of Science & Technology (MoS&T).
- The **pilot plant** was formally inaugurated by **Prof. Abhay Karandikar**, Secretary of DST, along with **Dr. R. Vijay**, Director of ARCI, in the presence of **Prof. Ashutosh Sharma**, Former Secretary DST and Chairman, Governing Council, ARCI.
- **Nd-Fe-B magnets** are essential components in **electric vehicles (EVs)**, **renewable energy (RE) systems, electronics**, and advanced manufacturing technologies.

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Elon Musk Unveils Terafab, Set to Become the Largest Semiconductor Factory Globally

- **Elon Musk** has launched the “**Terafab**” project to manufacture **in-house AI chips** for **robotics, artificial intelligence, and space technologies**.
- The project will be set up in **Austin, Texas**, and will be **jointly operated by Tesla and SpaceX**, with involvement from **xAI**.
- **Terafab** will begin with an **advanced technology fabrication unit**, marking Musk’s entry into **semiconductor manufacturing**.

Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 Held in New Delhi, Indian Carbon Market Portal Launched

- The **first edition of Bharat Electricity Summit (BES 2026)** was held from **March 19–22, 2026** at **Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, New Delhi**.
- The **Summit** brought together global stakeholders to strengthen **India’s energy transition** and **power sector reforms**.
- The **Summit** was inaugurated by **Union Minister Manohar Lal**, Ministry of Power (MoP) at **Yashobhoomi, New Delhi**.
- The **theme** of the four-day Summit was “**Electrifying Growth. Empowering Sustainability. Connecting Globally**”.
- **BES 2026** was organised by the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)** under the **Ministry of Power (MoP)**, aligning India’s energy sector with the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047**.

IIT-Kharagpur and PRL Scientists Study Formation of Titanium-Rich Lunar Basalts

- **Researchers from IIT-Kharagpur and Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad**, conducted a study on the formation of **titanium-rich basalts** on the **Moon**, published in **Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta**.
- **Lunar volcanic rocks** contain unusually high levels of **titanium dioxide (TiO₂)**, with some basalts having up to **18% TiO₂**, compared to less than **2% TiO₂** in Earth’s volcanic rocks.
- These **lunar basalts** originated from **ancient lava flows** formed **billions of years ago**, making them critical for understanding the **Moon’s geological evolution**.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Launches National AI Skilling, MyWAVES, and Advanced EPG with In-Built TV Tuners for DD Free Dish

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- **Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB)**, launched three major initiatives in **New Delhi, Delhi: National AI Skilling Initiative, MyWAVES**, and **Advanced Electronic Programme Guide (EPG)** with **in-built satellite tuners** in TV sets to enhance access to **Doordarshan (DD) Free Dish** services.
- The **National AI Skilling Programme** is launched in **partnership with Google and YouTube** and is designed to **train 15,000 participants** from the **creative and media sectors**.
- The programme is being implemented through the **Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT)**.
- **MyWAVES** is a new feature within the **WAVES OTT platform** that allows citizens to **create, upload, and share content**, supporting **Doordarshan’s Creators’ Corner** initiative.

Agnikul Cosmos Successfully Conducts Test of Fully 3D-Printed ‘Agnite’ Booster Engine in Chennai, Tamil Nadu

- **Agnikul Cosmos** successfully conducted a **critical booster engine test** of its rocket engine **Agnite** at the **Agnikul Launchpad (ALP-01), Chennai, Tamil Nadu** in **March 2026**.
- The test marked a **major milestone** in **India’s private space sector**, with successful testing of a **full metre-long rocket engine**, the largest **single-piece Inconel rocket engine**.
- The **Agnite engine** is **fully 3D printed**, reducing **manufacturing time** from **7 months to just 7 days**, significantly **lowering costs to one-tenth** and improving **production efficiency**.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration Drops Lunar Gateway Plan, to Build \$20 Billion Moon Surface Base Under Artemis Program

- The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has **scrapped its Lunar Gateway space station plan**, which was intended to orbit the **Moon**, and will instead construct a **\$20 billion lunar surface base**, marking a **major strategic shift** in the **Artemis Program**.
- **NASA chief Jared Isaacman** announced the changes, emphasizing a **step-by-step approach**, similar to the **Apollo Program**, to **reduce risks** and build **operational capability**.
- **NASA** unveiled plans for a **nuclear-powered Mars mission**, with a spacecraft named **“Space Reactor 1 Freedom”** planned for launch **before 2028**, featuring advanced **nuclear electric propulsion** and deploying **helicopters on Mars**.
- The **Artemis Program timeline** targets **landing astronauts on the Moon by 2028**.

About NASA :

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- The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** is an independent agency of the **U.S. federal government**, responsible for the **United States' civil space program**, and was founded on **29 July 1958** in the **United States**.

National Commission for Women Partners with Truecaller to Strengthen Women's Digital Safety Awareness in India

- The **National Commission for Women (NCW)** has collaborated with **Truecaller**, a global communications platform, to launch a nationwide **Women's Digital Safety Awareness Initiative** in India.
- The **collaboration** was formally announced at an event held at **Sushma Swaraj Bhawan**, aiming to strengthen **women's online safety** and **digital awareness**.

About National Commission for Women :

- The **National Commission for Women (NCW)** is an **autonomous statutory body** established under the **NCW Act, 1990** (formed in 1992).
- **NCW** is mandated to **protect and promote women's rights**, review **legal safeguards**, recommend **policy reforms**, and address **complaints** related to women's issues.
- Overall, the **initiative** strengthens **digital empowerment of women**, promotes **safe internet usage**, and enhances access to **grievance redressal mechanisms** through **technology-enabled awareness tools**.

IIT Ropar's Annam.AI to Establish Weather Intelligence Network

- **ANNAM.AI**, a **Government of India-supported Centre of Excellence** at **IIT Ropar**, has launched an initiative to deploy **100 AI-based weather stations** across **Punjab** by **30 March 2026**.
- The initiative begins with **Punjab** as the **first implementation hub**, marking the start of a **scalable national weather intelligence network**.
- These **AI-powered weather stations** will provide **hyperlocal, real-time weather data** to farmers **free of cost**, improving **agricultural decision-making**.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration releases detailed ocean floor map using Surface Water and Ocean Topography satellite data, filling long-standing seabed exploration gap

- The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has released a new and more detailed **map of the ocean floor** using data from the **SWOT satellite**, addressing a long-standing gap in **seabed exploration**.

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- The **Surface Water and Ocean Topography (SWOT)** satellite is a joint mission developed with **CNES**, with contributions from the **Canadian Space Agency (CSA)** and the **UK Space Agency**, launched in **December 2022**.
- The **SWOT satellite** can scan nearly **90% of Earth's surface every 21 days**, enabling **large-scale ocean and water body mapping**.

DEFENCE NEWS

Indian Army Retains Khelo India Winter Games 2026 Team Championship Title with 23 Medals

- The **Indian Army** successfully defended its **team championship title** at the **Khelo India Winter Games 2026**, winning a total of **23 medals**, including **9 gold medals** (with **8 golds** won in the **Gulmarg leg**).
- **Himachal Pradesh** finished as **runners-up**, winning **14 total medals** including **6 gold, 7 silver, and 1 bronze**, while **Haryana** secured **third place** with **7 total medals** including **4 gold, 1 silver, and 2 bronze**.
- The **Khelo India Winter Games 2026** were hosted by the **Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council** and managed by the **Sports Authority of India**, promoting winter sports development in India.
- **Defence Research & Development Organisation Successfully Carries Out Flight Tests of Very Short-Range Air Defence System**
- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** under the **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** successfully conducted **three consecutive flight trials** of the indigenously developed **Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS)**.
- The trials were conducted at the **Integrated Test Range, Chandipur (ITR)**, located off the coast of **Odisha**.
- **VSHORADS** is a **Man-Portable Air Defence System (MANPADS)** designed to neutralize **low-altitude aerial threats** such as fighter aircraft, helicopters, UAVs, and drones.

Indian Air Force Conducts Exercise Vayushakti-26 at Pokhran Firing Range in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan

- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** successfully conducted **Exercise Vayushakti-26** at the **Pokhran Field Firing Range**, Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, demonstrating **combat readiness**, joint operational capability, and **technological superiority**.

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- **Droupadi Murmu**, the **President of India**, attended the firepower demonstration as **Chief Guest**, along with Union Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** and other senior government and defence officials.

Indian Air Force Southern Air Command Conducts Joint Maritime Exercise ‘Kalari Leap’

- The **Southern Air Command (SAC)** of the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** successfully conducted **Exercise Kalari Leap** in the **Lakshadweep and Minicoy Archipelago** in the Arabian Sea.
- The objective of **Exercise Kalari Leap** was to validate **joint operational planning, rapid force projection, and precision execution** in complex maritime operational environments.
- The exercise involved **coordinated multi-force operations** with participation from: **Armed Forces Special Operations Division (AFSOD), Indian Coast Guard (ICG)**

Indian Navy’s Indian Naval Sailing Vessel Kaundinya to Be Flagged Into Mumbai Harbour by Defence Minister of State Sanjay Seth

- The **Indian Navy’s Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Kaundinya** will be **flagged into Mumbai Harbour** on **02 March 2026** by **Sanjay Seth, Raksha Rajya Mantri**.
- The **flag-in ceremony** marks the successful completion of the vessel’s **maiden overseas voyage** to the **Sultanate of Oman**, strengthening **India–Oman maritime and cultural relations** across the Arabian Sea.
- **INSV Kaundinya** is a **traditionally constructed stitched ship**, built using **ancient Indian maritime techniques**, where wooden planks are **hand-stitched** using **coir rope and natural resins**.

Ministry of Defence Signs ₹5,083 Crore Contracts for Advanced Light Helicopters Mk-II and Shtil Missiles

- On **March 03, 2026**, the **Ministry of Defence**, India signed contracts worth a total of **₹5,083 crore** for the acquisition of six **Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III (Maritime Role)** for the **Indian Coast Guard** and **Surface-to-Air Vertical Launch - Shtil missiles** for the **Indian Navy**, in the presence of Defence Secretary **Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh** at South Block, **New Delhi**.
- The contract for **ALH Mk-III (MR)**, along with **operational role equipment, engineering support package, and performance-based logistics support**, is valued at **₹2,901 crore** and has been signed with **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited** under the **Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured)**

About Ministry of Defence:

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- **Cabinet Minister:** Rajnath Singh
- **Minister of State (MoS):** Sanjay Seth

Indian Navy Signs Contract for 04 Self-Propelled Fuel Barges with Shoft Shipyard

- A contract for construction of **04 × 500T Self Propelled Fuel Barges** was signed on **02 March 2026** with **Shoft Shipyard Private Limited**, a **MSME shipyard** located in **Thane, Maharashtra**.
- The project supports the **Indian Navy** and promotes the “**Make in India**” and “**Aatmanirbhar Bharat**” initiatives of the Government of India.
- These barges will be constructed under the **Classification Rules** of the **Indian Register of Shipping (IRS)** to ensure **quality, safety, and operational standards** in shipbuilding.

INS Sudarshini Makes Historic Arrival in Alexandria After Suez Transit

- **INS Sudarshini** arrived at the historic **Alexandria** as part of its transoceanic expedition **Lokayan-26**, marking an important milestone in **maritime training and diplomacy**.
- The vessel reached **Alexandria** after transiting north through the **Suez Canal**, a **193-km strategic maritime gateway** connecting East and West global trade routes and serving as a major **training experience** for naval trainees.
- The visit reinforces the “**Bridges of Friendship**” initiative, promoting **maritime diplomacy** and **cultural cooperation** between India and Egypt.

Defence Research and Development Organisation Ghatak UCAV Programme Advances with Proposal for 60 Drones

- India’s indigenous **stealth combat drone Ghatak UCAV** is being developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** for the armed forces.
- The **Defence Procurement Board (DPB)** has recommended the procurement of **60 Ghatak UCAVs**, which now requires final approval from the **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**.
- **Ghatak UCAV** is a **stealth flying-wing drone** designed with a **low radar cross-section** and an **internal weapons bay** for covert operations.

About DRDO:

- Founded: 1958
- Headquarters: New Delhi, India
- Parent Ministry: Ministry of Defence, Government of India
- Chairman: Dr. Samir V. Kamat

INS Tarangini Reaches Colombo After Conducting Sea Training for Sri Lanka Navy Seariders

- The **Indian Navy’s sail training ship INS Tarangini** arrived at **Colombo, Sri Lanka** after completing a **sail training deployment** for **Sri Lanka Navy trainees**.

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- **Three officers and 26 trainees** from the **Sri Lanka Naval and Maritime Academy** embarked on **INS Tarangini** at **Trincomalee** for the sail training programme.
- During the **sea sortie**, trainees received **intensive training** in **sail setting, navigation, and watchkeeping under sails**, gaining practical experience in **ship handling and manoeuvring**.
- The deployment enabled trainees to **operate and manage the vessel** under guidance of the ship's crew, enhancing their **seamanship skills** and **operational knowledge**.

Indian Army Central Command Hosts First Strategic Communication Conclave in Lucknow

- The **Indian Army's Central Command** conducted its first-ever **Strategic Communication Conclave** in **Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**.
- The conclave witnessed participation of around **500 attendees**, including **senior military officers, diplomats, government communication experts, and media professionals**.
- The event focused on **strategic communication** within India's **national security architecture**, highlighting the importance of **information and perception management** in modern warfare.
- The conclave discussed **weaponisation of narratives** and the threat posed by **conflicts below the threshold of war**, such as **information warfare** and **psychological operations**.

Indian Armed Forces Contingent Leaves for Seychelles to Participate in Joint Military Exercise LAMITIYE-2026

- An **Indian Armed Forces** contingent arrived in **Seychelles** to participate in the **11th edition** of the **Joint Military Exercise "LAMITIYE-2026"** with the **Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF)**.
- The **Joint Exercise LAMITIYE-2026** is being conducted at the **Seychelles Defence Academy** from **09–20 March 2026**.
- The term "**LAMITIYE**" means "**Friendship**" in the **Creole language**, highlighting the strong **defence cooperation** between India and Seychelles.
- Exercise **LAMITIYE** is a **biennial** (every two years) joint military training exercise that has been conducted in **Seychelles** since **2001**.

IG Defence Unveils Indigenous Long-Range Strike Drone "Project KAL" for Deep-Strike Missions

- **IG Defence** unveiled **Project KAL**, an **indigenous long-range strike drone** designed for **deep-strike missions**.
- The drone is a **one-way attack UAV** capable of carrying **explosive payloads** up to **1,000 km**, targeting **high-value military assets** such as **logistics hubs, radar systems, and strategic infrastructure**.
- **Project KAL** has an **endurance** of about **3–5 hours**, enabling it to travel long distances, **loiter over target areas**, and conduct **precision strikes**.

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- The system is comparable to **Shahed-class drones**, known for their **low-cost, long-range strike capabilities** in modern conflicts.

US Submarine Strikes Iranian Warship IRIS Dena Near Sri Lanka in International Waters

- A **US submarine** torpedoed the **Iranian warship IRIS Dena** off the coast of **Sri Lanka**, outside its territorial waters.
- The ship was returning after participating in the **International Fleet Review** and **MILAN-2026** naval exercise hosted by **India** near **Visakhapatnam**.
- The attack resulted in the **death of at least 80 sailors** and expanded the **US-Israel–Iran conflict** beyond **West Asia** into the **Indian Ocean region**.
- The incident has sparked a debate in **India** over **maritime security**, especially given India's **strong naval presence** in the Indian Ocean.

United States and South Korea Begin Large-Scale Joint Military Drill 'Freedom Shield'

- The **United States** and **South Korea** began a large **joint military exercise** named **Freedom Shield** on **9 March 2026**.
- The exercise involves thousands of troops, with about **18,000 South Korean troops** participating, while the number of **American troops** has not been confirmed by **US Forces Korea**.
- **Freedom Shield** will continue until **19 March 2026**, involving multiple training and operational activities, including **live, virtual, constructive, and field-based exercises**.
- The exercise is aimed at strengthening **defence cooperation, military readiness, and operational coordination** between the **United States** and **South Korea**.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Unveils 'Defence Forces Vision 2047' Blueprint for Future-Ready Indian Military

- **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh** released '**Defence Forces Vision 2047: A Roadmap for a Future-Ready Indian Military**' at **South Block, New Delhi** on **March 10, 2026**.
- The vision document was articulated by **Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff** to transform the **Defence Forces** into a **modern, integrated, and technologically-advanced military** capable of supporting India's aspiration to become **Viksit Bharat by 2047**.

Defence Research & Development Organisation and Indian Navy Successfully Test Indigenous Air Droppable Container 'ADC-150' from P8I Aircraft

- The **Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)** and **Indian Navy** conducted **four successful in-flight release trials** of the indigenous **Air Droppable Container (ADC-150)**.

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- Trials were carried out from the **P8I aircraft** off the **Goa coast** between **February 21 and March 1, 2026**, under **extreme release conditions**.
- The **ADC-150** is **indigenously designed and developed** to deliver a **150 kg payload**, enhancing **naval operational logistics capabilities**.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Launches ‘Cold Response’ 2026 Arctic Exercise in Norway and Finland

- The **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)** commenced its **biennial Arctic military exercise** named **‘Cold Response 2026’** across **Northern Norway and Finland**.
- The exercise duration is from **March 2026 till March 19, 2026**, focusing on the **role of civilians** in supporting military operations.
- **Objective:** The exercise is part of **Arctic Sentry**, aimed at bolstering **NATO’s presence** in the **polar region**.

About NATO :

- Formation : 4 April 1949
- Headquarters : Brussels, Belgium
- Secretary General : Mark Rutte
- The **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** is an intergovernmental military alliance between 32 member states—30 in Europe and 2 in North America.

India–Japan Joint Military Exercise Dharma Guardian 2026 Concludes in Chaubattia After Two Weeks

- The **7th edition** of the **India–Japan joint military exercise Dharma Guardian 2026** concluded at **Chaubattia** after a two-week training period from **24 February to 8 March 2026**.
- The exercise involved **joint operational drills** and training between the **Indian Army** and the **Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF)**.
- The focus of the exercise was on **counter-insurgency (CI)** and **counter-terrorism (CT)** operations, along with **urban warfare** and **combat training in complex terrain**.
- **Exercise Dharma Guardian** is conducted **alternately** in **India and Japan** since **2018** to strengthen **bilateral defence cooperation**.

INS Trikand to Participate in Mauritius’ 58th National Day on March 12, 2026

- **INS Trikand**, a **Talwar-class guided-missile frigate** of the **Indian Navy**, will participate in the **58th National Day celebrations** of **Mauritius**.
- The ship reached **Port Louis** as part of its **operational deployment** to the **South-West Indian Ocean Region**.

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- A **marching contingent**, **naval band**, and an **onboard helicopter** from **INS Trikand** will take part in the **National Day Parade** at **Champ de Mars**.

INS Sudarshini Reaches Valletta, Malta, Strengthening India–Malta Maritime Relations

- The **Indian Naval Sail Training Ship INS Sudarshini** arrived at the port of **Valletta, Malta** as part of its **transoceanic expedition “Lokayan-26.”**
- The visit highlights the **strong maritime ties** between **India and Malta** and is part of the ship’s **22,000-nautical-mile global voyage**.
- Before reaching Malta, **INS Sudarshini** successfully transited the **Suez Canal** and made a **port call** at **Alexandria** in **Egypt**.

INS Trikand Completes Port Visit to Port Louis, Mauritius

- **INS Trikand** concluded her **port call** at **Port Louis, Mauritius**.
- The ship participated in the **58th Mauritius National Day Parade** on **12 Mar 2026** with a **marching contingent**, **naval band**, and **integral helicopter** for the **fly-past** at **Champ de Mars**.
- **Captain Sachin Kulkarni, Commanding Officer** of **INS Trikand**, called on **Mr Rampersad Soorojebally, Commissioner of Police**, and **H.E Mr Anurag Srivastava, High Commissioner of India to Mauritius**.

Indian Navy Joins United States-Led Multinational Exercise Sea Dragon 2026 in Guam

- The **Indian Navy** is participating in **Exercise Sea Dragon 2026**, a **United States Navy-led multinational anti-submarine warfare (ASW)** exercise held in **Guam** throughout **March 2026**.
- The exercise is hosted at **Andersen Air Force Base** and aims to enhance **maritime cooperation** and **ASW capabilities** in the **Indo-Pacific region**.
- **Participating forces** include the **United States Navy, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force, Royal New Zealand Air Force**, and the **Indian Navy**.

World’s First Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding Centre Laid by Sagar Defence in Andhra Pradesh

- **Sagar Defence Engineering Private Limited** laid the **foundation stone** for the **world’s first Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding and Systems Centre** at **Juvvaladinne Fishing Harbour, Nellore district, Andhra Pradesh (AP)**.
- The proposed centre will function as an **advanced shipyard**, integrating **Robotics** and **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** into key production processes to enhance **shipbuilding efficiency, workforce productivity, and sustainability**.

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- The centre will have **autonomous shipbuilding units, testing infrastructure, an R&D centre, Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facilities, and a specialised training hub** within a single **integrated campus**.

Keel Laid for Yard 16402 & 16403, Second and Third Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels at YMPL, Ratnagiri

- The **keel laying ceremony** of Yard 16402 & 16403, the **second and third ships** of six **Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs)**, was held at **M/s YMPL, Ratnagiri**.
- These **Next Generation OPVs** have a **range of 5,000 nautical miles** and can achieve a **maximum speed of 23 knots**.
- Each ship measures **117 meters in length** and has a **crew strength of 11 officers and 110 men**.
- The **OPVs** will feature **state-of-the-art machinery and advanced technological systems**, including **AI-based predictive maintenance, Remote Piloted Drones, Integrated Bridge System (IBS), and Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS)**.

Indian Navy Advances IOS SAGAR Initiative to Enhance Maritime Cooperation with Indian Ocean Nations

- **India** reaffirmed its **commitment to collaborative maritime security** in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** with the commencement of the **second edition of Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR**.
- The **Indian Navy** assumed the **chair of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)** in **February 2026**, and the current edition of **IOS SAGAR** includes participation from **16 IONS nations**.
- The initiative aligns with the **Government of India's SAGAR vision (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** and contributes to the broader **MAHASAGAR framework (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security Across the Regions)**.

Indian Army Holds 'Amogh Jwala' Exercise at Babina Field Firing Ranges in Uttar Pradesh

- The **Indian Army Southern Command** conducted **Exercise 'Amogh Jwala'** at the **Babina Field Firing Ranges, Uttar Pradesh** from **March 6 to 18, 2026**.
- The **13-day military exercise** aimed to **validate the Indian Army's preparedness for mechanised warfare** in a **multi-domain operational environment**.
- The exercise demonstrated **high-tempo mechanised operations** using **Attack Helicopters, Fighter Aircraft, drones, and counter-drone systems**.

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- A key highlight was the **deployment of Apache attack helicopters**, along with **network-enabled battlefield platforms**.

Indian Navy to Commission Advanced Stealth Frigate ‘Taragiri’ (F41)

- The **Indian Navy** is set to commission its latest **stealth Frigate, Taragiri (F41)** on **03 April 2026** at **Visakhapatnam**, with the ceremony presided over by **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh**.
- **Taragiri (F41)** is the **fourth platform of the Project 17A class** and represents a significant enhancement in **stealth and combat capabilities**.
- The **Frigate weighs 6,670 tonnes**, is built by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL)**, **Mumbai**, and embodies the **‘Make in India’** spirit with **indigenous content exceeding 75%**.
- Over **200 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** contributed to the ship’s construction, supporting India’s **Aatmanirbhar initiatives** and generating thousands of jobs.
- **Taragiri** is powered by a **Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG)** propulsion plant, providing **High-Speed – High-Endurance** performance for **multi-dimensional maritime operations**.

INS Nilgiri of Indian Navy Takes Part in Exercise Kakadu 2026 in Australia

- The **Indian Navy (IN)** frigate **INS Nilgiri** participated in the **sea phase of Exercise Kakadu 2026** in **Australia** as part of its deployment to the **Western Pacific**.
- The deployment aimed at enhancing **maritime cooperation** in the **Indo-Pacific region**.
- The **17th edition of Exercise Kakadu 2026** witnessed participation from over **19 nations** and **6,000 personnel**, covering the area from **Jervis Bay to Darwin, Australia**.
- A **Kakadu Fleet Review** was held in **Sydney Harbour**, New South Wales on **21st March 2026**, marking the largest gathering of **foreign warships** in over a decade and commemorating the **125th anniversary** of the **Royal Australian Navy (RAN)**.
- **INS Nilgiri** took part in **coordinated naval manoeuvres** off northern Australia, alongside warships from **Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand**.

Raksha Mantri Chairs Ministry of Defence Parliamentary Consultative Committee Meeting on Border Roads Organisation

- **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh** chaired a **Parliamentary Consultative Committee** meeting for the **Ministry of Defence** on the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** in **New Delhi**, discussing **defence, infrastructure development, and strategic initiatives** for **national security and operational preparedness**.

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- The **BRO** has enhanced **mobility of defence forces** and positively transformed the lives of local residents, and is tasked with developing **infrastructure** along the **Indo-Myanmar border** spanning approximately **1,600 km**, strengthening **border management capabilities**.

Ministry of Defence Signs ₹858 Crore Deals for Tunguska Air Defence Missile System and P-8I Aircraft Depot-Level Inspection

- The **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** signed **two contracts worth ₹858 crore** in **New Delhi**, aimed at strengthening India's **defence capabilities** and **maintenance infrastructure**.
- A **contract worth ₹445 crore** was signed with **JSC Rosoboronexport, Russia** for the procurement of the **Tunguska Air Defence Missile System** for the **Indian Army** in the presence of **Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh**.
- The **Tunguska Air Defence Missile System** will enhance India's **multi-layered air defence capabilities**, providing protection against **aerial threats** such as **aircraft, drones, and cruise missiles**.

Indian Air Force Introduces 'Vayu Baan', India's First Helicopter-Launched Drone System

- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** has initiated **Project "Vayu Baan"**, India's first **helicopter-launched Unmanned Aerial System (UAS)**.
- With this project, **India** joins an **elite group of countries** such as the **United States of America (USA)** and **China** in developing **air-launched drone technology**, reducing dependence on foreign systems.
- The project is being led by the **IAF Directorate of Aerospace Design (DAD)**, which issued a **Request for Proposal (RFP)** in **March 2026** to invite **domestic industry participation**.

About Indian Air Force :

- **Founded** : 26 January 1950
- **Headquarters** : New Delhi, India
- **Chief of the Air Staff (CAS)** : Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh
- **Motto** : Touch the Sky with Glory

Indian Navy Launches 'Operation Urja Suraksha' to Protect India-Bound Energy Shipments in Strait of Hormuz

- The **Indian Navy (IN)** launched **Operation "Urja Suraksha"** (**Energy Protection**) to **escort, guide, and safeguard** India-bound **energy shipments** through the strategically important **Strait of Hormuz**.

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- The **primary objective** of the operation is to ensure **India's energy security** by protecting **critical maritime supply routes**.
- A total of **22 India-bound vessels** have been identified for **naval escort protection**, including **20 high-priority ships**.
- These ships are carrying **essential energy resources** such as **Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)**, **Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)**, and **crude oil**.
- The mission involves deployment of **more than 5 frontline Indian Navy warships** in the **Strait of Hormuz**, a key **global maritime chokepoint**.

Indian Army and Indian Institute of Technology Madras Pravartak Join Hands to Boost Indigenous Defence Development

- The **Indian Army's Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM) Pravartak Technologies Foundation**, Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN) to boost **indigenous defence technology development**.
- The partnership aims to **identify, develop, and deploy indigenous solutions** for the **operational and maintenance needs** of the Indian Army.
- The collaboration will focus on **problem identification** in Army equipment and subsystems, followed by **prototype development, testing, and final deployment**.

Personnel from 16 Friendly Nations Complete Harbour Training Under Indian Navy's 'IOS SAGAR' Initiative to Boost Regional Maritime Cooperation

- The **Indian Navy (IN)** successfully completed the **harbour training phase** of the **IOS SAGAR initiative** at the **Southern Naval Command, Kochi**, marking a major step in **regional maritime cooperation**.
- The initiative strengthens India's commitment to **collaborative security, capacity building, and maritime stability** in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.
- The **IOR** faces multiple challenges such as **maritime security threats, piracy, illegal fishing, trafficking, natural disasters**, and protection of **Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs)**.

Adani Defence and Aerospace delivers first batch of 'Prahar' light machine guns to Indian Army

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- In a boost to India's **defence capability**, the **Indian Army** received the **first batch of 2,000 'Prahar' Light Machine Guns (LMGs)** under the **Make in India initiative**.
- The weapons are **7.62 mm calibre Light Machine Guns (LMGs)**, manufactured by **Adani Defence and Aerospace** at its **Small Arms Complex in Gwalior** in partnership with **Israel Weapon Industries**.
- The **'Prahar' LMG (known in Israel as Negev NG7)** is designed to enhance **infantry firepower, operational effectiveness, and combat readiness**.
- The delivery of the first batch of **2,000 LMGs** is part of a **larger order exceeding 40,000 guns**, strengthening **large-scale infantry modernisation**.
- The weapons were delivered **11 months ahead of schedule**, reflecting **efficient defence production and procurement timelines**.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh leads inaugural Informal Group of Ministers meeting to assess West Asia developments and their impact on India

- **Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh** chaired the **first meeting** of the **Informal Group of Ministers (IGoM)** to monitor the evolving situation in **West Asia**.
- The meeting was held at **Kartavya Bhawan-2** and focused on **assessing impacts** and recommending **proactive measures**.
- **Key participants** included **Nirmala Sitharaman, Kiren Rijju, Hardeep Singh Puri, Manohar Lal Khattar, Jagat Prakash Nadda, Prahlad Joshi, Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, and Jitendra Singh**.

Indian Navy sail training ship INS Sudarshini reaches Sète during Lokayan-26 transoceanic expedition

- The Indian Navy's sail training ship **INS Sudarshini** arrived at the historic port city of **Sète** as part of the transoceanic expedition **Lokayan-26**.
- The visit of **INS Sudarshini** marks a **significant milestone** in its journey and highlights India's commitment to **maritime cooperation** and **cultural diplomacy**.
- During its stay, **INS Sudarshini** will participate in the **'Escale à Sète' festival**, one of Europe's most prestigious gatherings of **traditional tall ships** and seafaring communities.

ENVIRONMENT**Scientists Discover New Genus and Species of Blind Fish in Assam**

- An international research team from **Germany, India, and Switzerland** discovered a **new genus and species** of **blind aquifer-dwelling (phreatobitic) fish** named **“Gitchak nakan”** in a hand-dug well in **Assam, India**.
- The discovery was published in **Scientific Reports**, a journal under the **Nature Portfolio**, which is one of the world’s leading scientific research journals.
- The name **“Gitchak nakan”** is derived from the **Garo language**; **“Gitchak”** means **red**, while **“na-tok”** and **“kana”** refer to the **absence of eyes**, describing the fish’s blind characteristics.

Two New Earthworm Species Found in Kerala’s Silent Valley National Park

- Researchers discovered **two new species** of **moniligastrid earthworms**, namely **“Moniligaster girishi”** and **“Drawida reynoldsi”**, in **Silent Valley National Park**, located in the **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve** of the **Western Ghats, Kerala**.
- The discovery was published in the **peer-reviewed scientific journal Zootaxa**, increasing scientific knowledge of **earthworm biodiversity and taxonomy**.
- With this discovery, the total number of **moniligastrid earthworm species** in India increased to **95 species**, of which **70 species** are found in the **Western Ghats**, highlighting **regional biodiversity richness**.

2,600-Year-Old Sealed Etruscan Tomb Unearthed in Central Italy

- **Archaeologists** in **central Italy** have uncovered a **sealed Etruscan tomb** dating back around **2,600 years**, providing rare insights into an ancient civilisation predating Rome.
- The tomb was discovered at the **San Giuliano archaeological site**, located about **70 km northwest of Rome**, which once hosted an **Etruscan settlement** on a plateau surrounded by a large **necropolis** (ancient burial ground).
- The excavation is part of the **San Giuliano Archaeological Research Project (SGARP)**, involving international universities, the **Virgil Academy**, and **Italian heritage authorities**.
- Inside the **undisturbed burial chamber**, archaeologists found **four skeletons** placed on **carved stone beds**, suggesting deliberate positioning in ancient burial ceremonies.

Stenothoe lowryi, a Rare Marine Amphipod, Found for the First Time in Indian Waters

- **Marine science researchers** from **Berhampur University** have recorded the presence of a **rare shrimp-like marine amphipod species** in Indian waters for the **first time**.

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- The discovery was made at **Arjyapalli** in **Odisha's Ganjam district** during a field survey of **rocky coastal habitats**.
- The species was identified as "**Stenothoe lowryi**", which was previously reported only from **Malaysia** and whose distribution in other regions was largely unknown.
- The research was led by **Shesdev Patro**, Assistant Professor in the **Department of Marine Science** at Berhampur University, under the **Mukhyamantri Research Innovation Extramural Programme (MRIEP)** funded by the **Odisha State Higher Education Council** for the **2024–25 academic year**.

Roopkund Lake: The Enigma of India's Himalayan "Skeleton Lake"

- **Roopkund Lake** is located in the **Himalayas of Uttarakhand** at an altitude of about **5,020 metres**, in the **Chamoli district**.
- The lake lies between the **Himalayan peaks Trishul and Nanda Ghunti**, forming part of the **Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.
- **Roopkund Lake** is popularly known as "**Skeleton Lake**" because **hundreds of human skeletons** are found around and inside the lake.
- The lake is a **small glacial lake** measuring less than **40 metres in diameter** and remains **frozen for most of the year** due to the **extremely cold Himalayan climate**.
- During **summer**, when the **ice melts**, **bones and skulls** become visible in the **clear glacial water** and along the lake's edges.
- The **skeletons** were first widely reported in **1942** by **forest ranger Hari Kishan Madhwal** while patrolling near **Nanda Devi National Park**.
- **Early investigations** initially suspected the remains belonged to **Japanese soldiers of World War II**, but later research confirmed they were **much older**.
- Researchers discovered **artefacts** such as **wooden objects, leather slippers, iron spearheads, and rings**, preserved due to the **cold environment**.

Newly Identified Plant Species *Osbeckia zubeengargiana* in Assam Named After Singer Zubeen Garg

- Researchers from **Gauhati University** discovered a **new plant species, Osbeckia zubeengargiana**, in the **grassland ecosystems** of **Manas National Park**, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) **World Heritage Site** in **Assam**.
- The species was named after **Assamese music icon Zubeen Garg**, and the discovery was published in the **scientific journal Phytotaxa**.

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- The species was documented during **floristic surveys** conducted between **2021 and 2025** in **Baksa district, Assam**.

New Estuarine Fish Species *Butis bargabhimae* Discovered in West Bengal

- **Scientists in West Bengal** have discovered a **new estuarine fish species** named “**Butis bargabhimae**”, enhancing India’s **aquatic biodiversity**.
- The species was found in the **Rupnarayan River**, a **tributary of the Hooghly River**, in an **estuarine ecosystem** near **Tamluk, West Bengal**.
- **Estuarine environments**, where **freshwater meets seawater**, serve as **dynamic habitats** supporting **diverse aquatic life**.
- “**Butis bargabhimae**” belongs to the **butid family**, commonly called **gudgeon gobies**, which are adapted to **brackish water** and **fluctuating salinity levels**.

Zoological Survey of India Discovers Two New Lichen Moth Species, *Caulocerahallowayi* and *Asura buxa*, in the Eastern Himalayas

- The **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** has announced the **discovery** of **two new species** of **lichen moths**, namely “**Caulocerahallowayi**” and “**Asura buxa**”, from the **Eastern Himalayas**.
- The **discovery** enhances India’s **biodiversity records** and was published in the **international journal Zootaxa**.
- **Caulocerahallowayi** was discovered near **Golitar in Sikkim**, while **Asura buxa** was identified in **Panijhora, West Bengal**.

Christ College & Mahatma Gandhi University Discover New Earthworm Species “*Drawida vazhania*” in Kerala

- **Researchers from Christ College and Mahatma Gandhi University** discovered a **new earthworm species** named “**Drawida vazhania**” in the **Vazhani Dam area** of **Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary, Thrissur district, Kerala**.
- With this **discovery**, the total number of **Drawida species** in India increased to **83**, including **55 species** in the **Western Ghats**.
- **Kerala** leads with **31 Drawida species**, of which **16 are endemic**, highlighting its **rich biodiversity**.

New Wild Kiwi Species “*Actinidia indica*” Discovered in Arunachal Pradesh by Botanical Survey of India

- Scientists from the **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** have identified a **new species of wild kiwi** named “**Actinidia indica**” in **Arunachal Pradesh**.

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- The discovery adds to India's **botanical diversity** and highlights the **ecological richness** of the **Eastern Himalayas**.
- **Actinidia indica** was recorded near **Ziro Valley**, Arunachal Pradesh, at an **elevation of 1,725 metres**.
- The species grows in a **transition zone** between **temperate and subtropical forests** with high **biodiversity** and favourable climatic conditions.
- It is a **perennial climbing shrub**, growing **2–4 metres** in height, with **densely hairy young branches** and **large ovate leaves**.

Desert Moss *Syntrichia caninervis* Identified as Key for Future Mars Ecosystems

- **Syntrichia caninervis** is a resilient **desert moss** identified as a potential candidate for future **Mars colonisation**.
- The study was published in the journal **The Innovation**.
- The moss can survive **extreme dehydration, freezing temperatures, and intense radiation**, making it highly adaptable to harsh conditions.
- It can lose over **98% of its cellular water** and enter a **dormant state**, resuming **photosynthesis** within seconds when exposed to moisture.

Zoological Survey of India Researchers Identify New Cockroach Species *Neoloboptera peninsularis* in Maharashtra

- Scientists from the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** discovered a new **cockroach species** named **Neoloboptera peninsularis** in the **Deccan Peninsula**, specifically **Nathachiwadi, Pune, Maharashtra**.
- The discovery was published in the scientific journal "**Records of ZSI**", highlighting its scientific significance.
- The species name "**peninsularis**" is derived from **Peninsular India**, indicating its regional origin.

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CURRENT AFFAIRS: BOOKS AND AUTHOR

Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan Releases 16 Books Published by Publications Division

- **C. P. Radhakrishnan**, Vice President of India, released **16 books** published by the **Publications Division** under the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** at **Uparashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi**.
- Out of the total publications, **14 books are in Tamil**, while the remaining **2 books are in Hindi (1) and English (1)**.
- The Vice President also released a book on **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee**, written by **S. K. Bose**, in **English, Hindi and Tamil**.

Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Releases Book “Mahatma: A Great Communicator” in New Delhi

- **Mansukh Mandaviya**, Union Minister for the **Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoL&E)** and the **Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS)**, released the book titled “**Mahatma: A Great Communicator**” at a function held at **Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat, New Delhi**.
- The book has been authored by **Dhiraj Kakadia**, who serves as the Additional Director General of **Akashvani**.

‘Karuna: The Power of Compassion’ Book by Kailash Satyarthi Launched in March 2026

- **Kailash Satyarthi**, **Nobel Peace Prize 2014 laureate**, released his latest book **Karuna: The Power of Compassion** in **March 2026**.
- The book was formally launched by the **Satyarthi Movement for Global Compassion** in association with **HarperCollins India**.
- The book was unveiled in the presence of **Surya Kant, Chief Justice of India**, and **Kiran Bedi**, former **Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry**.

CURRENT AFFAIRS : SUMMITS & CONFERENCE

India Submits Proposals at World Trade Organization’s 14th Ministerial Conference to Safeguard Food Security and Fishermen’s Livelihoods

- **India** has submitted proposals for the **World Trade Organization’s (WTO) 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14)** focusing on **food security** and the **livelihoods of traditional fishermen**.
- The **Ministerial Conference** is the **highest decision-making body** of the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**.
- **MC14** will be held from **26 to 29 March 2026** in **Yaoundé, Cameroon**.

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- The Conference will be chaired by **Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana**, Cameroon's Minister of Trade.
- The **WTO** was established under the **Marrakesh Agreement, 1994**, replacing earlier ministerial meetings under **GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade)**.
- The **Ministerial Conference** is required to meet **at least once every two years** to negotiate **trade agreements** and address **global trade issues**.

About World Trade Organization (WTO):

- Founded: 1 January 1995
- Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland
- Director-General: Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (since 2021)
- Membership: 166 members (162 UN member states, the European Union, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan)

United Nations to Host Inaugural High Seas Summit in New York in January 2027

- The **United Nations (UN)** will host the **first-ever High Seas Summit** in **January 2027** at its headquarters in **New York**.
- The summit is based on the **High Seas Treaty (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction – BBNJ)** adopted in **June 2023**, aimed at protecting **marine biodiversity** in **international waters** beyond national jurisdictions.
- The **BBNJ treaty** has been **ratified by around 60 countries**, enabling it to **come into force** and paving the way for **global governance of the high seas**.
- The **High Seas Summit (Conference of Parties – COP)** is proposed from **January 11 to 22, 2027**, focusing on **implementation mechanisms** and **institutional setup**.

6th BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry Women Empowerment Summit Held in New Delhi

- The **6th BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry Women Empowerment (BRICS CCI WE) Summit** was held from **21 to 23 March 2026** in **New Delhi, Delhi**.
- The **summit** brings together member nations of **BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa)** to promote **women empowerment, leadership, and entrepreneurship**.
- The **theme** of the **2026 BRICS CCI WE Summit** was **“Women in Innovation, Science Leadership, Innovation & Entrepreneurship (WISE) – Inspiring Change, Shaping Tomorrow.”**

ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS**Reserve Bank of India Grants Approval to SBI Mutual Fund to Buy Up to 9.99% Stake in RBL Bank and Bandhan Bank**

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** approved **SBI Mutual Fund**, a subsidiary of **State Bank of India**, to acquire up to **9.99%** of the **paid-up share capital** or **voting rights** in **RBL Bank**.
- The **RBI** also approved **SBI Mutual Fund** to acquire up to **9.99% stake**, including **equity share capital** and **voting rights**, in **Bandhan Bank**.
- **SBI Mutual Fund** has been granted **one year** from the date of **RBI approval** to complete the **proposed acquisition** up to the **9.99% limit**.

About RBL Bank :

- **Founded : August 1943**
- **Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra, India**
- **MD & CEO : R Subramaniakumar**

Facebook Overseas Acquires 30% Stake in Reliance Enterprise Intelligence Limited

- **Facebook Overseas**, a wholly owned subsidiary of **Meta Platforms Inc.**, acquired a **30% equity stake (25.65 crore shares)** in **Reliance Enterprise Intelligence Limited (REIL)**.
- **REIL** is a wholly owned subsidiary of **Reliance Intelligence Limited**, which is part of the **Reliance Intelligence Group**.
- The transaction was valued at approximately **Rs. 256.6 crore**, at an average price of **Rs. 10 per share**.
- **REIL** issued a total of **85.32 crore equity shares**, out of which **59.66 crore shares** worth **Rs. 596.6 crore** were allotted to **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)**.

Competition Commission of India Approves Central Bank of India's Additional Stake in Generali Central Insurance Companies

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approved the **acquisition of additional shareholding** in **Generali Central Insurance Company Limited (GCICL)** and **Generali Central Life Insurance Company Limited (GCLICL)** by **Central Bank of India**.
- The proposed acquisition involves **1.09% additional equity** in **GCICL** and **0.82% additional equity** in **GCLICL**, strengthening **Central Bank of India's strategic investment** in the insurance sector.
- **Central Bank of India** provides **banking and allied financial services** including deposits, lending, and financial products across India.

Competition Commission of India Approves Shareholding Purchase in Balaji Wafers by General Atlantic Unit

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approved the acquisition of shareholding in **Balaji Wafers Private Limited** by **General Atlantic Singapore BWP Pte. Ltd. (GASBWP)**.
- The acquisition is a **proposed combination transaction**, where **GASBWP** will acquire certain shares on a **fully diluted basis** from the **existing shareholders** of **Balaji Wafers**.
- **GASBWP** is an **investment holding company** incorporated in **Singapore**, affiliated with **General Atlantic investment funds**, which provide capital and **strategic investment support** to growing global businesses.

Reserve Bank of India Clears Bain Capital to Acquire Up to 41.66% Stake in Manappuram Finance

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** granted **final approval** to **Bain Capital** to acquire **joint control** and up to **41.66% stake** in **Manappuram Finance Limited**, a **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)**.
- In **March 2025**, **Bain Capital** signed an agreement to invest **₹4,385 crore** for an **18% fully diluted stake** in **Manappuram Finance** at a price of **₹236 per share**.

Meta Buys AI-Powered Social Platform Moltbook

- **Meta Platforms Inc.**, the parent company of **Facebook**, **Instagram**, and **WhatsApp**, has acquired **Moltbook**, an **experimental social networking platform** for **AI agents**.
- **Moltbook** is a **Reddit-style platform** where **autonomous AI-powered bots** interact, exchange **code snippets**, discuss projects, and reference their **human creators**.
- The platform was launched in **January 2026** and gained attention for fostering **communication**, **collaboration**, and **improvement** among **AI programs**.
- Following the acquisition, **Moltbook co-founders Matt Schlicht and Ben Parr** joined **Meta Superintelligence Labs**, led by **Alexandr Wang**, former **Scale AI CEO**.

Lila Global Acquires 298,997 deadweight tonne Very Large Crude Carrier Lila Jamnagar, First Indian-Flagged VLCC Through GIFT City IFSC

- **Lila Global** has acquired **Lila Jamnagar**, a **298,997 deadweight tonne (DWT) Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC)**, marking the **first Indian-flagged VLCC** structured through **GIFT City International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)**.

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- The vessel is registered under **RFK Shipping IFSC Private Limited** and will be operated through the **Lila Global platform**, reflecting the growing role of **GIFT City** in **maritime finance** and **ship leasing**.

Reserve Bank of India Clears Bain Capital's Investment in Manappuram Finance and Its Subsidiaries

- The **Reserve Bank of India** approved an **investment** of around **₹4,385 crore** by **Bain Capital** in **Manappuram Finance Limited (MFL)** and its subsidiaries.
- The **deal** includes granting **joint management control** in **Manappuram Finance Limited (MFL)**, **Asirvad Micro Finance Limited**, and **Manappuram Home Finance Limited**.
- The **transaction** involves a **mandatory open offer** under **Securities and Exchange Board of India's Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers Regulations, 2011**.
- The **capital infusion** is expected to be completed by **March 31, 2026**.

Kotak Mahindra Capital to Sell 30.99% Stake in Infina Finance for ₹1,293.91 Crore

- **Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Limited (KMCC)**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of **Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL)**, has entered into agreements to **divest 30.99% stake** in **Infina Finance Private Limited**.
- The **total value** of the divestment deal is **₹1,293.91 crore**.
- The transactions are expected to be **completed by March 31, 2026**, subject to customary conditions.
- **KMCC** will transfer **9.90% stake** (2,17,899 shares) to **Derive Trading and Resorts Pvt Ltd** and **Bright Star Investments Pvt Ltd** for **₹413.35 crore**.

Svatantra Microfin Merges with Chaitanya India Fin Credit Private Limited and Svatantra Holding to Form 2nd Largest NBFC-MFI

- **Svatantra Microfin Private Limited (SMPL)** completed its **amalgamation** with **Chaitanya India Fin Credit Private Limited (CIFCPL)** and **Svatantra Holding Private Limited (SHPL)**, forming the **2nd largest Non-Banking Financial Company–Microfinance Institution (NBFC-MFI)** in **India**.
- The **merger** was approved by the **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)**, Mumbai, with clearances from the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, **Competition Commission of India (CCI)**, and **BSE Limited**.

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- The **amalgamation** integrates the operations of **Svatantra Microfin, CIFCPL**, and its holding entity, consolidating the group's **market position**.

Competition Commission of India Approves MUFG's ₹39,618 Crore Investment in Shriram Finance, Marking Largest FDI in India's NBFC Sector

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** has approved **Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG) Bank's ₹39,618 crore investment** in **Shriram Finance Ltd**, marking the **largest FDI** in **India's NBFC sector**.
- Under the deal, **MUFG** will acquire a **20% stake** in **Shriram Finance** through **preferential allotment of shares**, gaining **strategic access** to India's **retail and MSME lending market**.
- The **transaction size of ₹39,618 crore** (approximately **\$4.4 billion**) is a **record deal** and is around **47% higher** than the earlier **RBL Bank investment**, highlighting its scale and **strategic importance**.

Competition Commission of India Approves Acquisition of Equity Stake in Aditya Birla Renewables by GIP EM Star Limited.

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approved the **subscription of equity share capital** of **Aditya Birla Renewables Limited** by **GIP EM Star Pte. Ltd. (Acquirer)**.
- The **Acquirer (GIP EM Star Pte. Ltd.)** is incorporated in **Singapore** and is owned by funds managed by **GIM EM Manager LLC**, which is wholly owned by **Global Infrastructure Management (GIM)**.

About CCI:

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) is a statutory body within the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and is responsible for enforcing the Competition Act of 2002.
- Founded: October 14, 2003
- Headquarters: New Delhi, India
- Chairperson: Ravneet Kaur

Reserve Bank of India Approves Avenir Investment's Acquisition of Controlling Stake in Sammaan Capital

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has approved **Avenir Investment RSC Limited's acquisition** of a **controlling stake** in **Sammaan Capital Limited** (formerly **Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited**).

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- The approval also includes **Sammaan Finserve Limited** (formerly **Indiabulls Commercial Credit Limited**), covering the **indirect change in control of the subsidiary** arising from the transaction.

Competition Commission of India Approves Acquisition of Stake in Groww Asset Management by State Street Global Advisors Inc.

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** approved the **acquisition of shareholding in Groww Asset Management Limited** by **State Street Global Advisors**.
- The **transaction** involves **State Street Global Advisors, Inc. (Acquirer)** acquiring stake in **Groww Asset Management Limited (Target)**.
- **State Street Global Advisors** is a **subsidiary of State Street Corporation (SSC)** and operates under the “**State Street Investment Management**” brand, which is the **asset management arm of SSC**.

MOUS AND AGREEMENT

India and Germany Launch EUR 20 Million Climate Resilience Initiative under International Climate Initiative

- **India and Germany** announced a new **EUR 20 million climate resilience initiative** during a high-level Climate Talk in **New Delhi**, strengthening **bilateral cooperation on climate adaptation**.
- The funding will be provided under **Germany’s International Climate Initiative** to support implementation of India’s upcoming **National Adaptation Plan**.

West Bengal Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and State Mission for Clean Ganga for Basin-Based Masterplans of Ichhamati and Jalangi Rivers

- The **Government of West Bengal** signed a memorandum of understanding on with **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit** and the **State Mission for Clean Ganga**, marking the State’s **first structured basin- level river planning initiative**.
- The project is part of the State’s ‘**Nodi Bandhan**’ initiative, announced in the **2025–26 Budget** with an allocation of **₹200 crore**, aiming to prepare comprehensive **basin-based masterplans for river sub-basins**.
- Out of **39 river sub-basins in West Bengal**, **Ichhamati and Jalangi rivers** have been selected in the first phase.

Ministry of Culture Signs MoU with FICCI to Develop National Strategy for Cultural and Creative

Economy; UIDAI Partners with Google for Aadhaar Centre Visibility

- The **Ministry of Culture** signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry** to formulate a comprehensive national strategy for India's **Cultural and Creative Economy**.
- The announcement was made by Union Minister **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, who described the initiative as a step towards positioning culture as a foundation for economic prosperity and ensuring a secure future for artists and artisans.
- The MoU aims to **develop a structured roadmap integrating culture with economic policy, expand domestic and international market access**, promote entrepreneurship and innovation, and generate employment opportunities in cultural sectors.

About UIDAI

- The Unique Identification Authority of India was **established on 12 January 2009** and is **headquartered in New Delhi**.
- It is responsible for issuing **Aadhaar, a 12-digit unique identity number**, and providing digital identity authentication for government and private services.

India Artificial Intelligence Mission Signs Statement of Intent with Business Sweden; DigiLocker Pilot Launched in Kenya

- The **India Artificial Intelligence Mission**, under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology**, signed a **Statement of Intent** with **Business Sweden** at the India Artificial Intelligence Impact Summit 2026 held in **New Delhi, Delhi**, to strengthen **India–Sweden cooperation in Artificial Intelligence and digital technologies**.
- The Statement of Intent aims to establish a **structured framework for collaboration** in the development, deployment and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence solutions, focusing on practical industrial applications and societal benefits.

Gujarat Receives ₹1,600 Crore Investment Boost to Strengthen Semiconductor Ecosystem

- **Gujarat's semiconductor ecosystem** received fresh investment proposals worth over **₹1,600 crore** from companies based in **Japan, South Korea and Malaysia**, announced during the **Gujarat Semiconnect Conference** held in **Gandhinagar**.
- The investments aim to build an **end-to-end semiconductor value chain**, covering manufacturing units, semiconductor-grade chemicals, advanced instrumentation, integrated circuit packaging, testing solutions, research and development centres and high-technology startups.

HCL Technologies and Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur Sign Memorandum of

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Understanding on Artificial Intelligence; Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur Partners with Telecommunication Engineering Centre on Sixth Generation Technology

- **HCL Technologies** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with **Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh**, to convert **Artificial Intelligence and intelligent systems research into enterprise-ready solutions** for Global Capability Centers.
- The Memorandum of Understanding was signed during the **GCC 4.0: Co-Creating India's Innovation Powerhouse Summit** held in **Hyderabad, Telangana**.
- The collaboration will focus on **Artificial Intelligence, robotics, advanced engineering and next-generation technologies**.

Nagaland Higher Education Department Signs Memorandum of Understanding with the India Meteorological Department for Weather Research

- The **Department of Higher Education, Nagaland** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with the **India Meteorological Department** under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** in **Kohima, Nagaland**.
- The Memorandum of Understanding will remain valid for **20 years**, establishing a long-term institutional partnership for **academic collaboration, joint research, training and capacity building in meteorological and atmospheric sciences**.
- Under the agreement, an **X-band Polarimetric Doppler Weather Radar** will be installed at **Dimapur Government College, Oriental Colony, Dimapur**, to strengthen local weather monitoring infrastructure.

International Solar Alliance and Indian Institute of Technology Delhi Sign Framework for Action to Boost Renewable Energy Cooperation

- The **International Solar Alliance** and **Indian Institute of Technology Delhi** formalised a **Framework for Action** in **New Delhi** to **strengthen cooperation in renewable energy across International Solar Alliance Member Countries**.
- The agreement was signed by **Ashish Khanna**, Director General of the International Solar Alliance, and **Rangan Banerjee**, Director of the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi.
- The Framework aims to enhance collaboration with the **Department of Energy Science and Engineering at Indian Institute of Technology Delhi** to build global clean energy capacity.

India–Canada Joint Leaders Statement 2026 Resets Bilateral Ties

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and Prime Minister **Mark Carney** issued a **Joint Leaders Statement in March 2026** to reset bilateral relations, marking **79 years of diplomatic ties** and

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adopting “**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – One Earth, One Family, One Future**” as the guiding vision.

- Launch of the **India–Canada Strategic Energy Partnership** covering **clean energy, conventional energy, civil nuclear energy and critical minerals**, along with relaunch of the Ministerial Energy Dialogue.

Indian Army and Ladakh Forest Department Sign MoU for Wildlife Conservation on World Wildlife Day 2026

- The **Indian Army** and the **Ladakh Forest Department** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen wildlife conservation efforts in Ladakh’s fragile high-altitude ecosystems.
- The initiative reinforces India’s commitment to **sustainable development in border areas while protecting biodiversity**.
- The MoU aims to **promote sustainable development in high-altitude ecosystems, strengthen environmental protection in Ladakh, conserve fragile habitats alongside border security operations, and establish a Joint Snow Leopard Conservation Cell for monitoring and coordination**.

Survey of India Signs Five-Year Memorandum of Understanding with Kerala Digital University for Geospatial Collaboration

- The **Survey of India**, under the **Department of Science and Technology**, Ministry of Science and Technology, signed a **five-year Memorandum of Understanding** with **Kerala Digital University**, Kerala.
- The objective of the partnership is to advance excellence in **geospatial data collection, processing and analysis** using technologies such as **Geoinformatics, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning**.
- Under the agreement, both institutions will collaborate on **Research and Development in mapping and spatial data sciences**.

NITI Aayog and UNICEF India Sign Statement of Intent to Improve Nutrition and Health in Aspirational Districts

- **NITI Aayog and UNICEF India** signed a **Statement of Intent (SOI)** to improve **nutrition and health outcomes in Aspirational Districts and Aspirational Blocks across India**.
- The agreement was signed by **Rohit Kumar**, Mission Director of the **Aspirational Districts and Blocks Programme** at NITI Aayog, and **Arjan de Wagt**, Deputy Representative of **UNICEF India**.

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- The partnership aims to **strengthen maternal and child nutrition services in underserved regions** and improve the **delivery of health and nutrition programmes**.

Bharat Electronics Limited Signs Memorandum of Understanding with SASMOS HET Technologies for Defence Electronics Manufacturing

- **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **SASMOS HET Technologies Ltd** to strengthen **India's indigenous defence electronics manufacturing ecosystem**.
- The MoU was exchanged between **Manoj Jain**, Chairman and Managing Director of BEL, and **H. G. Chandrashekar**, Chairman and Managing Director of SASMOS.
- The agreement was formalised earlier in the presence of **Rajnath Singh**, Defence Minister of India.
- The partnership aims to **localise mission-critical defence electronics components**, enhance **domestic value addition**, and strengthen **India's defence manufacturing supply chain**.

About BEL

- Bharat Electronics Limited is an Indian public sector aerospace and defence electronics company, headquartered in Bengaluru. It primarily manufactures advanced electronic products for ground and aerospace applications. BEL is one of sixteen PSUs under the administration of the Ministry of Defence of India.
- Founded: 1954, Bengaluru
- Chairman & Managing Director: Manoj Jain

Indian Institute of Technology Bombay Partners with Honeywell to Establish Centre of Excellence for Sustainability Skills

- **Indian Institute of Technology Bombay** partnered with **Honeywell** to establish a **Centre of Excellence (CoE)** for sustainability skills and innovation at its **Powai Campus** in **Mumbai**.
- The centre will be named the **IIT Bombay–Honeywell Centre of Excellence for Future Skills and Innovation** and aims to **train over 100,000 students in sustainability-related fields by 2030** through industry–academia collaboration.
- The initiative is funded by the **Honeywell Hometown Solutions India Foundation**, the philanthropic arm of Honeywell in India.

Bharat Electronics Limited Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India to Support Divyaangans

- **Bharat Electronics Limited – Chennai Unit (BEL-Chennai)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO)** to

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provide assistive devices to **Persons with Disabilities (Divyaangans)** in **Ramanathapuram District** and **Sivagangai District** of **Tamil Nadu**.

- The MoU was signed by **I. Jayandran**, General Manager of BEL-Chennai, and **A. V. Ashok Kumar**, Senior Manager and Unit Head of ALIMCO, in the presence of **Vikraman N**, Director (Human Resources) of BEL.
- Under this initiative, **709 Divyaangans** will receive specially designed assistive devices and equipment aimed at improving mobility, accessibility and quality of life.

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Coventry University Group for Artificial Intelligence and Healthcare Research

- The **Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IIT-G)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Coventry University Group (CUG)**, **United Kingdom**, to strengthen **global research collaboration in artificial intelligence and healthcare**.
- The agreement aims to promote academic mobility, joint research initiatives and collaborative degree programmes between the two institutions.
- The partnership is expected to expand **India–United Kingdom cooperation in emerging technology sectors**, particularly in the **application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare systems**.

All India Institute of Medical Sciences and Indian Space Research Organisation Sign Memorandum of Understanding for Space Medicine Research

- The **All India Institute of Medical Sciences** and the **Indian Space Research Organisation** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** to strengthen **medical research related to human spaceflight and develop healthcare solutions for astronauts involved in future Indian space missions**.
- The agreement was signed by **Srinivas**, Director of the **All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi**, and **Dinesh Kumar Singh**, Director of the **Human Space Flight Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation**.

Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India and Indo Canada Chamber of Commerce Sign MoU to Strengthen India–Canada Business Cooperation

- The **Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)** and the **Indo Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** during the **India–Canada Business Roundtable** held in **New Delhi**.
- The **MoU** aims to enhance **trade, investment, and institutional cooperation between the business communities of India and Canada**.

About ASSOCHAM

- President: Sanjay Nayar
- Founder: Dr. Niranjan Hiranandani
- Founded: 1920
- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Secretary General: Manish Singhal

India Initiates Trade Negotiations with Philippines and Maldives for New Trade Agreements

- **India has started** the process of signing **Terms of Reference** to begin trade negotiations with the **Philippines and Maldives**, according to the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- The initiative aims to **strengthen economic relations and promote bilateral trade between India and the two countries**.
- India will negotiate a **Preferential Trade Agreement with the Philippines** and a **Free Trade Agreement with the Maldives**.
- Under the Terms of Reference, India and the Philippines will start negotiations for a Preferential Trade Agreement.

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Coalition of the Willing to Empower Persons with Hearing Impairment

- The **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities** under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the **Coalition of the Willing in New Delhi** to strengthen empowerment and opportunities for persons with hearing impairment.
- The agreement aims to **accelerate inclusive development and improve accessibility for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community in India**.
- The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in the presence of V. Vidhyavathi, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities; Manmeet Kaur Nanda, Additional Secretary; Pradeep A., Director, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities; and Kumar Raju, Director of the **Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre**.

Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Partners with YouTube for FIFA World Cup 2026 Streaming

- The **Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)** partnered with **YouTube** to introduce a new **digital streaming format** for the **FIFA World Cup 2026**.
- Fans can watch the **first 10 minutes of matches live on YouTube**, after which they will be redirected to **official broadcasters**.

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- The initiative aims to expand digital reach and attract younger, mobile-first audiences.

About FIFA

- FIFA stands for **Fédération Internationale de Football Association**, which is French for "International Federation of Association Football". Founded in 1904, it is the worldwide governing body for football (soccer), futsal, and beach soccer, headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland.

India–Vietnam Strengthen Cooperation in Tribal and Ethnic Development

- **India and Vietnam** enhanced cooperation in **tribal and ethnic development** following a **high-level ministerial meeting held in New Delhi**.
- The engagement aims to deepen ties under the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** and promote **inclusive development**.
- Both countries agreed to share best practices, improve livelihoods, and preserve cultural heritage.

About Vietnam

- Capital: Hanoi
- Currency: Vietnamese dong
- Prime minister: Pham Minh Chinh

Himachal Pradesh Signs Memorandum of Understanding with National Dairy Development Board to Boost Dairy Sector

- The **Himachal Pradesh Government** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)** to strengthen the **dairy sector**.
- The agreement aims to enhance **milk processing capacity, improve dairy infrastructure**, and generate **employment opportunities for farmers**.
- It will also promote **dairy-based industries** and products under the **‘HIM’ brand**.
- The MoU focuses on **modernising dairy infrastructure** and strengthening the **milk supply chain** across the state.

India–Indonesia Collaborate on Restoration of Prambanan Temple Complex in Indonesia

- **India and Indonesia** strengthened **cultural cooperation** through collaboration on the restoration of the Prambanan Temple Compounds.
- The discussion took place on **16 March 2026** in **Jakarta** between Fadli Zon and a team from the Archaeological Survey of India.
- The initiative focuses on preserving **one of Southeast Asia’s most important cultural heritage sites**, reflecting growing **international cooperation in heritage conservation**.

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- The **Prambanan Temple Complex**, built in the **9th century**, is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** known for its **magnificent Hindu temple architecture dedicated to Hindu deities**.

About Indonesia

- Capital: Jakarta
- President: Prabowo Subianto
- Currency: Indonesian Rupiah

India and Bhutan Sign Memorandum of Understanding on Postal Cooperation

- **India and Bhutan** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding on Postal Cooperation** to strengthen bilateral collaboration in the postal sector.
- The Memorandum of Understanding provides a **structured framework for cooperation between India Post and Bhutan Post**.
- The agreement was signed between the Ministry of Communications and Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport during the **Bhutan visit of the Secretary of the Department of Posts**.

About Bhutan

- Capital: Thimphu
- Currencies: Bhutanese Ngultrum
- King: Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

APPS & PORTALS

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta Unveils 'CM Jan Sunwai Portal' and Mobile App to Boost Tech-Driven Grievance Redressal and Citizen Engagement

- **Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta** launched the **'CM Jan Sunwai Portal'** and mobile application to strengthen **public grievance redressal** and enhance **citizen engagement** through a technology-driven framework.
- The initiative was unveiled as part of the **Information and Technology Department's** digital governance push to improve **transparency, accountability, and efficient service delivery**.

Ministry of Culture Unveils Indian Culture Portal Version 2.0 in New Delhi

- **The Ministry of Culture (India) Secretary Vivek Aggarwal** launched **Version 2.0** of the **Indian Culture Portal (ICP)** at **Kartavya Bhawan, New Delhi**.

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- The **Indian Culture Portal (ICP) Version 2.0** is a **national digital platform** providing easy access to India's **cultural heritage**, history, literature, arts, and traditions for scholars, researchers, and citizens.
- The portal was originally launched in **December 2019** to **democratize cultural knowledge** access and promote **digital preservation** of Indian heritage.
- The upgraded portal uses **modern digital architecture** with a **React-based frontend** and **Drupal backend**, improving **speed, scalability, and performance**.

Pondicherry University Introduces 'Blue Voice' Mobile App to Aid Coastal Fishing Communities

- **Pondicherry University** has launched a **mobile application** named '**Blue Voice**' to improve **safety and disaster preparedness** among **coastal fishing communities**.
- The initiative aims to bridge **critical information gaps** by delivering **real-time, location-specific weather updates** in a simplified and accessible format.
- '**Blue Voice**' supports **fishers** who face risks due to **unpredictable weather conditions** and limited access to **timely alerts**.

Ministry of Rural Development Unveils Real-Time Internal Audit Portal to Enhance Governance and Accountability

- The **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)** announced the operationalization of a comprehensive **Internal Audit Portal** to shift audit processes from **manual tracking** to a **real-time, centralized digital ecosystem**.
- The portal was developed by the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** and officially reviewed in the presence of **Shri Shailesh Kumar Singh**, Secretary, MoRD, along with **Shri Akhilesh Jha**, Chief Controller of Accounts (CCA), and various Joint Secretaries.
- The portal allows **Secretary-level access** for direct, **top-down oversight** of audit health across all departments, enabling **evidence-based decision-making**.

About Ministry of Rural Development :

- Cabinet Minister : Shivraj Singh Chouhan
- Minister of State : Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, Kamlesh Paswan

PRISM-SG Portal Launched to Digitise and Fast-Track Approval Processes for ROBs in Highway and Railway Projects

- **Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari** and **Hon'ble Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting, Electronics & IT Shri Ashwini Vaishnav**

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launched the **PRISM-SG (Portal for Rail-Road Inspection & Stages Management – Steel Girders) Portal** in New Delhi to enhance **efficiency, transparency, and inter-agency coordination** in infrastructure development.

- The **PRISM-SG Portal** is designed to **digitise key approval and inspection processes** for the construction of **Road Over Bridges (ROBs)**, including **Quality Assurance Plan (QAP)**, **Welding Procedure Specification Sheet (WPSS)**, and **fabrication stage inspection of steel girders**.
- The **portal** enables **end-to-end online submission** of documents, **scrutiny**, raising and resolution of queries, **approvals, scheduling of inspections**, and uploading of **inspection reports**, photographs, and test results, supported by **complete audit trail** and **real-time monitoring**.

About Ministry of Road Transport & Highways :

- Cabinet Minister : Nitin Gadkari
- Minister of State : Ajay Tamta, Harsh Malhotra

National Housing Bank Launches Gruh Sugam Portal to Digitalise Home Loan Access for Defence and Government Personnel

- The **National Housing Bank (NHB)**, the apex housing finance institution in India, has launched the **Gruh Sugam Portal** to **simplify and digitise access to home loans** for **defence personnel, paramilitary forces, and government employees**.
- The **portal** aims to promote **affordable housing**, enhance **financial inclusion**, and accelerate **digital lending adoption**, especially for personnel posted in **remote and inaccessible areas**.
- The **Gruh Sugam Portal** is designed as a **seamless and transparent digital platform** to strengthen the **housing finance ecosystem** in India.
- It enables users to **explore, compare, and apply** for **housing loans** from **multiple lending institutions** through a **unified digital marketplace**.

SPORTS NEWS**Mumbai Cricket Association to Name Wankhede Stadium Stand After Ravi Shastri; Gates to Honour Cricket Legends**

- The **Mumbai Cricket Association** (MCA) has approved naming a stand at the **Wankhede Stadium** after former India captain **Ravi Shastri**.
- The decision was taken during the MCA Apex Council meeting held.
- Shastri was honoured with the prestigious Col CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award at the BCCI Awards 2024 in Hyderabad.
- The **Level 1 Stand below the Press Box** will be named in honour of Ravi Shastri, recognising his contribution as an all-rounder, former India captain, head coach, and commentator.

About Mumbai Cricket Association:

- Headquarters: Wankhede Stadium, Churchgate, Mumbai
- President: Ajinkya Naik

Jammu & Kashmir Win Ranji Trophy 2025–26 in Maiden Final Appearance

- **Jammu and Kashmir** scripted history by winning the **Ranji Trophy 2025–26** title in their first-ever final appearance.
- The final was played at the **KSCA Cricket Stadium**, where J&K defeated the **Karnataka cricket team** by securing a massive **291-run first-innings lead**.
- Led by captain **Paras Dogra**, the team posted **584 runs in the first innings**, while Karnataka were bowled out for **293 runs**.

Alyssa Healy Retires from All Forms of Cricket After Record-Breaking Final One Day International in Hobart

- **Former Australia Captain Alyssa Healy** has retired from **all forms of international cricket** after a memorable final **One Day International** match in Hobart.
- In her farewell One Day International, she scored a stunning **158 runs off 98 balls**, leading Australia to **409 for 7** against India.

Special Edition of ASMITA Women's Sports League Announced in New Delhi

- Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports **Raksha Nikhil Khadse** announced a special edition of the **ASMITA Women's Sports League** in **New Delhi** to mark **International Women's Day on 8 March 2026**.
- ASMITA stands for **Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women Through Action**, and the league aims to provide a competitive platform for female athletes at the grassroots level across India.

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- The initiative seeks to **empower women athletes, promote grassroots sports participation, identify and nurture young talent, and strengthen sports culture nationwide**, reflecting the government's commitment to gender equality in sports.

Logo of Cycling League of India Unveiled; World's First Professional Franchise-Based Road Cycling League

- Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports **Mansukh Mandaviya** unveiled the official logo of the **Cycling League of India**.
- The league is designed as the **world's first professional franchise-based road cycling** league aimed at promoting competitive cycling in India and strengthening the professional cycling ecosystem.
- The initiative seeks to **develop cycling talent, attract international participation and enhance India's presence in global cycling competitions**.

Chhattisgarh to Host First Edition of Khelo India Tribal Games 2026

- Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports **Mansukh Mandaviya** announced that the **Khelo India Tribal Games 2026** will be hosted by **Chhattisgarh**.
- The **first edition of the Khelo India Tribal Games** will be held from **26 March to 6 April 2026**.
- The games will be conducted across **three cities in Chhattisgarh** — **Raipur, Jagdalpur, and Sarguja**.
- The event aims to **promote sports participation among tribal communities and strengthen grassroots sports infrastructure in India**.

Jasprit Bumrah Completes 500 Wickets in International Cricket during ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026

- Indian fast bowler **Jasprit Bumrah** completed **500 wickets in international cricket** during the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026** semifinal against **England national cricket team**.
- The milestone was achieved at **Wankhede Stadium**, when **Jasprit Bumrah** dismissed **Harry Brook**, captain of England, **on the first ball of his spell**.
- The wicket came in the **fifth over of England's innings**, helping **Bumrah reach the landmark of 500 international wickets**.
- Achieving 500 wickets within a decade of his international debut highlights his remarkable consistency and impact across formats.

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George Russell Wins Formula One Australian Grand Prix 2026

- **George Russell** of **Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula One Team** won the **Formula One Australian Grand Prix 2026**, the opening race of the **Formula One 2026** season held at the **Melbourne Grand Prix Circuit** in **Melbourne, Australia**.
- Russell secured his **sixth Formula One career victory**, leading a **Mercedes one–two finish** with teammate **Kimi Antonelli** finishing second.
- **Charles Leclerc** and **Lewis Hamilton** of **Scuderia Ferrari** finished **third and fourth**
- The race began with an intense battle between Russell and Leclerc, with the **lead changing seven times within the first nine laps**.

India Wins ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026

- The **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026** ended with the **India national cricket team** defeating the **New Zealand national cricket team** by **96 runs** in the final held at **Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad**.
- With this victory, India secured **back-to-back ICC Men's T20 World Cup titles**, strengthening its dominance in international T20 cricket.
- After winning the toss, New Zealand opted to bowl, and India posted **255/5 in 20 overs**, one of the **highest totals in a T20 World Cup final**.
- **Sanju Samson** led India's batting with **89 runs off 46 balls**, hitting **5 fours and 8 sixes**.

Lakshya Sen Finishes Runner-up at All England Open 2026

- India's badminton star **Lakshya Sen** finished **runner-up in the men's singles** at the **All-England Open Badminton Championships 2026** held in **Birmingham, United Kingdom**.
- In the final, Sen lost to Taiwan's **Lin Chun-Yi** with scores **15–21, 20–22** in a closely contested match.
- Lin Chun-Yi dominated the **first game**, using aggressive attacking play and maintaining control throughout the rallies.
- In the **second game**, Lakshya Sen made a strong comeback and pushed the contest to the final moments, but Lin Chun-Yi held his nerve to win **22–20** and secure the title.

Second Edition of World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026 to be Held in New Delhi

- The **second edition of the World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026 – New Delhi** will be held in **New Delhi** from **March 11 to March 13, 2026**.
- The international para-athletics event will feature **around 257 athletes from eight countries**, making it a major **global para sports competition hosted by India**.

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- Participating countries include **India, Russia, Nepal, Bhutan, Hong Kong, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Egypt.**
- **India will field the largest contingent with about 219 athletes**, competing in multiple track and field events across different sport classifications.

BCCI Announces ₹131 Crore Cash Reward for Team India After ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 Victory

- The **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** announced a **₹131 crore cash reward for Team India** after winning the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026.**
- **India national cricket team** defeated **New Zealand national cricket team** in the final held at **Narendra Modi Stadium** on **8 March 2026.**
- The reward will be **distributed among players, coaching staff, support staff and selectors.**
- The announcement was confirmed by **Devajit Saikia**, Secretary of the BCCI, who praised the team's **consistent performance and dedication during the tournament.**

About BCCI

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India is the principal national governing body of the sport of cricket in India.
- Its headquarters are situated at the Cricket Centre in Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai. BCCI is the wealthiest governing body of cricket in the world.
- Founded: December 1928

India and New Zealand Launch Centenary Sports Cooperation Programme 2026 to Mark 100 Years of Sporting Relations

- **India and New Zealand** have initiated discussions to expand **bilateral sports cooperation in 2026**, marking **100 years of sporting relations between the two countries.**
- A **high-level meeting was held in New Delhi** between **Mansukh Mandaviya**, Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, and a **New Zealand sports delegation led by Chris Bishop**, Associate Minister for Sport and Recreation.
- The meeting focused on strengthening **sports diplomacy and launching the India–New Zealand Centenary Sports Cooperation Programme 2026.**
- The sporting relationship between the two nations dates back to **1926**, when the **Indian Army hockey team toured New Zealand**, marking one of the earliest sporting exchanges.

India Women's Hockey Team Qualifies for International Hockey Federation Hockey World Cup 2026

- The **India women's national field hockey team** qualified for the **FIH Hockey Women's World Cup 2026** even before the semifinals of the **Women's Hockey World Cup Qualifiers** held in **Hyderabad**.
- The qualification was confirmed after India secured a **dominant 4–1 victory against Wales women's national field hockey team** in a **Pool B match**.
- The match was played at **GMC Balayogi Hockey Stadium, Hyderabad**.
- **Navneet Kaur** scored a **hat-trick with goals in the 29th, 34th and 55th minutes**, while **Sakshi Rana** opened the scoring in the **7th minute**.

Shailesh Kumar Wins Gold in Men's High Jump T63 at World Para Athletics Grand Prix

- Indian para-athlete **Shailesh Kumar** won a **gold medal in the men's high jump T63 category** at the **World Para Athletics Grand Prix** held in **New Delhi**.
- The **reigning world champion** secured the **top position with a jump of 1.84 metres**, though it was lower than his **personal best of 1.91 metres**.
- The event marked the beginning of his competitive season, and the athlete expressed satisfaction with his performance.
- Shailesh Kumar revealed that he had been recovering from pain in his left knee following his victory at the **World Para Athletics Championships** last year.

International Cricketers Suspended in Bim10 Corruption Case

- International cricketers **Javon Searles, Trevon Griffith, and Chitranjan Rathod** have been **provisionally suspended** in connection with the **Bim10 corruption case**.
- The suspension was **jointly announced by the International Cricket Council and Cricket West Indies**.
- The charges relate to **alleged violations of anti-corruption regulations during the 2023–24 Bim10 tournament held in Barbados**.

India Tops Medal Table at World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026 with 208 Medals

- **India delivered an outstanding performance at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026** held at **Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi**.
- The **three-day international event featured 257 athletes from eight countries** competing in various **track and field events**.
- **India finished at the top of the medal table with a total of 208 medals**, comprising **75 gold, 69 silver and 64 bronze medals**.

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- The **host nation dominated the competition**, recording the **highest number of podium finishes** among all participating countries.

India Wins Five Medals at World Boxing Futures Cup 2026

- **India finished with a total of five medals** at the **World Boxing Futures Cup 2026**, securing **one gold, three silver and one bronze medal**.
- The tournament was held in Bangkok, Thailand from **March 8 to March 15, 2026**, featuring **top young boxing talents from around the world**.
- **Chandrika Pujari** led India's medal tally by winning the **gold medal in the women's 51kg category**.
- In the final, **Chandrika Pujari defeated Mardonova Nazokat of Uzbekistan by unanimous decision**, demonstrating **strong technical skills and control throughout the bout**.

BCCI Naman Awards 2026 Honours Top Performers in Indian Cricket

- The **BCCI Naman Awards 2026** were held in **New Delhi**, celebrating achievements and contributions to Indian cricket.
- The awards are presented annually by the **Board of Control for Cricket in India** to recognise outstanding performances in international cricket, domestic tournaments, and lifetime contributions to the sport.
- **Shubman Gill** won the **Polly Umrigar Award for Best International Cricketer (Men)** for his consistent performances for India in international cricket.
- **Smriti Mandhana** received the **Best International Cricketer (Women) award**, marking the **fifth time she has won the honour**.

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Defers Decision on Ban for Government Officials

- The **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)** postponed its decision on a proposed rule to **ban government officials from attending major sporting events**.
- The decision has been deferred until **September 2026**, after the **FIFA World Cup 2026** to be held in the **United States of America, Canada, and Mexico**.
- The proposed rule seeks to **restrict officials from countries that fail to pay financial dues** to the World Anti-Doping Agency.

About WADA

- The World Anti-Doping Agency is an international organization co-founded by the governments of over 140 nations along with the International Olympic Committee based in Canada to promote, coordinate, and monitor the fight against drugs in sports.
- President: Witold Bańka

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- Founder: Dick Pound
- Headquarters: Montreal, Canada
- Founded: 10 November 1999

India to Host World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

- **India secured the hosting rights for the World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028**, marking the **first time** the country will host this prestigious indoor athletics event.
- The championships will be held at the **Kalinga Indoor Athletics Stadium, Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.
- The announcement was made by Sebastian Coe, President of World Athletics, ahead of the **World Indoor Athletics Championships 2026 in Poland**.
- The **World Indoor Athletics Championships** is conducted **once every two years**, featuring top global athletes competing in **indoor track and field events**.

Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 Begins in Chhattisgarh from 25 March 2026

- The **Khelo India Tribal Games 2026** will be held from **25 March to 3 April 2026** in Chhattisgarh.
- The Games will be hosted across **Raipur, Jagdalpur and Surguja**.
- The event will bring together **over 6,000 participants**, including around **2,300 athletes** from across the country.
- The initiative aims to **promote tribal sporting talent at the national level** and **preserve indigenous sports traditions**.
- The **Khelo India Tribal Games** is a **national-level initiative** focused on showcasing the **talent of tribal athletes** and celebrating India's **tribal sporting heritage**.

LeBron James Becomes National Basketball Association's All-Time Leader in Regular Season Games Played

- **LeBron James** became the **all-time leader in National Basketball Association regular season games played**, appearing in his **1,612th game** for the Los Angeles Lakers against the Orlando Magic.
- He surpassed the previous record of **1,611 games** held by Robert Parish since **1997**.
- At the age of **41**, he achieved this milestone across **23 seasons**, highlighting exceptional **longevity, durability, and consistency** in professional basketball.

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- On the same occasion, the **Los Angeles Lakers** secured a **105–104** victory over the **Orlando Magic**.

Arundhati Reddy Named International Cricket Council Women’s Player of the Month for February 2026

- **Arundhati Reddy** was named the **International Cricket Council Women’s Player of the Month for February 2026** for her outstanding performance in the **Twenty20 International series against Australia**.
- She played a **key role in India’s historic Twenty20 International series victory in Australia**, one of the most challenging overseas tours in women’s cricket.
- She emerged as the **leading wicket-taker of the series**, taking **8 wickets in 3 matches** with a **bowling average of 10.87** and an **economy rate of 7.25**.
- She delivered a **career-best performance of 4 wickets for 22 runs in Sydney** and received the **Player of the Match** award.

Sahibzada Farhan Named International Cricket Council Men’s Player of the Month for February 2026

- **Sahibzada Farhan** was named the **International Cricket Council Men’s Player of the Month for February 2026** following his outstanding performance in the **International Cricket Council Men’s Twenty20 World Cup 2026**.
- He emerged as the **highest run-scorer of the tournament**, scoring **383 runs in 7 matches** at an **average of 76.60** and a **strike rate of 160.25**, including **2 centuries and 2 half-centuries**.
- He broke the record for **most runs in a single edition of the International Cricket Council Men’s Twenty20 World Cup**, surpassing the previous record held by **Virat Kohli**.
- He became the **first batter to score two centuries in a single edition of the International Cricket Council Men’s Twenty20 World Cup**.

Olympic women's sport limited to biological females

- International Olympic Committee (IOC) to restrict **women’s category to biological females** from **2028 Olympics (Los Angeles)**.
- Decision announced under IOC **President Kirsty Coventry**.
- Introduction of “**once-in-a-lifetime sex test**” for eligibility.

About IOC:

- **Founded: 1894**

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- **Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland
- **President:** Kirsty Coventry

Gurjant Singh Announces Retirement from International Hockey at Hockey India Awards Ceremony

- **Gurjant Singh**, forward of the **India men's national field hockey team**, announced his **retirement from international hockey** at the Hockey India Annual Awards ceremony held in **New Delhi**.
- The **31-year-old striker** concluded a distinguished international career spanning nearly a **decade**, earning **130 international caps** and scoring **33 goals**.
- He was widely recognised for his **speed, sharp finishing and consistent performances** as a forward.

India Wins Two Bronze Medals at Asia Cup World Ranking Tournament Stage 1; Multiple Archers Enter Finals

- **India** delivered a **strong performance** at the Asia Cup World Ranking Tournament Stage 1 by winning **two bronze medals** and securing **multiple entries into the finals** across categories.
- While compound teams showcased consistency and strength, the men's recurve section recorded a **dip in performance**.
- The **men's recurve team** comprising Devaang Gupta, Sukhchain Singh and Juyel Sarkar entered the **final** after defeating Malaysia 5–1.

Sheetal Devi Named 'Para Archer of the Year 2025' by World Archery

- **Sheetal Devi** was honoured with the '**Para Archer of the Year 2025**' award by **World Archery**.
- At the age of **19**, the **para-archer from Jammu and Kashmir** received **global recognition** for her outstanding performances and inspiring journey in para-archery.
- The award highlights **India's growing dominance in para-sports** at the international level.
- Sheetal Devi created history by becoming the **first female armless archer to win a gold medal** at the World Para Archery Championships.

Sunil Narine Becomes Most Capped Overseas Player in Indian Premier League History

- **West Indies player Sunil Narine** became the **most capped overseas player** in the history of the Indian Premier League (IPL) after surpassing **Kieron Pollard**, who had played **189 matches**.
- He achieved this milestone during the match against Mumbai Indians at Wankhede Stadium on **29th March 2026**.

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- Notably, **Sunil Narine** has played all his IPL matches only for **Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR)**.
- **Top overseas players with most IPL appearances:**
 - **Sunil Narine – 190 matches** – Kolkata Knight Riders
 - **Kieron Pollard – 189 matches** – Mumbai Indians
 - **AB de Villiers – 184 matches** – Royal Challengers Bangalore & Delhi Capitals (earlier **Delhi Daredevils**)
 - **David Warner – 184 matches** – Delhi Capitals & Sunrisers Hyderabad
 - **Dwayne Bravo – 161 matches** – Chennai Super Kings

OBITUARIES

Veteran Communist Party of India Leader R. Nallakannu Passed away at 101 in Chennai

- **R. Nallakannu**, a veteran leader of the **Communist Party of India (CPI)**, passed away at the age of **101** in **Chennai, Tamil Nadu**.
- He was born on **26 December 1925** at **Srivaikuntam** (now in **Thoothukudi district**), **Tamil Nadu**.
- He was regarded as one of **India's most respected communist leaders** and a **veteran of the freedom struggle**.

Renowned Sociologist T.K. Oommen, Jawaharlal Nehru University Professor Emeritus, Passed Away at 88

- **T.K.Oommen**, a renowned **Indian sociologist** and **Professor Emeritus** at **Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)**, passed away at the age of **88** in **Gurugram**, marking a major loss to **Indian social sciences**.
- Born on **16 October 1937** in **Venmony, Alappuzha, Kerala**.
- He was considered a **leading architect of modern Indian sociology**, known for research on **social justice, identity, pluralism, citizenship, state power, and nation-building**.

Padma Shri Honouree and Renowned Ghoda Nacha Artist Utsav Charan Das passed away at 80

- **Utsav Charan Das**, a **Padma Awardee** and renowned **Ghoda Nacha (dummy horse dance)** artist, passed away at the age of **80** in **Cuttack, Odisha**.
- He was born in **1946** in **Mania, Orissa Province** (British India), now part of **Odisha**.
- He was awarded the **Padma Shri** in **2020**, India's **fourth highest civilian award**, for his contribution to the field of **art and folk culture**.
- He was widely recognized for his **lifelong dedication** to **preserving and promoting** the traditional folk dance form **Ghoda Nacha**, a significant part of **Odisha's cultural heritage**.

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Veteran Congress Leader, Ex-Union Minister K.P. Unnikrishnan, Passed Away

- **K. P. Unnikrishnan**, veteran politician and former **Union Minister**, passed away at the age of **90** in **Kozhikode, Kerala**.
- He was born on **20 September 1936** in **Koyilandy, Kozhikode**, and remained a significant figure in **Indian parliamentary politics** for over three decades.
- Before entering politics, he began his professional career in **journalism** and was associated with **Mathrubhumi**, a leading Malayalam daily newspaper.
- He joined the **Indian National Congress (INC)** in the 1960s, marking the beginning of his active political career.

Senior Journalist and Ex-Diplomat H.K. Dua Passed Away

- Renowned **journalist**, former **diplomat**, and **parliamentarian Hari Krishan Dua (HK Dua)** passed away at the age of **88** in **New Delhi, India**.
- **Hari Krishan Dua** was born on **July 01, 1937**, and had an illustrious **journalism career** spanning more than **40 years**.
- He was honoured with the **Padma Bhushan** in **1998** by the Government of India, India's **third-highest civilian award**, in the '**Literature and Education (Journalism)**' category.

Vir Chakra Awardee and 1965 India–Pakistan War Veteran K.G. George Passed Away

- **Lance Havildar (ret'd) K.G. George**, a **Vir Chakra (VC)** awardee of the **1965 India–Pakistan War**, passed away in **Kottayam, Kerala**, at the age of **95**.
- He was born in **February 1931** in **Kerala**.
- He served in the **Indian Army (IA)** in the **Corps of Signals**, the army's communication arm, which was established on **15 February 1911**.
- The **Corps of Signals** has played a major role in transforming **communication systems** of the Indian Army and has adapted to the **digital revolution** of the 21st century.
- During the **1965 India–Pakistan War**, he showed **exceptional bravery** by restoring **disrupted communication lines** under heavy **enemy shelling** and **air strafing** in the **Wagah Sector**.

Veteran Congress Leader and Ex–Union Minister Biren Singh Engti Passed Away at 81

- **Biren Singh Engti**, veteran leader of the **Indian National Congress (INC)** and former **Union Minister of State (MoS)**, passed away at the age of **81** in **Guwahati, Assam**.
- He was born on **2 March 1945** in **Karbi Anglong, Assam**.
- **Engti** was a **five-time Lok Sabha MP** from **Diphu constituency**, Assam, with electoral victories in **1977, 1984, 2009**, and twice in **2014**.

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- He served as **Minister of State (MoS)** in the **Rajiv Gandhi-led** central government, handling portfolios such as the **Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (MoPPG&P)** and the **Ministry of Planning and Programme Implementation** between **1986 and 1989**.

Ex-All India Football Federation General Secretary Kushal Das Passed away at 66

- **Kushal Das**, former **General Secretary of All India Football Federation (AIFF)**, passed away in **New Delhi** at the age of **66**.
- He was born in **1959**.
- **Kushal Das** was a **Chartered Accountant (CA)** by profession with extensive experience in **sports management and administration**.
- He worked with **global firms** such as **PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)**, **GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)**, and **Shell**, gaining **corporate and financial expertise**.

Veteran BJP Leader and Former Member of Parliament Datta Meghe Passes Away at 89 in Maharashtra

- **Datta Meghe**, a veteran **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** leader and former **Member of Parliament (MP)**, passed away at the age of **89** in **Maharashtra**.
- He was born on **November 11, 1936**, in **Pawnar village, Wardha district**, Maharashtra.
- His **political career** spanned over **five decades** across multiple **legislative bodies**.
- He was first elected as **Maharashtra Legislative Council (MLC)** member in **1978** and served **three consecutive terms** till 1991.

Former French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin Passed away at 88 in Paris

- **Lionel Robert Jospin**, former **Prime Minister of France**, passed away at the age of **88** in **Paris, France**.
- He was born on **12 July 1937** in **Meudon**, near Paris.
- **Lionel Jospin** served as the **Prime Minister of France** from **1997 to 2002** under **President Jacques Chirac**.