

March - 21

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Dindigul launched “Dindu”, a Slender Loris, as an election mascot to promote voter awareness and participation in Assembly elections.
 - The mascot also commemorates the Kadavur Slender Loris Sanctuary and the first Slender Loris Conservation Centre, inaugurated on 7 March 2026.
- ❖ Kaveh Madani won the Stockholm Water Prize 2026 for contributions to water research and policy.
- ❖ William Dalrymple won the Mark Lynton History Prize 2026 for his book The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World.
- ❖ Global Recycling Day is observed every year on 18 March to promote recycling and sustainable waste management.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "Don't Think Waste. Think Opportunity!"
- ❖ International Day of Happiness is observed every year on 20 March to promote happiness and well-being worldwide.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "Caring and Sharing".

TAMIL NADU NEWS

Tamil Nadu Maternity Leave Rules 2026

Steady progress

The Tamil Nadu government's relaxation of the rules governing the grant of maternity leave are part of a process that's played out over the years

- In 1993, the government granted maternity leave of 90 days
- 18 years later, the government enhanced maternity leave to 180 days
- In 2013, the government issued consolidated guidelines for granting maternity leave
- T.N. enhanced maternity leave from 180 days to 270 days in 2016
- In 2018, the government clarified that a woman can be granted maternity leave for the second delivery too, if the first delivery resulted in the birth of twins



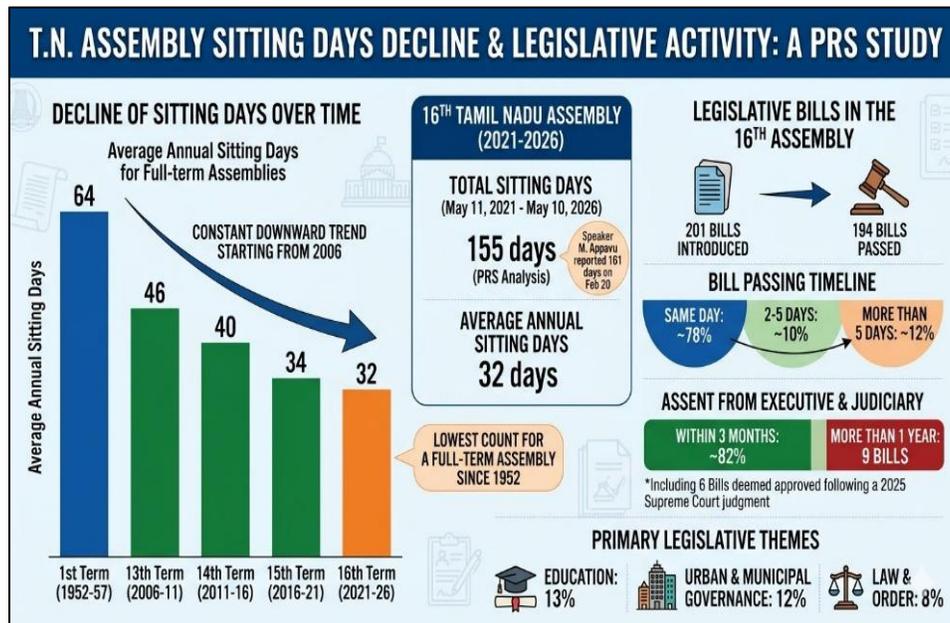
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Government has amended maternity leave rules to provide more benefits and flexibility to women employees.

- ❖ Women employees can now get 365 days of maternity leave for one additional delivery, even if the first delivery resulted in twins.
- ❖ Earlier, in such special cases, only 2 weeks to 6 weeks of maternity leave was allowed under the old service rules.
- ❖ The amendment follows important orders of the Supreme Court of India (2025) and the Madras High Court (2026).
- ❖ As per the revised rules, women with two or more surviving children can get up to 12 weeks' leave with full salary.
- ❖ The changes are based on provisions of the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 and Tamil Nadu Fundamental Service Rules, 1922.

T.N. Assembly Sitting – PRS Study

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly's annual sitting days have significantly declined from an average of 64 days in the first term (1952-57) to just 32 days in the 16th term (2021-26).
- ❖ The 16th Assembly, spanning from May 11, 2021, to May 10, 2026, met for a total of 155 days, marking the lowest count for a full-term Assembly since 1952.
- ❖ While the PRS Legislative Research analysis cited 155 days, Speaker M. Appavu reported 161 days during his valedictory speech on February 20.
- ❖ Average annual sitting days have seen a constant downward trend starting from the year 2006.
- ❖ The 13th Assembly (2006-11) averaged 46 sitting days per year.
- ❖ The 14th Assembly (2011-16) saw a further reduction to an average of 40 sitting days annually.
- ❖ The 15th Assembly (2016-21) continued the decline with an average of 34 sitting days per year.
- ❖ During the 16th Assembly's tenure, 201 Bills were introduced, with 194 of them being passed.
- ❖ Approximately 78% of the Bills passed were cleared by the House on the very same day they were introduced.
- ❖ About 10% of the Bills were passed within two to five days of their introduction.
- ❖ The remaining 12% of Bills were passed after more than five days from their introduction.
- ❖ Regarding executive and judicial assent, 82% of Bills received approval within three months of being passed.

- ❖ Nine Bills took more than a year to receive assent, including six that were deemed approved following a 2025 Supreme Court judgment.
- ❖ Education was a primary legislative theme, accounting for 13% of the Bills introduced during this period.
- ❖ Urban and municipal governance followed closely, representing 12% of the legislative output.
- ❖ Bills pertaining to law and order made up 8% of the total legislation during the 16th Assembly.



NATIONAL NEWS

Appropriation Bill 2026

- ❖ Parliament passed the Appropriation Bill 2026, allowing the Union Government to withdraw and spend funds for the financial year.
- ❖ It authorizes withdrawal of money from the Consolidated Fund of India to meet expenses of ministries, departments and government schemes.
- ❖ It is mandated under Article 114 of the Constitution, making it legally necessary for all government expenditure.
- ❖ It is introduced after voting on Demands for Grants in the Lok Sabha as part of the annual budget process.
- ❖ It is classified as a Money Bill under Article 110, so the Rajya Sabha cannot amend or reject it.

- ❖ It includes both voted expenditure and charged expenditure, like salaries of judges and constitutional authorities, ensuring financial accountability.



LOK SABHA PASSES APPROPRIATION BILL 2026 AMID OPPOSITION PROTESTS

Small Hydro Power Development Scheme

CABINET APPROVES SMALL HYDRO POWER (SHP) DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Total outlay
Rs. 2,584.60 crore

Target capacity: Approx. 1500 MW

- ☞ Supports small hydro projects (1–25 MW) across states
- ☞ Special focus on hilly and North Eastern states
- ☞ Financial assistance (NE & border districts): Up to Rs. 3.6 crore per MW or 30% of project cost (max Rs. 30 crore per project)

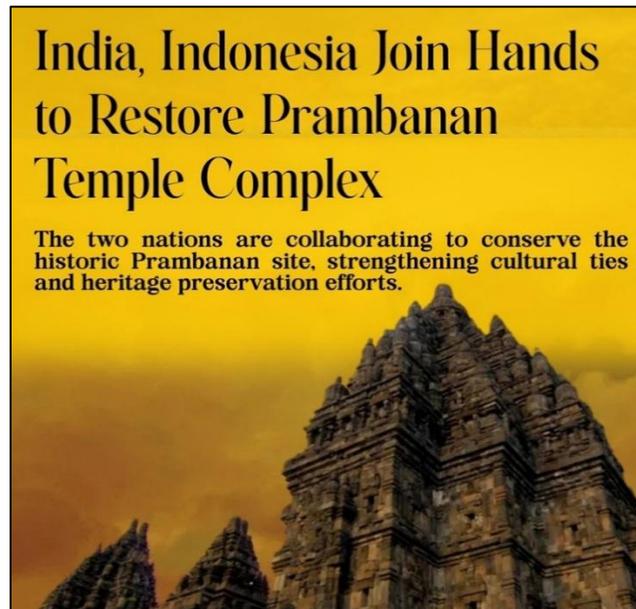
- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved the Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme with an outlay of ₹2,584.60 crore for FY 2026–27 to 2030–31.
- ❖ The scheme aims to develop about 1,500 MW of small hydro capacity across India, especially in hilly and remote areas.

- ❖ Small Hydro Power projects have a capacity range of 1–25 MW and promote decentralised renewable energy generation.
- ❖ Higher financial assistance is given to North Eastern and border states to encourage balanced regional development.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India–Indonesia Prambanan Restoration

- ❖ India and Indonesia partnered to restore the Prambanan Temple Complex to strengthen cultural ties.
- ❖ The temple, built in the 9th century by the Sanjaya dynasty, is the largest Hindu temple complex in Indonesia and a UNESCO World Heritage Site (1991).
- ❖ It is dedicated to the Hindu Trimurti—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva—with the Shiva temple rising about 47 metres.
- ❖ The complex has around 240 temples with carvings of the Ramayana and shows strong South Indian (Pallava) architectural influence.

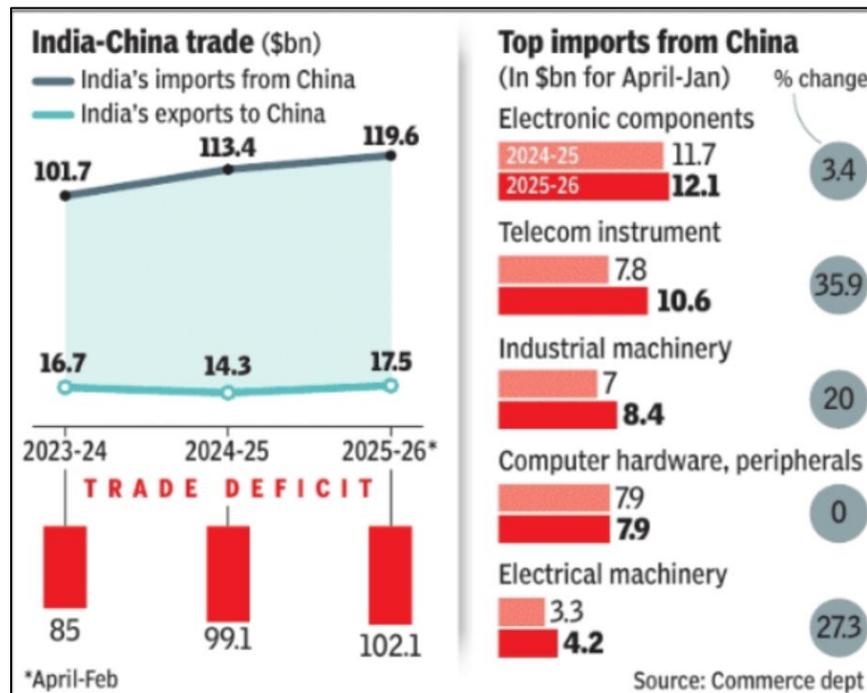


ECONOMY NEWS

India–China Trade Deficit 2025–26

- ❖ India's trade deficit with China crossed \$100 billion for the first time, reaching about \$102 billion in FY 2025–26 (April–February).

- ❖ A trade deficit means imports are higher than exports in a given period of time.
- ❖ India imports high-value goods like electronics, machinery, telecom equipment and APIs (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients) from China.
- ❖ India's exports to China mainly include petroleum products, copper items and some electronics, which are lower in value.
- ❖ This creates economic risks like current account deficit and dependence on Chinese imports in key sectors.
- ❖ It also highlights issues like limited market access and imbalance in trade between the two countries.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWS

New Molten Liquid Planet Class

- ❖ The Scientists have discovered a new class of molten liquid exoplanets using the James Webb Space Telescope.
- ❖ These planets are neither rocky planets nor water worlds, but are covered with vast global oceans of molten magma.
- ❖ The planet L 98-59 d is an example, located about 35 light-years from Earth, with a very high surface temperature of around 1,900°C.
- ❖ It has a dense atmosphere rich in hydrogen sulphide gas, creating a strong greenhouse effect and extreme conditions.

- ❖ This discovery introduces a third category of planets dominated by molten silicate material.

NEW MOLTEN LIQUID PLANET CLASS DISCOVERED

L 98-59 d
EXAMPLE -35 LIGHT-YEARS FROM EARTH

THE DISCOVERY
Scientists used JWST data to identify this new class of exoplanets.

DISCOVERED: NEW CLASS OF MOLTEN PLANETS

A NEW PLANET CATEGORY

- 1. ROCKY PLANETS**
e.g., Earth-like, solid surface
- 2. WATER WORLDS**
e.g., covered in deep oceans or ice
- 3. MOLTEN LIQUID PLANETS**
e.g., L 98-59 d, dominated by molten silicate material

L 98-59 d: AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
-35 Light-Years from Earth

SURFACE:
Vast global oceans of molten magma.

TEMPERATURE:
Extreme conditions, -1,900°C (3,450°F)

EXTREME ATMOSPHERE & GREENHOUSE EFFECT

DENSE ATMOSPHERE
RICH IN TOXIC SULPHIDE (H₂S) GAS

STRONG GREENHOUSE EFFECT

MOLTEN SILICATE SURFACE
The H₂S creates extreme climate conditions that's rich in hydrogen sulphide (H₂S) gas.

ENVIRONMENT NEWS

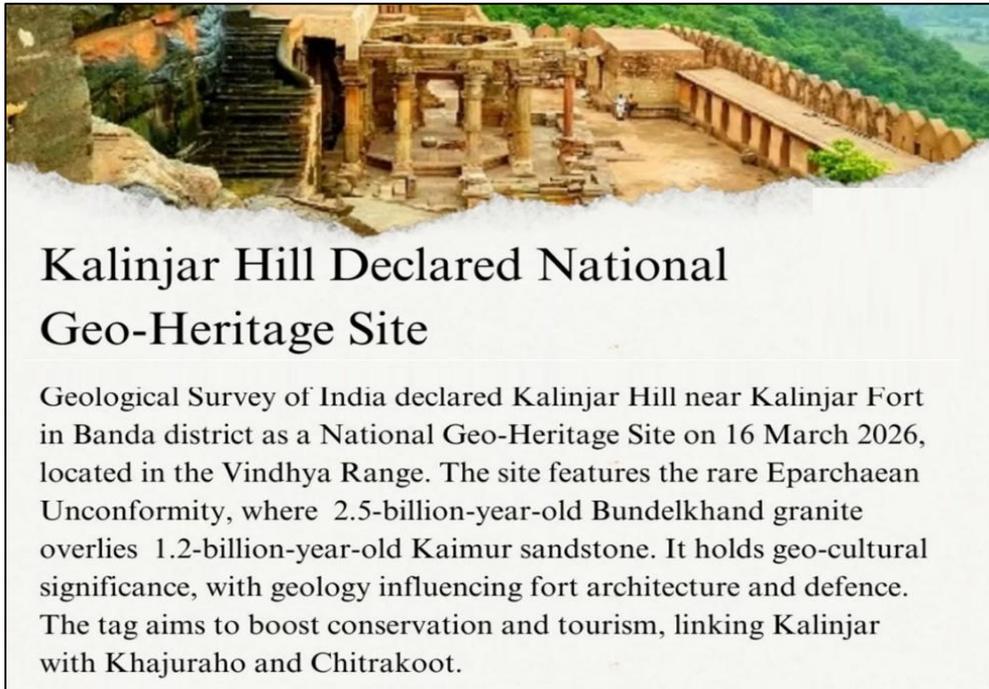
Dual-Sex Crab - *Vela carli*



- ❖ Researchers discovered a rare case of gynandromorphy in a freshwater crab species in Silent Valley National Park, Kerala.

- ❖ The species *Vela carli* showed both male and female characteristics (gynandromorphy condition).
- ❖ This is the first recorded case of such condition in the freshwater crab family Gecarcinucidae.
- ❖ The species is endemic to the Western Ghats and found in tree holes inside the forest ecosystem.

Kalinjar Hill - Geo-Heritage Site



- ❖ Kalinjar Hill was declared a National Geo-Heritage Site by Geological Survey of India.
- ❖ The site lies in the Vindhya Range and exhibits the rare Eparchaeon Unconformity, where rock layers of different geological ages meet.
- ❖ It features 2.5-billion-year-old Bundelkhand granite overlain by 1.2-billion-year-old Kaimur sandstone, offering insights into Earth's early history.
- ❖ Kalinjar Fort used the rocky terrain for natural defence and was built using locally available stone, showing a strong geo-cultural link.
- ❖ The site has historical and religious importance, including the Neelkanth Mahadev Temple linked to the Samudra Manthan legend and references in Buddhist texts.

REPORTS AND INDICES

World Happiness Report 2026

WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2026			
FINLAND TOPS LIST FOR 9TH STRAIGHT YEAR			
RANK ▼	▼ COUNTRY	▼ WORLD HAPPINESS SCORE	
1	FINLAND	7.76	
2	ICELAND	7.54	
3	DENMARK	7.53	
4	COSTA RICA	7.43	
5	SWEDEN	7.25	
6	NORWAY	7.24	
7	NETHERLANDS	7.22	
8	ISRAEL	7.18	
9	LUXEMBOURG	7.06	
10	SWITZERLAND	7.01	
116	INDIA	4.53	

- ❖ World Happiness Report 2026 ranked Finland as the happiest country for the 9th consecutive year.
- ❖ The report is published by the Wellbeing Research Centre and highlights global happiness trends and well-being levels.
- ❖ Top countries include Finland, Iceland, Denmark, Costa Rica, and Sweden, showing strong dominance of Nordic nations.
- ❖ The report notes that excessive social media use is reducing happiness, especially among youth in Western countries.
- ❖ India ranked 116th, indicating challenges in income levels, social support, and overall life satisfaction.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Ordnance Factory Day 2026 - March 18

- ❖ It is celebrated to mark the start of production at the first ordnance factory in Cossipore, Kolkata in 1802.

- ❖ In 2021, the Ordnance Factory Board was restructured into 7 DPSUs (Defence Public Sector Undertakings).
- ❖ India has 41 ordnance factories with about 70,000 employees and exports defence products to more than 30 countries.
- ❖ Major products include rifles, artillery, tanks, explosives, parachutes and military clothing.

