

TNPSC THERVUPETTAGAM

CURRENT AFFAIRS MARCH 2026

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TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin laid the foundation stone for the Tirunelveli Neo Tidel Park.
- ❖ The Union Minister for Education launched Teacher App 2.0 in New Delhi, an AI-driven digital tool that provides teaching tools, digital content, and performance dashboards to support schoolteachers and improve classroom learning.
- ❖ Steel industry veteran Jatinder Mehra passed away, and he had served as Vice Chairman of the Metals and Mining Division at the Essar Group.
- ❖ The Indian Army conducted Exercise Agni Varsha 2026 at Pokhran Field Firing Range in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.
- ❖ The National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) set a Guinness World Record for the highest number of viewers for a live-streamed Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare lesson on YouTube.
- ❖ Gentoo penguins have become the first bird species confirmed to be infected with H5N1 avian influenza in an Australian territory.
 - The highly pathogenic H5N1 strain (clade 2.3.4.4b) has also been found in southern elephant seals and Antarctic fur seals.
- ❖ India launched the Zero Prize, its first results-based environmental award for the verified pollution reduction.
 - The prize carries a total corpus of ₹5 crore, with ₹1 crore each for reduction in air, water and land pollution.
- ❖ MoEFCC (Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change) organised Him-CONNECT during TERI's (The Energy and Resources Institute) 25th World Sustainable Development Summit in New Delhi.
 - Him-CONNECT is a platform to connect researchers from the Indian Himalayan Region with start-ups, investors and policymakers.
- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded the Speaker of the Knesset Medal, the highest parliamentary honour of Israel, in Jerusalem.
- ❖ The North East Spring Festival 2026 began in Dimapur and is being held along with the Madhya Dakshini Festival 2026 to promote cultural exchange between regions.
- ❖ The Indian Air Force conducted the 'Kalari Leap' exercise in the Lakshadweep and Minicoy archipelago.
- ❖ The Supreme Court of India collegium has recommended Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari as the next Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.

- ❖ The Supreme Court of India has banned a Class 8 Social Science textbook published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) for including references to “corruption in the judiciary”.
- ❖ Pakistan launched Operation Ghazab Lil Haq against the Afghan Taliban along the disputed Durand Line.
- ❖ Thirteen Class XI students of Ariyakudi Government Higher Secondary School in Sivagangai district, Tamil Nadu, successfully launched a 600-gram mini satellite named Vikko Sat-1.
 - Vikko Sat-1 was designed to detect fungal spores in the stratosphere using five specialised sensors.
- ❖ Droupadi Murmu became the first Indian President to undertake a sortie in the Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) Prachand near the India–Pakistan border in Rajasthan.
 - LCH Prachand is designed for high-altitude warfare and is equipped with advanced weapons and avionics.
- ❖ The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) released new cybersecurity guidelines for space, including satellite communication.
 - The guidelines cover four segments – Space Segment (satellite and payload), Ground Segment (mission control and stations), User Segment (terminals and devices), and Communication Links (uplink and downlink).
- ❖ IndiaAI Mission and Business Sweden signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) to boost cooperation in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital technologies and promote trade, innovation, and joint investment.
 - A Sweden–India Technology and Artificial Intelligence Corridor (SITAC) will be launched for workshops, conferences, and visits to innovation hubs.
- ❖ Maruti Suzuki India Ltd’s Gujarat in-plant railway siding has been registered as the World’s First Modal Shift Transportation Project under the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) of Verra, the global carbon credit registry.
- ❖ The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) under NITI Aayog launched India’s first State Innovation Mission (SIM) in Tripura.
 - The mission is part of AIM 2.0 and aims to help States and Union Territories build strong innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems.
- ❖ The United Nations has approved the first carbon credits under the Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism (PACM) of Article 6.4.
 - The first project is a clean cooking initiative in Myanmar, implemented in partnership with the Republic of Korea.

- ❖ The Government of India has made it compulsory to sell 20% ethanol-blended petrol with a minimum Research Octane Number (RON) 95 across India from April 1, 2026.
 - India has already achieved 10% ethanol blending in 2022 and advanced the 20% blending target to 2025–26.
- ❖ The United Nations Road Safety Fund launched a Sustainable Road Safety Financing Project in Rajasthan, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Assam in partnership with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, WHO, and UNICEF.
- ❖ International Polar Bear Day was observed on February 27, 2026, to raise awareness about climate change and the protection of polar bears.
- ❖ National Protein Day is observed every year on February 27 in India to raise awareness about the importance of protein in the daily diet.
- ❖ The Indian Air Force (IAF) is conducting Exercise 'Vayu Shakti' in Pokhran, Rajasthan.
- ❖ India's total installed power capacity has crossed 520 gigawatts, with more than half coming from non-fossil fuel sources.
- ❖ Mangaluru International Airport won the 2025 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Award for Best Airport at Arrivals – Globally from Airports Council International World, marking its second consecutive global win after 2024.
- ❖ The 7th edition of Exercise Dharma Guardian, a joint military exercise between the Indian Army and the Japan started in Chaubattia, Uttarakhand.
- ❖ The Prime Minister of India will launch a nationwide human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination drive for 14-year-old girls from Ajmer, Rajasthan.
- ❖ The Central Bank of the UAE has launched the world's first Sovereign Financial Cloud Services Infrastructure (SFCSI).
- ❖ Micron Technology started operations at India's first advanced memory Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging (ATMP) facility in Sanand, Gujarat, which has the world's largest 500,000 square foot raised-floor semiconductor clean room.
- ❖ Jammu and Kashmir won the Ranji Trophy cricket 2025–26 title in their maiden final appearance after 67 years.
- ❖ Sachin Tendulkar has been appointed as a Global Champion for Road Safety by the United Nations (UN).
- ❖ The National Arogya Fair 2026, organised by the Ministry of Ayush, concluded in Shegaon, Buldhana district, Maharashtra.
- ❖ Security forces demolished over 200 Naxal-linked memorials in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh under Operation Demolishment.

- ❖ India has removed the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause from its Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) with France.
- ❖ Goa is hosting the fourth edition of the World Ocean Science Congress 2026 at the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) in Panaji, which focuses on ocean health, climate resilience and sustainable blue economy.
- ❖ Greece's Stefanos Sakellariadis won the Delhi Open 2026 men's singles title.
- ❖ Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport CSMIA in Mumbai was named Asia-Pacific's Best Airport for Departures in the over 40 million passengers' category at the 2025 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Awards.
- ❖ The Rajasthan government has renamed Mount Abu as Aburaj, while Kaman has been renamed Kamvan, and Jahazpur has been renamed Yagyapur.
 - Mount Abu, located in the Aravalli Range, is Rajasthan's only hill station and is famous for the Dilwara Jain Temples.
- ❖ Three major inland waterways projects were inaugurated on National Waterway-2 in Dibrugarh, Assam, including the Bogibeel Customs and Immigration Complex, the Dhubri Customs and Immigration Complex, and the renovated IWAI Heritage Building.
 - National Waterway-2, located on the Brahmaputra River, is a major economic corridor in the Northeast and improves cargo and passenger movement.
- ❖ The Government of Assam launched Mission Basundhara 3.0 in Dhemaji district to distribute land pattas to indigenous landless families, benefiting 1,06,905 people across the state.
 - The mission also granted land rights under the Forest Rights Act, 2006, and aims to resolve long-pending land disputes by providing legal ownership.
- ❖ The Prime Minister of India announced the Villages of Excellence initiative during his state visit to Israel to expand agricultural cooperation.
 - It is a grassroots extension to transform farming clusters into technology-driven zones and promoting precision farming, satellite-based irrigation, and integrated pest management.
- ❖ Installation of rooftop solar systems under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana has crossed 30 lakh households since February 2024.
 - The scheme aims to promote rooftop solar power in one crore households across India.
- ❖ A joint team from Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM) and Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering and Winter Sports (JIM&WS) successfully summited Mount Aconcagua on 22 February 2026.
 - Mount Aconcagua is the highest peak in South America and the second-highest peak in the world outside Asia.

- ❖ The Government of West Bengal announced the Banglar Yuva Sathi Scheme 2026 in the interim Budget to provide a monthly allowance of 1,500 rupees to unemployed youth.
 - The scheme will be implemented across West Bengal from 1 April 2026.
- ❖ World Seagrass Day is celebrated every year on March 1 to spread awareness about seagrass and marine conservation.
 - The theme of the year 2026 is “Seagrasses Enrich Ocean Biodiversity and Fisheries.”
- ❖ Zero Discrimination Day is observed every year on March 1 to promote equality and dignity for all people.
 - The theme of the year 2026 is “People First”.
- ❖ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully tested the drogue parachute for the Gaganyaan human spaceflight program.
- ❖ Waaree Energies will set up India’s largest integrated lithium-ion battery gigafactory at Rambilli in Anakapalli district, Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The Joint Regional Official Language Conference (Rajbhasha Sammelan) for Eastern, North-Eastern, and Northern regions held in Agartala to promote and preserve regional languages.
- ❖ The National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO), a Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprise has launched a new IA91 grade aluminium alloy ingot.
- ❖ India has gifted the Maldives its first high-speed ferry to launch new transport services between key atolls-Faafu and Dhaalu Atolls.
- ❖ Iran has launched ballistic missiles, including its Khorramshahr-4 (also called “Kheibar”), in retaliation after coordinated strikes by the United States and Israel.
- ❖ Iran’s Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has been officially confirmed dead following major coordinated military strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran.
 - Ayatollah Alireza Arafai has been named as the temporary Supreme Leader and jurist member of a three-person interim leadership council that will lead Iran until a permanent successor is chosen.
- ❖ Rare Disease Day is observed on 28 February (or 29 February in leap years) to raise awareness about rare diseases, their diagnosis, and treatment.
 - The theme for 2026 is “More Than You Can Imagine”.
- ❖ World Hearing Day is observed every year on 3 March to raise awareness about hearing loss and the importance of ear care.
 - The theme for 2026 is “From communities to classrooms: hearing care for all children”.

- ❖ Google has launched Nano Banana 2, also called Gemini 3.1 Flash Image, a new AI model for generating high-quality images.
- ❖ India's Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has successfully conducted three flight trials of the VSHORADS (Very Short-Range Air Defence System) missile from Chandipur, Odisha.
- ❖ The first phase of development works at Silver Beach in Cuddalore has been completed, and it has been developed as a Blue Flag beach under a pilot project of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- ❖ The union Health minister launched the indigenously manufactured Tetanus and Adult Diphtheria (Td) vaccine at the Central Research Institute in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The Bureau of Energy Efficiency celebrated its 25th Foundation Day on March 3, 2026 in New Delhi, and it functions under the Ministry of Power.
- ❖ Varanasi entered the Guinness World Records by planting over 2.5 lakh saplings in one hour.
- ❖ The 301 km Khurda Road–Balangir railway line in Odisha is nearing the full completion after more than 100 years of delay.
- ❖ Nine cheetahs from Botswana were brought to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh under India's cheetah reintroduction programme, taking the total cheetah population in the country to 48.
- ❖ The endangered Forest Owlet, which is listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, was spotted for the first time at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ The Prime Minister launched the nationwide Human Papillomavirus vaccination drive for 14-year-old girls using Gardasil-4.
- ❖ Operation Epic Fury is a major joint military operation held by the United States in coordination with Israel against Iranian military infrastructure.
- ❖ World Civil Defence Day is observed every year on March 1 to raise awareness about civil protection, disaster prevention, and preparedness.
- ❖ World Obesity Day is observed every year on 4 March to raise awareness about obesity and promote action to prevent and manage it.
 - The theme for 2026 is "8 Billion Reasons to Act on Obesity."
- ❖ The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu launched the Tamil Nadu Integrated Drinking Water Grievance Redressal Centre – PUNAL (1916) in Chennai.
- ❖ Researchers from TU Wien and start-up Cerabyte created the world's smallest QR (Quick Response) code, measuring about 2 square micrometres (smaller than a bacterium), and received a title from Guinness World Records.

- ❖ The foundation stone for an International Bird Centre (IBC) was laid at Agaram Reserve Forest near Kazhuveli Wetland Bird Sanctuary (Villupuram District) by Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ A 14th-century shipwreck carrying porcelain from the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) was discovered in the waters off Singapore, and it dates back about 650 years.
- ❖ Senior advocate Menaka Guruswamy has been nominated by the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) to the Rajya Sabha and could become India's first openly LGBTQ+ Member of Parliament if elected.
- ❖ Israel launched Operation Lion's Roar, conducting a pre-emptive strike on key sites in Tehran, Iran, targeting military and nuclear-related facilities.
- ❖ The Ashmolean Museum of the University of Oxford has returned a 16th century bronze idol of Saint Thirumankai Alvar to India.
 - The idol originally belongs to the Shri Soundararaja Perumal Temple in Thadikombu, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Chile has become the first country in the Americas and the second globally to be verified by the World Health Organization (WHO) for eliminating leprosy, also known as Hansen disease.
- ❖ International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness was observed on 5 March 2026 to create awareness about disarmament, arms control, and the dangers of nuclear weapons.
- ❖ Iran has launched Operation True Promise 4, a missile attack targeting Israel and nearby regional military sites, in retaliation for coordinated strikes by the United States (US) and Israel.
- ❖ Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari was sworn in as the 55th Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.
- ❖ Assam's GI-tagged Karbi Anglong Ginger was exported to London for the first time, with a trial consignment of 1.2 metric tonnes.
 - Karbi Anglong Ginger is grown in the Singhasan Hills of Karbi Anglong district in Assam using Jhum and Tila cultivation methods.
- ❖ The Election Commission of India held a national roundtable conference with State Election Commissioners at Bharat Mandapam in Delhi after a gap of 27 years.
 - The last conference was held in 1999.
- ❖ The World Day of Fight Against Sexual Exploitation is observed every year on 4 March to raise awareness about human trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- ❖ The International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness is observed every year on 5 March to raise awareness about reducing weapons and preventing the spread of dangerous arms.

- The theme for the year 2026 is "It is time to invest in the architecture of peace, not the tools of war".
- ❖ The book “Mahatma: A Great Communicator”, written by Dhiraj Kakadia, Additional Director General of Akashvani, was released in New Delhi.
- ❖ The Echinus Geyser in Yellowstone National Park, United States, erupted again after six years of inactivity.
 - It is the world’s largest acidic geyser, located in the Norris Geyser Basin, the hottest geothermal area in Yellowstone.
- ❖ Janaushadhi Saptah 2026 is being celebrated from 1–5 March 2026 with health camps held across India by the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI).
- ❖ The United States Court of International Trade ordered the government to refund about \$130 billion in tariffs collected illegally during the administration of Donald Trump, following a ruling by the Supreme Court of the United States.
- ❖ Mobile World Congress 2026, the world’s largest event for the mobile and technology industry, is being held in Barcelona, Spain.
 - The theme of the year 2026 is “The IQ Era.”
- ❖ The Karnataka government announced a ban on social media access for children under 16 years in the 2026–27 state budget.
 - The restriction will apply to platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok.
- ❖ International Women's Day 2026 is observed worldwide on 8 March 2026 to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment around the world.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is “Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls”.
- ❖ Sarvam AI launched the Sarvam Startup Program to support Artificial Intelligence (AI) startups in India.
- ❖ Mumbai’s suburban district has launched ‘Saksham Skill Survey’, India’s first AI-based skill census to assess youth skills and improve employability.
- ❖ India will build its first riverine lighthouses on the Brahmaputra River along National Waterway-2.
- ❖ TIME magazine has named three Indian-origin leaders, Reshma Kewalramani, Reshma Saujani and Safeena Husain, among its 16 Women of the Year 2026 for global leadership and contributions across biotechnology, economic policy and education.

- ❖ The Government of India is establishing the first integrated plant based on Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) at Kavaratti Island, Lakshadweep.
- ❖ The Hatti Risala festival in Jalna, Maharashtra, marks 138 years of tradition and promotes social harmony, cultural inclusiveness, and community participation.
- ❖ The President of India inaugurated the Darjeeling Hill Festival at Lok Bhavan in Darjeeling, West Bengal, celebrating the rich tribal traditions, arts, and lifestyles of India's indigenous communities.
- ❖ Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has organised Raisina Dialogue 2026 in New Delhi under the theme "Samskara: Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement".
- ❖ Japan has approved the world's first stem-cell therapy for treating Parkinson's Disease, which uses Induced Pluripotent Stem (iPS) Cells to replace damaged dopamine-producing neurons in the brain.
- ❖ TNExpat digital platform was launched by the Tamil Nadu Industries Minister to help expatriates understand living, working, culture and lifestyle in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The Astronomers have released the largest-ever image of the Milky Way's central region using the ACES (ALMA Central Molecular Zone Exploration Survey).
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government has constituted an expert committee to draft "Pet and Community Dog Bye-laws" to regulate or ban aggressive and dangerous dog breeds.
- ❖ The first edition of the Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 will be held in Chhattisgarh from 26 March to 6 April 2026.
- ❖ Mojtaba Khamenei, son of former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has reportedly been chosen as Iran's next Supreme Leader.
 - He will be the third Supreme Leader of the Republic, after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the republic, and Ali Khamenei, who held the position for 37 years.
- ❖ India won the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup 2026 by defeating New Zealand in the final Match, held at Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- ❖ Kerala Police will launch the Nirbhaya Nisha initiative to enhance the night-time safety of women across Kerala by providing rapid police assistance to women travelling at night.
- ❖ Union Sports Minister unveiled the logo of the Cycling League of India (CLI), the world's first franchise-based road cycling league.
- ❖ Jan Aushadhi Diwas is celebrated every year on 7 March to spread awareness about affordable generic medicines available at Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Kendras (PMBJAKs) under the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).

- ❖ The United States conducted a test launch of the Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, a land-based nuclear missile with an operational range of over 6,000 miles (about 13,000 km).
- ❖ Actor Shah Rukh Khan entered the Hurun Global Rich List 2026 with an estimated net worth of \$1.3 billion.
- ❖ Prime Minister of India inaugurated India's first Ring Metro in Delhi.
- ❖ Nepal's Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) won a majority in the 2026 general elections, and its leader, Balendra Shah, is set to become the next Prime Minister.
- ❖ R.M. Nachammai became the first woman to head a working nuclear power plant in India as Chief Superintendent of Kaiga Generating Station Units 3 and 4 in Karnataka from 15 March 2026.
- ❖ Droupadi Murmu has addressed the 9th International Santal Conference in Darjeeling, organised by the International Santal Council, which focuses on preserving Santal culture, language, and traditions.
 - The Santhal are one of the largest tribal communities in India, mainly living in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Bihar.
- ❖ Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation deployed the AI robot G-SPIDER at Amayizhanchan canal under Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban 2.0 to clean debris and avoid manual scavenging.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister also released the book 100-Year-Old Trees of Chennai, a comprehensive guide documenting centenarian trees in the city.
 - The book is part of the Green Tamil Nadu Mission, aimed at scientifically documenting trees that are over 100 years old.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet of India approved international status for Madurai Airport, which is expected to boost tourism, trade and economic development in southern Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Durga Puja in Kolkata, a 10-day festival marking the victory of Goddess Durga over Mahishasura, will be observed from 17–21 October 2026.
- ❖ The cheetah population in India reached 53 after Jwala gave birth to five cubs at Kuno National Park, increasing the number of Indian-born cheetah cubs to 33.
- ❖ The International Day of Women Judges was observed on 10 March every year to promote equal participation of women in the judiciary and increase their presence in courts and judicial leadership roles.
- ❖ No Smoking Day was observed on 11 March every year to encourage people to quit tobacco and adopt healthier lifestyles.
- ❖ World Kidney Day was observed on 12 March, which falls on the second Thursday of March every year, to raise awareness about kidney health and the prevention of kidney diseases.

- The theme for the year 2026 is “Kidney Health for All – Caring for People, Protecting the Planet.”
- ❖ Scientists discovered two new fruit fly species — *Acidoxantha paratotoflava* and *Hemilea suneriae* — in the Himalayan foothills of the Solan region, Himachal Pradesh.
 - The study also recorded the fruit fly genus *Rhagoletis* in India for the first time; these species belong to the Trypetinae subfamily.
- ❖ Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) won the 12th PSU National Award for its accessibility initiative Dhvani Spandana.
 - Dhvani Spandana is an onboard system that helps visually impaired passengers identify buses and travel independently.
- ❖ The Indian Orchid Festival 2026 concluded in Pakyong district of Sikkim under the theme of “Orchids for Beauty & Prosperity.”
- ❖ The 11th edition of Joint Military Exercise LAMITIYE-2026 is being conducted between India and Seychelles, at the Seychelles Defence Academy.
- ❖ The 12th Asian and Pacific Regional Prosecutors Conference was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ RBI authorised CRED to operate as a Payment Aggregator.
- ❖ The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh launched ‘Araku Kouni’, the State’s first tribal millet-based food menu featuring traditional recipes from Alluri Sitarama Raju District.
- ❖ The International Day to Combat Islamophobia on 15 March raises awareness about discrimination against Muslims and promotes tolerance, human rights, and action against hate speech.
- ❖ Pi Day is celebrated globally on March 14 every year because the first three digits of the mathematical constant π (pi), 3.14159, match the date 3/14.
 - The theme for the year is 2026 “Mathematics and hope.”
- ❖ V.O. Chidambaranar Port in Tamil Nadu has launched India’s first Digital Twin platform, a real-time virtual model that monitors port infrastructure, vessel movements, cargo operations, and equipment using real-time data.
- ❖ Bharat Tex 2026, the world’s largest integrated textile fair, was launched by the Union Minister of Textiles and will be held in July 2026 in New Delhi.
- ❖ Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy successfully tested the ADC-150 (Air Droppable Container-150) from a Boeing P-8I Poseidon aircraft near Goa.
 - ADC-150 is an indigenous container designed to air-drop supplies up to 150 kilograms to naval ships at sea.

- ❖ The Freedom Shield joint military exercise has been launched by the United States and South Korea, an annual defence drill aimed at improving military coordination and readiness against security threats.
- ❖ Rashtrapati Bhavan hosted the Purple Fest, organised by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, to celebrate the achievements of Divyangjan (persons with disabilities) and promote inclusivity by recognising their talent, achievements, and aspirations.
- ❖ International Day of Mathematics was observed on 14 March every year, also known as Pi Day, celebrating the mathematical constant π (3.14) and the importance of mathematics in daily life, science, and technology.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is “Mathematics and Hope.”
- ❖ The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has begun the Cold Response 2026 Arctic military exercise, a biennial drill held mainly in Norway focusing on Arctic warfare and interoperability of allied forces.
- ❖ The Indian Army launched a major bridge project in Sri Lanka under Operation Sagar Bandhu to connect Colombo, the capital city, with the economic centre Puttalam, restoring connectivity for people, goods, and essential services.
- ❖ The International Rail Coach Expo (IRCE) 2026 was inaugurated at the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai.
- ❖ India is testing Sheshnaag-150, a long-range swarming attack drone by Newspace Research Technologies, Bengaluru.
- ❖ Joha rice, an aromatic indigenous variety mainly grown in Assam, was exported for the first time in large quantities as a 25-metric-tonne consignment from Guwahati to the United Kingdom and Italy.
- ❖ Kavach 4.0 has been commissioned on 1,452 route km of the Indian Railways high-density Delhi–Mumbai and Delhi–Howrah corridors.
 - It is an indigenous Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system that prevents train collisions by automatically controlling speed and braking.
- ❖ The International Malaria Conference (IMC) 2026 concluded in New Delhi from 7–9 March 2026.
 - The theme of the conference was “Discovery, Development and Delivery: Driving Malaria Elimination and Beyond.”
- ❖ World Rotaract Day was observed on March 13 every year, marking the 58th anniversary of the Rotaract movement.
 - It is celebrated every year to recognize the success and impact of Rotaract clubs worldwide.

- ❖ India is establishing the world's first Autonomous Maritime Shipbuilding and Systems Centre in Andhra Pradesh's Nellore district to develop the unmanned surface vessels (USVs) and autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs) and strengthen maritime security and indigenous defence manufacturing.
- ❖ Avataar amphibious drone, India's first amphibious drone, was launched by Aqua AirX Autonomous Systems.
- ❖ Union Minister of Civil Aviation announced that Tuticorin Airport will be renamed Thoothukudi Airport in English, replacing the earlier name "Tuticorin Airport."
- ❖ Yashwant Gupta received the MP Birla Memorial Award for his contributions to radio astronomy.
- ❖ The ISRO successfully conducted a sea-level hot test of the CE20 Cryogenic Engine at 22-tonne thrust.
 - The CE20 engine powers the C25 cryogenic upper stage of Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3), India's heavy-lift rocket.
- ❖ The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) dismantled a pan-India darknet drug network called "Team Kalki", which had been operating through the darknet and encrypted messaging apps since January 2025.
- ❖ The Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Project, a 120-megawatt run-of-river hydropower project in Assam across the West Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts, was recently inaugurated by Prime Minister.
- ❖ Two giant oarfish, the longest bony fish in the world, belonging to the family Regalecidae, were recently spotted near the coast of Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.
 - These deep-sea creatures normally live at depths of around 900 metres and are rarely seen near the surface.
- ❖ 9,111 women and girls performed the traditional Lezim dance simultaneously in Dombivli, Maharashtra, during International Women's Day 2026 celebrations, setting a Guinness World Record.
- ❖ Myiophanes kempi, a rare cave-dwelling assassin bug of the Reduviidae family, has been rediscovered in the Andaman Islands after nearly 100 years.
- ❖ Osbeckia zubeengargiana, a new plant species of the Melastomataceae family, was discovered in the grasslands of Manas National Park in Assam and named after Zubeen Garg.
- ❖ Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, Asia's largest tulip garden in Srinagar, has been opened to the public, marking the arrival of the spring season in Kashmir Valley, which is located at the foothills of the Zabarwan Mountains.
- ❖ Mayank Chakraborty, a 17-year-old International Master (IM) from Guwahati of Assam has become India's 94th Chess Grandmaster, also becoming the first Grandmaster from Northeast India.

- ❖ A rare Blue-and-White Flycatcher (Muscicapidae family) was spotted at Pavagadh Hill in Gujarat.
- ❖ A new parasitic wasp species, *Chelonus* (*Carinichelonus*) *mahadeb*, was discovered in Assam tea estates and belongs to the Braconidae family known for parasitoid behaviour.
- ❖ The rare plant *Henckelia monophylla* has been rediscovered in Arunachal Pradesh after about 189 years and is an endemic species of the Gesneriaceae family, first collected in 1836.
- ❖ A new earthworm species, *Drawida vazhania*, was discovered in Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary in Thrissur district and belongs to the genus *Drawida* and family Moniligastridae, playing an important role in soil fertility and nutrient cycling.
- ❖ Indian Metro Network has become the world's third largest with over 1,143 km of operational metro lines.
 - This rapid growth, up from just 248 km in 2014, places India behind only China and the USA and it has expanded rapidly from just 5 cities in 2014 to 29 cities, showing major growth in urban transport infrastructure
- ❖ National Para Athletics Championship 2026 will be held from March 19–21, 2026, at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- ❖ Bharat Tribes Fest 2026 started in New Delhi to promote tribal culture and entrepreneurship.
- ❖ Brazil has enforced a new law to regulate social media access for children below 16 years.
- ❖ World Sleep Day is observed every year on the Friday (March 13/2026) before the March equinox to raise awareness about sleep disorders like insomnia and sleep apnea.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "Sleep Well, Live Better".
- ❖ World Consumer Rights Day 2026 will be observed on March 15 to promote consumer awareness and protect rights in online and offline markets.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "Safe Products, Confident Consumers".
- ❖ 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".
- ❖ Indian Navy has deployed P-8I aircraft for Exercise Sea Dragon, a US-led Anti-Submarine Warfare exercise near Guam in the Western Pacific Ocean.
- ❖ Argentina has formally withdrawn from the World Health Organization after notifying the United Nations on March 17, 2025.
- ❖ Former Ambassador Jawed Ashraf has been awarded the rank of Commandeur in the Legion of Honour by France.
- ❖ The N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman of the Tata Group, was conferred an honorary Knighthood (KBE) by the UK.
- ❖ India Post launched "24 Speed Post", a next-day delivery service for faster and more reliable dispatch of urgent consignments under the Department of Posts.
- ❖ World Oral Health Day is observed on 20 March every year to raise awareness and reduce oral diseases.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "A Happy Mouth is a Happy Life".
- ❖ World Sparrow Day is observed on 20 March every year across the world to raise awareness about the rapidly declining population of house sparrows in urban areas.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "I Love Sparrows".
- ❖ International Colour Day is observed on 21 March every year across the world to celebrate the importance of colours in art, science, and daily life.
- ❖ World Day for Glaciers is observed on 21 March to highlight glacier loss and to promote research, awareness, and protection of glaciers and water resources.
- ❖ Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited launched India's first LPG ATM at Gurugram under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- ❖ Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 was held in New Delhi focusing on renewable energy, smart grids and energy storage with the theme "Electrifying Growth, Empowering Sustainability, Connecting Globally".
- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India won the 'Initiative of the Year Award' from Central Banking for launching the .bank.in domain.
- ❖ The Indian Army conducted Exercise Amogh Jwala in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, under Southern Command to test combat readiness and mechanised warfare capabilities.

- ❖ The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed every year on 21 March to promote equality and end racism.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "Mobilizing Political Will: 60 Years of Commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination".
- ❖ The International Day of Forests is observed every year on 21 March to highlight the importance of forests.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "Forests and Economies".
- ❖ The keel laying of two Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels for the Indian Coast Guard was held in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra.
 - These vessels are part of a project to build six advanced OPVs to strengthen maritime security and coastal surveillance.
- ❖ Chapchar Kut, the spring festival of Mizoram, was celebrated in March 2026.
 - It showcases the Mizo culture and marking the completion of jhum cultivation clearing (shifting cultivation).
- ❖ World Down Syndrome Day 2026 was observed on March 21, 2026, every year to raise awareness about Down Syndrome.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "Together Against Loneliness".
- ❖ World Poetry Day 2026 was celebrated on March 21, 2026, every year across the world to promote reading, writing and sharing of poems and to support linguistic diversity.
- ❖ Bihar Diwas 2026 was celebrated under the theme of "Unnat Bihar, Ujjwal Bihar" from March 22 to 24, 2026 to marking the foundation day of Bihar.
 - It commemorates the formation of Bihar on March 22, 1912, after separation from the Bengal Presidency.
- ❖ Minor Planet Centre (under the auspices of the International Astronomical Union) announced the discovery of 15 new moons in the Solar System, including 4 around Jupiter and 11 around Saturn.
- ❖ The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has launched the 5G Innovation Hackathon 2026 under the 100 5G Use Case Labs Initiative to promote indigenous innovation and strengthen India's telecom ecosystem.
- ❖ Indian mountaineer Bhupathiraju Anmish Varma set a world record by completing the Seven Volcanic Summits in 92 days, 4 hours, and 45 minutes.
 - The Seven Volcanic Summits are the highest volcanoes on each continent, including Mount Elbrus (Russia), Mount Kilimanjaro (Tanzania), and Mount Sidley (Antarctica).

- ❖ The Ministry of Mines organised the National DMF (District Mineral Foundation) Summit 2026 held in New Delhi to improve the utilisation of DMF funds in mining-affected areas.
- ❖ The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities partnered with the “Coalition of the Willing” to create India’s first integrated life-cycle support model for the hearing impaired.
- ❖ World Puppetry Day 2026 was celebrated on March 21, 2026, every year across the world to promote and preserve the tradition of puppetry as a cultural art form.
- ❖ World Water Day is observed every year on March 22 to raise awareness about the importance of freshwater and the need for sustainable water management.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "Water and Gender," with the campaign slogan "Where Water Flows, Equality Grows".
- ❖ India achieved 1 billion tonnes of coal production for the second consecutive year.
- ❖ Indian Railways launched the SHINE app (Sexual Harassment Incident Notification for Empowerment) to enhance workplace safety.
 - It allows confidential reporting of harassment cases through HRMS (Human Resources Management System).
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh launched Project GANGA to provide high-speed internet connectivity to rural households and boost digital infrastructure.
 - The project aims to connect more than 20 lakh rural and semi-urban households over the next 2–3 years with reliable broadband services.
- ❖ World Day of Theatre for Children and Young People is celebrated every year on March 20 to promote theatre among children and young people worldwide.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is "Staging the Rights of Children. Today. Everyday."
- ❖ World Meteorological Day is celebrated every year on March 23 to mark the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1950.
 - The theme for the year 2026 is “Observing Today, Protecting Tomorrow.”
- ❖ World atheist Day is observed every year on March 23 to recognize people who do not believe in God.
- ❖ Kalpana Soren has received the Women Empowerment Trailblazer Award at the BRICS CCI WE (BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry Women Empowerment) Annual Women Summit 2026 held in New Delhi.
- ❖ National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) successfully tested an indigenous Floating LiDAR Buoy System off the Muttom coast in Tamil Nadu.
 - It is an advanced ocean-based platform that uses Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) to measure high-resolution wind profiles and meteorological data over the sea.

- ❖ Karnataka Grameen Bank won the National Award for Outstanding Performance in Self-Help Group Bank Linkage for 2024–25.
- ❖ The first National Indoor Athletics Championships began at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar.
- ❖ The Indian Air Force (IAF) has started the Vayu Baan project to develop India's first helicopter-launched drone system.
 - It is a small autonomous drone dropped from a moving helicopter and used for surveillance or attack.
- ❖ World Tuberculosis Day is observed annually on 24 March to highlight the global burden of Tuberculosis (TB).
 - The theme for 2026 is “Yes! We Can End TB: Led by countries, powered by people.”
- ❖ Scientists from the Botanical Survey of India discovered a new wild kiwi species named *Actinidia indica* near Ziro Valley in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ India hosted the 12th Steering Committee Meeting of the GlobE Network in New Delhi under the anti-corruption cooperation framework.
- ❖ International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members is observed annually on 25 March by the United Nations to support detained and missing staff members.
- ❖ International Day of the Unborn Child is observed annually on 25 March to raise awareness about the dignity and value of unborn life.
- ❖ World Theatre Day is celebrated every year on 27 March across the world to promote theatre arts.
 - The theme for 2026 is “Theatre and a Culture of Peace”.
- ❖ The Zoological Survey of India discovered a new cockroach species, *Neoloboptera peninsularis*, using DNA-based taxonomy in Pune, Maharashtra.
- ❖ Indian Navy launched Operation Urja Suraksha to protect India-bound energy shipments through the Strait of Hormuz amid tensions in West Asia.
- ❖ Balendra Shah was sworn in as the youngest democratically elected Prime Minister of Nepal.
- ❖ The Government of India launched the Model Context Protocol (MCP) server to link Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools with the e-Sankhyiki portal for real-time official data access.
 - MCP is an open-source standard introduced by Anthropic (2024) that connects AI models to external data sources securely, improving accuracy.
- ❖ Elon Musk announced the Terafab project, a large semiconductor facility in Austin, to boost Artificial Intelligence (AI) chip production.

- ❖ Agnikul Cosmos test-fired a first-of-its-kind 3D-printed booster engine using the Akasha300 3D printer.
- ❖ The US is set to introduce a historic change in its currency design by adding the signature of President Donald Trump on future US dollar notes for the first time.
- ❖ Kerala launched 'MLATrack.com', India's first digital platform to track the legislative performance of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs).
- ❖ The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways launched the PRISM-SG (Portal for Rail-Road Inspection and Stages Management – Steel Girders) Portal in New Delhi to streamline inspection and approval processes in bridge construction.
- ❖ India marked 20 years of Earth Hour with nationwide participation by switching off the lights of major monuments and buildings on March 28, 2026, from 8:30 PM to 9:30 PM.
 - Earth Hour is an annual global event organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature to promote climate action and energy conservation.
- ❖ INS Nilgiri of the Indian Navy, participated in Exercise Kakadu 2026, a biennial multinational naval exercise conducted by the Royal Australian Navy in Australia.
- ❖ Donald Trump has announced a \$300 billion refinery partnership with Reliance Industries to build the first new major oil refinery in the US.
- ❖ Scientists at CERN successfully transported antiprotons by road for the first time.
- ❖ The Ministry of Defence, Government of India, signed a ₹445 crore deal with JSC Rosoboronexport to procure the Tunguska Air Defence Missile System for the Indian Army.
- ❖ Prime Minister inaugurated Phase I of Noida International Airport, the second major international airport in NCR (National Capital Region) after Indira Gandhi International Airport.
- ❖ Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd operationalised India's first Port of Refuge (PoR) at Dighi and Gopalpur ports.
 - Port of Refuge (PoR) is a designated place where ships in distress can take shelter to protect life and the environment.
- ❖ The 40th edition of AAHAR 2026 was held in New Delhi and is one of South Asia's largest B2B food and hospitality exhibitions, jointly organized by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries and the India Trade Promotion Organisation.
- ❖ "Nagauri Paan Methi" has been registered as a Community Farmers' Variety by the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPVFRA).
 - It is a traditional fenugreek variety grown in Nagaur district and scientifically called *Trigonella corniculata* L.
- ❖ The Government of India has approved a ₹3,630.77 crore Greenfield connectivity project linking the Delhi–Mumbai Expressway with Jewar International Airport.

- ❖ Stuti Pradhan from Sikkim has been selected to represent India at the World Youth Parliament.
- ❖ Jammu and Kashmir won its first Ranji Trophy, India's premier domestic cricket tournament, after nearly 70 years.
- ❖ Kailash Satyarthi released a new book titled "Karuna: The Power of Compassion".
- ❖ World Backup Day is observed every year on March 31 to remind people to protect digital data.

TAMIL NADU

Small Dam Project

- ❖ Chief Minister M.K. Stalin laid the foundation stone for a small dam across the Koilmalaiyar River in Melarasanpattu village, Vellore.
- ❖ Koilmalaiyar River is a tributary of the Palar River, and the dam will be built between Melarasanpattu and Karuthamalai Reserve Forests near Amirthi Zoological Park on the foothills of Jawadhu Hills.
- ❖ It is the first project undertaken by the Water Resources Department (WRD) after the opening of Mordhana Dam across the Koundinya River in Gudiyatham in 2001.
- ❖ As per norms, small dams are built below five metres in height, moderate dams are between five and 15 metres, and large dams are above 15 metres; the height also decides the storage capacity.
- ❖ Bheeman Falls in Veerapanur Reserve Forest atop Jawadhu Hills in Tiruvannamalai is a key water source for the Koilmalaiyar River.
- ❖ The river flows through forests and plains and joins the Palar River around 30 kilometres from the new dam site.

First Dark Sky Park

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has launched its first 'Dark Sky Park' in Kolli Hills to promote astro-tourism and protect night sky visibility.
- ❖ The Park is located in the Kolli Hills region of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It aims to reduce light pollution and promote scientific awareness about astronomy.
- ❖ Dark Sky Parks are designated areas that preserve natural darkness for stargazing and research.

Naagam App

- ❖ The Naagam app will onboard 100 trained snake rescuers in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Naagam is a new mobile platform designed to streamline snake rescue operations and strengthen scientific data collection.
- ❖ It was unveiled in July 2025 by Forest Department to promote technology-driven wildlife rescue efforts in the State.
- ❖ The application is modelled after SARPA, Kerala's snake rescue platform.
- ❖ It is expected to improve response time and help study snake distribution patterns.
- ❖ The app is likely to be fully operational in four months, before the onset of the monsoon season, when snake rescue calls usually increase.

Thalikku Thangam Scheme

- ❖ The Division Bench of the Madras High Court set aside a single judge's August 12, 2024, order.
- ❖ The order had extended the Thalikku Thangam scheme to those earning up to ₹12,000 per month.
- ❖ The case relates to the 2011 Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Memorial Marriage Assistance Scheme.
- ❖ It is popularly known as the Thalikku Thangam scheme and provides gold assistance for young women's marriage to families earning below ₹6,000 per month.
- ❖ It held that the single judge wrongly expanded the scope of the writ petition beyond deciding whether the petitioner earned less than ₹6,000 per month.
- ❖ The Court said extending the benefit up to ₹12,000 income amounts to substituting one executive policy for another.
- ❖ It ruled that such a direction cannot be issued under Article 226 (writ jurisdiction of High Courts) of the Constitution of India.
- ❖ The Bench observed that there is no law mandating the extension of benefits based on the Minimum Wages Act.
- ❖ It also noted that the policy itself was not under challenge before the court.
- ❖ The judges stated that the gold assistance scheme was discontinued from August 2, 2022.
- ❖ It has been restructured as the Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance Scheme.

- ❖ The petitioner's 2021 application can be considered only if her income was below ₹6,000 per month.
- ❖ The Court also noted that extending the scheme could cause a heavy financial burden on the State due to rising gold prices.

Oral Cancer Rise in Tamil Nadu 2026

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has reported around 8,000 new oral cancer cases in 2025, raising concerns over late detection and increasing smokeless tobacco use.
- ❖ As per the Tamil Nadu Cancer Registry Programme, incidence is higher in men (11.6 per 1,00,000) than in women (5.4 per 1,00,000).
- ❖ India accounts for nearly one-third of global oral cavity cancer cases, with tobacco chewing, gutka, khaini, zarda, areca nut, and beedi smoking as major causes.
- ❖ Nearly 70–80% of cases in India are diagnosed at advanced stages, leading to a five-year survival rate of around 50%.

Organ Donation 2026 - Tamil Nadu

- ❖ Tamil Nadu recorded 57 deceased organ donors in the first two months of 2026, reaffirming its position as the leading state in India.
- ❖ The organ donation programme is managed by the Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu (Transtan), established in 2008.
- ❖ The state uses a centralised digital system and the Vidiyal mobile and web application for transparent organ allocation.
- ❖ "Green corridors" are created with police support to transport organs quickly between hospitals.

Tamil Nadu Shipbuilding Policy 2026

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has released the Tamil Nadu Shipbuilding Policy 2026.
- ❖ The Shipbuilding Policy 2026 aims to develop shipbuilding clusters and promote the manufacturing, repair, and recycling of ships in the State.
- ❖ A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) will be created under the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu to support shipyard development.
- ❖ Shipyards investing at least ₹100 crore in green initiatives will get a 50% subsidy, subject to a maximum limit of ₹50 crore or 2% of project cost.

Agroforestry Policy 2026

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government unveiled the Tamil Nadu Agroforestry Policy 2026 in Chennai.
- ❖ The policy aims to promote the sustainable agroforestry and encourage farmers to grow high-value tree species.
- ❖ The Farmers can cultivate trees such as teak, sandalwood, red sanders, and mahogany with simplified regulations.
- ❖ The policy focuses on increasing farmers' income and expanding tree cover in the State.
- ❖ It supports environmentally sustainable farming practices in Tamil Nadu.

Infrastructure Projects and Investments

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin has inaugurated several infrastructure projects and laid foundation stones for new development works in the State.
- ❖ He laid the foundation stone for the first phase of works to develop the Guindy Eco Park being carried out by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- ❖ The Park will be developed at a cost of ₹37.85 crore with theme gardens, a children's play area, bird habitat islands, herbal gardens, and viewing decks.
- ❖ He also inaugurated a 30 metre high Super Tree Tower at Kalaingar Centenary Park, built at a cost of ₹11.84 crore.
- ❖ A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with MRF Limited to set up a tyre manufacturing plant in Sivaganga district with an investment of ₹5,300 crore.

EmpowHer 1.0 Program

- ❖ StartupTN and TNWeSafe (Tamil Nadu Women Safety Project) have launched the EmpowHer 1.0 programme to support women entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The programme aims to help more than 6,000 aspiring women entrepreneurs across the State within one year.
- ❖ The first batch includes 160 women entrepreneurs from Chennai, Kanchipuram, Chengalpattu, and Tiruvallur districts.
- ❖ The participants were selected through a structured application process.
- ❖ The programme helps women develop business ideas and leadership skills.

Restriction of Political and Communal Events

- ❖ The Government of Tamil Nadu has amended the Tamil Nadu Private Schools (Regulation) Rules, 2023, to restrict certain activities in private schools.
- ❖ Private schools are not allowed to conduct programmes that are political, ideological, communal, or divisive in nature.
- ❖ No external person, association, or organisation can use school premises to organise meetings, campaigns, or activities unrelated to education.
- ❖ Activities that promote disharmony or hatred based on religion, caste, race, community, language, or ideology are banned.
- ❖ Cultural events, social service programmes, blood donation camps, and commemorative functions are allowed only if they are non-political and non-sectarian with prior government permission.

New Governor for Tamil Nadu

- ❖ R. N. Ravi, Governor of Tamil Nadu, has been transferred as the Governor of West Bengal.
- ❖ C. V. Ananda Bose stepped down from the post of Governor of West Bengal.
- ❖ Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, Governor of Kerala, will temporarily discharge the functions of the Governor of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Ajay Kumar Bhalla, the Governor of Manipur, has been given additional responsibility during the change in the Governor's post in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ R. N. Ravi served as the Governor of Tamil Nadu since 18 September 2021.

Delimitation in Tamil Nadu

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Assembly's strength was fixed at 234 seats.
- ❖ This number was arrived at by the Delimitation Commission, which undertook the post-1961 Census redistribution of Lok Sabha and Assembly seats.
- ❖ Under Article 170 of the Constitution and Section 8(b) of the Delimitation Commission Act, 1962, the number of seats in a State Assembly must be an integral multiple of the number of Lok Sabha seats allotted to that State.
- ❖ At the time, 14 States together accounted for 481 parliamentary seats.
- ❖ Madras (as Tamil Nadu was known then) had 41.
- ❖ It was taking the overall total to 507 in the Lok Sabha.
- ❖ The Delimitation Commission was chaired by Justice J.L. Kapur, with C.P. Sinha and K.V.K. Sundaram as members.

- ❖ It noted that Article 81(1) fixed the maximum number of directly elected Lok Sabha members at 500.
- ❖ This meant the maximum seats available for allocation among the 14 States was 493.
- ❖ The total population of these States has increased very considerably during the last ten years.
- ❖ The average population per parliamentary constituency has increased from 732,654 in 1951 to 889,257 in 1961.
- ❖ After reviewing demographic changes revealed by the 1961 Census, the Commission concluded that retaining the existing 481 seats would disproportionately penalize some larger States.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Madras would each have lost three seats, while Bihar would have lost one.
- ❖ To mitigate this, the Commission increased the total from 481 to 490.
- ❖ Even then, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Madras lost two seats each, while Bihar avoided a loss.
- ❖ The Commission recorded that even raising the number to the constitutional ceiling of 493 would not have altered the losses faced by those States.
- ❖ Accordingly, Madras' Lok Sabha strength was reduced from 41 to 39.
- ❖ The next step was to determine the size of the Madras Legislative Assembly.
- ❖ At that time, the State followed a multiple of five.
- ❖ It means each Lok Sabha constituency corresponded to five Assembly segments.
- ❖ Applying that formula mechanically would have resulted in: $39 \times 5 = 195$ Assembly seats.
- ❖ However, the Madras Assembly then had 206 elected members.
- ❖ Retaining the existing multiple would therefore have reduced the Assembly to 195 seats.
- ❖ It would be a significant contraction in representation.
- ❖ After due consideration, it was decided to retain the existing multiple in all States, except Madras.
- ❖ The commission thought that it would be proper to raise its multiple from 5 to 6 and to assign 234 seats to its Legislative Assembly.
- ❖ The revised formula thus became: $39 \times 6 = 234$.
- ❖ Instead of shrinking the seats of the Lok Sabha for the state, the Assembly seats in the state were expanded.
- ❖ The decision was not arbitrary.

- ❖ It was a structural adjustment designed to preserve proportionality between parliamentary and Assembly representation while preventing a drastic contraction of the State legislature.
- ❖ Six decades later, the 234-seat structure remains unchanged.

Tamil Nadu's progress since 1950

- ❖ The abolition of hand-rickshaws is a major one, along with other major social reforms initiated in Tamil Nadu by the government.
- ❖ The DMK government led by M. Karunanidhi abolished the practice in 1973.
- ❖ It was inspired by the ideals of the Dravidian Movement.
- ❖ It helped make the State a leader in social justice reforms in India.
- ❖ In West Bengal, however, it took another three decades for the State to finally end this inhuman system.
- ❖ The Dravidian Movement was initiated and propagated by what the Italian Communist leader Antonio Gramsci would describe as organic intellectuals with an organic ideology.
- ❖ After returning from tours of the United States and Japan, Anna told All India Radio (AIR) in 1968 that in a country like India, endowed with abundant manpower, industries and development projects ought to be more labour-oriented than capital-oriented.
- ❖ Annadurai also favoured a strong emphasis on agriculture, as the majority of the population depended on it.
- ❖ Today, Tamil Nadu is a highly industrialized State, achieving all-round growth across sectors.
- ❖ Karunanidhi nationalised transport in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The laws enacted by the DMK government empowered tenants and agricultural labourers in Tamil Nadu in important ways.
- ❖ It consolidated political power among the lower castes.
- ❖ One of the most significant measures was the Tenancy Land Record Act of 1969.
- ❖ In 1973, the DMK government introduced a law granting tenants the right to purchase all or part of the land, not exceeding five standard acres.
- ❖ The Land Reforms Act, amended in 1970, reduced the land ceiling from 30 standard acres to 15.
- ❖ These reforms continued even after the AIADMK, led by M.G. Ramachandran (MGR), came to power.
- ❖ Amendments to the Tenancy Act in 1979 further reduced rents to 25% and protected tenants against eviction even in cases of rent default during natural calamities.

- ❖ The Communist regimes in Kerala and West Bengal implemented similar land reforms.
- ❖ MGR's Nutritious Meal Scheme drew more students to schools and significantly reduced dropout rates.
- ❖ MGR paved the way for private engineering colleges and it aids to the capitalization of the Information Technology revolution.
- ❖ Jayalalithaa, who assumed leadership of the AIADMK after MGR, remained firm in her commitment to social justice.
- ❖ On the issue of reservation, she went a step further by increasing it to 69%.

New Schemes and Development Projects

- ❖ The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M.K. Stalin has launched new government schemes and inaugurated several development projects in Chennai.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Women Entrepreneur Empowerment Scheme (TWEES) was launched by the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Department to encourage 1 lakh women to become entrepreneurs in five years.
- ❖ The government has also released the Tiruchirappalli Master Plan 2045 and the Thoothukudi Master Plan 2045 for urban development.
- ❖ Foundation stones were laid for a Mangrove Conservation Centre at Pichavaram, an International Migratory Bird Centre at Marakkanam, and a Nilgiri Tahr Conservation Centre in Coimbatore.
- ❖ New infrastructure projects were launched, including medical facilities (₹167 crore), warehousing units with 60,000 metric tonnes capacity (₹78 crore), and fisheries infrastructure (₹100 crore).
- ❖ The Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh Wildlife Conservation Award was presented to the son of the late veterinarian Vaidyanathan Krishnamurthy.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government nationalised the works of Periyarist V. Anaimuthu and writer Erode Tamilanban, and the royalty was handed over to their family members.
- ❖ The Chief Minister also released 500 rare spiritual books and Tamil translations of 73 works of B.R. Ambedkar.

Tamil Nadu 2030: 14-Point Development Blueprint

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin unveiled a 14-point sector-wise blueprint, "Tamil Nadu 2030", in Chennai.
- ❖ The plan is based on feedback from 1.81 crore families through the "Unga Kanava Sollunga" (Share Your Dreams) household survey.

- ❖ The “Uttamar Gandhi Model Villages Project”, inspired by former President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, aims to develop villages as centres of economic growth.
- ❖ The project will provide urban amenities in rural areas, beginning with 10 village panchayats.
- ❖ Under the Kalaignar Kanavu Illam Scheme, 5 lakh houses in rural areas and 2 lakh houses in urban areas will be constructed.
- ❖ Medical insurance for all will be ensured, and special camps for early detection of cancer, diabetes and hypertension will be organised.
- ❖ The State aims to achieve the top rank in India in reducing Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), and mental health counselling centres will be set up in every district.
- ❖ In agriculture, the net sown area will increase to 50 lakh hectares, and soil health cards will be distributed to 43 lakh farmers.
- ❖ Natural farming will expand to 17,000 hectares, organic farming to 1 lakh hectares, and micro-irrigation facilities to 21 lakh hectares.
- ❖ Rainwater harvesting structures will be constructed in the Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats, and food production will increase to 125 lakh metric tonnes.
- ❖ In education, dropouts will be eliminated, and 100% smart classrooms will be introduced in all government and aided schools.
- ❖ Under Library 5.0, more than 300 libraries will be established, and 1,000 model schools will be developed.
- ❖ Naan Mudhalvan 2.0 will provide advanced skill training to students for global competitiveness.
- ❖ The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education will be increased to 90%, with research laboratories, Centres of Excellence, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) labs in educational institutions.
- ❖ A flexible curriculum with academic credits for sportspersons will be introduced, and house pattas will be given to every landless Adi Dravidar and tribal family in phases.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu aims to attract ₹18 lakh crore investment, create employment for 50 lakh youth, increase exports to \$120 billion, establish industrial parks in every district under the “Make in Tamil Nadu” initiative, and develop cities with pedestrian-friendly roads, 20% green spaces, wastewater recycling facilities, and modern cultural centres.

CCTNS 2.0 Portal

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Police launched a new website integrated with CCTNS 2.0 (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems) to provide digital police services.
- ❖ The new portal does not allow third parties or the general public to view or download First Information Reports (FIRs).
- ❖ Only the accused, victim, or complainant in a case can access and download the FIR through the website.
- ❖ The portal is integrated with the Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) for better coordination among agencies.
- ❖ The integration enables real-time data sharing with courts, forensic science laboratories, prisons, and prosecution departments.
- ❖ e-Sakshya and e-Summon applications have been implemented to improve digital evidence management and electronic delivery of summons.
- ❖ To use services under CCTNS 2.0, users must register personal details such as mobile number and email ID and create login credentials.

Meenambal Sivaraj

- ❖ Meenambal Sivaraj was a pioneering figure in the fight for the rights of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and women's empowerment.
- ❖ Meenambal Sivaraj was born on December 12, 1904, in Rangoon, Burma to V.G. Vasudeva Pillai and Minakshi.
- ❖ Her father was a prominent SC leader and businessman in Burma.
- ❖ He became the first SC member of the Madras Legislative Council.
- ❖ In 1918, Meenambal married Sivaraj, a law graduate from Madras and a vocal advocate for SC rights.
- ❖ In 1928, when the Simon Commission arrived in India, Meenambal supported it.
- ❖ Over the time, Meenambal became closely connected to leaders such as B.R. Ambedkar, Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, and Jawaharlal Nehru.
- ❖ One of Meenambal's most significant contributions was her work with the All India Scheduled Castes Federation (AISCF), founded by Dr. Ambedkar.
- ❖ She became the first Dalit woman to join the AISCF, and the first woman president of the South India Scheduled Castes Federation.
- ❖ Her association with national movements like the Indian National Congress also brought her into the fold of those working for India's Independence.
- ❖ She served as a magistrate for Madras Province, and a member of several important boards and committees, such as the Film Censor Board and the Madras State Advisory Committee.

- ❖ She no longer wished to be addressed by her given name, Meenambal Sivaraj, which she believed had “Aryan origins”.
- ❖ Instead, she chose to be called Angiarkanni Siva Arasu.
- ❖ In 1933, at the YMCA in Madras, Meenambal Sivaraj rose to speak about untouchability, unemployment, and the future of India’s “backward communities”.
- ❖ She was a key figure in the National Women’s Conference of Dalits, where she worked closely with Dr. Ambedkar.
- ❖ In 1946, she was appointed a member of the Senate of the University of Madras.
- ❖ Three years later, she was elected to the Madras City Council by the members of the Senate.
- ❖ Some accounts suggest that she is the first SC woman to be part of the City Council.
- ❖ She contested the elections in 1952 and 1967 but was defeated.
- ❖ Meenambal died on November 30, 1992, at the age of 88.

TWEES - Scheme

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Women Entrepreneur Empowerment Scheme (TWEES) was launched by CM of Tamil Nadu to promote women-led businesses.
- ❖ The scheme aims to encourage 1 lakh women to become entrepreneurs over the next five years.
- ❖ It is implemented by the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Department of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The programme will provide training, financial assistance and institutional support to women entrepreneurs.
- ❖ The scheme aims to increase women’s participation in the MSME sector and create more employment opportunities in the state.

Rules for Cosmetology Clinics

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government issued a Government Order (G.O.) to regulate cosmetology, aesthetics and hair transplant clinics in the state.
- ❖ All such clinics must register under the Tamil Nadu Clinical Establishments Act for their operation.
- ❖ The order is based on guidelines issued by the National Medical Commission (NMC).
- ❖ Hair transplant and aesthetic procedures can be performed only by qualified dermatologists or plastic surgeons.

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Private Clinical Establishments (Regulation) Act, 1997 regulates private clinical establishments in the state.

Jain Tirthankara Sculptures

- ❖ Two stone sculptures of Jain Tirthankaras were discovered near Lalgudi in Tiruchirappalli district, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The sculptures were found at Neikuppai village and Pudur Uthamanur village.
- ❖ The statues are believed to belong to the later Chola period.
- ❖ The Tirthankaras are shown in a meditative posture (ardha-paryankasana) with elongated ear lobes and triple umbrellas above their heads.
- ❖ The sculptures measure about 80 cm (Neikuppai) and 112 cm (Pudur Uthamanur) in height.

VOC Port - Berth 9 Container Terminal

- ❖ Berth 9 at V.O. Chidambaranar Port operates under the Public–Private Partnership (PPP) model and functions as a container terminal.
- ❖ Around 45% of the workforce at Berth 9 are women, working in administrative and other operational positions.
- ❖ V.O. Chidambaranar Port is located in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, and it is one of the 13 major ports in India; it was declared a major port on 11 July 1974.
- ❖ The port is the second largest port in Tamil Nadu and has the third largest container terminal in India.

Parandur Airport - Special Project

- ❖ The Government of Tamil Nadu has notified the Parandur Greenfield Airport Project as a “Special Project” under the Tamil Nadu Land Consolidation (for Special Projects) Act, 2023.
- ❖ The project has been declared a Special Project to expedite land acquisition and approval processes.
- ❖ Under the Act, projects requiring more than 100 hectares of land can be declared Special Projects to enable faster land consolidation.
- ❖ The airport project requires 5,746 acres of land, of which about 1,700 acres have been acquired so far.
- ❖ The State government will form a five-member expert committee to conduct public hearings and prepare a draft land consolidation scheme.

- ❖ The ₹27,400-crore project, planned in four phases, will have a capacity to handle 100 million passengers per year after completion.

Chennai Mangrove Restoration

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Forest Department planted 20,000 mangrove seedlings along the Buckingham Canal to strengthen Chennai's coastal ecosystem and improve climate resilience.
- ❖ The mangrove restoration is part of a phased programme to establish a green belt of mangrove species in the district.
- ❖ During 2024–25, about 12,500 seedlings of six species — *Rhizophora mucronata*, *Bruguiera cylindrica*, *Avicennia marina*, *Aegiceras corniculatum*, *Excoecaria agallocha*, and *Acanthus ilicifolius* — were planted across 20 hectares.
- ❖ In the second phase, around 5,000 mangrove saplings of species including *Rhizophora mucronata*, *Rhizophora apiculata*, *Avicennia marina*, and *Excoecaria agallocha* were planted at the Battle of Adyar Island on the Adyar River estuary.
- ❖ The latest phase involves planting 20,000 seedlings of five species: *Avicennia marina*, *Avicennia officinalis*, *Rhizophora mucronata*, *Rhizophora apiculata*, and *Excoecaria agallocha*.
- ❖ The step-by-step restoration aims to rebuild Chennai's mangrove cover, create a living coastal bioshield, protect the shoreline, nurture biodiversity, and strengthen the city's resilience to cyclones and sea-level rise.

State Planning Commission Reports

- ❖ The State Planning Commission (SPC) submitted 15 studies and reports on government schemes and emerging sectors to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin.
- ❖ The reports were handed over by J. Jeyaranjan, Executive Vice-Chairman of the Commission, offering policy insights to strengthen key development initiatives in the State.
- ❖ The studies examined athlete development, competitive performance, and ecosystem strengthening.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu accounts for 36 of India's 89 Chess Grandmasters and is home to 2 World Chess Champions.
- ❖ The State produced 4 medallists at the Paris Paralympics and fielded 12 Olympians at Paris, including 6 athletes in track and field events.

- ❖ Another study on Tamil Nadu Artificial Intelligence Future Workforce focused on preparing all levels of the workforce for the age of Artificial Intelligence and highlighted institutional, policy, and programmatic foundations built over the past 2–3 years.
- ❖ The SPC also conducted an in-depth analysis of the status of platform-based gig workers in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ An impact assessment was carried out for Illam Thedi Kalvi 2.0, the Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme, and the nutritional assessment of Anganwadi-going children.

V.O.C. Port - Windmill Handling Record

- ❖ V.O. Chidambaranar Port in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, set a national record by handling 147 windmill blades from a single vessel.
- ❖ This surpasses the previous record of 103 windmill blades handled by V.O.C. Port in November 2025.
- ❖ It marked the highest volume handled from a single vessel at any port in the country.
- ❖ The vessel MV Bo Run Jiu Zhou, loaded with 147 windmill blades, arrived from the Port of Qinzhou, China.
- ❖ V.O.C. Port is recognized as the leading windmill blade handling port in India.

New Rajya Sabha Members from Tamil Nadu 2026

- ❖ Six candidates have been elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Tamil Nadu to fill six vacancies as the term of existing members ends on 2 April 2026.
- ❖ The elected members are Tiruchi Siva and Constandine Ravindran (DMK), M. Christopher Tilak (INC), L. K. Sudhish (DMDK), M. Thambidurai (AIADMK), and Anbumani Ramadoss (PMK).
- ❖ The candidates were declared elected unopposed by Returning Officer R. Santhi in accordance with Section 53(2) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and Rule 11(1) of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961.
- ❖ Manickam and Sudhish are being elected to the Rajya Sabha for the first time.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu has a total of 18 members in the Rajya Sabha.
- ❖ Rajya Sabha elections use an open ballot system, where each MLA must show their marked ballot to their party's authorized agent before casting it.
- ❖ Failure to do so cancels the vote.
- ❖ Independent MLAs keep their votes secret.

- ❖ The election follows Proportional Representation by Single Transferable Vote (STV).
- ❖ MLAs rank candidates in order of preference.
- ❖ In Round 1, all first-choice votes are counted.
- ❖ A candidate wins by reaching a specific quota calculated from the total MLAs and seats available.
- ❖ Winners exceeding the quota are declared elected.
- ❖ Surplus votes are transferred to second-choice candidates.
- ❖ If seats remain unfilled, the candidate with the lowest votes is eliminated and their votes redistributed based on the next preferences.

Katranai Thoorum Arivu Statue

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin unveiled the Katranai Thoorum Arivu statue at Marina Beach highlighting the significance of continuous learning.
- ❖ The statue was installed by the Tamil Nadu Textbook and Educational Services Corporation under the School Education Department.
- ❖ The name Katranai Thoorum Arivu is borrowed from a Thirukkural couplet emphasizing the importance of lifelong education.

Tamil Nadu Study on Gig Workers

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission released a study on the status of platform-based gig workers in Tamil Nadu and suggested measures for their welfare and social security.
- ❖ The report recommends legal protection for gig workers to form unions for collective bargaining and representation.
- ❖ It suggests creating Social Security Funds covering benefits such as health insurance, maternity support, pensions, disability and accidental death benefits.
- ❖ The Commission proposes mandatory registration of gig workers and platforms on the e-Shram system.
- ❖ Platforms with more than 50 workers should set up internal dispute resolution committees with a State-appointed ombudsman.

Tamil Nadu Governor - Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar

- ❖ Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar has been appointed to additionally discharge the functions of the Governor of Tamil Nadu.

- ❖ He assumed office at Raj Bhavan Chennai on 12 March 2026.
- ❖ Hailing from Goa, Mr. Arlekar assumed office as Governor of Kerala in January 2025.
- ❖ The oath of office was administered by Chief Justice of the Madras High Court Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari.
- ❖ Former Governor R. N. Ravi completed his tenure and left the State on 11 March 2026 and now appointed as the Governor of West Bengal
- ❖ R. N. Ravi had assumed office as Governor of Tamil Nadu on 18 September 2021.

HPV Vaccination Drive in Tamil Nadu

- ❖ The Government of Tamil Nadu reported 81% coverage in the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme in four pilot districts within six weeks.
- ❖ The programme was launched on 27 January 2026 to vaccinate 14-year-old girls to prevent Cervical Cancer.
- ❖ The pilot project was implemented in Ariyalur, Tiruvannamalai, Perambalur and Dharmapuri districts.
- ❖ Around 27,000 girls were identified, and about 81% received the single-dose HPV vaccine.
- ❖ The programme is now expanding across the State following the Government of India's nationwide HPV vaccination campaign.

Tamil Nadu Industrial Projects

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin has launched multiple industrial and development projects in Chennai.
- ❖ The foundation stone was laid for a battery pack manufacturing unit by Ashok Leyland at Pillaipakkam (Kancheepuram district) with an investment of ₹500 crore.
- ❖ Mini Tidel Parks will be constructed in Karur, Nagapattinam and Pudukkottai districts at a total cost of ₹119 crore.
- ❖ A MoU was signed with Hirose Electric Group to establish an electrical and electronic connectors manufacturing unit in Tiruvallur district with an investment of ₹100 crore.
- ❖ Another MoU was signed with the University of California, Berkeley, to strengthen cooperation for green energy development in Tamil Nadu.

City Gas Distribution Network

- ❖ The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for a City Gas Distribution (CGD) network project by Bharat Petroleum.
- ❖ The project will be implemented in the Nilgiris district and the Erode district.
- ❖ It aims to supply Piped Natural Gas (PNG) to around nine lakh households and several commercial establishments.
- ❖ CGD is a network of underground pipelines used to supply natural gas to households, industries and vehicles.
- ❖ Natural gas is considered a cleaner fuel compared to conventional fuels such as coal and diesel.
- ❖ The CGD network project is expected to reduce emissions and support environmental sustainability in the region.
- ❖ The Prime Minister also dedicated the Lube Blending Plant of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) in Chennai to the nation.
- ❖ The plant is considered one of the world's largest lubricant blending facilities and will supply lubricants to various industries within and outside Tamil Nadu, reducing import dependence.
- ❖ The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for a highway bypass at Gangaikonda Cholapuram in Ariyalur district.

1952 Elections in Madras State

- ❖ In the first elections held in 1951-52 after the country became a Republic with the system of a universal adult suffrage in place, the major contestants were the Congress and the Communist Party of India (CPI).
- ❖ Despite the Congress having its State-level units established on linguistic lines such as the Andhra Committee and the Kerala Committee for over 20 years, the State of Andhra had not yet come into being.
- ❖ The leadership of the Congress, which was sympathetic to the idea of States on linguistic lines, did not, however, take a categorical stand in favour of it.
- ❖ Leaders including C. Rajagopalachari or Rajaji were against the idea.
- ❖ They held the view this would lead to fissiparous tendencies in the country.
- ❖ They found it then extremely difficult to come to terms with the reality after Partition.
- ❖ Rajaji had argued that the “mix of languages and cultures” had been Tamil Nadu's (then called Madras) strength.
- ❖ And if divided on the basis of language, the province, “once so big and important and progressive, will hereafter grow narrow-minded and intensely anti-culture”.

- ❖ The sitting Chief Minister P.S. Kumaraswami Raja (secured an overwhelming majority in 1946), and most of his Ministers lost in the then elections.
- ❖ So, a hung Assembly came up.
- ❖ In the House of 375 members, the Congress obtained 152 seats only but it remained as the single largest party.
- ❖ The CPI, which finished second, garnered 62 seats.
- ❖ It was in Chennai that the CPI had announced its decision to contest the election.
- ❖ And A.K. Gopalan, one of the towering leaders of the Left movement, made the announcement
- ❖ However, the Congress party had managed to have its representative – Rajaji as Chief Minister, despite not getting a majority of its own.
- ❖ In 1952, the then Governor, Sri Prakasa nominated C. Rajagopalachari (C.R. or Rajaji) to the Legislative Council.
- ❖ It was under the constitutional provision allowing the nomination of individuals with special knowledge or practical experience in fields such as literature, science, art, the cooperative movement and social service.
- ❖ That time CR had actually retired from active politics.
- ❖ Rajaji was the only Indian to have served as Governor-General of India and accepted the Chief Minister's post.
- ❖ The nomination of Rajaji alone had raised a political storm.
- ❖ Because he had subsequently been appointed Chief Minister of the State, which had then encompassed parts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala.
- ❖ The issue that continues to be debated is whether a Council of Ministers, who are in office during the period of transition after an adverse popular verdict, can recommend to the Governor for filling vacancies in the legislative House.
- ❖ And whether the Governor can act in favour of such a recommendation.
- ❖ Given such a fractured verdict, the Governor added fuel to the fire by inviting Rajaji.
- ❖ Rajaji became the leader of the Congress legislature party on March 31, 1952, to form the government.
- ❖ A surprise inclusion in the Rajaji Cabinet was the Commonweal Party's leader M. A. Manickavelu Naicker.
- ❖ By the time the Assembly was constituted in the early May, the strength of the Congress rose to 165.
- ❖ The practice that came into vogue subsequently is that no incumbent government, as soon as the model code of conduct for the Assembly election comes into force, takes any policy decision.

- ❖ If it is to take any such decision on account of exigency, it has to seek the Election Commission's nod.
- ❖ That way, Tamil Nadu having been responsible for the formulation of the practice.

State Information Commissioner - Vijayaram

- ❖ Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, Governor of Tamil Nadu, appointed A. Vijayaram as State Information Commissioner.
- ❖ The appointment was made under Section 15(3) of the Right to Information Act, 2005.
- ❖ A. Vijayaram took the oath of office before the Governor at Lok Bhavan.
- ❖ The Governor also prorogued the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly with effect from 13 March 2026.
- ❖ The Assembly session had begun on 20 January 2026.

Wallajah Big Mosque

- ❖ The historic Wallajah Big Mosque has reopened after months of renovation by the Prince of Arcot Endowments.
- ❖ The Wallajah Big Mosque, also called the Triplicane Big Mosque, is a historic mosque located in Triplicane, Chennai.
- ❖ It was originally built in 1795 by Muhammad Ali Wallajah, the Nawab of the Carnatic and ancestor of the Prince of Arcot.
- ❖ The mosque was constructed entirely of granite, without using wood or steel.
- ❖ It was built in the Mughal architectural style, featuring two minarets, though it does not follow a fixed architectural design.
- ❖ The grave of Qaid-e-Millat M. Muhammad Ismail Sahib is situated in front of the mosque.
- ❖ Muhammad Ali Khan Wallajah declared himself Nawab in 1749, but his position was disputed with Chanda Sahib.
- ❖ In 1752, after several clashes, Chanda Sahib's forces and his French allies were expelled from Arcot.
- ❖ Wallajah was officially declared Nawab on 26 August 1765, with recognition from Mughal emperor Shah Alam II.
- ❖ He was an ally of the British East India Company and supported them in the Carnatic Wars against Chanda Sahib.
- ❖ After months of renovation by the Prince of Arcot Endowments, the mosque has been restored for public use.

Proposed East Coast Railway in Tamil Nadu

- ❖ R. Sudha, Member of Parliament (MP) from Mayiladuthurai, submitted a proposal to the Union Railway Minister for a new East Coast Railway line from Chennai to Kanniyakumari.
- ❖ The proposed railway will pass through 14 coastal districts of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It is planned similarly to the Konkan Railway model.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu has a coastline of about 1,076 kilometres, supporting the idea of a coastal railway line.
- ❖ The project aims to improve tourism, the fishing industry, transport, and the export of marine products.

Tamil Nadu AVGC-XR Policy 2026

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government announced the AVGC-XR Policy 2026 to promote animation, visual effects, gaming, comics, and extended reality sectors.
- ❖ AVGC-XR stands for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics and Extended Reality.
- ❖ Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited (ELCOT) will act as the nodal agency to implement the policy.
- ❖ The policy aims to create 200 AVGC-XR startups and support 100 companies by 2030.
- ❖ It also plans to establish Digital Arts Centres in 300–400 colleges for skill development.
- ❖ Chennai is emerging as a major AVGC-XR hub in India with many gaming studios and visual effects companies.

T.N. Assembly election 2026

- ❖ With the announcement of the Tamil Nadu Assembly election schedule on March 15, political parties will get a 38-day window to undertake campaigning.
- ❖ It will end at 5 p.m. on April 21, before polling is held on April 23.
- ❖ The window for campaigning in this election is the same as that of the 2021 Assembly election, which was held amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ In 2016, candidates had over 70 days to campaign, while in 2011 the campaign period was over 40 days.
- ❖ Further, the 2026 election cycle represents Tamil Nadu's most compressed poll schedule since 2011.

- ❖ This means the administrative freeze on announcing new policies and schemes or floating tenders during the Model Code of Conduct will be relatively brief.
- ❖ From the date of announcement to the counting of votes on May 4, the entire process spans 51 days in this election.
- ❖ In comparison, the time frame stretched to 66 days in 2021, 77 days in 2016, and 74 days in 2011.
- ❖ The gap between polling of votes and counting has been reduced from 25 days in 2021 to 10 days this time.
- ❖ The term of the 16th Tamil Nadu Assembly will end on May 10.
- ❖ The total number of electors in Tamil Nadu, according to the electoral rolls, is 5.67 crore.
- ❖ There are 75,032 polling booths, including 44,065 in rural areas and 30,967 in urban areas.
- ❖ The average number of electors per booth is 756.
- ❖ A polling booth will be established at Vellimalai in Varusanadu in Theni district to help just five voters exercise their franchise.
- ❖ Of the 234 Assembly constituencies, 44 are reserved for candidates of the Scheduled Castes and two are reserved for candidates of the Scheduled Tribes.

Model Code of Conduct 2026

- ❖ The announcement of the Tamil Nadu Assembly election schedule was made on March 15.
- ❖ Consequent to the announcement of the election schedule, the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) came into force in Tamil Nadu in the evening.
- ❖ The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a set of rules issued by the Election Commission to guide political parties and candidates during elections.
- ❖ This is in keeping with Article 324 of the Constitution, which gives the Election Commission the power to supervise elections to the Parliament and state legislatures.
- ❖ The model code of conduct consists of seven sections which deal with general conduct, meetings, processions, party in power, polling booth, polling day and election manifestos.

Impact of Model Code of Conduct

- ❖ It would be applicable to all candidates, political parties, and the State and Union governments.

- ❖ District Election Officers (DEOs) have been directed to obtain information on unusual and suspicious withdrawal or deposit of cash exceeding ₹1 lakh at banks for due verification.
- ❖ The ruling government cannot sanction new projects, announce financial grants, or utilize government vehicles/staff for political campaigns.
- ❖ No campaigning is allowed within 100 meters of polling stations.
- ❖ Public meetings and rallies are prohibited 48 hours before the poll closes.
- ❖ Vehicles used for campaigning must be registered with district administration, and illegal use or voter transportation is punished.
- ❖ Organizers must inform the local police well in advance, detailing routes, timing, and using designated spaces impartially.
- ❖ Candidates and parties must avoid activities that cause conflict, such as criticizing other parties' private lives or conducting protests at opponents' houses.
- ❖ No appeals to religion, caste, or communal sentiments.
- ❖ Criticism must focus on policies, performance, and programmes, not private lives.
- ❖ Official mass media cannot be used for biased coverage favoring the ruling party.
- ❖ Illegal activities like bribing, intimidation, impersonation, or campaigning near polling stations are prohibited.
- ❖ Demonstrations outside private homes or use of someone else's property for campaigning are banned.
- ❖ Parties must inform authorities about meetings and processions; permissions for loudspeakers or gatherings must be obtained.
- ❖ Police instructions must be followed to maintain peace and manage traffic.
- ❖ Processions must follow pre-decided routes, timings, and start/end points.
- ❖ Carrying harmful objects or burning effigies is prohibited.
- ❖ Parties must avoid clashes with other processions.
- ❖ Parties and candidates must cooperate with election officials during polling.
- ❖ No propaganda, liquor, or crowding near polling booths; camps must remain simple and free of political symbols.
- ❖ Governments cannot use official machinery, funds, or positions for campaigning.
- ❖ No announcements of financial grants, new projects, infrastructure promises, or ad-hoc appointments that could influence voters.
- ❖ Government facilities, including transport, rest houses, dak bungalows, and public spaces, must be equally available to all parties.
- ❖ Election manifestos must follow constitutional principles, be realistic, and cannot be released during the prohibited period before polling.

Background

- ❖ The birth of the Model Code of Conduct dates back to the Assembly elections of Kerala in 1960, during which the State administration drafted a 'Code of Conduct' for political actors.
- ❖ In the 1962 general elections to the Lok Sabha, the MCC was circulated by the Election Commission of India to recognised parties, and state governments.
- ❖ The MCC was largely followed by all parties in the 1962 elections and continued to be followed in subsequent general elections.
- ❖ In 1979, the Election Commission added a section to regulate the 'party in power' and prevent it from gaining an unfair advantage at the time of elections.
- ❖ It was the year 1991 when the Election Commission decided to make more stringent use of the Model Code of Conduct following repeated election norms violations and continued corruption.
- ❖ In 2013, the Supreme Court directed the Election Commission to include guidelines regarding election manifestos, which it had included in the MCC for the 2014 general elections.
- ❖ The MCC is not enforceable by law.
- ❖ However, certain provisions of the MCC may be enforced through invoking corresponding provisions in other statutes such as the Indian Penal Code, 1860, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, and Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- ❖ The Election Commission has argued against making the MCC legally binding; stating that elections must be completed within a relatively short time (close to 45 days), and judicial proceedings typically take longer, therefore it is not feasible to make it enforceable by law.
- ❖ The MCC contains eight provisions dealing with general conduct, meetings, processions, polling day, polling booths, observers, party in power, and election manifestos.
- ❖ Major provisions of the MCC are outlined below.
- ❖ General Conduct: Criticism of political parties must be limited to their policies and programmes, past record and work.
- ❖ Activities such as: (a) using caste and communal feelings to secure votes, (b) criticising candidates on the basis of unverified reports, (c) bribing or intimidation of voters, and (d) organising demonstrations or picketing outside houses of persons to protest against their opinions, are prohibited.
- ❖ Meetings: Parties must inform the local police authorities of the venue and time of any meeting in time to enable the police to make adequate security arrangements.

- ❖ Processions: If two or more candidates plan processions along the same route, organisers must establish contact in advance to ensure that the processions do not clash. Carrying and burning effigies representing members of other political parties is not allowed.
- ❖ Polling day: All authorized party workers at polling booths should be given identity badges. These should not contain the party name, symbol or name of the candidate.
- ❖ Polling booths: Only voters, and those with a valid pass from the Election Commission, will be allowed to enter polling booths.
- ❖ Observers: The Election Commission will appoint observers to whom any candidates may report problems regarding the conduct of the election.
- ❖ Party in power: The MCC incorporated certain restrictions in 1979, regulating the conduct of the party in power. Ministers must not combine official visits with election work or use official machinery for the same. The party must avoid advertising at the cost of the public exchequer or using official mass media for publicity on achievements to improve chances of victory in the elections. Ministers and other authorities must not announce any financial grants, or promise any construction of roads, provision of drinking water, etc. Other parties must be allowed to use public spaces and rest houses and these must not be monopolized by the party in power.
- ❖ Election manifestos: Added in 2013, these guidelines prohibit parties from making promises that exert an undue influence on voters, and suggest that manifestos also indicate the means to achieve promises.

Early Chola Sculptures and Inscriptions

- ❖ Early Chola Dynasty period sculptures and inscriptions were discovered on the bed of the Cauvery River near Musiri.
- ❖ The sculptures of Dakshinamurthy and Vinadhara Shiva were found about 200 metres from the river bund and likely belonged to a ruined temple.
- ❖ A stone slab contains two Tamil inscriptions dated to the 10th century C.E.
- ❖ One inscription records 120 kasu (ancient coins) donated to the sabha of Mahendramangalam to maintain two perpetual lamps in a temple.
- ❖ Another inscription mentions tax-free land donated to the temple as devadana (gift to the deity).
- ❖ Architectural remains such as pillar fragments, roof structures and a large Shiva Linga were also found at the site.

Excavations at Keeladi

- ❖ The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has permitted the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology to conduct the 11th phase of excavations at Keeladi and seven other sites.
- ❖ The approval was granted under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules, 1959, after recommendation by an expert committee.
- ❖ Excavations will be carried out at Keeladi and its clusters in Sivaganga district.
- ❖ Other approved sites are Pattinamarudhur (Thoothukudi), Karivalam Vantha Nallur (Tenkasi), Manikollai (Cuddalore), Adichanur (Villupuram), Vellalore (Coimbatore), Telunganur–Mangadu (Salem), and Nagapattinam.
- ❖ The proposal for excavation was submitted by the State government in July 2025 as part of the Tamil Nadu Budget 2025–26.
- ❖ Excavations in Tamil Nadu are usually conducted between January and July, before the monsoon season begins.

Single-Use Hemodialysis Policy

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has adopted a single-use haemodialysis policy to improve patient safety in government hospitals.
- ❖ The policy aims to eliminate the reuse of dialysers for patients undergoing dialysis in public healthcare facilities.
- ❖ Other states like Telangana, Karnataka, and Gujarat have already introduced similar single-use dialyser policies.
- ❖ Single-use dialysers offer advantages such as better efficiency, improved patient safety, and reduced risk of infections.
- ❖ Globally, around 90% of haemodialysis in the United States, 85% in Europe (excluding eastern regions), and 98% in Australia and New Zealand use single-use dialysers.
- ❖ In India, reusable dialysers still account for about 70–80% of haemodialysis treatments in the government sector.

Mental Health Policy for Educational Institutions

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has introduced a dedicated mental health policy for students in educational institutions.
- ❖ The policy focuses on early identification of stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues among students.
- ❖ It proposes counselling services, trained mental health professionals, and awareness programmes in schools and colleges.

- ❖ Institutions will be encouraged to create safe, inclusive, and supportive environments for student well-being.
- ❖ The policy also emphasises reducing stigma around mental health and promoting open discussions.

Tamil Nadu Maternity Leave Rules 2026

- ❖ 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.

Top Textile Exporter 2026 - Tamil Nadu

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has become India's top textile exporter in the FY 2024–25 by surpassing Gujarat and Maharashtra in total export value.
- ❖ The state recorded textile exports worth about \$7.99 billion with a growth of around 29 % in the last four years.
- ❖ It contributes 21.84 % to India's total textile exports, which stood at about \$36.61 billion.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu ranks first, followed by Gujarat with \$5.64 billion and Maharashtra with \$3.83 billion in textile exports.

Home Guards Age Limit update

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has increased the upper age limit for Home Guards from 58 to 60 years, and the rule was amended by the Tamil Nadu Home Department.
- ❖ The decision applies to the re-appointment and extension of service for Home Guards.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Home Guards Organisation was formed in 1963 to support the police in maintaining law and order.
- ❖ Home Guards assist during emergencies such as floods, fires, and epidemics, and also help in traffic and crowd control.
- ❖ The sanctioned strength of Home Guards in Tamil Nadu is about 16,122, including both men and women.

Prosopis juliflora Eradication

- ❖ The Madras High Court ordered the eradication of *Prosopis juliflora* (an invasive alien species) from Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ *Prosopis juliflora* is a plant species native to the Americas and was introduced in India during the colonial period.
- ❖ It is a shrub or small tree in the family Fabaceae, a kind of mesquite.
- ❖ It is native to Mexico, South America and the Caribbean.
- ❖ It grows rapidly in arid and semi-arid regions and outcompetes native plants.
- ❖ The plant consumes large amounts of groundwater and degrades soil quality.
- ❖ Its spread reduces biodiversity and harms local ecosystems.
- ❖ The order aims to restore native vegetation, improve groundwater and protect biodiversity.
- ❖ All private landowners must remove the plants from their property within 30 days, after which officials will do it and recover costs.

16th Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly

- ❖ The tenure of the 16th Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly is set to end on May 10, 2026, completing its five-year term.
- ❖ The Assembly began its tenure on May 11, 2021, following the state elections held in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ This Assembly recorded comparatively fewer sittings than previous legislative terms, indicating a reduced number of sessions.
- ❖ It introduced a major administrative reform by shifting to a fully digital and paperless mode of budget presentation.
- ❖ On August 13, 2021, the revised Budget for 2021–22 was presented in a paperless format by former Finance Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan.
- ❖ A significant initiative was the introduction of a separate Agriculture Budget, presented annually to give focused attention to the agriculture sector.

SC/ST Commission

- ❖ The Vice-Chairperson of the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been assigned to perform the duties of Chairperson.
- ❖ This decision follows the demise of the Chairperson, Justice S. Tamilvanan.
- ❖ Vice-Chairperson Imayam (V. Annamalai) has been nominated to take over the responsibilities temporarily.

- ❖ The order was issued by the Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare Department of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The Commission works to safeguard the rights and welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the state.

Tamil Nadu Public Health Model

- ❖ Uttar Pradesh officials visited Tamil Nadu to study its successful public health model for reducing maternal deaths.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu has achieved a low Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of about 35–40, compared to around 140 in Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The model is based on strong healthcare infrastructure, efficient service delivery systems, and continuous monitoring mechanisms.
- ❖ Key features include district-level audits, MMR war rooms, standard treatment protocols, and a focus on high-risk pregnancy cases.
- ❖ Institutions like the National Health Mission (NHM) and Tamil Nadu Health Systems Project support implementation and coordination.

Cauvery River Water Decline Study

- ❖ A study by the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar shows the Cauvery River may face continuous water decline till the year 2050 due to climate change.
- ❖ The study predicts about 3.5% reduction in total river water flow between 2026 and 2050 period.
- ❖ Cauvery river flow has already decreased by about 28% between 1951 and 2012 based on observed data.
- ❖ Other major rivers like the Ganga and Indus may see an increase in water flow due to global warming effects.
- ❖ The study used CMIP6 (Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6) climate models for detailed scientific analysis.

People of Gopallapuram – English Translation

- ❖ The Tamil novel Gopalapurathu Makkal by Ki. Rajanarayanan is released in English as People of Gopallapuram.
- ❖ Ki. Rajanarayanan (1923–2021), also called Ki.Ra., was a famous Tamil writer and pioneer of karisal (black soil region) literature.
- ❖ He wrote about rural life, folk culture, agriculture and traditions of southern Tamil Nadu in a simple local language style.

- ❖ He is known for documenting oral stories, dialects and culture of village people in his literary works.
- ❖ The book is translated by Shubashree Desikan to reach wider readers in the English language.

Refugee Casts Vote for First Time

- ❖ R. Gokuleswaran, a 39-year-old Sri Lankan refugee camp resident from Tiruchi, will cast his vote for the first time as an Indian citizen in the upcoming State Legislative Assembly elections.
- ❖ He is a resident of the Sri Lankan Tamils Rehabilitation Camp at Kottapattu in Tiruchi district.
- ❖ His sister-in-law, K. Nalini, 40, made headlines in 2024 as the first naturalised Indian from the Kottapattu camp to exercise her franchise.
- ❖ K. Nalini received Indian citizenship in 2022 and later obtained a voter identity card.
- ❖ She proved her citizenship in the Madras High Court before getting her voting rights.

NATIONAL

75th Foundation Year of ESIC

- ❖ The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has started its 75th Foundation Year celebrations in 2026.
- ❖ Employees' State Insurance Corporation is a statutory body under the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- ❖ It was created under the Employees State Insurance Act, 1948, and the scheme was launched on February 24, 1952.
- ❖ The ESI Scheme provides medical care and cash benefits during sickness, maternity, disability, and death due to employment injury.
- ❖ The scheme was inaugurated in Kanpur and Delhi by Jawaharlal Nehru.

Aadhaar - Not Proof of Citizenship

- ❖ The Supreme Court ruled that Aadhaar cannot be used as proof of citizenship during hearings on electoral roll revision in West Bengal.
- ❖ The Supreme Court of India stated that Aadhaar is only a proof of identity and not proof of citizenship.

- ❖ The case relates to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, where nearly 50 lakh voters are being verified.
- ❖ The Court directed the deployment of judicial officers to examine voter documents before publication of the revised list.
- ❖ It invoked Article 142 of the Constitution to treat supplementary voter lists as part of the final electoral roll.
- ❖ Aadhaar is governed by the Aadhaar Act, 2016, and the Election Commission of India conducts periodic revision of voter lists.

Tribal Women's Inheritance Rights

- ❖ The Supreme Court reaffirmed that the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, does not apply to Scheduled Tribes.
- ❖ The Supreme Court of India gave this ruling in the Nawang Vs. Bahadur case (October 2025).
- ❖ The Court set aside a Himachal Pradesh High Court order that had extended inheritance rights to “Hinduised” tribal women.
- ❖ It stated that Scheduled Tribes are excluded from the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, unless Parliament makes a law to include them.
- ❖ Scheduled Tribes are recognised under Article 342 of the Constitution of India.
- ❖ The Court said any change in inheritance rights for tribal women must be made by Parliament, not by the judiciary.

Atul Mishra v. Union of India 2026 Case

- ❖ The Supreme Court delivered a judgment in Atul Mishra v. Union of India (2026) on balancing fraternity and freedom of speech.
- ❖ The Supreme Court of India heard a writ petition challenging the title of a proposed film for allegedly stereotyping a community.
- ❖ The Court said vilifying any community based on caste, religion, language, or region is constitutionally impermissible.
- ❖ It stated that fraternity is part of the Preamble and is important to protect the dignity, unity, and integrity of the nation.
- ❖ The Court upheld freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a), but said it is subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2).
- ❖ It emphasised that restrictions must be based on necessity, not on public sentiment alone.

Rah-Veer Scheme – Good Samaritan Protection

- ❖ The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways highlighted the Rah-Veer (Good Samaritan) Scheme to encourage people to help road accident victims during the Golden Hour.
- ❖ The Good Samaritan Rules were notified in 2020 under Section 134A of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019.
- ❖ A person who helps an accident victim cannot be forced to reveal personal details, pay hospital charges, or face legal trouble.
- ❖ The Golden Hour is the first one hour after a serious injury, when quick medical help can save lives.
- ❖ Under the Rah-Veer Scheme, a person who helps a victim within the Golden Hour can receive ₹25,000 and a Certificate of Appreciation, up to five times in a year.
- ❖ The scheme aims to reduce road accident deaths and promote a culture of helping others without fear.

Rail Parcel App

- ❖ South Central Railway launched the Rail Parcel App at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad.
- ❖ The app provides doorstep pickup and delivery of parcels.
- ❖ It offers real-time tracking and secure digital payment options.
- ❖ The pilot project has started in seven cities, including Hyderabad, Vijayawada and Bengaluru.
- ❖ South Central Railway signed an MoU with IIM Bangalore to study freight logistics.
- ❖ The initiative supports the target of 3,000 million tonnes of cargo loading by 2030.

Indian Railways Technology Integration

- ❖ Union Minister of Railways launched the Rail Tech Policy 2026, the Rail Tech Portal, and the e-Railway Claims Tribunal (e-RCT) in New Delhi.
- ❖ The Rail Tech Policy 2026 promotes large-scale adoption of modern technology across Indian Railways.
- ❖ It focuses on safety, efficiency, and innovation through Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data-driven solutions.
- ❖ AI systems include elephant intrusion detection, fire detection in coaches, drone-based track inspection, and obstruction detection in fog.

- ❖ The Rail Tech Portal allows startups and innovators to submit proposals and pilot projects with railway departments.
- ❖ The e-Railway Claims Tribunal provides online case filing, tracking, and faster adjudication, digitizing all 23 tribunals within 12 months.
- ❖ These reforms are part of Indian Railways' plan of 52 reforms in 52 weeks to modernize operations and improve transparency.

CBDC Integration in PDS

- ❖ The Government of India launched a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) based Digital Food Currency pilot in Puducherry.
- ❖ The pilot is launched under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY).
- ❖ Food subsidy will be transferred directly into beneficiaries CBDC wallets instead of bank accounts.
- ❖ The Digital Rupee (₹) is issued by the RBI.
- ❖ Beneficiaries can use digital coupons to buy entitled foodgrains from Fair Price Shops (FPS) under the Public Distribution System (PDS).
- ❖ The pilot aims to improve transparency, real-time tracking, and secure Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) delivery.
- ❖ The project will later expand to Chandigarh and Dadra and Nagar Haveli after review.

Supreme Court on River Pollution

- ❖ The Supreme Court gave the responsibility of monitoring river pollution to the National Green Tribunal (NGT).
- ❖ The Supreme Court of India closed its 2021 Suo motu case on polluted rivers.
- ❖ The Court said that the right to live in clean and hygienic conditions is part of Article 21 (Right to Life) of the Constitution of India.
- ❖ The monitoring work will now be done by the NGT.
- ❖ As per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) 2025 report, 296 river stretches are polluted in India.
- ❖ A river stretch is called polluted when the Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) is more than 3 milligrams per litre.

Lok Sabha Privileges Committee

- ❖ The Privileges Committee of the Lok Sabha (the lower house of India's Parliament) has not been constituted for nearly two years in the 18th Lok Sabha.
- ❖ It is a standing committee that protects the special rights and immunities of the House and its members, allowing them to function without outside interference.
- ❖ The committee investigates the breaches of parliamentary privilege and can recommend actions such as reprimand, suspension, or expulsion of members.
- ❖ The Lok Sabha Privileges Committee has 15 members nominated by the Speaker, while the Rajya Sabha committee has 10 members nominated by the Chairman.
- ❖ Its powers are based on Article 105 of the Indian Constitution for Parliament and Article 194 for State Legislatures.
- ❖ The committee can summon members, outsiders, and documents, and ensures Parliament maintains dignity and authority.

Vibrant Villages Programme-II

- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved the Vibrant Villages Programme-II (VVP-II) for the years 2024–25 to 2028–29.
- ❖ The scheme will help develop villages near India's International Land Borders (ILBs), except the northern border, which is already covered under VVP-I.
- ❖ The total budget of the scheme is ₹6,839 crore, and it covers 18 states and Union Territories like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

Women's Welfare Schemes

- ❖ The president of India, has launched four women's welfare schemes of the Delhi Government in New Delhi.
- ❖ The Pink National Common Mobility Card was launched to improve safe and cashless public transport access for women.
- ❖ Two free Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders will be given every year to ration card holding families during Holi and Diwali.
- ❖ The Delhi Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana will provide ₹56,000 in instalments for a girl child, which can grow to more than ₹1 lakh by the age of 21.
- ❖ The Meri Punji Mera Adhikaar scheme aims to clear pending financial dues and ensure the financial rights of citizens.

Nucleic Acid Test

- ❖ The Supreme Court of India is examining whether the Nucleic Acid Test (NAT) should be made compulsory in all blood banks to ensure safe blood transfusion under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- ❖ NAT is a molecular test that detects genetic material (DNA or RNA) of viruses in donated blood.
- ❖ It can identify infections like Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C at an early stage.
- ❖ NAT reduces the “window period” compared to Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) tests, which are commonly used in India.
- ❖ The petition argues that safe blood transfusion is part of the Right to Life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.
- ❖ The Court has asked for data on cost, State-level implementation, and feasibility before taking a final decision.

ANVESH-2026 Conference

- ❖ The National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management, Kundli, organised ANVESH-2026 to promote the sustainable and healthy food systems.
- ❖ The conference aims to promote innovation, sustainability, and the idea of “Food as Medicine” in the food processing sector.
- ❖ NIFTEM-K is an Institute of National Importance under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.
- ❖ At present, only 12–13% of India’s food produce is processed.
- ❖ The government has set a target to increase food processing to 25% in the next five years.
- ❖ Post-harvest losses in India are estimated at nearly ₹1.10 lakh crore every year.

Legacy Thrust Territories

- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs has introduced the concept of the Legacy Thrust Territories to prevent the return of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) after the major success against Naxalism.
- ❖ Legacy Thrust Territories are districts that were earlier affected by Naxal violence but will continue to receive security and development support.
- ❖ Around 200 districts were affected by Left Wing Extremism in 2000, but by 2025, the number reduced to 38 districts.

- ❖ At present, only 7 districts remain on the LWE list, including 5 in Chhattisgarh, 1 in Jharkhand, and 1 in Odisha.
- ❖ The main aim is to stop the return of Naxalism and to bring peace and development to these areas.
- ❖ The government will continue to support security forces, improve roads and communication, strengthen administration, and encourage extremists to surrender.

Rice Fortification 2026

- ❖ The Union Government has decided to temporarily stop rice fortification under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana after a study by IIT Kharagpur.
- ❖ The study found that micronutrients in fortified rice decrease over time due to moisture, temperature, humidity, and long storage.
- ❖ Rice in the central pool is often stored for 2–3 years, which increases the risk of nutrient loss.
- ❖ The government said that foodgrain supply under the Public Distribution System, Integrated Child Development Services, and PM Poshan Scheme will not be affected.
- ❖ Rice fortification means adding nutrients like Iron, Folic Acid (Vitamin B9), and Vitamin B12 as per the standards of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.
- ❖ The scheme was started to reduce malnutrition and anaemia without changing the taste or quality of rice.

Ethical AI Standards

- ❖ The Government of India has notified the country's first standards for cloud computing, data centre performance, and Ethical Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- ❖ The standards were notified by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) under the Bureau of Indian Standards Rules, 2018.
- ❖ These standards are aligned with international frameworks of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).
- ❖ They introduce measures such as the Cooling Efficiency Ratio (CER) to evaluate the cooling performance of data centres.
- ❖ The standards also promote ethical principles in Artificial Intelligence (AI), such as transparency and reduction of bias.

Operation Sankalp

- ❖ Indian Navy warships deployed under Operation Sankalp have been placed on standby for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations due to rising tensions in West Asia.
- ❖ Operation Sankalp is a maritime security mission launched by the Indian Navy on 19 June 2019.
- ❖ It was started to ensure the safety of Indian-flagged merchant vessels in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- ❖ The operation secures sea routes in the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman, and the Gulf of Aden.
- ❖ It aims to protect India's maritime trade and prevent piracy in the region.
- ❖ The mission is supported by the Maritime Anti-Piracy Act, 2022.

Lok Sabha Committee of Privileges 2026

- ❖ Om Birla, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, nominated 15 members to the Committee of Privileges in 2026.
- ❖ The committee will be chaired by Ravi Shankar Prasad.
- ❖ The Committee of Privileges examines cases related to breaches of parliamentary privileges of Members of Parliament (MPs).
- ❖ This parliamentary committee investigates complaints of violation of privileges of the House or its members.
- ❖ The Lok Sabha Committee of Privileges consists of 15 members, nominated by the Speaker.
- ❖ The committee performs semi-judicial functions and recommends action to the House.
- ❖ Parliamentary privileges are defined under Articles 105 and 122 of the Constitution of India.

Census 2027 Mascots

- ❖ The Government of India launched the mascots Pragati and Vikas for Census 2027 to increase public awareness and participation.
- ❖ Pragati represents a female enumerator, and Vikas represents a male enumerator.
- ❖ The mascots symbolise equal participation of women and men in nation-building.
- ❖ Census 2027 will be India's first fully digital census using mobile applications and digital platforms for data collection.

- ❖ The census will be conducted in two phases: HLO (House listing and Housing Census) and PE (Population Enumeration).

NITI Aayog–UNICEF Partnership

- ❖ NITI Aayog and UNICEF India signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) to improve nutrition and health outcomes in Aspirational Districts and Aspirational Blocks.
- ❖ The partnership focuses on maternal and child nutrition services in underserved regions.
- ❖ IMPAct4Nutrition (I4N) platform will mobilize Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds for nutrition programmes.
- ❖ The initiative aims to improve the implementation and monitoring of nutrition schemes in Aspirational Districts.

Essential Commodities Act, 1955

- ❖ The Government of India invoked the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 in March 2026 to ensure adequate supply of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) during a global energy crisis.
- ❖ The Act allows the government to regulate production, supply, distribution, and pricing of essential commodities.
- ❖ On 5 March 2026, oil refining companies were directed to maximise LPG production for domestic consumers.
- ❖ The Act also allows the government to impose stock limits to prevent hoarding and ensure fair availability.
- ❖ It was earlier invoked in August 2025 to control rising wheat prices in India.

Blue Book - Rules of Protocol

- ❖ During the March 2026 visit of Droupadi Murmu to West Bengal, neither the Chief Minister nor a nominated Minister received the President, raising questions about the 'Blue Book' protocol rules.
- ❖ The 'Blue Book' is a confidential manual of the Ministry of Home Affairs that lays down security, logistics, and ceremonial protocols for visits by the President, Vice-President, and Prime Minister of India.
- ❖ It mandates that high-level dignitaries must be received by the Governor and Chief Minister, and all venue security and administrative arrangements must follow approved procedures.

- ❖ If the Chief Minister is unavailable, a “Minister-in-Waiting” (usually a senior Minister from the State Council of Ministers) should receive the President according to protocol.
- ❖ As per the rules, a Mayor of a Municipal Corporation cannot be given the status of a Minister-in-Waiting, and the protocol rules cannot be altered by State governments for convenience.
- ❖ The Blue Book also defines all arrangements for such visits, including reception points at airports, railway stations, road entry points, or seaports, and the list of officials receiving the dignitary must be approved by the respective secretariat of the President, Vice-President, or Prime Minister.
- ❖ The manual is kept at the district level with the District Magistrate and the head of the district police, and any deviation from its provisions is treated as a serious security lapse and may lead to inquiries.

Green Ammonia and Green Methanol Standards

- ❖ The Government of India has announced the standards for Green Ammonia and Green Methanol under the National Green Hydrogen Mission to promote trade in green hydrogen derivatives.
- ❖ The standards were issued by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy to define eligibility conditions and emission limits for classifying ammonia and methanol as “green” fuels.
- ❖ The Green Ammonia Standard requires non-biogenic greenhouse gas emissions not exceeding 0.38 kg CO₂ equivalent per kg of ammonia.
- ❖ The Green Methanol Standard requires non-biogenic greenhouse gas emissions not exceeding 0.44 kg CO₂ equivalent per kg of methanol.
- ❖ Carbon dioxide for green methanol production may come from biogenic sources, direct air capture, or existing industrial sources, and detailed rules for measurement, monitoring, verification, and certification will be issued separately.

LaBL 2.0 initiative

- ❖ The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) launched LaBL 2.0 (Lighting a Billion Lives 2.0) in New Delhi to expand decentralized renewable energy in India.
- ❖ It promotes Decentralized Renewable Energy (DRE) solutions such as solar power in rural and off-grid areas.
- ❖ It is the second phase of the Lighting a Billion Lives initiative, which was first launched in 2008 by (TERI).
- ❖ The programme supports clean energy access, rural livelihoods, and women-led clean energy enterprises.

- ❖ It uses Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems to measure climate benefits and carbon emission reductions.

Diversification of India's Energy Basket

- ❖ India is exploring new energy sources and diversifying crude oil imports due to the Strait of Hormuz disruptions amid the Iran–Israel conflict.
- ❖ India has started importing crude oil from about 40 countries to strengthen energy security.
- ❖ Around 60% of India's crude imports now arrive through alternate routes.
- ❖ India imported nearly 300 million metric tonnes of crude oil and petroleum products in 2024–25.
- ❖ The country meets about 88% of crude oil needs and 51% of gas demand through imports.
- ❖ India signed a \$3 billion Liquefied Natural Gas deal with the United Arab Emirates.
- ❖ Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve Limited maintains Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) at Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru, and Padur (Udupi, Karnataka).

Pavini Shukla vs Union of India case

- ❖ The Supreme Court of India in the Pavini Shukla vs Union of India (UoI) case suggested implementing the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) to address gender bias in personal laws.
- ❖ Uniform Civil Code (UCC) aims to replace religion-based personal laws with a common law for all citizens, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or gender.
- ❖ Article 44 of the Constitution of India directs the State to secure a UCC for citizens across India.
- ❖ Matters such as marriage, divorce, adoption and succession fall under the Concurrent List (Seventh Schedule) allowing both Centre and States to make the laws.
- ❖ UCC aims to ensure gender justice, secularism, simplified legal procedures and national unity.
- ❖ Uttarakhand is the first State in independent India to implement UCC, while Goa follows the Portuguese Civil Code (1867) as a common civil law.
- ❖ The 21st Law Commission of India (2018) said a nationwide UCC is not necessary at present, suggesting reforms in existing family laws instead.

Press Note 3 Relaxation

- ❖ The Union Cabinet of India has approved a partial relaxation of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) rules under Press Note 3 (2020) for countries sharing land borders with India.
- ❖ Press Note 3 (2020) requires government approval for investments from neighbouring countries such as China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan, and Afghanistan.
- ❖ The policy was introduced in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic to prevent opportunistic takeovers of Indian companies.
- ❖ The new relaxation allows limited FDI in selected manufacturing sectors such as capital goods, electronic capital goods, electronic components, and solar manufacturing inputs (polysilicon and ingot-wafer).
- ❖ Strategic sectors like semiconductors remain restricted.
- ❖ Investments up to 10% beneficial ownership from land-border countries can be allowed through the automatic route, while majority ownership must remain with Indian entities.

Passive Euthanasia Case

- ❖ The Supreme Court of India allowed withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment for Harish Rana, a 32-year-old man in a vegetative state since 2013, marking the first court-approved implementation of passive euthanasia in India.
- ❖ The bench of J. B. Pardiwala and K. V. Vishwanathan permitted withdrawal of medical treatment, including clinically assisted nutrition.
- ❖ The Court directed All India Institute of Medical Sciences to implement palliative end-of-life care ensuring dignity and comfort.
- ❖ Medical boards formed by the Court concluded that his condition was irreversible with negligible chances of recovery.
- ❖ Passive euthanasia means withdrawing or withholding life-sustaining treatment, while active euthanasia (assisted dying) remains illegal under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.
- ❖ The legal basis comes from Article 21 of the Constitution of India, which the Court interprets as including the right to die with dignity.
- ❖ Earlier judgments such as Aruna Shanbaug case and Common Cause v. Union of India laid the framework for passive euthanasia in India.

Natural Gas Order 2026

- ❖ The Government of India issued the Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026, to prioritise natural gas allocation amid global Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) supply concerns.
- ❖ Under the order, fertilizer plants are placed under 'Priority Sector-2', ensuring at least 70% of their average natural gas supply based on the previous six months.
- ❖ The move aims to protect domestic fertilizer production and ensure adequate supply for farmers during the Kharif sowing season.
- ❖ According to the Department of Fertilizers, India's total fertilizer stock reached 180.12 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) as of 10 March 2026, about 36.6% higher than the previous year.

Passive Euthanasia framework

- ❖ The Supreme Court (SC) applies Passive Euthanasia framework for first time.
- ❖ The SC in Harish Rana vs Union of India judgement permitted the withdrawal of artificial life support of a man.
- ❖ It was on the basis of Best Interest of the Patient Principle
- ❖ He has been in a vegetative state for more than 12 years.
- ❖ The SC waived the usual 30-day consideration period as the patient's parents and both medical boards unanimously agreed that recovery was impossible.
- ❖ It will be allowing the withdrawal of clinically assisted nutrition and hydration (CANH).
- ❖ This was the first time the Supreme Court had implemented its own 2018 Constitution Bench guidelines for what it had then called 'passive euthanasia'.
- ❖ Euthanasia refers to the hastening of a patient's death to relieve suffering.
- ❖ It is often referred to as mercy killing, typically occurring in cases where a patient suffers from an incurable or terminal distress.
- ❖ It is broadly classified into two types - Passive and Active.
- ❖ Under Passive euthanasia, a patient is allowed to die naturally by withholding or withdrawing medical treatment that sustains life.
- ❖ Therefore, it cannot be termed as the extinguishment of life or an unnatural termination of life.
- ❖ Consequently, the same is held not to fall foul of Article 21 (right to life and dignity).
- ❖ This is legal in India under strict guidelines.

- ❖ In P. Rathinam Case (1994), the SC initially held that the Right to Life includes the Right to Die, effectively de-criminalizing suicide.
- ❖ But, a Five-judge bench in Gian Kaur Case (1996), ruled that the Right to Life under Article 21 does not include the Right to Die.
- ❖ But it distinguished between dying unnaturally and dying with dignity.
- ❖ In Aruna Ramchandra Shanbaug case (2011), the SC rejected a plea for euthanasia, but allowed passive euthanasia under strict conditions for terminal and irreversible patients.
- ❖ The SC legalized Passive Euthanasia in India for the first time, subject to High Court approval.
- ❖ In Common cause judgment (2018), the SC recognised it and held that right to die with dignity is a fundamental right under Article 21.
- ❖ In 2018, a Constitution Bench of the apex court had upheld passive euthanasia and the right to give advance medical directives or 'Living Wills' to smooth the dying process as part of the fundamental right to live with dignity.
- ❖ The court had ruled that the fundamental right to life and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution included the "right to die with dignity".
- ❖ In 2026, in the present case, it laid down guidelines for it and recognised the concept of a 'living will'.
- ❖ Active euthanasia refers to the physician's deliberate act, usually the administration of lethal drugs, to end an incurably or terminally ill patient's life.
- ❖ Active euthanasia is illegal in India.
- ❖ In its judgment, the apex court acknowledged the general consensus that 'passive euthanasia' was an obsolete and rather confusing term.
- ❖ 'Euthanasia' will refer strictly to active euthanasia, which remains impermissible.
- ❖ 'Withdrawing or Withholding of Medical Treatment' will replace the term 'passive euthanasia'.
- ❖ The court held that withholding of life-sustaining interventions should not be a "single act" nor an "act of abandonment" of unconscious or incompetent patients in a persistent vegetative state (PVS).
- ❖ The process of withdrawal of CANH must be part of a well-structured, tailored, robust and articulated palliative care plan for a PVS patient in his or her most vulnerable phase of life.
- ❖ The right to die with dignity is inseparable from the right to receive quality palliative and End-of-Life (EOL) care.
- ❖ The court said any decision to withdraw or withhold medical treatment must withstand scrutiny on two primary grounds.

- ❖ The first is the intervention in question must qualify as ‘medical treatment’, and secondly, its withdrawal must strictly be in the patient’s “best interests”.
- ❖ It held that CANH qualified as medical treatment, even if done at home.
- ❖ Sound medical judgment and ethical considerations both are equally important while enquiring about whether withdrawal of life support is in the ‘best interest’ of the patient.
- ❖ The court directed Chief Medical Officers in all districts to form panels of registered medical practitioners to constitute secondary medical boards to examine applications for the withdrawal of life support.
- ❖ The area Judicial Magistrates of First Class must be intimated by hospitals if a primary and second medical boards unanimously recommend withdrawal of life support in cases.
- ❖ The distinction between “active” and “passive” euthanasia goes beyond the simplistic binary of “act” versus “omission”.
- ❖ Consequently, for active euthanasia to be legally permissible, there must be an explicit legislative enactment authorizing such deprivation.

In other countries

- ❖ Several European countries have legalized forms of assisted dying, primarily including Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Spain, Austria, and Switzerland.
- ❖ Canada, Australia and New Zealand have all introduced assisted dying laws since 2015.
- ❖ As of mid-2025, assisted dying is illegal in the UK.
- ❖ But the House of Commons (Lower House) has passed a major bill, the "Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill".
- ❖ It aims to legalize it in England and Wales.
- ❖ In 2025, France has passed a law allowing terminally ill or gravely injured patients the right to die.

SC on creamy layer

- ❖ The Supreme Court ruled that income cannot be the sole criterion to decide the creamy layer among Other Backward Classes (OBCs).
- ❖ It settled the long-pending question of equivalence between PSUs and private sector employees and those in the government sector.
- ❖ Earlier, those included in the ‘creamy layer’ are not entitled to OBC reservation benefits.

- ❖ Now, the Supreme Court's judgement will be applicable to children of parents working at PSUs and in private employment.
- ❖ It provides relief to about 100 candidates who appeared in CSEs (Civil Service Exams) since 2015 and had been denied the OBC quota.
- ❖ A bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and R. Mahadevan affirmed that social status, rather than just a salary, must be the primary measure for identifying the "creamy layer".
- ❖ The Bench was hearing petitions arising due to a letter issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) with regard to the creamy layer criterion.
- ❖ It was clarifying an Official Memorandum (OM) issued long back in September 1993.
- ❖ The court noted that the OM excluded income from salary and agricultural income from the income/ wealth test for determination of creamy layer status.
- ❖ That letter dated October 14, 2004 directed inclusion of salary income of PSU and private sector employees.
- ❖ This resulted in hostile discrimination between the wards of government servants and those of PSU/private sector employees.
- ❖ It was only on the basis of their income derived from salaries.
- ❖ So, treating the children of those employed in PSUs or private employment, etc., as being excluded from the benefit of reservation only on the basis of their income derived from salaries will not be correct.
- ❖ Without reference to their posts (whether Group A or B, or Group C or D) it would certainly lead to hostile discrimination between parties who are similarly placed.
- ❖ And it would amount to equals being treated unequally.
- ❖ Thereby it was attracting the rigour of the equality doctrine under Articles 14, 15 and 16.

Background

- ❖ Following the landmark 1992 SC ruling in Indra Sawhney vs Union of India, also known as the Mandal verdict, the concept of 'creamy layer' within the OBCs was introduced.
- ❖ The idea was to exclude certain categories of OBC candidates whose families had accumulated certain social and economic privileges over the years, known as the creamy layer.
- ❖ On September 8, 1993, the DoPT issued a circular clarifying who is classified as OBC and who belongs to the creamy layer among them.

- ❖ For those in government jobs, the ‘creamy layer’ specifies groups such as persons occupying constitutional posts; Group-A/Class-I officers of All India Services, Central services and state services; Group-B/Class-II services of Centre and state; employees of PSUs; officers of Armed Forces; professionals and those from trade and industry; property owners; and an income/wealth test.
- ❖ If either parent is a direct recruit of Group-A, or is promoted before the age of 40, their children cannot take advantage of the OBC quota.
- ❖ Similarly, if both parents are Group-B direct recruits, their children will be covered under the creamy layer.
- ❖ For Armed Forces, officials up to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel can avail the OBC quota, but higher ranks are in the creamy layer.
- ❖ The criterion for those not in the government sector was set at Rs 1 lakh per annum in 1993.
- ❖ It was revised in due course and since 2017, this income limit is Rs 8 lakh.
- ❖ In the September 1993 circular, it was categorically stated that income from “salary” or “agriculture” would not be counted for the test of income and wealth for deciding the creamy layer status.
- ❖ But in cases of EWS, this was “included.”

No-Trust Motion Against Speaker

- ❖ The no-confidence motion brought by Opposition parties against Om Birla was dismissed by a voice vote.
- ❖ The Lok Sabha witnessed a 12-hour debate for this.
- ❖ The tradition has been that when a no-confidence motion is discussed against the Speaker, the Speaker does not occupy the Chair.
- ❖ These rare motions occurred in 1954 (against G.V. Mavalankar), 1966 (against Hukam Singh), and 1987 (against Balram Jakhar).
- ❖ In all these instances of a motion, the House was presided over for 14 days by other officers.
- ❖ The Speaker has stayed away from presiding over the Lok Sabha since the Motion of Removal against him was admitted in the first part of the Budget Session.
- ❖ BJP MP Jagdambika Pal was in the presiding officer during the debate.
- ❖ Pal sought the vote of the House, which rejected the motion by a voice vote.
- ❖ No division of votes was sought as the House was not in order.
- ❖ According to Article 94(c) under the Constitution, the Speaker can be removed only through a resolution passed by a majority of all the members of the Lok Sabha (Effective Majority), not merely those present and voting (Simple Majority).

- ❖ The process begins when a member submits a written notice to the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha seeking removal.
- ❖ At least two Lok Sabha members have to sign the notice to move a resolution for the Speaker's removal.
- ❖ Any number of members can sign the notice, but a minimum of two is mandatory.
- ❖ At least 14 days' notice must be given before the motion can be taken up.
- ❖ Once admitted, the motion requires the support of at least 50 members to proceed for discussion in the House.
- ❖ The procedural framework governing this process is laid down in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, specifically Rules 200 to 203.
- ❖ The rules mandate that the resolution must clearly state the charges against the Speaker.
- ❖ During the debate on such a motion, the Speaker may participate in the proceedings as a member of the House.
- ❖ And while the Speaker can vote on the resolution in the first instance, he/she cannot exercise their vote in case of a tie.
- ❖ Article 96 of the Constitution bars a speaker or a Deputy Speaker from presiding over the House while a resolution for his removal from office is under consideration.
- ❖ The Speaker has a constitutional right to defend himself in the House if the resolution is discussed in the Lok Sabha.
- ❖ The language of the proposed resolution is usually examined by the deputy speaker, but since the present Lok Sabha does not have a deputy speaker, it may be examined by the senior-most member of the panel of chairpersons.
- ❖ The panel helps run the House in the Speaker's absence.

FraudPro - Artificial Intelligence

- ❖ Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) received global recognition for FraudPro at the Mobile World Congress 2026 held in Barcelona, Spain.
- ❖ FraudPro is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) based fraud detection platform.
- ❖ It helps telecom operators detect identity-based telecom fraud and fake mobile connections.
- ❖ The platform strengthens security in telecom networks.
- ❖ It is deployed by the Department of Telecommunications through the Digital Intelligence Platform and the Sanchar Saathi portal.

Campaign Against Sarpanch Pati Practice

- ❖ Ministry of Panchayati Raj launched the “Say No to Proxy Sarpanch” campaign to curb the ‘Sarpanch Pati’ practice.
- ❖ The campaign aims to empower elected women sarpanches and discourage proxy leadership by male relatives.
- ❖ It was launched around International Women’s Day and runs till 18 March.
- ❖ The initiative promotes women’s participation in grassroots governance under the Panchayati Raj system.

Initiative on Childhood Obesity

- ❖ WHO Foundation and Novo Nordisk partnered to tackle childhood obesity in India.
- ❖ The initiative will implement school-based health programmes and awareness campaigns.
- ❖ It aims to promote healthy lifestyles, balanced diets and physical activity among children.
- ❖ The programme will support early identification of health risks and strengthen primary healthcare systems.
- ❖ Obesity is linked to non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases and Type 2 Diabetes.

Vaccine Adverse Effect Compensation

- ❖ The Supreme Court of India directed the Union Government to create a “no-fault compensation policy” for people who suffered serious adverse effects or deaths after COVID-19 vaccination.
- ❖ No-fault liability means victims or families can receive financial compensation without proving negligence by the government or vaccine manufacturers.
- ❖ The Court said the State has a positive obligation under Article 21 (Right to Life) to support people affected by rare vaccine complications.
- ❖ Monitoring of side effects is done through AEFI (Adverse Events Following Immunisation) committees.
- ❖ Rare serious side effects include myocarditis and pericarditis (heart inflammation) and TTS (Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome), a rare blood-clotting disorder.

Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat Campaign

- ❖ The Government highlighted the progress of the “Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat” campaign to eliminate child marriage in India.
- ❖ The campaign was launched on 27 November 2024 to make India child-marriage-free through government and community participation.
- ❖ A 100-Days Special Campaign under this initiative started on 4 December 2025 to increase awareness and reporting of child marriage cases.
- ❖ The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) and the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act prohibit child marriage and child labour.
- ❖ Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs) are appointed by state governments to prevent child marriages and create awareness.
- ❖ The Child Helpline 1098 provides a 24×7 toll-free emergency service for children in distress, including cases related to child marriage.

Sujal Gaon ID under Jal Jeevan Mission

- ❖ The Ministry of Jal Shakti launched Sujal Gaon ID, a unique digital identifier for rural drinking water supply schemes.
- ❖ The initiative is introduced under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0 to improve monitoring and transparency.
- ❖ Each rural water supply scheme will receive a unique digital ID for mapping and management.
- ❖ Around 1.64 lakh Sujal Gaon IDs have been created across 31 States and Union Territories.
- ❖ The system helps in real-time monitoring, better planning, and efficient management of rural water supply.
- ❖ The mission aims to provide safe tap water to every rural household by 2028.

Transgender Persons Act

- ❖ The Union Government introduced a Bill to amend the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act in Parliament.
- ❖ The amendment proposes a new definition of “transgender person” and removes the provision of self-perceived gender identity.
- ❖ The 2019 Act earlier allowed people whose gender did not match their birth-assigned sex to identify as transgender without mandatory medical procedures.
- ❖ The proposed Bill gives District Magistrates the authority to issue transgender identity certificates based on medical board recommendations.

- ❖ The amendment also introduces specific punishments for offences against transgender persons, including denial of public access or forced labour.

Dumpsite Remediation Accelerator Programme

- ❖ The Dumpsite Remediation Accelerator Programme (DRAP) was launched under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 to achieve the target of “Lakshya Zero Dumpsites” by September 2026.
- ❖ The programme is implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- ❖ It aims to remediate legacy waste dumpsites and convert them into green zones.
- ❖ Around 8.8 crore metric tonnes of legacy waste across 214 dumpsites in 202 Urban Local Bodies have been prioritised.
- ❖ Legacy waste refers to old municipal solid waste accumulated in landfills over many years.
- ❖ Dumpsites release harmful emissions such as leachate (polluted liquid) and landfill gases like methane and carbon dioxide.

National Mineral Development Corporation

- ❖ The National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) became the first mining company in India to produce 50 million tonnes of iron ore in a single FY 2025–26.
- ❖ It is a Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Steel.
- ❖ National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) was established in 1958 and is headquartered in Hyderabad.
- ❖ It is the largest producer of iron ore in India, operating major mines in Chhattisgarh and Karnataka.
- ❖ It also operates India’s only mechanised diamond mine at Panna in Madhya Pradesh.

Elections 2026

- ❖ The Election Commission of India announced that Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu will be held in a single phase, while polling in West Bengal will take place in two phases.
- ❖ CEC Gyanesh Kumar said the total number of voters of the four States and Union Territories is equivalent to the population of Australia, France, South Africa, Germany and Canada.

- ❖ A total of 17.4 crore voters is eligible to take part in the forthcoming Assembly elections in four States and one Union Territory to elect 824 MLAs.
- ❖ Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar said the EC will also ensure 100% webcasting across all polling stations to maintain transparency during the voting process.

Samridh Gram Phygital Services Initiative

- ❖ The Samridh Gram Phygital Services Pilot Initiative was inaugurated at Umri village in Madhya Pradesh to deliver integrated rural services.
- ❖ It is a pilot project for “Phygital” (Physical + Digital) service delivery in rural areas.
- ❖ The project is implemented by the Department of Telecommunications using the BharatNet rural broadband network.
- ❖ The project establishes Samridh Kendras, village service hubs providing services like education, telemedicine, agriculture advisory, e-governance, and financial services.
- ❖ It aims to improve digital access and public service delivery in villages through an integrated digital infrastructure.

Data Centres in India

- ❖ India’s data centre capacity increased from about 375 MW in 2020 to around 1500 MW in 2025.
- ❖ A data centre is a secure facility used to store, process, and manage large amounts of digital data.
- ❖ Major data centres in India are located in Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Noida, and Jamnagar.
- ❖ They support services such as digital payments, cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), and 5G technology.
- ❖ India’s first hyperscale data centre, Yotta D1, is located in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

Lifetime Validity for FSSAI Licences

- ❖ India’s Ministry of Health and Family Welfare approved lifetime validity for licences issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).
- ❖ Food business operators will no longer need to renew their licences repeatedly, which reduces paperwork and compliance costs.

- ❖ The turnover limit for basic registration has been increased from ₹12 lakh to ₹1.5 crore.
- ❖ Street food vendors registered with Municipal Corporations or Town Vending Committees will now be automatically considered registered under FSSAI.
- ❖ The government will also introduce a risk-based, technology-enabled food inspection system to improve food safety monitoring.

New Rules for State DGP Appointment

- ❖ The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) revised the rules for appointing the State Director General of Police (DGP).
- ❖ States must now seek permission from the Supreme Court of India if there is any delay in sending the names of eligible officers for DGP empanelment.
- ❖ States must send proposals to UPSC at least three months before the retirement of the current DGP.
- ❖ The rule follows the judgment in Prakash Singh vs Union of India, which laid guidelines for police reforms and DGP appointments.
- ❖ The Supreme Court clarified that there is no concept of an “acting DGP” and that states must appoint a regular DGP.
- ❖ UPSC prepares a panel of three senior IPS (Indian Police Service) officers, from which the State government selects the DGP.

Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers

- ❖ The Supreme Court of India struck down the age cap on maternity leave for adoptive mothers as unconstitutional.
- ❖ The court ruled that Section 60(4) of the Social Security Code, 2020, violated equality and the right to life under Articles 14 and 21.
- ❖ It has granted 12 weeks of maternity leave to adoptive mothers irrespective of the child’s age at adoption.
- ❖ The earlier rule limited benefits only to children below three months, making it impractical and discriminatory.
- ❖ The court also urged the government to consider paternity leave as part of social security benefits.

MC Mehta Vs Union of India

- ❖ The Supreme Court of India has closed the 40-year-old MC Mehta v. Union of India case related to air pollution in Delhi-NCR.

- ❖ The case was originally filed in 1985 by environmentalist MC Mehta and became a landmark Public Interest Litigation in environmental law.
- ❖ Over the years, the case led to major measures like CNG adoption in Delhi transport and stricter pollution control norms.
- ❖ The court has now initiated a suo motu case titled “Re: Issues of air pollution in NCR” to address ongoing concerns more effectively.
- ❖ It also directed those pending applications be converted into separate writ petitions for better case management.
- ❖ The move aims to ensure faster and more focused handling of air pollution issues in the National Capital Region.

Horticulture Estimates 2024–26

- ❖ Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare released Final Estimates for 2024–25 and First Advance Estimates for 2025–26.
- ❖ Total horticulture area increased to 301.36 lakh hectares and production reached 3707.38 lakh tonnes in 2024–25.
- ❖ Production for 2025–26 is projected at 3708.46 lakh tonnes, showing steady growth in the sector.
- ❖ Fruits production rose to 1176.49 lakh tonnes and vegetables to 2177.97 lakh tonnes in 2024–25.
- ❖ Major increases were seen in fruits and vegetables like banana, mango, onion, potato and tomato.
- ❖ Spices, flowers, and medicinal plants also recorded growth due to improved technology and value chains.

Coconut Promotion Scheme 2026

- ❖ The government announced the Coconut Promotion Scheme in Budget 2026–27 to boost coconut production and farmer income.
- ❖ India is the world’s largest coconut producer, contributing about 30.37% of global coconut production.
- ❖ Coconut is cultivated on about 2165 thousand hectares and produces around 21,373 million nuts annually.
- ❖ Nearly 30 million people, including about 10 million farmers, depend on coconut cultivation for their livelihood.
- ❖ The scheme focuses on improving productivity, replacing old trees, and promoting high-value agriculture crops like coconut, cashew and cocoa.

Dirghavadhi Krishak Punji Sahakar Yojana

- ❖ The Dirghavadhi Krishak Punji Sahakar Yojana has been launched by the National Cooperative Development Corporation under the Ministry of Cooperation to strengthen long-term credit for cooperatives.
- ❖ The scheme aims to provide long-term financial support for agriculture and allied sectors, promoting capital formation and rural infrastructure development.
- ❖ It targets cooperative societies with sound financial performance to ensure steady institutional credit flow and improve productivity.
- ❖ National Cooperative Development Corporation conducts appraisal, monitoring and loan sanction with proper security and due diligence norms.
- ❖ Recovery mechanisms include legal provisions under SARFAESI (Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest) Act, 2002 and Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) proceedings.

Jan Vishwas Amendment Bill 2025

- ❖ The government withdrew the Jan Vishwas (Amendment) Bill, 2025, from Lok Sabha after Select Committee review to incorporate detailed recommendations and improvements.
- ❖ The bill aims to decriminalize minor offences across various laws by replacing imprisonment provisions with monetary penalties and fines.
- ❖ It seeks to reduce the burden on courts, minimize litigation, and promote ease of doing business in India.
- ❖ Withdrawal is a procedural step allowing the government to revise, refine and reintroduce the bill with stronger provisions.
- ❖ The move reflects a shift towards trust-based governance, regulatory simplification, and improving the compliance environment.

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.

Small Hydro Power Development Scheme

- ❖ 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.

Krishi Sakhi Initiative 2026

- ❖ The Agriculture Insurance Company of India Limited (AIC) launched the Krishi Sakhi Initiative to empower women farmers.
- ❖ The initiative aligns with the United Nations, declaring 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer.
- ❖ It aims to increase women's participation in agriculture and crop insurance and promote inclusive growth.
- ❖ The initiative also highlights the role of women in strengthening India's agricultural sector and rural development.

Guillotine in Parliament 2026

- ❖ The Lok Sabha recently invoked the guillotine procedure to clear the Demands for Grants for the 2026–27 fiscal year.
- ❖ A guillotine is a parliamentary mechanism used to fast-track approval of financial demands in a limited time.
- ❖ It is invoked by the Lok Sabha Speaker when discussion time is over, and many demands remain pending.
- ❖ Under this, all pending “Demands for Grants” are put to a vote together without further discussion.
- ❖ It is mainly used during the Union Budget process for ministry-wise expenditure approval.

Postal Ballot Voting 2026

- ❖ The Election Commission of India has allowed postal ballot voting for senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PwDs), service voters, and essential service workers in Assembly elections.
- ❖ The facility is provided under the Representation of the People Act, 1951, to improve voter participation.
- ❖ Voters above 85 years and PwDs can cast votes through postal ballots after submitting Form 12D via Booth Level Officers.
- ❖ Service voters will receive ballots electronically through the Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS).
- ❖ Postal ballots must reach the Returning Officer before counting day to be considered valid.

IOS SAGAR Initiative 2026

- ❖ The Indian Navy launched the second edition of the IOS SAGAR initiative to strengthen regional maritime ties.
- ❖ It aims to improve cooperation, security and stability in the Indian Ocean Region through joint naval engagement.
- ❖ SAGAR stands for “Security and Growth for All in the Region”.
- ❖ The initiative provides training to foreign naval personnel at Kochi, including seamanship, operations and maritime security practices.
- ❖ It involves participation from 16 member countries of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium to enhance coordination.
- ❖ The programme includes joint sea deployment, port visits and interaction to address common challenges like piracy, trafficking and disaster response.

India Power Capacity Projection 2035-36

- ❖ The Central Electricity Authority released the 20th Electric Power Survey midterm review.
- ❖ India’s total installed power capacity is projected to increase to 1,121 gigawatts (GW) by 2035–36 from around 520 GW in 2026.
- ❖ Solar energy is expected to become the largest source with about 509 GW, leading the clean energy transition.
- ❖ Coal will remain a major source with around 315 GW, providing a stable baseload power supply.
- ❖ The share of non-fossil fuel energy is expected to reach nearly 70 % of total capacity by 2035–36.

National Dental Commission

- ❖ The Government of India established the National Dental Commission, replacing the Dental Council of India, to reform dental education and regulation.
- ❖ It aims to improve the quality of dental education, ensure transparency in admissions and exams, and provide affordable oral healthcare services to people.
- ❖ The commission has three autonomous boards that look after dental education, assessment of institutions, and professional ethics of dentists.
- ❖ It replaces the old system under the Dentists Act 1948, bringing a modern and structured regulatory framework.
- ❖ The commission is headed by Dr. Sanjay Tewari and focuses on accountability and better governance in the dental sector.
- ❖ It also works to reduce irregularities, improve standards in dental colleges, and protect the interests of students and patients.

ALMM Framework

- ❖ The Government has expanded the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) framework to include the solar ingots and wafers, effective from June 1, 2028.
- ❖ It was launched in 2019 by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy to ensure the quality and reliability of solar equipment.
- ❖ It allows only approved manufacturers and models to be used in government-supported solar projects.
- ❖ The framework includes List-I (Solar PV Modules), List-II (Solar PV Cells) and List-III (Solar Ingots and Wafers).

Longest Serving Head of Government - PM Modi

- ❖ Narendra Modi became India's longest-serving head of the government in March 2026.
- ❖ He completed 8,931 days in office, combining his tenure as Gujarat Chief Minister and Prime Minister.
- ❖ He surpassed Pawan Kumar Chamling (Sikkim CM), who held the previous record of 8,930 days.
- ❖ Narendra Modi served as Gujarat Chief Minister from 2001 to 2014 before becoming Prime Minister in 2014.
- ❖ He has led his party to victory in three Lok Sabha elections (2014, 2019, 2024).

- ❖ Jawaharlal Nehru holds the record for the longest uninterrupted tenure as Prime Minister.

NHRC Guidelines on Custodial Death Autopsy

- ❖ The National Human Rights Commission issued new guidelines for post-mortem in custodial death cases after procedural lapses in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It directed that autopsies must be conducted by a board of at least three doctors, preferably from different institutions.
- ❖ All doctors must have a postgraduate degree in forensic medicine and a minimum of five years' experience.
- ❖ The guidelines aim to ensure transparency, accuracy, and prevent external influence during post-mortem examinations.
- ❖ Cross-institutional teams are expected to provide better checks and balances in sensitive cases.

RISA Timeless Tribal Scheme

- ❖ Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched "RISA: Timeless Tribal" to promote tribal crafts and textiles.
- ❖ It is a premium national brand implemented by TRIFED to showcase tribal products.
- ❖ The scheme aims to promote tribal weaves, embroidery and handicrafts while supporting Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India).
- ❖ It focuses on cluster-based development, skill training, modern design support and eco-friendly packaging.
- ❖ It includes famous products like Eri silk (Assam), Pashmina (Ladakh), Dokhra art (Chhattisgarh) and Toda embroidery (Tamil Nadu).
- ❖ It helps improve the income of tribal artisans and preserves traditional cultural heritage.

SATHEE App for Competitive Exams

- ❖ The Ministry of Education launched the SATHEE App in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur.
- ❖ SATHEE (Self-Assessment Test and Help for Entrance Exams) is a free digital platform for exam preparation like JEE, NEET, CUET, SSC, RRB, and IBPS.
- ❖ It provides video lectures, mock tests, study material, and previous year question papers for students.

- ❖ The app includes AI-enabled (Artificial Intelligence-enabled) features for personalized learning and tracking.
- ❖ It aims to support economically weaker students by providing free, quality education and accessible learning resources.

Prakriti 2026 – India’s Carbon Market Initiative

- ❖ The International Conference on Carbon Markets, “Prakriti 2026,” was held in New Delhi under the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).
- ❖ It focuses on carbon markets, climate finance, and emission reduction under Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- ❖ The event highlighted the Indian Carbon Market Portal and the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS).
- ❖ It aims to promote transparency, global cooperation, and sustainable low-carbon economic growth.
- ❖ The conference supports India’s efforts towards climate goals under the Paris Agreement.

Manuscript Mapping Drive

- ❖ The Ministry of Culture launched India’s first nationwide manuscript mapping survey to preserve heritage.
- ❖ It is part of the Gyan Bharatam Mission to protect and digitise ancient knowledge.
- ❖ The survey will identify manuscripts across India and create a consolidated national digital repository.
- ❖ Manuscripts will be geotagged, documented, and digitised to prevent loss and intellectual piracy of knowledge.
- ❖ The initiative aligns with the New Delhi Declaration and promotes the preservation of India’s cultural and literary heritage.

Gold Hallmarking Expansion in India

- ❖ The Government of India expanded mandatory gold hallmarking by adding 7 more districts in the sixth phase of the Gold Hallmarking Order.
- ❖ The scheme is implemented by the Bureau of Indian Standards to ensure purity, quality, and consumer protection in gold jewellery.
- ❖ It uses Hallmark Unique Identification (HUID) to enable traceability and prevent fraud in the gold trade.
- ❖ The system now covers 380 districts and includes multiple gold caratages such as 14K, 18K, 22K, and 24K, with 9K available as a voluntary option.

Inter-Regional Transmission Capacity Expansion

- ❖ India's inter-regional transmission capacity is planned to reach 143 gigawatts (GW) by 2027 to strengthen the national power grid.
- ❖ The capacity was about 120 GW in 2025 and will be expanded to 143 GW (2027) and 168 GW (2032) to ensure smooth electricity flow across regions.
- ❖ The expansion is part of the National Electricity Plan (NEP) to improve reliability and integrate renewable energy sources.
- ❖ India's peak electricity demand is projected to reach around 388 GW by 2032, requiring a strong transmission network.
- ❖ The plan also includes expansion of transmission lines to 6.48 lakh circuit kilometres (ckm) and transformation capacity to 2,345 GVA (Giga Volt Ampere), improving overall grid capacity and efficiency.

Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026

- ❖ The Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026, is likely to be introduced and taken up for detailed discussion in the Rajya Sabha.
- ❖ The Bill seeks to establish a comprehensive and uniform legal framework governing recruitment, promotions, deputation, and service conditions across all Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).
- ❖ At present, forces such as the Central Reserve Police Force, Border Security Force, ITBP, CISF, and SSB operate under separate Acts, leading to policy inconsistencies, administrative delays, and frequent service-related disputes.
- ❖ The Bill proposes structured deputation of Indian Police Service (IPS) officers, including 50% of Inspector General posts, at least 67% of Additional Director General posts, and all top-level posts like Special DG and DG through deputation.
- ❖ The proposal may limit their promotion opportunities and affect career progression despite long years of service.
- ❖ The Bill is linked to the 2025 directions of the Supreme Court of India, which recommended the cadre reforms and reduction of IPS deputation to address stagnation issues.
- ❖ Currently, CAPFs play a crucial role in internal security, border management, counter-insurgency operations, and election duties across India.

Transgender Rights Amendment Bill 2026

- ❖ Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, was passed by the Lok Sabha.

- ❖ The Bill changes the process of identity recognition, requiring certification by the District Magistrate based on a medical board's recommendation.
- ❖ It allows transgender persons to change their name in official documents after obtaining the identity certificate.
- ❖ It amends the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
- ❖ The Supreme Court of India (NALSA judgment, 2014) had recognised the right to self-identification under Article 21 (Right to Life).

SC Status and Conversion Law

- ❖ The Supreme Court of India ruled that only Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists can claim Scheduled Caste status.
- ❖ The ruling is based on Clause 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.
- ❖ It states that conversion to any other religion leads to immediate loss of Scheduled Caste status.
- ❖ Sikhism was included in 1956, and Buddhism was added in 1990 under this provision.
- ❖ A person cannot claim benefits under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, after converting to another religion.
- ❖ Re-conversion requires proof of original caste, genuine return to religion, and acceptance by the community.

GHADC Amendment - ST Rule for Elections

- ❖ The Garo Hills Autonomous District Council in Meghalaya amended rules to make the Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificate mandatory for contesting council elections.
- ❖ The amendment restricts election eligibility only to recognised Scheduled Tribes, excluding non-tribal residents even if they are permanent inhabitants.
- ❖ The council functions under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which provides autonomy to tribal areas and protects their customs and governance.
- ❖ The decision came after tensions over non-tribal candidates attempting to contest elections in the Garo Hills region.
- ❖ Earlier notification on this rule was struck down by the High Court due to procedural lapses, leading to a formal amendment.
- ❖ The move aims to preserve tribal identity, ensure representation of indigenous communities, and strengthen self-governance in tribal areas.

Natural Gas and Petroleum Products Distribution Order 2026

- ❖ The government notified the Natural Gas and Petroleum Products Distribution Order, 2026, under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, to expand gas use.
- ❖ India plans to increase the share of natural gas in its energy mix to 15% by 2030 from about 6.2% in 2025.
- ❖ Natural gas is a fossil fuel mainly made of methane (CH₄) (Methane).
- ❖ It reduces pollution by lowering Particulate Matter (PM), Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x), and Sulphur Oxides (SO_x).
- ❖ Consumption is expected to rise from 52 million Tonnes Per Annum (MTPA) in FY25 to 112 MTPA by FY40.
- ❖ Government initiatives include City Gas Distribution (CGD), Compressed Bio Gas (CBG), and Unified Tariff (UFT) policy.

Reform Express Initiative

- ❖ Ministry of Railways has launched the Reform Express Initiative as a policy framework to modernize Indian Railways and improve efficiency in cargo and passenger services.
- ❖ The initiative aims to modernize railways, reduce logistics costs, improve passenger convenience, and ensure efficient service delivery.
- ❖ It focuses on technology integration, transparency, ease of doing business, and the removal of inefficiencies in railway operations.
- ❖ Key reforms include advanced cargo containers for salt transport, stricter contractor rules, Aadhaar OTP ticket verification, flexible boarding and class upgrade, and optimized wagons for automobile transport.
- ❖ Measures include the removal of fake IRCTC accounts, the prevention of corruption in bidding, and improved logistics systems.

Doctrine of Necessity

- ❖ Surya Kant (Chief Justice of India) recused from hearing petitions challenging the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023, due to a possible conflict of interest.
- ❖ Recusal means a judge withdraws from a case when there is a real likelihood or reasonable fear of bias, to ensure fair justice.
- ❖ It is based on the principle “nemo iudex in causa sua” (no one should be a judge in their own case), which is a rule of natural justice.
- ❖ The Doctrine of Necessity means a judge may still hear a case even with a conflict if no other competent authority or court is available to decide the matter.

- ❖ This doctrine was applied in Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India (2015), where judges did not recuse as the issue affected all judges.
- ❖ India does not have a codified law or clear statutory rules governing judicial recusal; decisions are based on judges' own discretion.

Modified UDAN Scheme 2026

- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved the Modified UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme to improve regional air connectivity.
- ❖ The scheme, launched in 2016, aims to make air travel affordable and accessible for common people in smaller cities.
- ❖ The scheme will run for 10 years, FY 2026–27 to 2035–36, with a total outlay of ₹28,840 crore.
- ❖ It aims to develop 100 new airports from unused airstrips and improve connectivity in remote and rural areas.
- ❖ Financial support will be given for the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of about 441 airports and for building 200 helipads.
- ❖ Viability Gap Funding (VGF) of ₹10,043 crore will support airlines to operate flights on less profitable routes.

IVFRT Scheme 2026–2031

- ❖ Union Cabinet approved extension of Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration and Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme for 5 years.
- ❖ The scheme will continue from April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2031, to strengthen India's immigration system.
- ❖ IVFRT (Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration and Tracking) is a digital platform to manage visa, immigration, and foreigner registration processes.
- ❖ It was first launched in 2010 to improve efficiency, security, and monitoring of foreign nationals in India.
- ❖ The scheme will use modern technologies like mobile services and self-service kiosks for faster immigration clearance.

FCRA Amendment Bill 2026

- ❖ The government introduced the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, to strengthen the regulation of foreign funding.
- ❖ The bill regulates foreign contributions (money received from foreign sources) to improve transparency and accountability of organisations.

- ❖ It proposes a Designated Authority to take control of foreign funds and assets if registration is cancelled, expired, or not renewed.
- ❖ FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) registration will automatically lapse if not renewed, ensuring strict compliance.
- ❖ Key functionaries (directors, trustees, partners) are made personally responsible for the proper use of foreign funds.
- ❖ It mandates time-bound use of funds and restricts organisations under suspension from transferring or selling assets.

India's Climate Targets 2031–2035

- ❖ The Government of India approved new climate targets (Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)) for 2031–2035 under global climate agreements.
- ❖ India will reduce the emissions intensity of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 47% by 2035 from 2005 levels, showing a stronger climate action commitment.
- ❖ India will achieve 60% of its total electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel (like solar, wind) energy sources by 2035.
- ❖ India aims to create a carbon sink (absorption of carbon dioxide (CO₂)) of 3.5–4.0 billion tonnes through forests and tree cover.
- ❖ These targets are submitted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and align with the Paris Agreement goals.
- ❖ The targets support India's long-term goal of Net Zero emissions (no net carbon emissions) by 2070 and its sustainable development vision.

Agricultural Production in India 2024–25

- ❖ India recorded its highest-ever agricultural production in 2024–25, with record output in foodgrains and horticulture.
- ❖ Foodgrain production reached 357.73 million tonnes (MT) and horticulture production reached 362.08 MT.
- ❖ India was ranked first globally in pulses, millets, dry onion, coconut, and spices production.
- ❖ India was ranked second globally in cereals, fruits and vegetables, and key cash crops like sugarcane, cotton, and tea.
- ❖ Agricultural exports increased to USD 51.1 billion in FY25.

Electricity (Amendment) Rules, 2026

- ❖ The Government of India has notified the Electricity (Amendment) Rules, 2026, modifying provisions related to Captive Generating Plants (CGPs).
- ❖ Captive Generating Plants (CGPs) are power plants set up by industries to generate electricity mainly for their own use.
- ❖ The amendment clarifies ownership rules, including subsidiaries and holding companies, to remove legal ambiguity.
- ❖ It mandates annual verification of captive status and introduces designated nodal agencies at the State/UT level from 1 April 2026.

GARBH-INi Initiative for Preterm Birth Prediction

- ❖ The Government of India is using the GARBH-INi initiative to predict and prevent preterm births early by using advanced research methods and artificial intelligence (AI).
- ❖ GARBH-INi (Interdisciplinary Group for Advanced Research on Birth Outcomes) is a flagship programme under DBT (Department of Biotechnology), Government of India.
- ❖ India has one of the highest numbers of preterm births in the world.
- ❖ It leading to newborn deaths, child mortality, and long-term health problems.
- ❖ The initiative includes India's largest pregnancy cohort study, tracking about 12,000 pregnant women to identify early risk factors.
- ❖ It uses AI (Artificial Intelligence), clinical epidemiology, and multi-omics methods like genomics, proteomics, and microbiome studies for accurate prediction.
- ❖ GARBH-INi-DRISHTI is a digital data-sharing platform that helps researchers access, analyse, and share scientific data for better maternal healthcare outcomes.

Jal Mahotsav 2026 Campaign

- ❖ Jal Mahotsav 2026 was launched by the Ministry of Jal Shakti on International Women's Day (March 8).
- ❖ Jal Mahotsav is a nationwide campaign held from 8th to 22nd March to promote water conservation and rural water management.
- ❖ It is organised under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- ❖ Activities include Jal Arpan Diwas, Jal Sankalp (water pledge), and Jal Bandhan to involve community participation.

- ❖ The campaign works at the national, state, district, and Gram Panchayat levels for better implementation.
- ❖ Women play a key role, with lakhs involved in water testing and management using Field Testing Kits (FTKs).

Jal Jeevan Mission Extension

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has extended Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) till December 2028 with a focus on improving rural drinking water supply.
- ❖ The total financial outlay has been increased to ₹8.69 lakh crore under the upgraded version called JJM 2.0.
- ❖ The scheme aims to provide functional tap water connections to all 19.36 crore rural households across India by 2028.
- ❖ At present, about 15.80 crore households (81.61%) already have tap water connections under the mission.
- ❖ A national digital system called Sujalam Bharat will be used to map and monitor water supply systems from source to household taps.

Defence Forces Vision 2047

- ❖ Defence Minister unveiled the Defence Forces Vision 2047 roadmap for a future-ready Indian military.
- ❖ It aims to transform India's military into a modern, integrated and multi-domain force by 2047.
- ❖ The plan focuses on technologies like Artificial Intelligence, drones, cyber systems and space capabilities.
- ❖ It promotes joint operations among the Army, Navy and Air Force for better coordination and efficiency.
- ❖ It includes phases like transition, consolidation and excellence to achieve long-term defence goals.
- ❖ The vision also supports self-reliance by boosting domestic defence production and reducing imports.

UIDAI Bug Bounty Programme

- ❖ Unique Identification Authority of India launched its first structured bug bounty programme to strengthen the security of the Aadhaar system.
- ❖ The programme invites cyber security experts and ethical hackers to identify vulnerabilities and hidden risks in UIDAI digital platforms.

- ❖ Around 20 selected security researchers will examine systems like the official website, the myAadhaar portal and the secure QR code application.
- ❖ It helps in early detection of security flaws, prevents data breaches and improves protection of personal identity data.

Look Out Circular Guidelines

- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs has revised rules for issuing Look Out Circulars (LOCs) to strengthen control and improve coordination among agencies.
- ❖ Statutory bodies like the National Commission for Women (NCW), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) cannot directly request LOCs and must route through police or central agencies.
- ❖ LOC forms now have 3 clear actions: detain and inform, prevent departure and inform, or “see remarks” for special cases.
- ❖ Intelligence agencies like the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) can use “see remarks” only for national security or terrorism-related cases.
- ❖ If a person is detained, the concerned agency must take custody within 3 hours or hand over to the police, and within 24 hours for full action.
- ❖ LOC (Look Out Circular) is used to stop wanted or absconding persons from leaving India at airports and seaports by the Bureau of Immigration (BoI).

BHAVYA Scheme

- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA) to boost industrial infrastructure in India.
- ❖ BHAVYA aims to develop 100 plug-and-play industrial parks with a total budget of ₹33,660 crore over 6 years (2026–2032).
- ❖ Industrial parks will be developed on 100–1000 acres (minimum 25 acres in North-East and hilly regions) with ready infrastructure.
- ❖ Financial support up to ₹1 crore per acre will be provided for core, value-added, and social infrastructure facilities.
- ❖ It will be implemented by the National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

INTERNATIONAL

India and Germany - Climate Adaptation Partnership

- ❖ India and Germany have deepened cooperation on climate adaptation and resilience during a high-level Climate Talk in New Delhi.
- ❖ Germany announced a grant of up to 20 million euros under the International Climate Initiative (IKI) for India.
- ❖ The project will focus on vulnerable ecosystems in the Himalayas, island territories, Western Ghats, North-East, and Lower Gangetic floodplains.
- ❖ It will promote ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), including forest restoration, biodiversity corridors, flood and erosion control, groundwater recharge, and community-led natural resource management.
- ❖ The funding will explore blended finance, biodiversity credits, and insurance-based risk solutions for long-term sustainability.

International Emergency Economic Powers Act

- ❖ A United States federal court ruled that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) does not allow the President to impose broad import tariffs.
- ❖ The IEEPA was enacted on 28 October 1977 in the United States.
- ❖ It allows the President to regulate financial transactions after declaring a national emergency.
- ❖ The Act can be used to freeze assets and restrict economic dealings in response to external threats.
- ❖ Any emergency declared under this Act must be renewed every year under the National Emergencies Act NEA.
- ❖ The IEEPA forms the legal basis for many United States economic sanctions.

IEA Membership – India

- ❖ The International Energy Agency (IEA) welcomed progress on India's request for full membership.
- ❖ India has been an associate member of the IEA since 2017.
- ❖ The IEA was established in 1974 by member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) after the 1973 oil crisis.
- ❖ Full IEA membership is currently limited to OECD countries, and India is not a member of the OECD.
- ❖ Member countries must maintain strategic oil reserves equal to at least 90 days of net imports.

Five-Year Rice Pact

- ❖ India has signed a five-year agreement with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to provide sustained rice supplies for global hunger relief.
- ❖ The Food Corporation of India (FCI) will supply up to 200,000 metric tonnes of rice over five years, including up to 25% broken grains, for emergency food assistance.
- ❖ The price for the current supply cycle is fixed at Rs 2,800 per quintal until March 31, 2026, with annual review through mutual consultation.
- ❖ The pact aims to ensure the predictable and timely availability of food grains for crisis-affected populations in Africa, West Asia, and conflict zones.

Pax Silica Alliance – India

- ❖ India has formally joined the Pax Silica Alliance, a US-led strategic coalition, by signing the Pax Silica Declaration.
- ❖ The alliance focuses on critical minerals, semiconductors, and artificial intelligence (AI).
- ❖ It aims to secure global AI and semiconductor supply chains and reduce dependence on non-aligned nations.
- ❖ India's very participation leverages its engineering talent and expanding semiconductor manufacturing, including ten plants under development.
- ❖ Member countries include Australia, Greece, Israel, Japan, Qatar, South Korea, Singapore, the UAE, the UK, and the US.

Board of Peace

- ❖ India attended the first meeting of Trump's Board of Peace in Washington as an observer.
- ❖ The board aims to support Gaza's reconstruction and address global conflicts.
- ❖ India supports the Gaza Peace Plan and UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2803, but chose not to become a full member.
- ❖ The board has 27 members, including Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Turkey, and Pakistan.
- ❖ 22 countries, including the UK, Germany, and Japan, joined as observers.
- ❖ India's observer status allows it to engage diplomatically, monitor discussions, protect regional interests, and maintain flexibility in India-US relations.

India and Canada - Strategic Energy Partnership

- ❖ India and Canada signed a \$1.9 billion uranium supply agreement for 10,000 tonnes of uranium (2027–2035) to support India's nuclear power plants.
- ❖ The uranium will be supplied by Canadian company Cameco to support India's clean energy and nuclear power programme.
- ❖ Both countries have also agreed to restart negotiations for the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to increase bilateral trade to \$50 billion by 2030.
- ❖ Canada agreed to join the International Solar Alliance and Global Biofuel Alliance, strengthening cooperation on renewable energy.
- ❖ The two countries have also decided to improve cooperation in counter-terrorism, security, energy, and technology.

Water Cremation - Scotland

- ❖ Scotland became the first nation in the United Kingdom to legalise water cremation, also called alkaline hydrolysis.
- ❖ Water cremation is an eco-friendly alternative to traditional burial and flame cremation.
- ❖ The process uses water, heat, and potassium hydroxide to break down the body in a sealed chamber.
- ❖ It takes about 90 minutes, leaving only bones, which are later processed into ashes.
- ❖ The method produces fewer carbon emissions and uses less energy compared to flame cremation.
- ❖ The law was approved by the Scottish Parliament to provide more environmentally sustainable funeral options.

International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue

- ❖ A United States submarine torpedoed the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena in the Indian Ocean near Sri Lanka.
- ❖ Sri Lanka rescued the sailors under the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR), 1979.
- ❖ The SAR (Search and Rescue) Convention, 1979, is an international agreement adopted under the International Maritime Organization to ensure the rescue of people in distress at sea.
- ❖ It divides the world's oceans into Search and Rescue regions, where coastal states coordinate rescue operations.

- ❖ The convention requires ships and coastal states to assist people in distress at sea, regardless of nationality.
- ❖ In India, search and rescue operations are coordinated by the Indian Coast Guard.
- ❖ India ratified the SAR Convention in 2001 and manages rescue operations in the Indian Search and Rescue Region (ISRR).

Restriction of Social Media for Children – Indonesia

- ❖ Indonesia announced restrictions on social media access for children under 16 years through a new regulation.
- ❖ The rule was issued to reduce cyberbullying, addiction and online risks for minors.
- ❖ Accounts of children under 16 on platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, Instagram and Roblox will be gradually deactivated starting March 28, 2026.
- ❖ Countries like Australia and Spain have also introduced similar restrictions for minors.
- ❖ Malaysia has announced a social media ban for users under 16 from 2026.

Metabolic Health Crisis

- ❖ A recent analysis of the Global Burden of Disease Study (GBD) reported that India and China have the highest metabolic disease burden in the Asia-Pacific region during 1990–2023.
- ❖ The study measures health loss using Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs).
- ❖ Major metabolic conditions studied include Type 2 diabetes, high systolic blood pressure, high Body Mass Index (BMI), high Low-Density Lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, and Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD).
- ❖ In 2023, India recorded about 21 million DALYs and 5.8 lakh deaths due to Type 2 diabetes.
- ❖ High blood pressure caused around 3.8 crore DALYs and 15.7 lakh deaths in India.

Upemba National Park

- ❖ An armed attack held on the headquarters of Upemba National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- ❖ Upemba National Park is one of the oldest national parks in Africa, established in 1939.

- ❖ It is located in southeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, across Lualaba, Haut-Katanga and Haut-Lomami provinces.
- ❖ The Park covers about 12,752 square kilometres and contains over 80 lakes, including Lake Upemba, supporting rich biodiversity.

Global Arms Imports 2021–2025

- ❖ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute reported that India ranked second in global arms imports during 2021–2025.
- ❖ India accounted for about 8.2% of total global arms imports during this period.
- ❖ According to the report, Ukraine is ranked first, followed by India, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Pakistan.
- ❖ India has gradually reduced dependence on Russia and increased arms purchases from **France, Israel, and the United States.
- ❖ Russia's share in India's arms imports declined from about 70% (2011–2015) to around 40% (2021–2025).

Global Oil Stocks Released by IEA

- ❖ The International Energy Agency (IEA) will release 400 million barrels of emergency oil due to tensions in West Asia.
- ❖ The release is the largest in IEA history from member countries' strategic reserves.
- ❖ IEA member nations hold 1.2 billion barrels of public emergency oil and 600 million barrels of industry stocks under government rules.
- ❖ The decision follows attacks on commercial shipping in the Persian Gulf by Iran after US and Israeli strikes.
- ❖ Germany, Japan and Austria will release parts of their reserves.
- ❖ The release aims to stabilize global oil supply amid regional security threats.
- ❖ The Strait of Hormuz, a key shipping route, has been disrupted, affecting oil transport.

Ethnic Unity Law

- ❖ China passed a new Ethnic Unity Law to strengthen national unity and common identity.
- ❖ The law was approved by the National People's Congress, China's highest legislative body.
- ❖ It aims to integrate 56 officially recognised ethnic groups in the country.

- ❖ The law promotes Mandarin as the main language in education and government communication.
- ❖ It also encourages social integration and inter-ethnic marriages.
- ❖ The law will come into effect on 1 July 2026.

UN Resolution on Iran Attacks

- ❖ India co-sponsored a resolution at the United Nations Security Council condemning attacks by Iran on Gulf countries and Jordan.
- ❖ The 15-member UN Security Council adopted the resolution with 13 votes in favour, while China and Russia abstained.
- ❖ The resolution condemned attacks on Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.
- ❖ It called for an immediate halt to hostilities and warned against threats to close the Strait of Hormuz.
- ❖ The move highlights India's concern for regional stability and the protection of its diaspora in Gulf countries.

Strikes on Kharg Island

- ❖ The United States carried out air strikes on military targets on Kharg Island, the main oil export hub of Iran.
- ❖ It is located in the northern Persian Gulf, about 50–55 km from the Iranian mainland and northwest of Bushehr port.
- ❖ Kharg Island is a five-mile-long coral island formed from coral limestone deposits.
- ❖ Unlike many islands in the Gulf, it has natural freshwater resources, which supported settlements in the past.
- ❖ It lies close to the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important oil shipping chokepoints.

India–New Zealand Sports Cooperation 2026

- ❖ India and New Zealand plan to expand sports cooperation as 2026 marks 100 years of sporting relations between the two countries.
- ❖ A high-level meeting was held in New Delhi, chaired by the Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports.
- ❖ The sporting ties began in 1926 with the Indian Army hockey tour to New Zealand.

- ❖ Both countries identified sports such as rugby, rowing, canoeing, sailing, athletics, and cycling for cooperation.
- ❖ The Sports Authority of India and the Indian Olympic Association are involved in the collaboration.
- ❖ A proposed India–New Zealand Centenary Sports Cooperation Programme 2026 will promote training camps, coaching exchanges, and sports science collaboration.

Asia Africa Agri Alliance

- ❖ Asia Africa Agri Alliance has been established to boost trade, agricultural cooperation, investment, and technology exchange between Asia and Africa.
- ❖ It is set up as a not-for-profit institution under Section 8 of the Companies Act to create structured frameworks for partnerships and policy alignment.
- ❖ The alliance focuses on improving agri-food value chains and promoting knowledge and technology sharing between the regions.
- ❖ Asia and Africa together contribute over 40 percent of global agricultural production, making this collaboration important.
- ❖ The bilateral agricultural trade between the two regions exceeds 90 billion US dollars annually.

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.

West Asia Energy Crisis 2026

- ❖ The conflict in West Asia escalated after attacks on Ras Laffan Industrial City and South Pars Gas Field, key global LNG hubs.
- ❖ Ras Laffan is one of the world’s largest LNG export centres, and damage has raised concerns over global gas supply.

- ❖ The attacks disrupted energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz, increasing oil and gas prices worldwide.
- ❖ India is affected as it depends heavily on LNG imports from Qatar through Ras Laffan.

UN Commission on the Status of Women 2026

- ❖ The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) concluded its 70th session in 2026, where member states adopted important conclusions on gender equality.
- ❖ It is a functional commission under the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the main global body for women's rights.
- ❖ Established in 1946, it aims to promote gender equality and women's empowerment across political, economic, and social fields.
- ❖ It sets global standards, monitors progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, and reviews implementation of international agreements.
- ❖ It focuses on issues like legal reforms, digital safety, access to justice, and women's health rights worldwide.

Fujairah Port and Shah Gas Field Attacks – UAE

- ❖ The Fujairah Port in the UAE was attacked amid the Iran–US–Israel conflict.
- ❖ Attacks also hit the Shah gas field, one of the world's largest sour gas fields, halting production and supply.
- ❖ These attacks caused energy disruptions and reduced crude exports from the UAE.
- ❖ The disruptions affect global oil supply, especially via the Strait of Hormuz, a key energy route.

Litani River - Lebanon

- ❖ Israeli airstrikes destroyed a key bridge over the Litani River of Lebanon
- ❖ The Litani River is the longest entirely within Lebanon.
- ❖ It originates near Baalbek and flows through the fertile Bekaa Valley before draining into the Mediterranean Sea.
- ❖ The river supports major infrastructure like the Qaraoun Dam for irrigation and hydroelectric power.
- ❖ The Bekaa Valley is a key agricultural region with significant arable land.

Philippines Energy Emergency 2026

- ❖ The Philippines declared a national energy emergency due to tensions in West Asia affecting fuel supply.
- ❖ The government plans to secure fuel supplies and maintain the distribution of essential commodities.
- ❖ A special committee was formed to manage fuel, food, and medicine supply chains.
- ❖ The country has around 45 days of fuel reserves and aims to build strategic stockpiles.

The American Revolution – 250th Anniversary Commemoration

- ❖ The United States (US) government has launched Task Force 250 and the “Story of America” video series to mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026.
- ❖ The American Revolution (1775–1783) was a struggle in which 13 British colonies in North America gained independence and formed the United States of America.
- ❖ Key causes included taxation without representation, Enlightenment ideas, British restrictions on westward expansion, and colonial opposition to mercantilist policies.
- ❖ Major events included the Boston Tea Party (1773), Battle of Saratoga (1777), and Treaty of Paris (1783), which formally ended the war.
- ❖ The revolution led to the creation of the first modern democratic republic and inspired global independence movements.

Cuba Power Crisis 2026

- ❖ Cuba experienced repeated nationwide blackouts in March 2026 due to a major collapse of its electricity grid.
- ❖ The crisis is driven by ageing power infrastructure, with many plants operating beyond their lifespan.
- ❖ Severe fuel shortages and reduced oil imports have further weakened electricity generation capacity.
- ❖ Cuba relies heavily on imported fuel, meeting only about 40% of its needs domestically.

International Solar Alliance (ISA) – Romania

- ❖ Romania has ratified the Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and officially joined the alliance.
- ❖ The ratification instrument was presented by Romania's Ambassador Sena Latif to the Depository of ISA in the presence of officials from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India.
- ❖ ISA is an international intergovernmental organisation aimed at promoting solar energy adoption among member countries.
- ❖ It was launched jointly by India and France at COP21 in 2015 and is headquartered in Gurugram, India.
- ❖ The alliance focuses on mobilising investments, reducing solar energy costs, and expanding clean energy access globally.

FATF Grey List Update

- ❖ The Financial Action Task Force added Kuwait and Papua New Guinea to its increased monitoring list after its recent plenary meeting.
- ❖ These countries were added due to strategic gaps in systems to control money laundering, terrorist financing and illegal fund flows.
- ❖ Countries in this list are called the grey list, and they must follow time-bound action plans to correct these weaknesses.
- ❖ Iran, North Korea and Myanmar remain in the high-risk list, which requires strict countermeasures and enhanced due diligence.

Agreed Conclusions Framework

- ❖ The United Nations adopted the Agreed Conclusions framework to improve access to justice for women and girls across the world.
- ❖ It was adopted by consensus during the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women held in New York.
- ❖ The framework is not legally binding and acts as a guiding policy for member countries to improve justice systems.
- ❖ It focuses on removing discriminatory laws and ensuring equal legal rights for women and girls in all sectors.
- ❖ It also aims to strengthen protection against violence, both online and offline and improve support systems.

ECONOMY

Base Year Revision 2022-23

- ❖ The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released a new series of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimates with a base year of 2022–23.
- ❖ The new series replaces the old 2011–12 base year series and improves accuracy using updated data from Goods and Services Tax (GST), Public Finance Management System (PFMS), Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), and household surveys.
- ❖ Real GDP for Financial Year (FY) 2025–26 is estimated at ₹322.58 lakh crore, growing 7.6%, and Nominal GDP at ₹345.47 lakh crore, growing 8.6%.
- ❖ The back series of GDP from 1950–51 will be released by December 2026.

National Monetization Pipeline 2.0

- ❖ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) 2.0 in New Delhi.
- ❖ The pipeline was developed by NITI Aayog under the Asset Monetisation Plan 2025-30 announced in the Union Budget 2025-26.
- ❖ It estimates a total monetisation potential of 16.72 lakh crore rupees from Financial Year (FY) 2025-26 to FY 2029-30.
- ❖ About 5.8 lakh crore rupees is expected from private sector investment.
- ❖ The first phase of the NMP achieved nearly 90 % of its six lakh crore rupees target.

State Economic Growth Trends

- ❖ Maharashtra has recorded the slowest growth in GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) among India's four largest state economies.
- ❖ The big four states are Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Gujarat.
- ❖ Maharashtra's GSDP grew by about 43% between 2021–22 and 2024–25.
- ❖ Karnataka recorded the highest growth at about 65%, followed by Gujarat (48%) and Tamil Nadu (47%).
- ❖ Despite slower growth, Maharashtra remains India's largest state economy with a projected GSDP of ₹42.67 lakh crore in 2024–25.
- ❖ These four states together play a major role in India's economic growth, investments, and industrial development.

Sudarshan AI System

- ❖ SEBI used the Sudarshan Artificial Intelligence (AI) system to remove over 1.2 lakh misleading posts by financial influencers on social media.
- ❖ Sudarshan AI System is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) based decision-support system used in the banking and financial sector in India.
- ❖ It uses machine learning and data analytics to process large financial datasets and generate predictive insights.
- ❖ The system helps banks in credit risk assessment, loan appraisal and early warning detection of stressed assets.
- ❖ It is also used for fraud detection, transaction monitoring and regulatory compliance in financial institutions.

Economic Stabilization Fund

- ❖ The Lok Sabha approved the second batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2025–26.
- ❖ The finance minister proposed the Economic Stabilisation Fund (ESF) with a total outlay of ₹1 lakh crore.
- ❖ The ESF is intended to help India respond to global crises, sudden economic shocks, and supply chain disruptions.
- ❖ Supplementary Demands for Grants are required when the budget approved by Parliament for a financial year is insufficient for a particular service.
- ❖ The President lays these demands before both Houses of Parliament, and they must be passed before the end of the financial year.
- ❖ Supplementary Demands for Grants are mentioned under Article 115 of the Indian Constitution.

MPS Norms Revision

- ❖ The Ministry of Finance has amended rules on Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS) to boost the Initial Public Offering (IPO) market and ease listing norms.
- ❖ The rules introduce a tiered structure based on post-listing valuation of companies for public shareholding requirements.
- ❖ Minimum public shareholding at listing has been reduced in some cases (as low as 2.5%) to encourage large company listings.
- ❖ Companies must gradually increase public shareholding to 25% within a specified time period after listing.

- ❖ The changes amend the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957, governing stock market listings.
- ❖ The reform aims to improve market participation, revive IPO activity, and enable the listing of large firms like Reliance Industries-linked ventures and the National Stock Exchange.

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.

RELIEF Scheme 2026

- ❖ Government of India launched the RELIEF (Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation) scheme under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM) to support exporters facing disruptions.
- ❖ It aims to reduce losses due to rising freight costs, higher insurance premiums, and supply chain uncertainties in global trade routes.
- ❖ The scheme is implemented by the Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC), which provides export credit risk insurance.
- ❖ Exporters can get up to 100% additional risk cover for insured shipments and up to 95% cover for new shipments during the disruption period.
- ❖ Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) receive up to 50% reimbursement of freight and insurance surcharges, with a maximum of ₹50 lakh per exporter.

CGSMFI-2.0 Scheme

- ❖ The Government of India launched the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions 2.0 (CGSMFI-2.0) with a corpus of ₹20,000 crore.

- ❖ The scheme aims to provide guaranteed support to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) for lending to microfinance institutions.
- ❖ NBFC-MFIs provide collateral-free loans to households with annual income up to ₹3,00,000.
- ❖ The scheme is managed by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company under the Ministry of Finance.
- ❖ It promotes financial inclusion, supports small businesses and helps in poverty reduction in India.

PRARAMBH 2026 Campaign

- ❖ The Government of India launched PRARAMBH 2026 to help people understand the Income Tax Act 2025, which will start from April 1, 2026.
- ❖ PRARAMBH means Policy Reform and Responsible Action for Mission Viksit Bharat, and it is a nationwide awareness campaign.
- ❖ It is conducted by the Ministry of Finance and the Central Board of Direct Taxes.
- ❖ The aim is to teach taxpayers about new tax rules and make tax filing easy and clear.
- ❖ It includes digital tools like Income Tax Website 2.0 and AI chatbot “Kar Saathi” to help people.

India Sports Economy

- ❖ India’s sports industry crossed \$2 billion in 2025, reaching a value of ₹18,864 crore as per a report by WPP Media.
- ❖ The market grew by about 13.4% from 2024, showing steady expansion and increasing commercialization of sports.
- ❖ Media spending was the largest contributor with around 51% share, driven by television and rapid growth in digital streaming platforms.
- ❖ Sponsorships formed about 42% of the market, including team deals, league partnerships, and athlete endorsements.
- ❖ Cricket dominated the sector with nearly 89% share, supported by leagues like the Indian Premier League and Women’s Premier League.

Flexible Inflation Targeting Framework 2026–2031

- ❖ The government has notified the inflation target for 2026–2031 under the Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT) framework.

- ❖ The FIT framework was given legal status through an amendment to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, in 2016.
- ❖ Inflation target remains 4% (Consumer Price Index - CPI) with a tolerance band of 2%–6% for 2026–2031.
- ❖ Reserve Bank of India manages inflation through the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), a 6-member body.
- ❖ Inflation outside the 2%–6% band for 3 consecutive quarters is considered a policy failure.

SEZ Policy Reform Committee

- ❖ Government of India has constituted a 17-member committee to suggest major reforms in the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) policy.
- ❖ The committee will prepare a concept paper and roadmap for the SEZ 2.0 policy.
- ❖ It will examine the SEZ Act, 2005 and assess its effectiveness in the current global trade and investment environment.
- ❖ It will study harmonisation of export promotion schemes such as SEZs, Export Oriented Units (EOUs), MOOWR (Manufacturing and Other Operations in Warehouse), EPCG (Export Promotion Capital Goods) scheme, Advance Authorisation, and DFIA (Duty Free Import Authorisation).
- ❖ It will include members from Commerce Ministry, NITI Aayog, DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade), and CBIC (Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs).

Bank of Baroda - Green Bonds

- ❖ Bank of Baroda became the first bank in India to issue domestic Green Infrastructure Bonds worth ₹10,000 crore.
- ❖ Bank of Baroda has raised ₹10,000 crore through Series I long-term Green Infrastructure Bonds for funding eco-friendly projects.
- ❖ The bond issue received strong investor demand with bids of about ₹16,415 crore, more than three times the base size.
- ❖ Green bonds are used to finance sustainable projects like renewable energy, clean transport, and climate-friendly infrastructure.

RBI Dividend Framework 2026

- ❖ Reserve Bank of India revised the bank dividend framework and introduced new prudential norms effective from Financial Year 2026–27.

- ❖ The aim is to safeguard the banking system by maintaining strong capital buffers and preventing financial risks.
- ❖ The new rules replace the 2025 framework to better align dividend payouts with the financial strength and stability of banks.
- ❖ Banks cannot pay dividends above 75% of their profit after tax to ensure adequate capital retention.
- ❖ Dividend decisions will depend on factors like capital adequacy ratio, profitability levels and asset quality indicators.
- ❖ Foreign banks can remit profits to their parent companies without prior approval, but must follow regulatory conditions.

India - US Cotton Trade

- ❖ India has overtaken China to become the largest supplier of cotton products to the United States in 2025.
- ❖ India exported around 0.6 million tonnes of cotton products, while China's exports declined to about 0.5 million tonnes due to high tariffs (10%–125%) and regulatory restrictions.
- ❖ US laws like the Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act (UFLPA) reduced dependence on Chinese imports and increased sourcing from India and other countries.
- ❖ The United States remains the world's largest importer of cotton-based products like apparel and home textiles.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Low-Frequency Solar Observation

- ❖ Scientists from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics observed coronal mass ejection (CME) driven shocks using the Gauribidanur radio telescope and the Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC) onboard Aditya-L1.
- ❖ Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC) is a payload designed to study the Sun's corona in visible wavelengths.
- ❖ The Gauribidanur radio telescope operates below 150 MHz and observes low-frequency solar radio emissions.
- ❖ The team estimated that the CME-driven shock on May 27, 2024, began at about 130,000 km from the Sun.
- ❖ The shock was travelling at nearly 1,700 km per second near the Sun.

Eco-Friendly Biosurfactant

- ❖ Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology, under the Department of Science and Technology, has developed a new biosurfactant using ghee.
- ❖ The biosurfactant was produced using the probiotic bacterium *Lactobacillus plantarum* JBC5 and ghee as the main raw material.
- ❖ It showed strong antibacterial action against *Staphylococcus aureus*, which causes skin and wound infections.
- ❖ The compound achieved 60% emulsification index and remained stable up to 276°C.

Shalimar Wheat

- ❖ Scientists at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Kashmir, developed two new early-maturing wheat varieties for the rice-wheat cropping system in Kashmir.
- ❖ These varieties are suitable for mid-altitude regions up to about 1,850 metres.
- ❖ They are resistant to yellow rust, a major fungal disease of wheat.
- ❖ Shalimar Wheat-3 gives up to 38 quintals per hectare and contains higher iron, zinc, and about 12 % protein.

Self-Replicating RNA – QT45

- ❖ Scientists have reported that RNA may have been Earth's first genetic material after discovering a self-replicating RNA molecule called QT45.
- ❖ QT45 is a small RNA molecule of 45 nucleotides that can copy itself under special conditions.
- ❖ This supports the RNA World hypothesis, which suggests early life depended only on RNA before DNA and proteins evolved.
- ❖ The Miller-Urey experiment in 1953 showed that amino acids could form under early Earth conditions, but it did not produce DNA or RNA.
- ❖ QT45 copies itself using three-nucleotide building blocks, but the process is very slow compared to modern cells.

Earliest Animals on Earth

- ❖ Scientists have found evidence of the earliest animals on Earth in rocks that are about 541 million years old.

- ❖ Researchers discovered chemical fossils called steranes in ancient rocks.
- ❖ These fossils suggest that sea sponges (demosponges) were among the first animals to live in the oceans.
- ❖ The discovery shows that animal life existed before the Cambrian explosion, when many animals rapidly evolved.
- ❖ It also indicates that early animals lived in oceans with low oxygen levels.

Mars Beaches

- ❖ China's Zhurong rover, part of the Tianwen-1 mission, discovered evidence of ancient beaches on Mars.
- ❖ The rover operates in Utopia Planitia, a large northern basin on Mars.
- ❖ Ground-penetrating radar detected buried sediment layers resembling coastal deposits several metres below the surface.
- ❖ These formations date back to the Late Hesperian period, around 3.5–4 billion years ago.
- ❖ The findings suggest Mars once had a long-lasting ocean called the Deuteronilus Ocean.
- ❖ Ancient Mars likely had a warmer climate and stable liquid water, potentially supporting habitable conditions.

Dark Oxygen in the Pacific Ocean

- ❖ Scientists have discovered "Dark Oxygen" about 4,000 metres below the Pacific Ocean, where sunlight does not reach.
- ❖ Dark Oxygen refers to oxygen found in deep-sea regions without sunlight.
- ❖ The discovery was made in the Clarion–Clipperton Zone of the Pacific Ocean.
- ❖ Scientists observed oxygen levels increasing near polymetallic nodules on the seafloor.
- ❖ Polymetallic nodules contain metals like manganese, nickel and cobalt.
- ❖ This discovery challenges the idea that oxygen is produced only through photosynthesis.

Moonshot Project

- ❖ Moonshot Project was launched by the IISc.
- ❖ The project aims to develop brain co-processors combining neuromorphic hardware and Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms.

- ❖ Brain co-processors are devices designed to enhance or restore brain functions by connecting with different parts of the brain.
- ❖ The project will create an Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered closed-loop device to restore smooth and coordinated movement.
- ❖ The technology aims to support cognitive rehabilitation and restore sensorimotor functions in stroke survivors.

Vikram 1 - Private Orbital Rocket

- ❖ Skyroot Aerospace is preparing to launch Vikram-1, India's first privately developed orbital rocket.
- ❖ The rocket is designed to carry satellites up to 300 kg into low Earth orbit and will be launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
- ❖ The rocket is named after Vikram Sarabhai, the father of India's space programme.
- ❖ Earlier, the company successfully launched Vikram-S, India's first private sub-orbital rocket, in 2022.

Megamaser Discovery

- ❖ The MeerKAT Radio Telescope detected a powerful cosmic "gigalaser" (hydroxyl megamaser) located about 8 billion light-years from Earth.
- ❖ A Megamaser is a natural cosmic source that amplifies microwave or radio waves through stimulated emission of radiation.
- ❖ The signal was produced by hydroxyl (OH) molecules in a distant galaxy during galaxy collisions and mergers.
- ❖ The radio signal was magnified by Gravitational Lensing, where a massive galaxy bends and amplifies light from a distant source.
- ❖ The MeerKAT Radio Telescope is located in South Africa and is part of the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) radio astronomy project.

Very Low Earth Orbit Satellite Systems

- ❖ Bharat Electronics Limited and Bellatrix Aerospace signed a MoU to jointly develop Very Low Earth Orbit (VLEO) satellite systems.
- ❖ VLEO refers to satellite orbits at 150 km to 450 km above the Earth.
- ❖ The partnership aims to develop indigenous satellite platforms for defence and civilian uses.

- ❖ VLEO satellites face atmospheric drag, so advanced propulsion systems are used to keep them in orbit.
- ❖ Being closer to Earth allows better imaging resolution and faster signal transmission.
- ❖ If a satellite fails in VLEO, atmospheric drag pulls it down to burn in the atmosphere, reducing space debris.

Eco-Friendly Plastic Recycling

- ❖ Scientists at the University of Waterloo in Canada have found a way to turn plastic waste into acetic acid (vinegar) using only sunlight.
- ❖ The process uses photocatalysis, a chemical reaction triggered by sunlight, at room temperature without harmful chemicals.
- ❖ They tested four types of plastics: Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC), Polyethylene (PE), Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), and Polypropylene (PP).
- ❖ Acetic acid produced this way can be used in food, pharmaceuticals, and plastic industries.

Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile

- ❖ The THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defence) missile defence system developed by the United States Department of Defence is being used during the Israel–Iran conflict of 2026 to intercept ballistic missiles.
- ❖ THAAD is an advanced ballistic missile defence system designed to intercept short, medium and limited intermediate-range ballistic missiles in their final stage of flight.
- ❖ It uses “hit-to-kill” technology, where the interceptor destroys the incoming missile by direct collision using kinetic energy instead of an explosive warhead.
- ❖ The system can intercept missiles at a range of about 150–200 kilometres and at high altitude inside or outside the Earth’s atmosphere.
- ❖ THAAD works as part of the BMDS (Ballistic Missile Defence System) and can integrate with systems like MIM-104 Patriot.

Precision Strike Missile

- ❖ The PrSM (Precision Strike Missile) was reportedly used by the United States Army during strikes in the West Asia conflict involving Iran.
- ❖ PrSM is a long-range surface-to-surface precision-guided missile.

- ❖ It is designed to replace ATACMS (Army Tactical Missile System) used by the U.S. military.
- ❖ The missile can strike targets at a range of about 60 km to over 499 km with high precision.
- ❖ It can be launched from MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System) and HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System) platforms.
- ❖ It is designed to attack enemy air defence systems, command centres, and logistics bases in deep-strike operations.

Proba-3 Mission

- ❖ The European Space Agency (ESA) lost contact with the Coronagraph satellite of the Proba-3 mission due to a power failure.
- ❖ Proba-3 is the first precision formation-flying mission to study the Sun's outer atmosphere (corona).
- ❖ It was launched in December 2024 aboard the ISRO PSLV-C59 rocket.
- ❖ The mission uses twin satellites: Coronagraph (camera) and Occulter (blocks the Sun to create an artificial eclipse).
- ❖ It helps study Solar Winds and Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) that can disrupt satellites and power grids.

White Phosphorus

- ❖ Human Rights Watch (HRW) has claimed that Israel used white phosphorus munitions over residential areas in Yohmor, Lebanon.
- ❖ White phosphorus is a chemical substance that ignites immediately when exposed to oxygen and produces dense smoke.
- ❖ It is used by militaries to create smoke screens, illuminate battlefields, or mark targets.
- ❖ When used as an incendiary weapon, it can cause severe burns, respiratory damage, organ failure, and death.
- ❖ International humanitarian law restricts the use of incendiary weapons in civilian or populated areas.

Black Rain over Tehran

- ❖ Residents of Tehran experienced "Black Rain" after fires at oil facilities during the Israel–Iran conflict released pollutants into the atmosphere.

- ❖ Black rain is rainfall contaminated with soot, ash, oil particles, and industrial chemicals from large fires or explosions.
- ❖ It forms when rain passes through polluted air containing smoke, hydrocarbons, sulphur oxides, and nitrogen compounds.
- ❖ The World Health Organization (WHO) warned that it may cause breathing problems, skin irritation, headaches, and chemical burns.
- ❖ Long-term exposure to chemicals like benzene can increase the risk of cancer.

Earth's Closest Natural Laboratory for Mars Exploration

- ❖ The Scientists are studying Devon Island in Nunavut, Canada, as a natural site to test technologies and survival methods for future Mars missions.
- ❖ It is the world's largest uninhabited island and has a polar desert environment with very low temperatures and almost no vegetation.
- ❖ The island contains the Haughton Impact Crater, a 20-km-wide meteorite crater that resembles the rocky surface of Mars.
- ❖ Scientists also conduct experiments, such as the Arthur Clarke Mars Greenhouse, to study how plants could grow in Mars-like soil.
- ❖ Researchers study microorganisms living inside rocks (endolithic colonisation) to understand how life may survive in extreme environments similar to Mars.

Double Asteroid Redirection Test Mission

- ❖ A study showed that NASA's Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) mission changed the orbit of an entire asteroid system.
- ❖ The mission targeted Dimorphos, a small asteroid orbiting Didymos in a binary asteroid system.
- ❖ In September 2022, a spacecraft was deliberately crashed into Dimorphos using the kinetic impactor technique.
- ❖ After the impact, Dimorphos' orbital period around Didymos reduced by about 33 minutes.
- ❖ The collision also slightly changed the orbit of the Didymos–Dimorphos system around the Sun, demonstrating a method of planetary defence.

Asteroid 2024 YR4

- ❖ NASA confirmed that Asteroid 2024 YR4 will not collide with the Moon in 2032 after new observations.

- ❖ The asteroid was discovered in 2024 and was earlier predicted to have about a 3.8–4.3% chance of hitting the Moon on 22 December 2032.
- ❖ Scientists refined its orbit using observations from the James Webb Space Telescope.
- ❖ New calculations show the asteroid will pass the Moon at a safe distance of about 21,200 kilometres.
- ❖ The asteroid is about 65 metres wide and is classified as a Near-Earth Object (NEO).

Sejjil Ballistic Missile

- ❖ Iran has reportedly deployed the Sejjil Ballistic Missile for the first time in active combat during a military operation against positions linked to the United States and Israel.
- ❖ The Sejjil is an indigenous two-stage medium-range ballistic missile developed by Iran's aerospace industries.
- ❖ The missile has an operational range of about 2,000 km and can carry a warhead of around 700 kg.
- ❖ The missile is nicknamed the “dancing missile” because it can perform evasive manoeuvres, making interception by missile defence systems difficult.

Silverpit Crater

- ❖ Silverpit Crater is confirmed as an ancient asteroid impact site based on new research evidence.
- ❖ It is located under the North Sea seabed near Yorkshire and was discovered in 2002 during oil exploration.
- ❖ The crater formed about 43–46 million years ago due to a high-speed asteroid impact.
- ❖ Scientists found shocked quartz and feldspar minerals, which prove high-energy impact events.
- ❖ The crater is about 3 km wide with circular fault rings extending up to 20 km.

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.

Neodymium-Iron-Boron Magnet

- ❖ A pilot plant to manufacture Neodymium-Iron-Boron (NdFeB) Magnet was set up at the International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials.
- ❖ NdFeB magnets are the strongest permanent magnets and are made from neodymium, iron, and boron.
- ❖ They have very high magnetic strength and strong resistance to losing magnetism.
- ❖ These magnets are of three types: sintered, bonded, and hot-pressed based on production methods.
- ❖ They are widely used in electronics like mobile phones, earphones, hard drives, and electric vehicles.

High Cholesterol and Cancer Spread

- ❖ A study by the National Institutes of Health found that high cholesterol helps cancer spread.
- ❖ High cholesterol makes the nuclear membrane (outer layer of the nucleus) soft and weak.
- ❖ This allows cancer cells to move easily through tissues and spread to other parts.
- ❖ It also causes DNA damage, leading to more mutations and severe cancer.
- ❖ The LBR (Lamin B Receptor) protein increases cholesterol inside the nucleus in cancer cells.
- ❖ Lowering cholesterol or targeting LBR may help slow down cancer spread.

Sahiwal Cattle IVF Breakthrough

- ❖ Indian Veterinary Research Institute produced Sahiwal calves using advanced reproductive technology.
- ❖ The achievement was done by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research–Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar, Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh).

- ❖ Scientists used the OPU–IVF–ET (Ovum Pick-Up–In Vitro Fertilization–Embryo Transfer) technique for the first time at the institute.
- ❖ Five healthy Sahiwal cattle calves were born in February 2026 within five days.
- ❖ The programme started in 2022–23 to improve indigenous breeds like Sahiwal, Tharparkar, and Murrah buffalo.

Xi-cc-plus Baryon Discovery

- ❖ CERN announced the discovery of a new particle called Xi-cc-plus.
- ❖ The discovery was made at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) by the LHCb (Large Hadron Collider beauty) experiment.
- ❖ Xi-cc-plus is a heavy baryon made of two charm quarks and one down quark.
- ❖ It is about 4 times heavier than a proton and is highly unstable with a very short lifetime.
- ❖ The LHC has also discovered key particles like the Higgs Boson, exotic hadrons (particles made of four or five quarks), and rare B-meson decays.

NavIC Atomic Clock Failure – ISRO

- ❖ The atomic clock in the IRNSS-1F satellite failed, affecting India’s navigation system NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation).
- ❖ Atomic clocks are essential for accurate positioning, navigation, and timing services.
- ❖ With this failure, the number of functional satellites for NavIC reduced to three, below the required four.
- ❖ NavIC is India’s indigenous regional navigation system developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation.
- ❖ ISRO plans to use indigenous rubidium atomic clocks in future replacement satellites to strengthen the system.

Ladakh Magmatic Arc – Tectonic Evolution

- ❖ Scientists have recently decoded the evolution of the Ladakh Magmatic Arc, revealing a detailed geological history spanning nearly 130 million years.
- ❖ It was formed due to the continuous subduction of the Neo-Tethys Oceanic Plate beneath the Eurasian Plate over millions of years.
- ❖ The arc developed during the long geological time period from the Jurassic to the Eocene epoch (approximately 201 to 34 million years ago).

- ❖ Important geological components of this arc include the Dras–Nidar Island Arc Complex and the Ladakh Batholith, which preserve valuable rock records.
- ❖ It shows three major phases of magmatic evolution, reflecting changing tectonic conditions and eventual collision with the Indian Plate.

Dual-Function MXene Catalyst

- ❖ Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati have developed an advanced MXene-based material capable of both hydrogen production and solar desalination.
- ❖ The material shows excellent performance in hydrogen generation through water electrolysis, with very low energy requirement compared to traditional platinum-based catalysts.
- ❖ It is based on MXenes, which were modified into ultra-thin ribbon-like structures to improve surface activity and efficiency.
- ❖ Ruthenium atoms were introduced into the structure to enhance catalytic activity, improving charge transfer and increasing hydrogen evolution efficiency.
- ❖ The same material also functions as a solar-powered desalination system using a Janus evaporator, converting seawater into safe drinking water efficiently.

Titanium-Rich Rocks on the Moon

- ❖ A new study by the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur and Physical Research Laboratory explained how titanium-rich rocks formed on the Moon.
- ❖ Lunar basalts have very high titanium dioxide (TiO_2), up to 18%, compared to less than 2% on Earth.
- ❖ Scientists conducted high-pressure and high-temperature experiments to study conditions inside the Moon.
- ❖ The study found a two-stage process of melting and mixing inside the Moon's mantle.
- ❖ A dense ilmenite-bearing layer (a titanium-rich mineral layer) sank and melted to form titanium-rich magma.
- ❖ This magma later rose and formed titanium-rich volcanic rocks on the Moon's surface.

Deep-Sea Rare Earth Discovery in Japan

- ❖ Japan discovered a massive deep-sea rare earth deposit under the Pacific Ocean near Minamitorishima Island.

- ❖ The deposit contains about 16 million tonnes of rare earth elements like yttrium and dysprosium metals.
- ❖ It was found nearly 6,000 metres deep using the advanced drilling vessel Chikyu.
- ❖ Rare earth elements are important for electric vehicles, wind turbines and modern electronic devices.
- ❖ The deposit may meet global demand for some key elements for up to 700 years.

CALM-Brain Repository

- ❖ India's first digital repository on brain structure and function, CALM-Brain, has been launched in Bengaluru.
- ❖ It is developed by researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences and NCBS (National Centre for Biological Sciences).
- ❖ CALM-Brain stores data on psychiatric disorders like addiction, bipolar disorder, dementia, OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder), and schizophrenia.
- ❖ It includes clinical, brain imaging, behavioural, and genetic data for research.
- ❖ The repository will help in better understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of mental health disorders.

Massive Water Reservoir in Deep Earth

- ❖ Scientists have discovered a huge water reservoir nearly 700 km below Earth's surface inside the mantle, changing ideas about Earth's water origin.
- ❖ The water is not in liquid form but is chemically trapped inside a high-pressure mineral called ringwoodite in the mantle.
- ❖ This region is called the transition zone, located between 410 km and 660 km deep below the Earth's crust.
- ❖ Scientists detected this water using seismic wave studies, as waves slow down in water-rich regions, and by studying mineral samples from volcanic activity.
- ❖ The hidden reservoir may contain more water than all oceans combined, but it is locked inside rocks and not freely flowing.

Small Modular Reactors in India

- ❖ India is developing three types of Small Modular Reactors to increase nuclear energy capacity and support clean energy goals.
- ❖ These are small and advanced nuclear reactors producing up to 300-megawatt electric power per module.

- ❖ Types include Bharat Small Modular Reactor, SMR-55 and high temperature gas cooled reactor for power and hydrogen generation.
- ❖ They use advanced technologies like pressurised water reactors and slightly enriched uranium fuel.
- ❖ SMRs are safer, modular, cost-effective, and reducing carbon emissions.

Textile Waste Report 2026

- ❖ The Ministry of Textiles released a report on mapping the textile waste value chain in India to improve recycling and sustainability.
- ❖ India generates about 70.73 lakh tonnes of textile waste every year from manufacturing processes and post-consumer disposal.
- ❖ Around 95% of pre-consumer waste is recovered due to strong collection and recycling systems in the industry.
- ❖ The spinning sector achieves nearly 100% reuse of waste within production through closed-loop processes.
- ❖ About 70% of total textile waste is recycled, reused, upcycled or downcycled instead of going to landfills.
- ❖ The textile recycling market may reach 3.5 billion US dollars by 2030 and can create nearly one lakh green jobs.

ENVIRONMENT

New dinosaur species - Spinosaurus mirabilis

- ❖ A new dinosaur species named Spinosaurus mirabilis has been discovered in the Sahara Desert of Niger.
- ❖ The species lived about 95 million years ago during the Cretaceous Period (145–66 million years ago).
- ❖ It belonged to the Spinosaurid group of theropod dinosaurs.
- ❖ Three skulls and other skeletal remains were recovered by palaeontologists.
- ❖ The dinosaur measured about 12 metres in length and weighed nearly seven tonnes.
- ❖ The discovery suggests that Spinosaurids were semi-aquatic predators living in freshwater river systems.

7th Waterbird Census

- ❖ The 7th Waterbird Census at Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve recorded the first-ever sighting of the smew (*Mergellus albellus*) in the park.
- ❖ The census recorded over 1,05,000 waterbirds during the survey.
- ❖ The count was conducted across the Kaziranga–Laokhowa–Burhachapori floodplain complex.
- ❖ The survey reaffirmed Kaziranga as an important site on the Central Asian Flyway for migratory birds.

Fishing Cat in Kaziranga

- ❖ The first scientific assessment has established Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve as a major stronghold of the fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*).
- ❖ At least 57 unique fishing cats were identified across more than 450 square kilometres of the reserve.
- ❖ The fishing cat is classified as Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- ❖ The report was released on February 22, which is observed as Fishing Cat Day.

Carbon Leak in Congo Basin

- ❖ Lake Mai-Ndombe and Lake Tumba in the Democratic Republic of Congo are releasing ancient carbon stored in nearby peatlands.
- ❖ A study found that about 40 % of the carbon dioxide released from these lakes comes from peat that is more than 3,000 years old.
- ❖ Peatlands are waterlogged areas that store large amounts of carbon from dead plants.
- ❖ The Congo Basin stores about one-third of the world's tropical peatland carbon.
- ❖ Scientists say that climate change and deforestation may increase the release of stored carbon into the atmosphere.

Soil Health Degradation in India

- ❖ The Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) released a report titled “Healing Soils in India: For Better Crop Health and Human Nutrition.”
- ❖ Primary causes of soil degradation include overuse of urea, intensive farming, monocropping, residue burning, and water stagnation in rice fields.

- ❖ India loses about 5.3 billion tonnes of topsoil every year, along with 5.4–8.4 million tonnes of nutrients due to erosion.
- ❖ Soil degradation reduces the crop nutrient absorption, lowers crop quality, and causes hidden hunger in children due to deficiencies in zinc, iron, and other micronutrients.
- ❖ The government promotes soil health through schemes like the Soil Health Card Scheme, PM-PRANAM, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, and Neem-Coated Urea.

Nilgiris Wood Pigeon

- ❖ A recent study states that climate change may drastically shrink the suitable habitat of the Nilgiris Wood Pigeon in the Western Ghats by the end of this century.
- ❖ The Nilgiris Wood Pigeon (*Columba elphinstonii*) is endemic to the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot.
- ❖ The findings show that habitat may slightly increase between 2021 and 2040, but may sharply decline between 2081 and 2100.
- ❖ The species lives in high-elevation evergreen forests known as “sky islands” in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- ❖ The IUCN lists it as Least Concern, but long-term climate change may affect its survival.

Indian Bison Fest 2026

- ❖ The second edition of the Indian Bison Fest will be held on 8 March 2026 at Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary in Odisha.
- ❖ The festival celebrates the Indian bison, also known as gaur (*Bos gaurus*), which is the largest bovine species in the world.
- ❖ The latest census in January 2026 recorded 848 gaurs in the sanctuary, showing an increase of 190 animals in one year.
- ❖ The sanctuary is located near the Hirakud reservoir and is becoming an important gaur conservation area in eastern India.
- ❖ The gaur is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List due to habitat loss and hunting.

Project HANUMAN

- ❖ Project HANUMAN was launched in Andhra Pradesh to address the rising human-wildlife conflict.

- ❖ The aim of the project is to reduce clashes between humans and wild animals and to protect both people and wildlife.
- ❖ Rapid response teams will be deployed to handle emergencies in conflict areas.
- ❖ Technology and monitoring systems will be used to track wildlife movement. The project will improve coordination between forest officials and local communities.
- ❖ Awareness programmes will also be conducted to prevent risky behaviour near forest areas.

Review of Quarry Plan

- ❖ The National Green Tribunal (NGT) asked authorities to reconsider a quarry proposal near Vallanadu Blackbuck Sanctuary while ensuring protection for blackbucks.
- ❖ The tribunal directed the State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) of Tamil Nadu to review the project again with strict wildlife safeguards.
- ❖ The proposed stone and gravel quarry covers about 6.02 hectares and is located about 1.7–1.9 km from the sanctuary in the Thoothukudi district.
- ❖ The Blackbuck (Indian antelope) is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, which gives it the highest level of legal protection.
- ❖ The sanctuary was established mainly to conserve blackbucks and covers about 16.41 square kilometres of dry scrub forest.

Slender Loris Conservation Centre

- ❖ Slender Loris Conservation Centre was inaugurated in Dindigul district, the first such facility in India.
- ❖ The centre focuses on conservation and research of the Slender Loris.
- ❖ The slender loris is a small arboreal primate found in the dry forests and scrub landscapes of southern India and Sri Lanka.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government earlier notified the Kadavur Slender Loris Sanctuary.
- ❖ The sanctuary covers 11,806.56 hectares across seven blocks in Dindigul and Karur districts.
- ❖ It includes reserve forests such as Thoppaswimalai, Thanneerkaradu, Mudimalai and D. Edayapatti.

India's Biodiversity Progress Assessment

- ❖ India has submitted its 7th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

- ❖ The report assesses India's progress on 23 National Biodiversity Targets (NBTs) and 142 indicators.
- ❖ These targets are aligned with the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) adopted in 2022.
- ❖ The report was prepared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- ❖ Only two targets (NBT1 – biodiversity planning and NBT2 – ecosystem restoration) are currently on track.
- ❖ The CBD is a global treaty adopted at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Striped Hyena Conservation

- ❖ Tajikistan and Uzbekistan proposed to include the Striped Hyena in Appendix I and II of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).
- ❖ The proposal will be discussed at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) of CMS.
- ❖ The meeting will be held in Campo Grande, Brazil from 23–29 March 2026.
- ❖ Appendix I includes endangered migratory species that require strict protection.
- ❖ Appendix II includes species that require international cooperation for conservation.
- ❖ The Striped Hyena is listed as Near Threatened in the IUCN Red List.

Dusky Eagle Owl

- ❖ A rare pair of Dusky Eagle Owls has been spotted in the Phato tourism zone of the Terai West forest division near Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand, after 15 years.
- ❖ Dusky Eagle Owl belongs to the family Strigidae.
- ❖ They prefer dense, old-growth forests near rivers and wetlands.
- ❖ Their IUCN Red List status is Least Concern.

Kuno–Rajasthan Cheetah Movement

- ❖ Two cheetahs were tracked in the Mangrol range of Baran and Banjh Amla Conservation Reserve, travelling 60–70 km from Kuno National Park.
- ❖ The cheetahs, KP2 and KP3, are about 6 km apart on either side of the Parvati River.

- ❖ They are first-generation cubs born in India, descended from African cheetahs brought in 2022 under Project Cheetah.
- ❖ The project allows inter-State movement within the Kuno–Gandhi Sagar meta population landscape.
- ❖ It supports the plan for a 17,000 sq. km Kuno–Gandhi Sagar inter-State wildlife corridor covering 7 districts of Rajasthan and 8 districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ Nine cheetahs from Botswana arrived in India on 28 February 2026 under Project Cheetah.
- ❖ Botswana is the third African country to send cheetahs to India after Namibia and South Africa since September 2022.
- ❖ Project Cheetah aims to reintroduce cheetahs in India, which became extinct in 1952.
- ❖ Three adult cheetahs are currently kept at the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh.

Sambar Deer Recorded at High Altitudes

- ❖ The sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*) was recorded for the first time at high-altitude protected areas in Chamba district, Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The species was found in Kalatop–Khajjiar Wildlife Sanctuary and Gamgul Wildlife Sanctuary, located at elevations above 2,500–3,000 metres.
- ❖ Sambar deer is the largest deer species in South Asia and is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.
- ❖ The species is protected under Schedule III of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary Case

- ❖ The Karnataka High Court ordered a halt to all ground-level activities in the Sharavathi Valley Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary and its Eco-Sensitive Zone.
- ❖ The interim order came during the hearing of a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) challenging approval for the 2,000 MW Sharavathi Pumped Storage Project and Kalkatte Bridge inside the sanctuary.
- ❖ The sanctuary is named after the lion-tailed macaque, an endangered primate species endemic to the Western Ghats.
- ❖ The court stated that activities inside wildlife sanctuaries are regulated under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, which restricts the destruction or diversion of wildlife habitat.
- ❖ The Western Ghats are also recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a global biodiversity hotspot.

Rare Marine Amphipod

- ❖ A rare marine amphipod, *Stenothoe lowryi*, was discovered for the first time in India at Arjyapalli Beach, Ganjam district, Odisha.
- ❖ Previously, this shrimp-like species was known only from the Malaysian shores.
- ❖ It belongs to the family Stenothoidae within the order Amphipoda.
- ❖ It plays a role in the marine food web as a scavenger, feeding on small plants and animal matter.

2025 Seismic Code

- ❖ Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) withdrew the 2025 seismic code (IS 1893) after concerns raised by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).
- ❖ The earlier standard IS 1893 (Part 1): 2016 is now again applicable in India.
- ❖ A seismic code is a set of building standards designed to help structures withstand earthquake forces and reduce damage.
- ❖ India is divided into four seismic zones under the code: Zone II (Low), Zone III (Moderate), Zone IV (High), and Zone V (Very High).
- ❖ About 59% of India's land area is considered earthquake-prone according to the seismic zonation system.

Checklist of Fireflies

- ❖ Scientists released India's first comprehensive checklist of fireflies, identifying 92 species across 27 genera from records between 1881–2025.
- ❖ Over 60% of the species are endemic to India, and many species have not been recorded again since the 1800s.
- ❖ The Western Ghats have the highest diversity of fireflies, followed by North East India and the Gangetic Plain.
- ❖ Fireflies belong to the beetle family Lampyridae and produce light through bioluminescence.
- ❖ The light is produced by a chemical reaction involving luciferin, luciferase, oxygen, and adenosine triphosphate (ATP).
- ❖ Fireflies are declining due to light pollution and urbanisation, highlighting the need for conservation.

National Climate Stack Innovation Challenge

- ❖ The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) launched the National Climate Stack Innovation Challenge.

- ❖ The initiative aims to create a National Climate Stack, which will integrate different climate datasets into one digital system.
- ❖ It will help improve forecasting of climate hazards such as droughts, floods, heatwaves, and cyclones.
- ❖ The system will support agriculture planning, rural finance, disaster preparedness, and public policy decisions.

Nine New Species in Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary

- ❖ The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) discovered nine new species during a faunal survey at Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary in the Western Ghats.
- ❖ The newly identified species include *Stenaclurillus megamalai* (jumping spider), *Edmundsula meghamalaiensis* (mayfly), *Thraulius vellimalaiensis* (mayfly), *Protosticta sholai* (damsselfly), *Allacta vellimalai* (cockroach), and *Lachesilla vellimalai* (bark louse), along with other new invertebrate species.
- ❖ The survey recorded 977 species across 21 faunal groups, including 511 vertebrates (286 birds, 97 reptiles, 77 mammals, 36 amphibians, and 15 fish) and 466 invertebrates.
- ❖ The sanctuary is part of the Srivilliputhur–Megamalai Tiger Reserve, India's 51st tiger reserve, notified in 2021, covering about 1,016 sq km.
- ❖ Many species found in the survey act as bio-indicators that help measure water quality and ecosystem health.

New Lichen Moths

- ❖ The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) discovered two new lichen moth species (*Caulocera hollowayi* and *Asura buxa*) in the eastern Himalayas.
- ❖ These species were found in the Sikkim and West Bengal regions.
- ❖ Lichen moths belong to the order Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths).
- ❖ The eastern Himalayas are a major biodiversity hotspot with rich biodiversity.
- ❖ Lichen moths act as indicators of air quality as they depend on pollution-sensitive lichens.

Koala Population Recovery in Australia

- ❖ The population of koalas in Victoria has significantly recovered, leading to improved genetic diversity.
- ❖ Earlier, excessive hunting and habitat loss caused a sharp decline, creating a genetic bottleneck in the species.

- ❖ Rapid population growth in recent decades has increased gene reshuffling and reduced inbreeding problems.
- ❖ This has helped improve overall health, reduce deformities, and enhance adaptability to environmental changes.
- ❖ Koalas are marsupials that mainly feed on eucalyptus leaves and depend on forest ecosystems for survival.

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 Eparchaean 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.

Tamil Nadu Raptor Survey 2026

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has recorded 51 species of raptors in its first statewide scientific assessment conducted by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department.
- ❖ The survey was conducted in January–February 2026 under the guidance of the Tamil Nadu Raptor Research Foundation.
- ❖ The survey recorded 40 diurnal raptor species and 11 nocturnal raptor species.
- ❖ It included rare and threatened species like the White-rumped Vulture, Red-headed Vulture, and Indian Vulture.

- ❖ The assessment provides baseline data for conservation, monitoring, and habitat protection of raptors in the state.

Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species

- ❖ The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA – National Biodiversity Authority) constituted an Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species.
- ❖ The committee was formed to address ecological and socio-economic threats caused by invasive alien species in India.
- ❖ It will prepare a national list of invasive species and identify high-risk species across states.
- ❖ The committee will recommend strategies for prevention, control, eradication, and ecological restoration.
- ❖ It will also support biodiversity conservation and strengthen national and global environmental commitments.

Desert Moss - *Syntrichia caninervis*

- ❖ Scientists identified desert moss *Syntrichia caninervis* that may support future life on Mars.
- ❖ The moss can survive extreme dehydration, freezing temperatures, and high radiation.
- ❖ It can lose most of its water, enter dormancy, and quickly resume photosynthesis when moisture returns.
- ❖ Experiments in Mars-like conditions showed it can survive and regrow under low pressure and high carbon dioxide levels.
- ❖ It can tolerate temperatures up to -196°C and very high radiation levels.

Aghanashini–Vedavathi river linking project

- ❖ UNESCO raised concerns about the project's impact on the Western Ghats ecosystem.
- ❖ The project plans to divert about 35 million cubic feet (TMC ft) of water from the Aghanashini River to the Vedavathi River.
- ❖ UNESCO said all such projects must follow the World Heritage Convention, 1972 rules for protecting natural sites.
- ❖ The Western Ghats are a biodiversity hotspot and a UNESCO World Heritage Site with rich plants and animals.

Global Migratory Species Protection Initiative

- ❖ The Global Initiative on the Taking of Migratory Species (GTI) was launched at COP15 of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) held at Campo Grande, Brazil.
- ❖ It is a global initiative involving governments, conservation organisations, and local communities to stop illegal and unsustainable taking of migratory species.
- ❖ It aims to improve data collection, strengthen laws and policies, increase community participation, and raise awareness.

India's Third Cheetah Habitat

- ❖ Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve (VDTR) in Madhya Pradesh has been developed as India's third designated site for cheetah reintroduction under Project Cheetah.
- ❖ It is formed by merging the Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary and Durgavati Wildlife Sanctuary.
- ❖ It is located in the Bundelkhand region across Sagar, Damoh, and Narsinghpur districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ It was notified as a Tiger Reserve in September 2023 with approval from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- ❖ It will support the co-existence of cheetahs, tigers, leopards, and Indian wolves in a large grassland and forest ecosystem.

Anavaran Deforestation Alert System

- ❖ Forest Survey of India (FSI) has stopped issuing alerts from the AI-based Anavaran deforestation system since early 2026.
- ❖ The Anavaran system is an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based platform that detects forest loss using satellite data.
- ❖ It was launched in January 2024 to give near real-time alerts on deforestation to State Forest departments every 15 days.
- ❖ The system uses data from Sentinel-1 and Sentinel-2 satellites of the European Space Agency.
- ❖ It works on machine learning and satellite images to identify changes in forest cover with high accuracy (10–20 metre resolution).
- ❖ FSI works under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

REPORTS AND INDICATES

Global Residence Program Index 2026

- ❖ The United Arab Emirates ranked joint second in the 2026 index published by Henley & Partners.
- ❖ Greece secured the first position.
- ❖ The UAE shared the second position with Italy and Switzerland.
- ❖ The index evaluates 40 residence programmes based on the tax system, quality of life, visa access, and processing efficiency.
- ❖ The UAE improved from fifth position in 2025 to joint second position in 2026.

Global Mind Health 2025 Report

- ❖ Sapien Labs released the Global Mind Health 2025 Report under the Global Mind Project.
- ❖ The report is based on MHQ (Mind Health Quotient), which measures emotional, cognitive and social well-being.
- ❖ India ranked 60th globally among the 18–34 age group with an MHQ score of 33 (global average: 66).
- ❖ Indians aged 55 and above scored 96 and ranked 49th globally.
- ❖ The report noted 44% ultra-processed food consumption among Indian youth aged 18–34.

States Electricity Transition Report 2026

- ❖ A new report by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and Ember highlighted that Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan are leading in electric vehicle (EV) adoption and green hydrogen promotion.
- ❖ The report reviewed 21 States that account for 95% of India's electricity demand.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh achieved 10% EV adoption in FY25 and set a target of 22 GW solar capacity by FY27 and 1 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2028.
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh recorded 6.2% EV adoption, introduced an integrated renewable energy policy in 2024, and has 1,440 MW pumped hydro storage capacity.
- ❖ Rajasthan recorded 6.6% EV adoption and has the lowest green tariff premium among the three States.

Integrated Ocean Carbon Research Report 2026

- ❖ The IOC (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission) of UNESCO released the Integrated Ocean Carbon Research (IOC-R) Report.
- ❖ The report states that the ocean absorbs about 25% of human-produced carbon dioxide (CO₂).
- ❖ It highlights a 10–20% difference in global estimates of ocean carbon absorption due to limited data and scientific gaps.
- ❖ The report identifies five priority areas, including changes in the ocean carbon sink, role of marine biology, land–ocean–ice carbon exchange, industrial impacts, and marine carbon dioxide removal (mCDR).

Global Mind Health report – India

- ❖ Indian youth ranked 60th among 84 countries in youth mental well-being, according to the ‘Global Mind Health in 2025’ report released by Sapien Labs.
- ❖ The study surveyed more than 78,000 internet-enabled individuals across India.
- ❖ Mental well-being was measured using the Mind Health Quotient (MHQ), which evaluates 47 cognitive, emotional, social and physical indicators.
- ❖ Young adults aged 18–34 recorded an average MHQ score of 33, while individuals aged 55 and above scored 96.
- ❖ The report identified weaker family bonds, higher consumption of ultra-processed food and early smartphone exposure as key contributing factors.

Women, Business and the Law 2026 Report

- ❖ The World Bank released the Women, Business and the Law (WBL) 2026 report, highlighting gaps in the implementation of women’s economic rights.
- ❖ The report studies laws affecting women’s economic opportunities in 190 economies using the WBL 2.0 framework.
- ❖ The global average score is 67.9 for legal frameworks, but lower for supportive frameworks (47.3) and enforcement (53.4).
- ❖ Only 4% of women live in economies with near full legal equality across all three pillars.
- ❖ The report states that closing the gender gap in labour force participation could increase global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by over 20% in the next decade.

IEA Report 2026

- ❖ The International Energy Agency (IEA) has released its State of Energy Innovation 2026 report.

- ❖ It highlights that the global clean energy innovation is growing due to the competitiveness, energy security, and climate goals.
- ❖ In 2025, over 320 energy start-ups received first-round funding, and energy-related patents increased worldwide.
- ❖ The report notes that the electricity grid integration is very slow despite mature technologies due to regulatory and market barriers.
- ❖ Countries including the USA, Germany, China, and India are competing for the technological leadership in clean energy.

Innovators Business Environment Index 2026

- ❖ StartupBlink released the Innovators Business Environment Index (IBEI) 2026 to measure business conditions for innovators across countries.
- ❖ The Innovators Business Environment Index (IBEI) evaluates national business environments using a score from 0 to 100.
- ❖ It measures factors such as regulation, access to capital, taxation, digital infrastructure, and global mobility.
- ❖ The United States ranked first with a score of 100, followed by Singapore in second place and the United Kingdom in third place.
- ❖ India ranked 54th in the world with a score of 55.035.
- ❖ India ranked ahead of China, which was placed at 85th position in the index.

World Obesity Atlas 2026

- ❖ The World Obesity Atlas 2026 report has revealed that India has overtaken the United States to become the second-highest country globally in childhood obesity.
- ❖ The report was released by the World Obesity Federation (WOF).
- ❖ India ranks second globally, after China, in childhood obesity.
- ❖ About 41 million Indian children were estimated to have high Body Mass Index (BMI) in 2025.
- ❖ Around 14 million children in India were living with obesity.
- ❖ By 2040, nearly 20 million children in India are projected to be living with obesity.

UN Women Report 2026

- ❖ UN Women has released the report titled “Ensuring and Strengthening Access to Justice for All Women and Girls.”
- ❖ The report states that women globally hold only 64% of the legal rights of men.

- ❖ It also says no country in the world has achieved full legal equality for women and girls.
- ❖ In 54% of countries, rape is not legally defined based on consent.
- ❖ Nearly three-fourths of countries still allow child marriage under certain conditions.
- ❖ In 44% of countries, there is no legal requirement for equal pay for equal work.

State of the World's Migratory Species Report

- ❖ An interim update of the State of the World's Migratory Species Report warned that nearly half of migratory species populations are declining globally.
- ❖ The report is prepared under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) under the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- ❖ It assesses the conservation status of 1,189 migratory species listed under the CMS treaty.
- ❖ The report shows that about 49% of migratory species populations are declining.
- ❖ Around 24% of these species face the risk of extinction.
- ❖ Major threats include habitat loss, overexploitation, infrastructure development, and diseases such as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1).

State of India's Environment Report 2026

- ❖ The Centre for Science and Environment has released the State of India's Environment Report 2026, highlighting major environmental challenges in India.
- ❖ It states that extreme weather events occurred on 99% of days in 2025, causing 4,419 deaths and affecting 17.41 million hectares of crops.
- ❖ It notes rising human-tiger conflicts, linked to growing tiger populations, habitat pressure, and increased human settlements near forests.
- ❖ The report highlights gaps in air pollution monitoring, stating that only about 15% of India's population lives within 10 km of a continuous air-quality monitoring station, leaving most regions without adequate pollution data.

Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026

- ❖ NITI Aayog released the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026 to assess the financial health of Indian states.
- ❖ States account for nearly one-third of India's government debt and deliver key public services, making systematic evaluation of finances important.

- ❖ Top-performing states in the Achiever category are Odisha, Goa, and Jharkhand, with high own-tax revenue, large capital outlay (4–5% of Gross State Domestic Product), and low fiscal deficit (below 3% of GSDP).
- ❖ Bottom states include Punjab, West Bengal, and Kerala due to higher non-developmental spending and weaker fiscal patterns.
- ❖ For North-Eastern and Himalayan states, Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand rank highest, while Himachal Pradesh and Manipur rank low because of weak revenue and persistent fiscal stress.
- ❖ The FHI evaluates states on five key pillars: Quality of Expenditure, Revenue Mobilisation, Fiscal Prudence, Debt Index, and Debt Sustainability using data from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

Special 301 Report

- ❖ The United States Trade Representative began Section 301 investigations on major trading partners, including India, China and the European Union, over trade practices.
- ❖ The Special 301 Report is published annually by the United States Trade Representative under the Trade Act of 1974.
- ❖ It identifies countries that do not provide adequate protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).
- ❖ The report also assesses fair market access for United States intellectual property holders.
- ❖ Countries are classified as Priority Foreign Country, Priority Watch List, and Watch List.

Global Capital Flows Report 2025

- ❖ The Global Capital Flows Report 2025, released by Colliers, stated that India ranked fourth globally in cross-border investments in land and development sites.
- ❖ The ranking highlights India's growing importance in global real estate investment.
- ❖ Real estate investments across Asia-Pacific (APAC) markets reached USD 71.9 billion in the first half of 2025.
- ❖ India received about USD 3 billion in real estate investments in H1 2025.
- ❖ Foreign investments contributed about USD 1.6 billion (around 52%), while domestic investments increased significantly.
- ❖ Major investment sectors include residential and office real estate projects.

Landfill Methane Emission reduction

- ❖ The report “Reducing Methane Emissions from Landfills: The potential of biocover systems” was released by the Climate and Clean Air Coalition.
- ❖ The report highlights that biocover systems can effectively reduce methane emissions from landfills while improving air quality and public health.
- ❖ Biocovers are microbial systems that use naturally occurring bacteria to convert methane into less harmful carbon dioxide and water.
- ❖ They can mitigate up to 50 percent of methane emissions over a long period, making them useful for waste management.
- ❖ Landfills contribute about 11 percent of global human-made methane emissions, and methane has a very high global warming potential.

UNEP Report 2026 on Unused Medicines

- ❖ The United Nations Environment Programme has released the “Safe Disposal of Unused Medicines” report, highlighting risks of improper disposal to the environment and public health.
- ❖ The report adopts a One Health approach integrating human, animal, and environmental health systems for safe medicine disposal.
- ❖ Improper disposal contributes to Antimicrobial Resistance, ecosystem toxicity, and endocrine disruption.
- ❖ Around 50% of medicines become waste globally, and unused medicines form about 3% of hazardous healthcare waste.
- ❖ Wastewater treatment plants are often ineffective in removing pharmaceutical pollutants completely.
- ❖ Suggested methods include high-temperature incineration, waste immobilization, engineered landfills, and co-processing.

World Happiness Report 2026

- ❖ 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.

India BioEconomy Report 2026

- ❖ The Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) released the India BioEconomy Report (IBER) 2026 in New Delhi.
- ❖ India's bioeconomy reached \$195.3 billion in 2025, contributing about 4.8–5% of GDP.
- ❖ The sector grew at 18%, showing strong expansion in recent years.
- ❖ The BioIndustrial segment was the largest, followed by BioPharma, Bio Services, and Bio Agri.
- ❖ India has over 11,800 biotech startups and more than 150 Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in life sciences.
- ❖ The report highlights India's potential to become a global leader in biotechnology and aims toward a \$1 trillion bioeconomy by 2047.

WTO Global Trade Outlook 2026

- ❖ The World Trade Organization (WTO) released the Global Trade Outlook report, highlighting a slowdown in world trade.
- ❖ It projected global merchandise trade growth to fall to 1.9% in 2026 from 4.6% in 2025.
- ❖ The ongoing conflict in West Asia and rising energy prices are identified as major reasons.
- ❖ Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz have increased oil prices and affected global supply chains.
- ❖ High energy costs are expected to impact sectors like transport, agriculture and manufacturing.
- ❖ India may face risks due to dependence on oil and fertiliser imports from the Gulf region.

Global Terrorism Index 2026

- ❖ Global Terrorism Index 2026 was released by the Institute for Economics and Peace.
- ❖ Pakistan ranked 1st with the highest impact of terrorism, recording 1,139 deaths and 1,045 incidents in 2025.

- ❖ India ranked 13th with a score of 6.43, reporting over 142 incidents and more than 100 deaths.
- ❖ The report covers 163 countries, representing about 99.7% of the world's population.
- ❖ Globally, terrorism deaths decreased by 28% to 5,582, and incidents fell by 22% in 2025.
- ❖ The Islamic State was identified as the deadliest terrorist group worldwide.

Himalayan Glacier Loss Report 2026

- ❖ Changing Dynamics of Glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalayan Region from 1990 to 2020 was released by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.
- ❖ The report shows glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region lost around 12% of their total area between 1990 and 2020.
- ❖ The ice loss rate has doubled after 2000, indicating faster glacier melting due to rising global temperatures.
- ❖ Glaciers have lost up to 27 metres of ice thickness since 1975, showing a long-term decline.
- ❖ The region is called the “Third Pole” because it stores large amounts of ice outside the Arctic and Antarctic.
- ❖ Melting glaciers affect major rivers like the Ganges River, Indus River and Brahmaputra River, impacting water supply.

SDG Bulletin Report on Prosperity

- ❖ Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the report titled “Delivering Prosperity at Scale: India’s Economic Transformation through the SDGs”.
- ❖ It highlights India’s progress in economic growth, poverty reduction and improvement in living standards.
- ❖ It focuses on inclusive development, job creation, infrastructure growth and sustainable economic policies.
- ❖ The report shows how SDGs are integrated into national planning and governance frameworks.

Consumer Justice Report 2026

- ❖ The Consumer Justice Report 2026 was released by India Justice Report, assessing India’s consumer dispute redressal system.

- ❖ It highlights rising pendency with over 5 lakh cases and delays beyond the 3–5 months' timeline.
- ❖ The report notes issues like vacancies (~40%), poor infrastructure and low use of mediation.
- ❖ Major complaints are from banking, insurance and housing sectors.

MoSPI - Planet in Focus Report

- ❖ The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the “Planet in Focus” report on environmental sustainability under SDGs recently.
- ❖ The report assesses India’s progress in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including sanitation, climate action, and ecosystems.
- ❖ India achieved Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, and 97.2% schools have gender-segregated toilets (SDG 6).
- ❖ Waste-recycling facilities increased from 829 (2019–20) to 3,036 (2024–25), improving sustainable consumption (SDG 12).
- ❖ 698 out of 784 local bodies implemented disaster risk reduction strategies aligned with the Sendai Framework (SDG 13).
- ❖ Fisheries yield increased, and Ramsar wetland area doubled, but challenges like air pollution, water stress, and waste management remain.

UNIGME Report on Child Mortality 2025

- ❖ The United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UNIGME) released its 2025 report recently.
- ❖ Globally, about 4.9 million under-five deaths were recorded in 2024, with newborns accounting for nearly half.
- ❖ Major causes include preterm birth complications, infections, pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria, and malnutrition.
- ❖ India’s under-5 mortality rate declined to about 26.6 (2024) and neonatal mortality to 16.7, showing significant progress.
- ❖ India played a key role in reducing child mortality in South Asia through immunisation, institutional deliveries, and newborn care.
- ❖ However, challenges remain as neonatal deaths are still high, and progress needs to accelerate to meet SDG targets.

National Report on Nagoya Protocol

- ❖ India has submitted its First National Report (NR1) on the Nagoya Protocol implementation to the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat.
- ❖ The report explains India's work on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS – sharing benefits from genetic resources) from 2017 to 2025.
- ❖ About 2,76,653 Biodiversity Management Committees were formed across India to protect local biodiversity.
- ❖ A total of 12,830 approvals were given for research and commercial use by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) and State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs).
- ❖ ₹216.31 crore was collected, and ₹139.69 crore was shared with local communities, farmers and traditional knowledge holders.
- ❖ The Nagoya Protocol (adopted in 2010) ensures fair sharing of benefits from genetic resources and protects traditional knowledge.

UN World Water Development Report 2026

- ❖ The United Nations Water released the World Water Development Report 2026 titled “Water for All People: Equal Rights and Opportunities.”
- ❖ 2.1 billion people still lack safely managed drinking water worldwide.
- ❖ women and girls spend about 250 million hours daily collecting water.
- ❖ It emphasizes gender inequality, as women are underrepresented in water governance and leadership roles.

WMO State of Global Climate Report 2026

- ❖ The World Meteorological Organization released the State of the Global Climate 2026 Report, warning that Earth's climate is “flashing red”.
- ❖ The report states that Earth's energy imbalance has reached a 65-year high, meaning more heat is being trapped than released into space.
- ❖ Greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O) are at record levels, accelerating global warming.
- ❖ Oceans absorb about 90% of excess heat, leading to ocean warming, sea-level rise, and ocean acidification.
- ❖ Global temperature is about 1.43°C above pre-industrial levels, causing extreme weather events like heatwaves, floods, and droughts.
- ❖ The report highlights serious impacts on ecosystems, human health, livelihoods, and global economic stability.

World Air Quality Report 2025

- ❖ The World Air Quality Report 2025, released by IQAir, ranked Pakistan as the most polluted country.
- ❖ It is followed by Bangladesh and Tajikistan, while India ranked sixth.
- ❖ The rankings are based on PM2.5 levels.
- ❖ At the city level, Loni in Uttar Pradesh was the most polluted, while Delhi ranked fourth globally.
- ❖ Only about 9 percent of countries met safe air quality standards set by the World Health Organization.

IIED Food Security Index

- ❖ The International Institute for Environment and Development released the IIED Food Security Index.
- ❖ The index measures food security based on four pillars: availability, accessibility, utilisation (use of food), and sustainability.
- ❖ It studies the impact of climate change under different warming levels, like 1.5°C and 2°C.
- ❖ India is ranked among the most vulnerable large economies to food insecurity in the index.
- ❖ India's food security score may fall by about 15% under warming scenarios, increasing the risk of severe food insecurity.

NITI Aayog Report on Natural Farming

- ❖ NITI Aayog released a report titled "Empowering Farmers: Natural Farming Training Toolkit & Best Practices Guide."
- ❖ Natural farming is a chemical-free, livestock-based farming system that integrates crops, trees, and animals to enhance biodiversity.
- ❖ It relies on natural ecological processes and avoids external chemical inputs, unlike conventional farming.
- ❖ The approach reduces cultivation costs, improves farm incomes, and enhances soil organic carbon and microbial activity.
- ❖ It also conserves water and electricity and reduces greenhouse gas emissions significantly.

NHAI Green Cover Index 2025–26

- ❖ NHAI released the first National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI) 2025–26 in collaboration with ISRO's NRSC(National Remote Sensing Centre).
- ❖ The index measures the percentage of green canopy along National Highway stretches using satellite data.
- ❖ It uses high-resolution multispectral imagery from ISRO's Resourcesat-2/2A (LISS-IV) and Cartosat-2S for validation.
- ❖ The assessment covers around 30,000 km of highways across 24 states under the operation and maintenance phase.
- ❖ Data is published on the Bhuvan GIS platform for transparency and public access.

PLFS 2025 Annual Report

- ❖ PLFS (Periodic Labour Force Survey) is released by NSO (National Statistics Office) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- ❖ From 2025, the survey period changed to calendar year (January–December) instead of agricultural year (July–June).
- ❖ It measures key indicators like LFPR (Labour Force Participation Rate), WPR (Worker Population Ratio), and UR (Unemployment Rate).
- ❖ LFPR for age 15+ is 59.3%, WPR is 57.4%, and UR is 3.1%, showing overall employment conditions in India.
- ❖ Agriculture remains the largest employer in India, but its share slightly decreased in 2025 compared to the previous year.

Global Maternal Deaths Report 2023

- ❖ A global analysis published in The Lancet Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Women's Health reported maternal mortality data for 2023.
- ❖ India recorded about 24,700 maternal deaths in 2023, among the highest in South Asia.
- ❖ The study is based on GBD (Global Burden of Disease) 2023, covering 204 countries.
- ❖ Globally, around 2.4 lakh maternal deaths occurred, with MMR (Maternal Mortality Ratio) at 190.5 per lakh live births.
- ❖ Maternal deaths have declined since 1990, but progress has slowed in recent years.
- ❖ Major causes include maternal haemorrhage and hypertensive disorders during pregnancy.

STATES

CM Shri Schools - Haryana

- ❖ The Haryana government announced the launch of CM Shri Schools during the Budget Session of the State Assembly.
- ❖ The schools will be started on the lines of PM Shri (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India) Schools.
- ❖ CM Shri Schools will follow the CBSE curriculum pattern.
- ❖ The schools will focus on modern infrastructure and quality education.
- ❖ 25% seats will be reserved for EWS and DG (Disadvantaged Groups) under the RTE Act (Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act), 2009.

Pakyong Airport Renaming

- ❖ The Sikkim Chief Minister announced that Pakyong Airport will be renamed as Trilochan Pokhrel Airport to honour the freedom fighter Trilochan Pokhrel.
- ❖ Trilochan Pokhrel, also called “Gandhi Pokhrel,” was Sikkim’s first independence activist.
- ❖ He participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–22), Civil Disobedience Movement (1930–34), and Quit India Movement (1942).
- ❖ Pakyong Airport is the only airport in Sikkim.

Removal of Two-Child Rule

- ❖ The Rajasthan Cabinet has removed the rule that barred candidates with more than two children from contesting Panchayati Raj and urban local body elections.
- ❖ The two-child norm was introduced in 1995 for population control but is now considered outdated, as the fertility rate has dropped to 2 from 3.6 in 1991–94.
- ❖ Two Amendment Bills will be introduced in the ongoing Assembly session to change the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, and the Rajasthan Municipalities Act, 2009.

Kerala’s Vision 2031

- ❖ Vision 2031 is Kerala’s long-term policy framework to transform the state by its 75th year of statehood into a knowledge-driven, socially just, and democratically vibrant society.
- ❖ It was presented at the ‘Vision 2031: International Conference on Development and Democracy’ held in Thiruvananthapuram.

- ❖ The vision emphasizes participatory governance, evidence-based policy, and public consultation in decision-making.
- ❖ The state government plans follow-up actions, including legislative reforms and translating conference recommendations into projects through government and semi-government agencies.
- ❖ Key focus areas include knowledge economy, environmental sustainability, quality employment, social justice, and strengthened local governance.

Naxal-Free status - Bihar

- ❖ Bihar has been declared Naxal-free after the surrender of the last armed Maoist.
- ❖ The Union government has set March 31, 2026, as the deadline for eradicating Left Wing Extremism (LWE) from India.
- ❖ LWE, also called Naxalism or Maoism, began with the Naxalbari movement of 1967 in West Bengal.
- ❖ It spread across the Red Corridor, affecting states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, Kerala, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and parts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Bhu-Aadhaar for Land Parcels

- ❖ The Delhi government has introduced Bhu-Aadhaar, giving every land parcel a unique 14-digit identification number.
- ❖ It is part of the Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) system to modernise land records and ensure transparency.
- ❖ Each land parcel will have a geo-referenced code for accurate mapping and ownership verification.
- ❖ Drone surveys and digital mapping will create precise land maps covering coordinates, size, and ownership details.
- ❖ The system will reduce disputes, prevent multiple registrations, and support an Integrated Land Information Management System (ILIMS).

Kerala Nativity Card Bill

- ❖ The Kerala Nativity Card Bill has been referred to the Subject Committee on Land Revenue and Devaswom by the Kerala Assembly.
- ❖ The Bill aims to provide legal backing to the nativity card initiative, which serves as an authoritative identity proof for Keralites.

- ❖ The card will replace the current nativity certificate and include a photograph for permanent identification.
- ❖ It can be issued to people born in Kerala or those with Kerala-born ancestors who have not accepted foreign citizenship.

Yadava-Era Stone Pillar

- ❖ Remains of a 12th-century Yadava-era temple-style stone pillar were found near the Vena River banks at Hinganghat in Maharashtra.
- ❖ The fragments were discovered in Hinganghat town of Wardha district, about 70 km from Nagpur.
- ❖ Researchers identified the pillar as belonging to the Seuna or Yadava dynasty of the 12th to 13th centuries.
- ❖ The carvings, including a lotus motif, are made from black basalt and reflect the Hemadpanti architectural style.
- ❖ Hemadpanti style is known for using large interlocking stone blocks without lime mortar.
- ❖ The pillar may have been part of a temple sabhamandap or near the garbhagriha, indicating the presence of a major medieval temple complex in the region.

Childbirth Incentive Scheme

- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh government announced a ₹25,000 financial incentive for couples having a second or third child.
- ❖ The scheme aims to increase the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in the state.
- ❖ The TFR of Andhra Pradesh is about 1.5, which is below the replacement level of 2.1.
- ❖ Under the scheme, ₹25,000 will be given to couples at the time of delivery for the second or third child.
- ❖ The policy aims to address declining birth rates and an increasing ageing population in the state.
- ❖ The government is also considering changes in rules related to the two-child norm in local body elections.

herSTART 5.0 Programme

- ❖ The herSTART 5.0 programme was launched in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, to support women entrepreneurs.

- ❖ The programme is implemented by the Gujarat University Startup and Entrepreneurship Council.
- ❖ It provides incubation, mentorship and market access for women-led startups.
- ❖ The programme aims to increase the participation of women in the startup ecosystem.

Local Body Elections in Puducherry

- ❖ A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been filed in the Madras High Court seeking directions to conduct local body elections in the Union Territory of Puducherry.
- ❖ The Madras High Court has issued notices to the Puducherry Government and the State Election Commission regarding the conduct of local body elections.
- ❖ During French rule, elected communes and municipalities were created to support grassroots democratic governance in the region before its liberation in 1954.
- ❖ Elections to local bodies were held until 1968, after which they stopped for about 38 years.
- ❖ After the issue was raised in Parliament, local body elections were conducted in Puducherry in 2006.
- ❖ The tenure of these local bodies ended in 2011, and no local body elections have been held in the Union Territory since then.
- ❖ The Common Election Commission for Union Territories, created under Articles 243-K and 243-ZA of the Constitution, conducts elections for Panchayats and Municipalities in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, and Ladakh was added to this commission in September 2023.

Mizo Language – Eighth Schedule Proposal

- ❖ The Mizoram Legislative Assembly has unanimously passed a resolution seeking inclusion of the Mizo language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.
- ❖ The inclusion of the Mizo language will not affect the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status of the Mizo community under the Scheduled Tribes Order, 1950.
- ❖ Currently, the Eighth Schedule recognises 22 languages, which receive the government support for the development and use in official examinations and administration.
- ❖ The State government also suggested exploring Sixth Schedule status for the entire Mizoram, similar to arrangements in Meghalaya.

Cash Assistance Schemes for Women 2026

- ❖ On International Women's Day, the state governments of Assam and Manipur announced cash assistance for women, while Punjab rolled out a monthly stipend for eligible women.
- ❖ Assam announced that ₹9,000 each will be transferred to about 40 lakh beneficiary families under the Orunodoi Scheme through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) on 10 March 2026.
- ❖ The scheme, launched on 2 October 2020, aims to empower women and support poor families; the ₹9,000 includes a Bihu bonus and four monthly instalments (January–April).
- ❖ The total disbursement will be about ₹3,600 crore, making it one of the largest single-day fund transfers in Assam's history.
- ❖ Manipur Government earmarked ₹350 crore to assist about 3.5 lakh women affected by ethnic conflict in the State.
- ❖ In Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party government announced a monthly stipend scheme for eligible women in its last Budget before the next Assembly election.

Freedom of Religion Bill 2026

- ❖ The Chhattisgarh government approved the Freedom of Religion Bill 2026 to prevent illegal religious conversions.
- ❖ The bill prohibits conversions done by force, fraud, inducement (including financial incentives), or undue influence.
- ❖ The law applies to all religions and ensures conversions happen voluntarily.
- ❖ It mandates that any conversion through prohibited methods is punishable under the law.
- ❖ The bill aligns with the Indian Constitution (Articles 25–28), which guarantees freedom of religion but allows regulation in the interest of public order, morality, and health.
- ❖ The proposal aims to regulate religious conversions while maintaining public order in the state.

Medieval Gajapathi Inscription

- ❖ A medieval Telugu inscription linked to the Gajapathi dynasty was discovered at the Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The inscription is associated with Purushottama Deva, a 15th-century ruler of the Gajapathi kingdom of Odisha.

- ❖ It mentions Kumaraguru Mahapatra, a steward officer serving under the Gajapathi ruler.
- ❖ The inscription was found on a stone pillar in the temple mandapa and is written in Telugu.
- ❖ The temple artefacts are believed to have been brought from Kondaveedu Fort, an important medieval centre in Andhra Pradesh.

Ladakh Statehood and Sixth Schedule Demand

- ❖ Protests in Leh and Kargil demanded the statehood, Sixth Schedule status, Public Service Commission (PSC), and greater representation for Ladakh.
- ❖ Ladakh became a Union Territory (UT) without legislature after the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, leading to a “representation deficit”.
- ❖ Around 97% of the population belongs to tribal communities, seeking protection of land, culture, and the fragile ecosystem.
- ❖ Demand includes inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution (Article 244(2)) for Autonomous District Councils (ADCs).
- ❖ The Sixth Schedule currently applies to tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.
- ❖ Concerns include strategic security due to borders with China and Pakistan, along with constitutional and administrative challenges.
- ❖ Ladakh Reservation (Amendment) Regulation, 2025 provides 85% reservation and domicile-based safeguards for locals.

Gaudham Yojana – Chhattisgarh

- ❖ The Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh has launched the Gaudham Yojana to establish about 1,460 shelters for stray and abandoned cattle across the state.
- ❖ The scheme aims to ensure proper protection, shelter, feeding, and scientific management of stray cattle.
- ❖ The initiative promotes traditional cow protection along with improved livestock management and rural economy support.

Ancient Petroglyphs Discovery

- ❖ Ancient petroglyphs have been discovered near Beerappa Temple in Telangana, adding to India’s prehistoric heritage.
- ❖ Petroglyphs are images carved on rock surfaces by removing outer layers using harder tools.

- ❖ The term comes from Greek words “petros” (stone) and “glyphein” (to carve).
- ❖ Techniques include pecking, incising, abrading, drilling, polishing, and scratching.
- ❖ They are found worldwide except Antarctica; in India, the Edakkal Caves are a famous example.

Freedom of Religion Bill 2026

- ❖ The Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Bill 2026 was passed by the Maharashtra Assembly to curb forced religious conversions.
- ❖ The Bill aims to regulate religious conversions and ensure that conversions happen voluntarily without coercion, fraud or inducement.
- ❖ It provides strict punishments, including imprisonment up to 7 years and fines for illegal conversion activities.
- ❖ Higher penalties are prescribed for cases involving minors, women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to ensure their protection.
- ❖ The law also covers conversions through marriage and mass conversions, ensuring transparency and legal accountability.

GHADC Term Extension 2026

- ❖ The Meghalaya government extended the tenure of the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC) by six months.
- ❖ The decision was taken in a Cabinet meeting held in Shillong, Meghalaya, amid protests and unrest in the Garo Hills region.
- ❖ The issue is related to demands to restrict non-tribal participation in GHADC elections.
- ❖ GHADC is a body under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, meant to protect tribal rights and governance.
- ❖ The extension allows time for discussions on electoral reforms and helps reduce tensions in the region.

Sarhul Festival

- ❖ Sarhul is a major tribal festival celebrated recently mainly in Jharkhand and parts of Odisha, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh.
- ❖ It marks the worship of nature and the arrival of the spring season in tribal communities.

- ❖ The festival is associated with the sacred Sal tree, believed to be the abode of the village deity (Sarna Maa).
- ❖ It symbolises the union of the Sun and the Earth, representing renewal of life and ecological balance.

Assam Peace Settlement with Kuki & Hmar Groups

- ❖ The Government of Assam signed peace agreements with Kuki militant groups and the Hmar People's Convention–Democratic.
- ❖ The agreements were signed as Memorandums of Settlement (MoS) with support from the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ❖ They aim to end insurgency and promote peace, stability, and development in the region.
- ❖ Welfare councils like the Kuki Welfare and Development Council (KWDC) and the Hmar Welfare and Development Council (HWDC) will be formed.
- ❖ The pact also includes rehabilitation of former cadres and socio-economic development in affected areas.

Musi River Rejuvenation Project – Telangana

- ❖ Telangana State Government announced a Cabinet sub-committee for the Musi River Rejuvenation Project in 2026.
- ❖ The project aims to clean and restore the Musi River and improve the environment in Hyderabad.
- ❖ A Cabinet sub-committee led by Bhatti Vikramarka will monitor and guide the project.
- ❖ The government will provide proper rehabilitation and resettlement to people affected near river areas.
- ❖ The project focuses on river cleaning, urban development, and better living conditions.

Uniform Civil Code Bill 2026

- ❖ Gujarat became the second state after Uttarakhand to pass the Uniform Civil Code Bill 2026, creating a common law for all communities.
- ❖ The law regulates marriage, divorce, succession, and live-in relationships with compulsory registration and legal procedures.
- ❖ Practices like polygamy are banned, and fraudulent or forced marriages can lead to imprisonment and fines.

- ❖ Live-in relationships must be registered, and women are given legal protection, including maintenance rights, while children are treated as legitimate.
- ❖ Scheduled Tribes are exempted, and the bill was drafted based on recommendations of a committee led by Ranjana Desai.
- ❖ The concept of the Uniform Civil Code is mentioned under Article 44 of the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution of India.

Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 - Meghalaya

- ❖ Meghalaya became the 12th state to sign reform-based MoU under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0.
- ❖ JJM aims to provide functional household tap water connections in rural areas.
- ❖ JJM 2.0 focuses on service delivery, sustainability, and decentralised water management.
- ❖ The MoU promotes the role of Gram Panchayats and Village Water and Sanitation Committees in managing water supply.
- ❖ Meghalaya has achieved over 83% rural tap water coverage under the mission.

Lake and Air Watch Initiative

- ❖ Gujarat launched the Lake and Air Watch initiative to monitor and improve lake health and air quality across cities.
- ❖ It uses satellite technology to track lake area changes, algae growth, waste and water quality indicators.
- ❖ Real-time Air Quality Index monitoring will be set up in 17 municipal corporations and 152 municipal areas.
- ❖ The system gives automatic alerts when air pollution rises or lake conditions worsen.

Microalgae Air Tower in Delhi

- ❖ India's first microalgae-based air tower was installed in New Delhi to reduce air pollution from vehicles.
- ❖ The tower is set up near the Aerocity highway as a pilot project to test new pollution control technology.
- ❖ It uses microalgae and photosynthesis to absorb pollutants like carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter.
- ❖ Polluted air is taken into the tower and converted into oxygen and algal biomass naturally.
- ❖ It is a nature-based and sustainable method for improving urban air quality.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS

T.K. Oommen Demise

- ❖ Eminent sociologist T.K. Oommen passed away on 26 February 2026 in Gurugram at the age of 88.
- ❖ T. K. Oommen was Professor Emeritus at Jawaharlal Nehru University's Centre for the Study of Social Systems.
- ❖ He was a leading architect of modern Indian sociology and was known for his work on social justice, identity, pluralism, social movements, and political sociology.
- ❖ He wrote his PhD thesis on the Bhoodan–Gramdan Movement led by Vinoba Bhave.
- ❖ He served as President of the International Sociological Association and the Indian Sociological Society, and was a member of the Sachar Committee.
- ❖ He was also the chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the Gujarat Harmony Project, formed after the 2002 communal violence.
- ❖ He received the Padma Bhushan in 2008 and authored around 20 books and many research articles.

BAFTA 2026

- ❖ The 79th British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Awards 2026 were held at London's Royal Festival Hall.
- ❖ The film *One Battle After Another* won six awards, including Best Film and Best Director for Paul Thomas Anderson.
- ❖ The Manipuri-language Indian film *Boong* won Best Children's and Family Film, marking the first time an Indian film has received this award.
- ❖ *Sinners* won three awards, including Original Screenplay and Supporting Actress.
- ❖ *Hamnet* won two awards, including the Outstanding British Film and Leading Actress.
- ❖ Winners in acting categories included Robert Aramayo (Best Actor, BAFTA Rising Star), Jessie Buckley (Leading Actress), Wunmi Mosaku (Supporting Actress), and Sean Penn (Supporting Actor).

Chicago Alumni Award

- ❖ K.V. Subramanian became the first Indian economist to receive the University of Chicago Alumni Award for Professional Achievement(2026).
- ❖ It is the first time in the award's 85-year history that an Indian economist has received it.

- ❖ K.V. Subramanian served as Chief Economic Adviser of India (2018–2021).
- ❖ He also served as Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Jnanpith Award 2026 – Vairamuthu

- ❖ Vairamuthu received the Jnanpith Award 2026, becoming the third Tamil writer to win the honour after 24 years.
- ❖ Earlier Tamil recipients include Akilan and Jayakanthan.
- ❖ Vairamuthu won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2003 for his novel Kallikattu Ithikasam.
- ❖ The Jnanpith Award is the oldest and highest literary award in India, instituted in 1961 by Bharatiya Jnanpith, founded by Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain in 1944.
- ❖ The award is given to Indian writers writing in languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India and English.
- ❖ Out of 23 eligible languages, the award has been presented for works in 16 languages.

Jürgen Habermas demise (1929–2026)

- ❖ Influential German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas passed away at the age of 96.
- ❖ He was a key 20th-century German philosopher and social theorist, known for advocating deliberative democracy and the public sphere as essential for legitimate governance.
- ❖ He belonged to the Frankfurt School of critical theory.
- ❖ His work focused on communicative rationality, democracy, and the rule of law.
- ❖ His ideas influenced debates on democracy and European integration, including the European Union.

Oscars 2026

- ❖ The winners of the 98th Academy Awards (Oscars 2026) were announced in Los Angeles, United States.
- ❖ The Best Picture award was won by the film *One Battle After Another*, directed by Paul Thomas Anderson.
- ❖ Michael B. Jordan won the Best Actor award for his performance in the film *Sinners*.
- ❖ Jessie Buckley won the Best Actress award for the film *Hamnet*.
- ❖ The Best Animated Feature award was won by *KPop Demon Hunters*.

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025

- ❖ Sahitya Akademi announced awards for outstanding literary works in 24 Indian languages.
- ❖ The awards recognise excellence across genres like poetry, novels, short stories, essays, memoirs, and literary criticism.
- ❖ Among poetry winners are Shrestha Kabita (Bengali) by Prasun Bandyopadhyay, Bhattkhadaki (Gujarati) by Yogesh Vaidya, and Animesha (Telugu) by Nandini Sidha Reddy.
- ❖ Notable winners include Crimson Spring (English novel) by Navtej Sarna, Jeete Jee Allahabad (Hindi memoir) by Mamta Kalia, and Maayaamanushyar (Malayalam novel) by N. Prabhakaran.
- ❖ In Tamil, Sa. Tamilselvan won for Thamiz Sirukathaiyin Thadangal (literary criticism), highlighting Tamil short story evolution.
- ❖ The award includes a copper plaque, shawl, and ₹1,00,000 cash prize for each recipient.

Living Tamil Award for World Literature

- ❖ Jeyamohan announced a new literary honour called the Living Tamil Award for World Literature.
- ❖ The award carries a prize of ₹1 crore (around \$100,000), making it one of India's biggest literary awards.
- ❖ It will recognise outstanding works in both Indian and global literature across languages and genres.
- ❖ The winner will be announced simultaneously in New Delhi and New York City.
- ❖ The initiative reflects efforts within Tamil Nadu literary circles to create independent recognition platforms.

Ramnath Goenka Awards 2026

- ❖ Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards 2026 honoured 24 journalists across 19 categories in New Delhi.
- ❖ The awards are presented by Ramnath Goenka Foundation and were given by Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan.
- ❖ They recognise excellence in print, digital, and broadcast journalism across India.
- ❖ Some winners include Avadhesh Akodia (Print Hindi), Sarvapriya Sangwan (Broadcast Hindi), and Praveen Jain (Photojournalism).
- ❖ Other winners include Deeptiman Tiwary (Politics reporting) and Mridulika Jha (Investigative reporting).
- ❖ The awards are named after Ramnath Goenka, known for fearless journalism.

SPORTS

Winter Olympics 2026

- ❖ The 2026 Winter Olympics were successfully held from 6 to 22 February 2026 in Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy.
- ❖ Norway topped the medal table with 18 gold medals and 41 total medals.
- ❖ The United States finished second with 33 total medals, while the Netherlands secured third place with 20 medals.
- ❖ Italy, the host nation, won 30 total medals, including 10 gold medals.
- ❖ Spain, Brazil, and Kazakhstan won historic first or rare gold medals in this edition.

World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026

- ❖ India finished first at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026 held in New Delhi.
- ❖ India won a total of 208 medals, including 75 gold, 69 silver and 64 bronze medals.
- ❖ Russia finished second with 35 medals, while Bosnia and Herzegovina secured third place.
- ❖ Preeti Pal, a double Paralympic bronze medallist, won a gold medal in the women's 200 m T35–T37 race.
- ❖ Shubham Juyal won gold in the men's shot put F57 event with a throw of 14.45 metres.
- ❖ Rakeshbhai Bhatt won gold in the men's 200 m T37–T44 race, leading an all-Indian podium finish.
- ❖ Manojkumar Sabapathi secured gold in the men's 800 m T53–T54 event.

World Boxing Futures Cup

- ❖ Chandrika Pujari of India won a gold medal at the World Boxing Futures Cup 2026 held in Bangkok, Thailand.
- ❖ She won the women's 51 kg category by defeating Mardonova Nazokat of Uzbekistan in the final.
- ❖ India finished the tournament with five medals – 1 gold, 3 silver and 1 bronze.
- ❖ Gunjan (women's 48 kg), Joyshree Devi (women's 54 kg), and L. Ambekar Meetei (men's 50 kg) won silver medals in their respective categories.
- ❖ Radhamani Longjam won a bronze medal in the women's 57 kg category.
- ❖ The tournament featured young boxers competing in Youth Olympic weight categories and served as preparation for the 2026 Summer Youth Olympics in Dakar, Senegal.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Wildlife Day 2026 - March 03

- ❖ The day aims to raise awareness about the conservation of wild animals and plants.
- ❖ It was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2013.
- ❖ The day marks the signing of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973.
- ❖ The theme of the year 2026 is “Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods.”

Civil Accounts Day 2026 – March 01

- ❖ India has celebrated the 50th Civil Accounts Day on 1 March 2026 to mark the Foundation Day of the Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS).
- ❖ The ICAS was established in 1976 under the Ministry of Finance (MoF) after separating the audit and accounting functions of the Union Government.
- ❖ The reform was implemented through the Comptroller and Auditor General (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Amendment Act, 1976 and the Departmentalisation of Union Accounts Ordinance, 1976.
- ❖ The Public Financial Management System (PFMS), developed by the Office of the Controller General of Accounts (CGA), is the main Information Technology (IT) platform for government payments, receipts and accounting.
- ❖ PFMS was launched in 2009 as the Central Plan Schemes Monitoring System (CPSMS) and later expanded for Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

National Safety Day 2026 - March 04

- ❖ The day aims to promote workplace safety and accident prevention in India.
- ❖ National Safety Day is organised by the National Safety Council, which was established on 4 March 1966.
- ❖ The day was first celebrated in 1972 to spread awareness about safety, health, and environmental protection.
- ❖ The theme for 2026 is “Engage, Educate & Empower People to Enhance Safety.”

World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development 2026

- ❖ The day aims to highlight the role of engineers in achieving sustainable development and solving global challenges such as climate change and infrastructure needs.

- ❖ The 2026 celebration was held in Jakarta, Indonesia.
- ❖ It was co-organised by the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO).
- ❖ The theme for the year 2026 is “Smart engineering for a sustainable future through innovation and digitalization.”

CISF Raising Day 2026 - March 10

- ❖ CISF Raising Day 2026 is observed on March 10 to mark the establishment of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).
- ❖ The CISF was established in 1969 under the CISF Act, 1968, to provide security for critical industrial facilities in India.
- ❖ It protects airports, metro rail networks, nuclear plants, seaports, government buildings, and major public events.

National Vaccination Day 2026 - March 16

- ❖ The day is observed in India to highlight the importance of immunisation in protecting public health.
- ❖ The day marks the launch of the Pulse Polio Immunisation Programme on 16 March 1995, when the oral polio vaccine was first given nationwide.
- ❖ India was officially declared polio-free in 2014 after sustained vaccination drives and public awareness campaigns.
- ❖ The theme for the year 2026 is “Immunization for All is Humanly Possible.”

International Day of Action for Rivers 2026 – March 14

- ❖ The day highlights the importance of conserving rivers for clean water, biodiversity, and human survival.
- ❖ The day was adopted in 1997 at an international meeting in Curitiba, Brazil.
- ❖ The day aims to protect free-flowing rivers, ensure sustainable water use, and support affected communities.
- ❖ It raises awareness about threats like pollution, dams, and climate change impacts on rivers.
- ❖ The theme for the year 2026 is “Protect Rivers, Protect People”.

World Social Work Day 2026 - March 17

- ❖ The day aims to promote unity, social inclusion, cooperation, and collective responsibility among people.

- ❖ It highlights the important role of social workers in supporting communities, addressing challenges, and promoting social justice.
- ❖ It is organised by International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), a global body of social work professionals.
- ❖ The theme for the year 2026 is “Co-Building Hope and Harmony: A Harambee Call to Unite a Divided Society”.

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.

UN French Language Day 2026 – March 20

- ❖ The day was established by the United Nations in 2010.
- ❖ The day also marks the International Day of La Francophonie.
- ❖ The day aims to promote equal use of all six official languages of the United Nations and encourage cultural understanding.
- ❖ French is one of the six official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish).
- ❖ French is spoken across five continents, with a large number of speakers in Africa.

International Nowruz Day 2026

- ❖ The International Nowruz Day is observed every year on 21 March to celebrate the Persian New Year and the arrival of spring.
- ❖ It marks the vernal equinox, which represents the change of season from winter to spring.
- ❖ The word “Nowruz” means “new day”, symbolising renewal, hope and new beginnings in life.
- ❖ It was recognised by the United Nations in 2010 and celebrated in many regions, such as Central Asia and the Caucasus.

March equinox 2026 - March 21

- ❖ It is the moment when the Sun crosses the equator from south to north, marking an important astronomical event.
- ❖ It marks the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere and autumn in the Southern Hemisphere.
- ❖ On this day, day and night are nearly equal across the world.
- ❖ The term equinox means “equal night”.
- ❖ The Sun rises in the east and sets in the west, and it occurs twice every year (March and September).
- ❖ The March equinox is also called the Vernal Equinox or Northward Equinox.

Pakistan Day 2026 - March 23

- ❖ It is observed every year on March 23 to mark the adoption of the Lahore Resolution.
- ❖ The resolution was passed in 1940 by the All-India Muslim League in Lahore.
- ❖ It called for independent states for Muslims in the north-western and eastern regions of India.
- ❖ In 1956, Pakistan adopted its first Constitution and became an Islamic Republic on the same day.
- ❖ The Minar-e-Pakistan was later built at the site where the resolution was adopted.

Shaheed Diwas 2026

- ❖ It is observed every year on March 23 to remember the sacrifice of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev.
- ❖ They were executed by the British in 1931 at Lahore jail.
- ❖ Another Shaheed Diwas is observed on January 30 to mark the death of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948.
- ❖ The day honours all martyrs who sacrificed their lives for India’s independence.

International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims 2026 - March 24

- ❖ This day was commemorated globally to uphold the right to truth and the dignity of victims of human rights violations.
- ❖ The day was established by the United Nations in 2010.
- ❖ The date honors Óscar Arnulfo Romero, who was assassinated in 1980 for speaking against injustice.

- ❖ It highlights justice, transparency, and the dignity of victims of violations like torture and enforced disappearances.

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

- ❖ The day was designated by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007 (observed annually since 2008).
- ❖ It commemorates victims of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, one of the worst human rights violations in history.
- ❖ The date marks the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act (1807), passed in the United Kingdom.
- ❖ The day aims to honor victims, promote awareness, and educate people to fight racism and discrimination.
- ❖ The theme for 2026 is “Justice in Action: Confronting History, Advancing Dignity, Empowering Futures.”

MISCELLANEOUS

Lascaux Cave

- ❖ The discovery of the Lascaux Cave in 1940 revealed 17,000-year-old prehistoric paintings in southwestern France.
- ❖ The cave is located near Montignac in the Dordogne region of France.
- ❖ It contains over 2,000 images and about 6,000 painted or engraved figures.
- ❖ The paintings belong to the Upper Palaeolithic Magdalenian culture.
- ❖ Natural pigments like ochre, charcoal and manganese oxide were used in the artwork.

Oldest Rock Art - Indonesia

- ❖ A hand stencil discovered in Liang Metanduno cave in Sulawesi, Indonesia, has been dated to at least 67,800 years ago, making it the oldest known rock art.
- ❖ The mineral crust over the painting was dated to about 71,600 years old.
- ❖ The discovery supports early human migration to Sahul, the ancient landmass of Australia, New Guinea, and Tasmania.
- ❖ It shows that symbolic art existed during the Pleistocene epoch, which lasted from about 2.6 million to 11,700 years ago.

Maritime Labour Convention 2006

- ❖ The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) marked the 20th anniversary of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006.
- ❖ This Convention was adopted on 23 February 2006 in Geneva.
- ❖ It is known as the Seafarers' Bill of Rights.
- ❖ It sets minimum standards for wages, working hours, accommodation and medical care for seafarers.
- ❖ It ensures inspection by Flag State and Port State authorities for compliance.

Amondawa Tribe and Concept of Time

- ❖ A study published in the journal Language and Cognition reported that the Amondawa tribe does not use measurable units of time.
- ❖ The Amondawa tribe lives in the Amazon rainforest of Brazil.
- ❖ Their language has no words for time units such as week, month, or year.
- ❖ They describe events in sequence but do not treat time as a separate measurable concept.
- ❖ Age is not counted numerically, and individuals change names at different life stages.
- ❖ Daily activities are guided by natural cycles like sunrise, sunset, and seasons.

200,000-Year-Old Horse DNA Discovered

- ❖ Scientists discovered 200,000-year-old horse DNA at the Schöningen archaeological site in Lower Saxony, Germany.
- ❖ The DNA was identified as belonging to *Equus mosbachensis*, an extinct horse species from the Middle Pleistocene epoch.
- ❖ The Schöningen site is also famous for 300,000-year-old wooden hunting spears, some of the oldest known hunting weapons.
- ❖ Scientists earlier believed such ancient DNA could survive only in permafrost or frozen regions.
- ❖ The DNA survived because the sediments had low oxygen (anaerobic conditions) and carbonate-rich minerals, which slowed the decay of genetic material.

Hurun Rich List 2026

- ❖ Hurun Rich List 2026 reported that India has 308 billionaires, ranking third in the world after the United States and China.

- ❖ The total wealth of Indian billionaires reached ₹112.6 trillion, a 10% increase from the previous year.
- ❖ Mukesh Ambani remained the richest person in India and Asia with a net worth of ₹9.8 trillion.
- ❖ Gautam Adani ranked second with a net worth of ₹7.5 trillion.
- ❖ Roshni Nadar Malhotra, chairperson of HCL Technologies, ranked third and is the only woman among India's top 10 richest people.
- ❖ Mumbai has the highest number of billionaires in India with 95 billionaires.

International Year of the Woman Farmer 2026

- ❖ The issue of gender, agriculture, and climate change is in focus as the United Nations declared 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer, highlighted during International Women's Day.
- ❖ In India, about 80% of rural women are engaged in agriculture and perform nearly 70% of farm work, contributing 75% in crop production, 79% in horticulture, and 95% in animal husbandry and fisheries.
- ❖ Despite their role, only about 13.9% of agricultural landholdings are registered in the name of women.
- ❖ Climate change further increases women's vulnerability and, in the absence of adequate resources, they are forced to perform farm work and unpaid domestic work, as well as face various natural disasters such as droughts and floods.
- ❖ Rising of the male migration from the rural areas has led to the "feminisation of agriculture."

Archaeological Finds on Pambai River Banks

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology found Iron Age cultural materials during archaeological exploration along the Pambai River.
- ❖ Discoveries include Iron Age urn burials, potsherds, glass beads, ring wells and ceramics.
- ❖ The survey was conducted in several villages of Villupuram.
- ❖ Archaeological remains were found at habitation mounds and burial sites.
- ❖ The materials belong to the Iron Age, Early Historic and Historic periods.

Jurassic Era Dinosaur Nest

- ❖ Scientists have discovered a 150-million-year-old dinosaur egg nest at Santa Cruz Beach in Torres Vedras, Portugal.

- ❖ The fossilised nest contains 10 dinosaur eggs preserved in their original nesting arrangement in sandstone cliffs.
- ❖ The eggs belong to the Upper Jurassic Period (about 163–145 million years ago).
- ❖ Preliminary analysis suggests the eggs may belong to a carnivorous theropod dinosaur.

New Ancient Reptile Species

- ❖ Scientists discovered a new ancient reptile species named *Sonselasuchus cedrus* that lived about 225–201 million years ago during the Late Triassic period.
- ❖ These fossils were found in Petrified Forest National Park, US.
- ❖ The species belongs to the shuvosaurid group, a lineage of reptiles related to ancient crocodile ancestors within the archosaur group.
- ❖ The discovery helps scientists understand the evolution and diversity of reptiles that lived alongside early dinosaurs.

2600-Year-Old Etruscan Tomb

- ❖ Archaeologists discovered a 2,600-year-old sealed Etruscan tomb at the San Giuliano archaeological site in central Italy.
- ❖ The tomb dates back to around the 7th century BCE and remained undisturbed for centuries.
- ❖ It contained the remains of four individuals placed on stone beds.
- ❖ More than 100 artefacts such as ceramic vessels, iron weapons, bronze ornaments and silver jewellery were found.
- ❖ The discovery provides insights into the burial practices and social life of the Etruscan civilisation.
- ❖ The Etruscan civilisation flourished in central Italy between the 8th and 6th centuries BCE and influenced early Roman culture.

Flying reptile species - *Bakiribu waridza*

- ❖ Scientists discovered a new flying reptile species, *Bakiribu waridza*, from a 100-million-year-old fossilised regurgitate (dinosaur vomit).
- ❖ The fossil was found in the Araripe Basin of Brazil, a major Cretaceous fossil site.
- ❖ It is the first extinct species described entirely from fossilised regurgitated material (regurgitalite).
- ❖ The remains likely came from a predator such as a Spinosaurid dinosaur.
- ❖ The pterosaur had hundreds of thin teeth used for filter-feeding, similar to modern flamingos.

Ramesses II Statue Fragment Discovered

- ❖ Archaeologists discovered the missing upper fragment of a 3,200-year-old statue of Ramesses II in Hermopolis Magna, Minya Governorate, Egypt.
- ❖ The statue fragment was found at El Ashmunein, the modern site of the ancient city Hermopolis Magna, about 241 kilometres south of Cairo.
- ❖ The newly discovered limestone fragment is 3.8 metres tall, and when joined with the lower part found in 1930, the statue will be about 7 metres high.
- ❖ The statue shows Pharaoh Ramesses II wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt.
- ❖ Ramesses II ruled Ancient Egypt from 1279 BCE to 1213 BCE during the 19th Dynasty of the New Kingdom.
- ❖ Hermopolis Magna was an ancient religious centre dedicated to Thoth, the ibis-headed god of wisdom, writing and knowledge.

Mahad Chavdar Tale Satyagraha Centenary 2026

- ❖ The centenary year of the historic Mahad Satyagraha was observed in Mahad, Raigad district, Maharashtra, on March 20, 2026.
- ❖ The movement was led by B. R. Ambedkar on March 20, 1927, to assert the right of Dalits to access public water sources like the Chavdar Tale tank.
- ❖ During the movement, thousands of people drank water from the tank, challenging social restrictions imposed on Dalits.
- ❖ This event took place three years before the Salt Satyagraha and became an early example of the civil rights struggle in India.

Hurun Richest Self-Made Women List 2026

- ❖ The Hurun Research Institute released the Richest Self-Made Women in the World 2026 list featuring global billionaires.
- ❖ The list includes 150 self-made women billionaires from 20 countries, with rising wealth trends globally.
- ❖ Three Indians featured are Radha Vembu (Zoho), Falguni Nayar (Nykaa), and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (Biocon).
- ❖ These women represent India's growing presence in entrepreneurship and business leadership.

Göbekli Tepe – Oldest Known Temple Site

- ❖ Göbekli Tepe provides important new evidence about the origins of early human civilisation.

- ❖ It is located in Turkey and dates back to around 9600 BCE.
- ❖ It is considered the world's oldest known temple complex, older than the Egyptian pyramids and Stonehenge.
- ❖ The site has large T-shaped limestone pillars with detailed carvings of animals such as foxes, lions and birds.
- ❖ It was built by hunter-gatherers, showing that organised social life existed even before agriculture began.
- ❖ The site was deliberately buried around 8000 BCE, and the exact reason is still not known.

Neanderthal Factory Discovery

- ❖ A major archaeological discovery at Neumark-Nord shows that Neanderthals had organised methods of food processing.
- ❖ The site is located in Germany and dates back to around 125,000 years ago.
- ❖ Archaeologists found thousands of animal bones broken in a systematic pattern to extract marrow and fat.
- ❖ The bones were further crushed and heated to obtain grease, showing planned and repeated activity.
- ❖ This proves that Neanderthals had advanced survival skills and a proper understanding of nutrition.
- ❖ The site was used repeatedly, indicating it worked like a specialised processing area or "factory".

289-Million-Year-Old Reptile Skin Fossil

- ❖ A rare reptile skin fossil discovered in Oklahoma of USA provides new evidence about early life on land.
- ❖ The fossil was found at Richards Spur and dates back to about 289 million years ago.
- ❖ It is considered the oldest known reptile skin fossil, pushing back the timeline of skin evolution.
- ❖ The skin shows non-overlapping, pebbled scales similar to modern crocodiles, indicating early adaptation to land.
- ❖ Special conditions like low oxygen, fine clay burial and natural oil helped preserve the soft tissue.

Fossil Discovery in the Gobi Desert

- ❖ The Scientists discovered a 1 cm long fossil in the Gobi Desert, revealing early mammalian evolution.
- ❖ The fossil belongs to a micro-mammal from the Late Cretaceous period, about 100 to 66 million years ago.
- ❖ It was found in the Ukhaa Tolgod region with a nearly complete skeleton, which is very rare.
- ❖ The specimen coexisted with dinosaurs like Velociraptor.
- ❖ Its preservation is due to protracted aridification, a long-term drying process with rapid burial by sand.

QS World University Rankings 2026

- ❖ Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode entered the global top 100 in QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026.
- ❖ It secured 78th rank worldwide in the Business and Management Studies category.
- ❖ The institute improved from 141st rank in 2025, showing strong progress.
- ❖ QS rankings evaluated 6,277 institutions globally across many subjects.
- ❖ IIM Kozhikode earlier moved from the 401–450 band in 2021 to the top 100 in 2026.

Lviv's Historic Centre – UNESCO World Heritage Site Damage

- ❖ A Russian drone strike damaged a residential building within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Lviv's Historic Centre in Ukraine, near the Bernardine Monastery.
- ❖ Lviv's Historic Centre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site inscribed in 1998 for its outstanding architectural and cultural value.
- ❖ The city reflects a unique blend of Baroque, Renaissance, Neoclassical, and Central–Eastern European architectural styles.
- ❖ It was founded in the mid-13th century by King Daniel of Galicia.
- ❖ The site includes over 2,000 protected monuments and the iconic Rynok Square with historic townhouses.
- ❖ UNESCO sites in conflict zones are protected under the 1954 Hague Convention for Protection of Cultural Property.

