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Awards

K.V. Subramanian – Chicago Alumni Award 2026

Introduction

- Indian economist K.V. Subramanian has been recognised for professional achievement by the University of Chicago.

Why in news?

- Awarded the University of Chicago Alumni Award for Professional Achievement (2026).
- First Indian economist to receive this honour in the award's 85-year history.
- The recognition cites his global impact on economic policy.

Background

- Served as Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) to the Government of India, authoring three landmark Economic Surveys (2018–2021).
- Currently the Executive Director for India at the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Holds distinguished alumnus honours from all three of his alma maters: IIT Kanpur, IIM Calcutta, and the University of Chicago.

Significance

- Highlights his role as CEA, during which he authored three landmark Economic Surveys (2018–2021).
- Recognises his global impact on economic policy.

Facts/General knowledge

- Chief Economic Adviser (CEA): A post in the Government of India, equivalent to the rank of Secretary, responsible for providing objective economic analysis and producing the annual Economic Survey.
- International Monetary Fund (IMF): An international organisation of 190 countries working to foster global monetary cooperation and secure financial stability.
- Economic Survey of India: The flagship annual document of the Ministry of Finance that reviews developments in the Indian economy over the previous financial year.
- University of Chicago: Renowned for its Chicago School of Economics, which has produced numerous Nobel laureates in economic sciences.

Mangaluru International Airport – 2025 ASQ Best Airport at Arrivals (Global)

Introduction

- Mangaluru International Airport won the 2025 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Award for Best Airport at Arrivals – Globally.
- The award was presented by Airports Council International (ACI) World.
- This marks the second consecutive year the airport has received this honour (2024 and 2025).
- The accolade highlights excellence in arrivals experience, including immigration, baggage handling, cleanliness and overall comfort.

Why in news?

- The airport has once again earned global recognition with the 2025 ASQ Best Airport at Arrivals – Globally award.
- Only six airports worldwide were selected in this category in 2025.

Background

- The ASQ Awards are organised annually by Airports Council International (ACI) World, representing airports across the globe.
- The programme measures passenger satisfaction across key service parameters and is based entirely on real time passenger feedback, with surveys independently administered by ACI.
- The arrivals category assesses immigration, baggage delivery, cleanliness, ambience, signage and comfort.
- Mangaluru International Airport is managed by Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL), India's largest private airport operator

Significance

- Winning the 2025 ASQ Best Airport at Arrivals – Globally reflects consistent excellence in service delivery.
- The achievement strengthens Mangaluru International Airport's global standing in passenger service quality.
- Investments in digital initiatives and process optimisation improved operational efficiency.
- A focus on passenger centric infrastructure enhanced overall comfort, with close coordination with government agencies ensuring smoother arrivals.
- The award adds to AAHL's growing portfolio of

globally benchmarked airports in India.

Facts/General knowledge

- The ASQ Awards are considered the aviation industry's most credible benchmark for customer satisfaction.
- In 2025, 100 airports globally were recognised across various categories.
- In 2026, the awards will be formally presented at the Airport Experience Summit in Istanbul, Türkiye, scheduled from 31 August to 4 September 2026, with the ceremony on 2 September 2026.
- This year, a total of 195 awards will be presented worldwide, reflecting global excellence in airport operations.

98th Academy Awards (Oscars 2026)

Introduction

- Held on 15 March 2026 at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.
- One Battle After Another emerged as the biggest winner.

Why in news?

- The 98th Academy Awards ceremony took place, marking a key event in global cinema.
- Introduction of a new category: Best Casting.
- A rare tie occurred in Best Live Action Short Film.
- "Golden" from KPop Demon Hunters won Best Original Song, the first K-Pop song to win an Oscar.

Background

- The Academy Awards are presented annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) to honour excellence in global cinema across various categories.

Significance

- The Oscars 2026 highlighted global diversity, introduction of new categories, and dominance of select films, reflecting evolving trends in world cinema.

Facts/General knowledge

- Venue and host: Dolby Theatre, Los Angeles; hosted by Conan O'Brien.
- Best Picture: One Battle After Another (total of six Oscars).
- Best Director: Paul Thomas Anderson (One Battle After Another).
- Best Actor: Michael B. Jordan (Sinners), his first Oscar win.
- Best Actress: Jessie Buckley (Hamnet).
- Best Supporting Actress: Amy Madigan (Weapons).
- Best Supporting Actor: Sean Penn (One Battle After Another).
- Best Original Screenplay: Sinners (Ryan Coogler).
- Best Adapted Screenplay: One Battle After Another.
- Best International Feature Film: Sentimental Value (Norway).
- Best Animated Feature: KPop Demon Hunters.
- Best Documentary Feature: Mr Nobody Against Putin.
- Best Documentary Short: All the Empty Rooms.
- Best Cinematography: Sinners.
- Best Film Editing: One Battle After Another.
- Best Sound: F1.
- Best Visual Effects: Avatar: Fire and Ash.
- Best Production Design, Costume & Makeup: Frankenstein.
- New category winner (Best Casting): Cassandra Kulukundis (One Battle After Another).
- Best Live Action Short Film: Tie between The Singers and Two People Exchanging Saliva.
- Best Original Song: Golden (KPop Demon Hunters), the first K-Pop song to win an Oscar.
- Overall tally: One Battle After Another – 6; Sinners – 4; Frankenstein – 3.

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025

Introduction

- The Sahitya Akademi announced the 2025 awards across 24 languages.
- Honours include 8 poetry collections, 4 novels, 6 short story books, 2 essays, 1 literary criticism, 1 autobiography, and 2 memoirs.

Why in news?

- Notable winners include former diplomat Navtej Sarna for his English novel Crimson Spring, Hindi writer Mamta Kalia for her memoir Jeete Jee Allahabad, and Tamil author Sa. Tamilselvan for Thamiz Sirukathaiyin Thadangal in literary criticism.

Background

- The Sahitya Akademi Award, established in 1954, is the second highest literary honour in India after the Jnanpith Award.
- It is conferred annually by the Sahitya Akademi, an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture.
- The award is presented in 24 languages, which include the 22 languages listed in the Eighth

Schedule of the Constitution, plus English and Rajasthani.
- The award announcement follows a July 2025 MoU between the Ministry of Culture and its four autonomous institutions—the National School of Drama, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Lalit Kala Akademi, and Sahitya Akademi—mandating a restructuring of awards in consultation with the Ministry.

Significance
- Recognises exceptional literary merit and promotes the country's rich multilingual heritage.
- Reflects linguistic diversity and genre breadth, spanning poetry, novels, short stories, essays, literary criticism, autobiography, and memoirs.

Facts/General knowledge
- 2025 winners (language-wise):
- Assamese – Karhi Khelar Sadhu (Novel) – Devabrat Das
- Bengali – Shrestha Kabita (Poetry) – Prasun Bandyopadhyay
- Bodo – Dwngnwi Lama Mwnse Gathwn (Novel) – Sahaisuli Brahma
- Dogri – Thakur Satsayie (Poetry, Couplets) – Khajur Singh Thakur
- English – Crimson Spring (Novel) – Navtej Sarna
- Gujarati – Bhattkhadaki (Poetry) – Yogesh Vaidya
- Hindi – Jeete Jee Allahabad (Memoir) – Mamta Kalia
- Kannada – Dada Seerisu Tande (Short Stories) – Amaresh Nugadoni
- Kashmiri – Najdavanek'y Pot Aalav (Poetry) – Ali Shaida
- Konkani – Konkani Kavyem: Rupani Ani Rupakam (Essays) – Henry Mendonca (H.M. Pernal)
- Maithili – Dhatri Paat San Gaam (Memoir) – Mahendra
- Malayalam – Maayaamanushyar (Novel) – N. Prabhakaran
- Manipuri – Kanglamdriba Eephut (Short Stories) – Haobam Nalini
- Marathi – Kalyanilya Resha (Autobiography) – Raju Baviskar
- Nepali – Nepali Paramparik Sanskriti Ra Sabhyata Ko Dukuti (Essays) – Prakash Bhattarai
- Odia – Padapurana (Poetry) – Girijakumar Baliyar Singh
- Punjabi – Safety Kit (Stories) – Jinder
- Rajasthani – Bharkhama (Stories) – Jitender Kumar Soni
- Sanskrit – Prasthanacatustaye Brahmaghosah (Poetry) – Mahamahopadhyaya Sadhu Bhadreshdas
- Santali – Mid Birna Chenne Saon Inag Sagai (Short Stories) – Sumitra Soren
- Sindhi – Waghoo (Stories) – Bhagwan Atlani
- Tamil – Thamiz Sirukathaiyin Thadangal (Literary Criticism) – Sa. Tamilselvan
- Telugu – Animesha (Poetry) – Nandini Sidha Reddy
- Urdu – Safar Jaari Hai (Poetry) – Pritpal Singh Betab

Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards 2026

Introduction
- The 2026 edition recognised 24 journalists across 19 categories for excellence in Indian journalism.

Why in news?
- The awards were presented in New Delhi by Honourable Vice-President of India C. P. Radhakrishnan.

Background
- These prestigious awards celebrate outstanding contributions to Indian journalism.

Significance
- The awards covered diverse categories, showcasing excellence across multiple formats and languages.

Facts/General knowledge
- Print (Hindi) — Winner: Avadhesh Akodia — Organisation/Publication: Dainik Bhaskar
- Broadcast/Digital (Hindi) — Winner: Sarvapriya Sangwan — Organisation/Publication: BBC News Hindi
- Print/Digital (Regional Languages) — Winners: Muhammad Sabith & Akhil Sivanand — Organisation/Publication: Mathrubhumi
- Broadcast/Digital (Regional Languages) — Winner: Fousiya Musthafa News — Organisation/Publication: Malayalam 24*7
- Environment, Science & Technology Reporting — Winners: Jayashree Nandi & Tannu Jain — Organisation/Publication: Hindustan Times
- Environment, Science & Technology Reporting (Broadcast/Digital) — Winners: Rohini Krishnamurthy & Dhruval Parekh — Organisation/Publication: Down to Earth
- Uncovering India Invisible — Winner: Vijay Pal Dudi — Organisation/Publication: Dainik Bhaskar

- Uncovering India Invisible (Broadcast/Digital) — Winner: Basant Kumar — Organisation/Publication: NewsLaundry
- Business & Economic Journalism — Winners: Praveen Paramasivam, Munsif Vengattil & Aditya Kalra — Organisation/Publication: Thomson Reuters
- Reporting on Politics and Government — Winner: Deeptiman Tiwary — Organisation/Publication: The Indian Express
- Reporting on Politics and Government (Broadcast/Digital) — Winner: Rishika Kashyap — Organisation/Publication: Deccan Herald
- Sports Journalism — Winner: Srikkanth Dhasarathy — Organisation/Publication: DT Next
- Investigative Reporting (Print/Digital) — Winner: Mridulika Jha — Organisation/Publication: Aaj Tak
- Investigative Reporting (Broadcast) — Winner: Sreya Chatterjee — Organisation/Publication: India Today
- Feature Writing — Winner: Vidheesha Kuntamalla — Organisation/Publication: The Indian Express
- Civic Journalism — Winner: Sandip Dighe — Organisation/Publication: The Times of India
- Civic Journalism — Winners: Sreya Chatterjee & Arvind Ojha — Organisation/Publication: India Today
- Photojournalism — Winner: Praveen Jain — Organisation/Publication: The Print
- Books (Non-Fiction) — Winner: Aparajith Ramnath — Organisation/Publication: Penguin Random House

International Relation meeting and submits

India-AI Impact Summit 2026

Introduction

- A global summit under the IndiaAI Mission that reorients AI towards development and impact with inclusive, responsible governance.
- Seeks to accelerate AI-driven solutions across healthcare, agriculture, climate resilience, governance, and economic growth.
- Aims to strengthen digital sovereignty and prepare the workforce for AI-enabled opportunities.

Why in news?

- Commenced at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.
- Organised by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- Marks the first major global AI summit hosted in the Global South, showcasing India's leadership in development-focused AI.

Background

- Shifts the global narrative from "AI Safety" to "AI for Development and Impact".
- Structured around two conceptual frameworks: the Three Sutras (Pillars) and the Seven Chakras (Working Groups).
- Anchored by institutional frameworks including MeitY, the IndiaAI Mission, Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), and the Digital India initiative, ensuring policy direction, ecosystem support, innovation infrastructure, and digital foundations aligned with national priorities.
- Leverages digital public infrastructure and global partnerships to drive scalable, inclusive AI adoption.

Significance

- Voice of the Global South by prioritising developmental outcomes for challenges such as healthcare access, agricultural productivity, and language barriers.
- Democratisation of technology through India's Digital Public Infrastructure model and advocacy of "AI Commons" to widen access to compute, datasets, and models for developing nations.
- Shift from regulation to innovation with emphasis on applied use cases that improve Human Development Index indicators.
- Strategic diplomacy positioning India as a bridge between the developed West and the developing South in technology governance.
- Advances inclusive, responsible AI governance while bolstering digital sovereignty and workforce readiness.

Facts/General knowledge

- Theme and philosophy: "Sarvajana Hitaya, Sarvajana Sukhaya" (Welfare for all, happiness for all).
- Conceptual frameworks:
- Three Sutras (Pillars): People (empower citizens via healthcare, education, financial inclusion); Planet (sustainable practices, climate resilience, resource

efficiency); Progress (economic growth, governance, public service delivery).
- Seven Chakras (Working Groups): Health; Agriculture; Safe & Trusted AI; Science; Inclusion; Democratising AI Resources; Economic Development.
- Expected outcomes:
- At least 15 tangible deliverables on AI governance, innovation, and inclusive growth.
- India's entry into the US-led Pax Silica initiative to build a resilient global electronics and semiconductor supply chain.
- Global cooperation on AI governance and ethics via multistakeholder frameworks rather than a formal treaty body.
- Strengthening AI for jobs and public service delivery, highlighting AI's role in employment generation and governance efficiency.
- Expansion of India's AI Safety Institute model for collaborative research on AI safety and standards.

PM Modi's 2026 State Visit to Israel

Introduction

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertook a two-day State Visit to Israel on 25–26 February 2026.
- This was his second official visit, following the first in 2017, reinforcing the India–Israel Strategic Partnership.
- The visit took place against the backdrop of a reshaped West Asian landscape after 7 October 2023.

Why in news?

- PM Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to address the Knesset (Israel's Parliament).
- He condemned the "barbaric" Hamas attack and reiterated India's policy of "zero tolerance for terrorism," drawing a parallel with India's 26/11 experience.
- He endorsed the UNSC-backed Gaza Peace Initiative as a pathway to "just and durable peace," stressing dialogue and humanity.

Background

- India previously elevated ties with Israel during PM Modi's 2017 visit.
- New Delhi preserves Strategic Autonomy in West Asia, maintaining vital energy and civilisational ties with Iran, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and typically avoids rigid military-style blocs.

Significance

- Strategic partnership deepened, with Israeli PM Netanyahu portraying the relationship as an "iron alliance" between two resilient democracies.
- Defence cooperation advanced beyond a buyer–seller model to joint development, including missiles and drones.
- Economic engagement accelerated with an agreement to fast-track negotiations for an ambitious Free Trade Agreement.
- Technology and innovation collaboration expanded across AI, quantum computing, water solutions, agri-tech and cybersecurity.
- India engaged with emerging regional architectures, including Netanyahu's Hexagon vision, while carefully preserving Strategic Autonomy.
- De-hyphenated approach showcased: supporting Israel's security while explicitly backing a Two-State Solution and Palestinian humanitarian needs.
- Cultural connect highlighted through PM Modi's visit to Yad Vashem and interactions with the Indian–Jewish diaspora.

Facts/General knowledge

- Netanyahu called the relationship an "enormous multiplier" for both countries.
- Technology exhibition highlights included:
- AI and quantum computing: collaborative research in strategic technologies.
- Water solutions: desalination (WaterGen).
- Agri-tech: micro-irrigation (N-Drip).
- Cybersecurity: advanced threat prevention and data security.
- Hexagon of Alliances (Netanyahu's vision):
- Structure: a six-nation framework involving Israel, India, Greece, Cyprus and select Arab and African nations.
- Objective: to create a security and strategic axis to counter "radical axes," including the radical Shia axis led by Iran and emerging radical Sunni axes.
- IMEC (India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor):
- Connectivity: linking India to Europe via the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel (Haifa Port), with India and Israel termed the most "secure anchors."
- Status: delayed by the Gaza conflict but revived by the India–EU Trade Deal (January 2026) and the 2025 Trieste Summit, positioned as a "future-proof" alternative to the Suez Canal and China's BRI.

India–EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

Introduction

- India and the European Union announced the

conclusion of negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), described as the "Mother of all deals," marking a key milestone in India's strategic economic partnerships.

Why in news?

- The announcement of the concluded FTA negotiations positions the EU as India's 22nd FTA partner and underscores the scale and importance of the agreement.

Background

- The FTA was announced at the 16th India–EU Summit held in India.
- Negotiations began in 2007, were suspended in 2013, and relaunched in 2022.
- The negotiated texts will undergo legal review and translation before submission for approval by the European Council and consent by the European Parliament.
- Ratification by India will follow before the agreement enters into force.

Significance

- Strategic access to European markets:
- Preferential access across 97% of tariff lines, covering 99.5% of trade value.
- Immediate duty elimination on 70.4% of tariff lines covering 90.7% of India's exports, benefitting labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, leather and footwear.
- Key sectors like textiles, apparel, marine, leather, footwear, and chemicals, currently facing 4%–26% EU import duties, will have zero duty, enhancing competitiveness.
- Access to Indian markets:
- India offers 92.1% of its tariff lines covering 97.5% of EU exports, with immediate duty elimination on 49.6% of tariff lines.
- Services and mobility:
- Broader and deeper EU commitments across 144 services subsectors, including IT/ITeS and professional services.
- Social Security Agreements within five years with all EU Member States and a framework for Indian students to study and avail post-study work visas.
- Sector-specific gains and regulatory cooperation:
- Preferential market access for agricultural products like tea and coffee.
- Preferential access for engineering goods; boost to marine, leather and footwear exports; zero duty access in textiles and clothing.
- Product Specific Rules aligned with existing supply chains.
- Reinforced intellectual property protections under TRIPS.
- Cooperation on Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures and Technical Barriers to Trade.
- Security and defence dimension:
- The EU–India Security and Defence Partnership (SDP) signed at the 16th Summit offers opportunities for India's burgeoning defence industrial ecosystem.
- It is the EU's third SDP in Asia after Japan and South Korea.

Facts/General knowledge

- The EU is a unique economic and political union operating as a single market allowing goods, services, capital and persons to circulate freely without technical, legal and bureaucratic barriers.
- Founded in 1951 after the Second World War by six countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.
- Current Member States: 27 countries; the United Kingdom officially left the EU on 31 January 2020.
- Five main institutions of the EU: European Parliament, European Council, European Commission, Court of Justice and Court of Auditors.

India–Canada Strategic Reset

Introduction

- A high-level engagement produced multiple outcomes across trade, nuclear energy, critical minerals, clean energy, defence, and diplomatic ties.
- The initiatives aim to elevate bilateral cooperation and set clear targets for future collaboration.

Why in news?

- It was the first bilateral visit to India by a Canadian Prime Minister since 2018.
- The visit led to concrete agreements and announcements spanning economic, energy, and security domains.

Background

- India and Canada relations were designated a Strategic Partnership in 2018.
- Bilateral merchandise trade is roughly US$8–9 billion annually, significantly below potential relative to economic size.

Significance

- Nuclear energy: A landmark civil nuclear deal

provides a major boost to India's Viksit Bharat vision to achieve 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047.
- Critical minerals: Cooperation focuses on secure and resilient supply and value chains, aligning with the G7 Critical Minerals Action Plan.
- Clean energy: Collaboration is reinforced through Canada's decision to join the International Solar Alliance and the Global Biofuels Alliance, alongside an MoU on energy storage, solar, wind, and biomass/bio-energy.
- Security: The first-ever India–Canada Defence Dialogue is set to foster strategic security discussions.
- Political and diplomatic ties: The India–Canada Parliamentary Friendship Group enhances political networking, and India supports Canada's entry to the Indian Ocean Rim Association as a Dialogue Partner.
- Trade ambition: The shared goal is to reach US$50 billion in bilateral trade by 2030.
- Agri-food innovation: A Joint Pulse Protein Centre of Excellence is envisaged, with Canada as a pulse exporter to India.

Facts/General knowledge

- Trade agreement: Signed the Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).
- Current trade: Bilateral merchandise trade stands at approximately US$8–9 billion annually.
- Trade target: Set a goal to reach US$50 billion by 2030.
- Civil nuclear deal: The Department of Atomic Energy (India) signed a USD 2.6 billion long-term commercial contract with Canada's Cameco for the supply of Uranium Ore Concentrates.
- Critical minerals: Signed an MoU to develop secure and resilient critical mineral supply and value chains, aligning with the G7 Critical Minerals Action Plan.
- Clean energy platforms: Canada announced it will officially join the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA).
- Energy cooperation: An MoU was established to share best practices and build capacity in energy storage, solar, wind, and biomass/bio-energy.
- Defence: Establishment of the first-ever India–Canada Defence Dialogue.
- Parliamentary links: Formation of an India–Canada Parliamentary Friendship Group.
- Regional engagement: India announced support for Canada to join the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) as a Dialogue Partner.
- Agri-food: Declaration of Intent for a Joint Pulse Protein Centre of Excellence; Canada is a pulse exporter to India.

India–Japan Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA) Renewal

Introduction

- India and Japan maintain a Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA) to support financial stability.
- It provides a framework for accessing foreign exchange liquidity under defined conditions.

Why in news?

- India has renewed its BSA with Japan, effective from 28 February 2026.

Background

- The BSA is a two-way currency swap agreement between the central banks of two countries.
- Each country can exchange its local currency with the other in return for US dollars when required.
- The exchange operates under pre-decided conditions and timeframes.

Significance

- The India–Japan BSA remains at 75 billion US dollars.
- It is one of the largest bilateral currency swap arrangements in the world.
- It demonstrates deep financial trust and an economic partnership between India and Japan.
- Benefits include:
- Ensuring access to foreign exchange liquidity during financial crises
- Helping stabilise currency markets
- Reducing pressure on foreign exchange reserves
- Strengthening investor confidence

Facts/General knowledge

- India's other currency swap arrangements to strengthen regional financial cooperation include:
- SAARC Currency Swap Arrangement (2024–27)
- India–UAE Currency Swap Arrangement
- India–Sri Lanka Currency Swap Arrangement

Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2026

Introduction

- The 2026 edition of Mobile World Congress took place in Barcelona, Spain from 2–5 March 2026.

- The event focused on integrating Artificial Intelligence with advanced connectivity.

Why in news?

- The theme for 2026 was "The IQ Era".
- Indian telecom innovators showcased their technologies and innovations at the global platform.

Significance

- Aimed at enabling smarter networks.
- Drove digital innovation.
- Emphasised societal transformation through intelligent connectivity.

Facts/General knowledge

- It is the world's largest event for the mobile and technology industry.
- The event was organised by the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA).

Indonesia's Ban on Children's Social Media Use

Introduction

- Indonesia has imposed a nationwide restriction to protect minors from harmful content on social media platforms.

Why in news?

- The country has become the first in Southeast Asia to introduce such restrictions on minors' social media use.

Background

- The regulation is intended to safeguard children from exposure to harmful online content.

Significance

- Aims to shield children from cyberbullying.
- Seeks to reduce the risk of online scams targeting minors.
- Intends to prevent exposure to pornography.
- Addresses concerns over social-media addiction among young users.

Facts/General knowledge

- Age restriction: Children below 16 are prohibited from holding accounts on major social media platforms.
- Platforms covered: YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Threads, X, Bigo Live, and Roblox.
- Verification requirement: Social media companies must implement age-verification mechanisms to block underage account creation.
- Parental responsibility: Parents and guardians are encouraged to monitor children's online activities and promote responsible internet usage.
- Account deactivation: Accounts belonging to users under 16 on high-risk platforms will be gradually deactivated as part of enforcement.

India–Finland Strategic Partnership (2026 State Visit)

Introduction

- State Visit of the President of Finland, Alexander Stubb, to India from 4–7 March 2026.
- Marked a significant step in strengthening India–Finland relations.

Why in news?

- Elevation of bilateral ties to a Strategic Partnership in Digitalisation and Sustainability.

Background

- Formal diplomatic relations established on 10 September 1949.
- Initial decades laid the foundations of bilateral trade and friendly relations.
- High-level visits: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (1983) and President Mauno Koivisto (1987).

Significance

- Strengthens India's engagement with Nordic countries and Europe.
- Promotes collaboration in emerging technologies and digital innovation.
- Enhances talent mobility and knowledge exchange.
- Supports cooperation in sustainability and climate action.

Facts/General knowledge

- Strategic Partnership in Digitalisation and Sustainability to expand cooperation in:
- Artificial Intelligence, 5G and 6G telecommunications, quantum computing, and digital infrastructure.
- Sustainable development and green technologies.
- Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement to facilitate movement of skilled professionals, researchers, and students.
- Sustainability and clean technologies cooperation to deepen work on environmental protection, renewable energy, circular economy, and climate action.
- Expansion of trade and economic cooperation, with acknowledgement that the India–EU Free Trade

Agreement will create new opportunities for bilateral trade and economic engagement.
- Collaboration in research, innovation, and emerging technologies to strengthen partnerships on semiconductors, digital technologies, secure supply chains, startups, and innovation ecosystems.
- Multilateral cooperation and global governance commitments reaffirmed:
- Support for a rules-based international order with the United Nations at the centre.
- Emphasis on global cooperation to address climate change and biodiversity loss.

Defence and Military Exercise

India's Low-Cost Strike Drones

Introduction
- Low-cost drones are reshaping warfare, evident in Ukraine for the last four years and now in the Iran war.
- Iran's low-cost Shahed drones have inspired the US's LUCAS.
- In India, low-cost, deep-strike drone projects such as Sheshnaag-150 and Project KAL are picking pace.

Why in news?
- India has fast-tracked efforts to field low-cost, long-range strike drones comparable to systems seen in recent conflicts.
- The Indian Army has inducted frontline, man-portable suicide drones and deployed loitering munitions in forward areas.

Background
- Several Indian projects are tailored to the low-cost, long-range profile exemplified by the Shahed-136.
- The focus spans deep-penetration strike systems and tactical loitering munitions, alongside air-launched swarming concepts.

Significance
- Enhances deep-penetration strike options at low cost over long distances.
- AI-enabled swarms can autonomously coordinate to saturate and overwhelm enemy air defences.
- Tactical drones enable precision engagement of lower-end threats without risking soldiers.
- Air-launched swarms can autonomously detect and strike air defence targets such as surface-to-air missiles and radars.

Facts/General knowledge
- Sheshnaag-150 (NewSpace Research and Technologies, Bengaluru):
- Range: Over 1,000 km
- Payload: 25–40 kg warhead
- Feature: AI-powered swarm technology enabling coordinated, autonomous saturation of air defences
- Project KAL (IG Drones, Noida):
- Type: Classified long-range kamikaze drone for deep-penetration strikes
- Range: Up to 1,000 km
- Endurance: 3 to 5 hours
- Nagastra-1 (Solar Industries/EEL):
- Role: Man-portable suicide drone for precision strikes
- Accuracy: 2-metre
- Range: Up to 30 km
- Cost efficiency: Designed to cheaply target lower-end threats like terrorist launch pads without risking soldiers
- SkyStriker (Alpha Design with Israel's Elbit Systems):
- Type: Loitering munition
- Range: 100 km
- Status: Recently deployed in forward areas of Jammu and Kashmir
- ALFA-S (HAL and NewSpace Research):
- Concept: Swarm drones launched from fighter jets (e.g., Su-30MKI or Jaguar)
- Capability: Autonomous identification and strike against targets such as surface-to-air missiles and radars

Lokayan 26 Expedition by INS Sudarshini

Introduction
- Lokayan 26 is a 10-month transoceanic voyage by the Indian Navy's sail training ship INS Sudarshini.
- The voyage covers over 22,000 nautical miles with visits to 18 foreign ports across 13 countries.
- It reflects India's maritime heritage and the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

Why in news?
- INS Sudarshini began the Lokayan 26 expedition on 20th January 2026.

Background
- The voyage includes maritime partnership activities with host nations.
- It advances the MAHASAGAR – Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions vision.

Significance
- Participation in the tall-ship events Escale à Sète in France and SAIL 250 in New York, USA, to showcase India's maritime heritage and seafaring traditions.
- Strengthening cooperation with host nations through engagements during port visits.
- Training and capacity building for more than 200 Indian Navy and Coast Guard trainees through intensive sail training, long-range navigation, traditional seamanship, and interaction with trainees from other navies.

Facts/General knowledge
- INS Sudarshini is the second sail training ship of the Indian Navy after INS Tarangini.
- The ship has sailed over 1,40,000 nautical miles.
- It serves as a symbol of India's maritime professionalism and goodwill.

Exercise Amogh Jwala, Uttar Pradesh

Introduction
- A field exercise focused on validating technology-driven mechanised warfare capabilities in a multi-domain operational environment.

Why in news?
- Recently concluded at the Babina Field Firing Ranges in Uttar Pradesh.
- Conducted over 13 days from 6–18 March 2026.

Significance
- Demonstrated integrated employment of mechanised forces with attack helicopters, fighter aircraft, unmanned aerial systems, counter-drone systems, and network-enabled battlefield platforms.
- Executed under a robust command and control architecture.

Facts/General knowledge
- Conducted by the Indian Army's Southern Command.

Stealth Frigate Taragiri (F41)

Introduction
- Taragiri (F41) is a stealth guided-missile frigate of the Project 17A class, designed for multi-dimensional naval warfare across surface, air, and sub-surface domains.
- Constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai.
- Incorporates over 75% indigenous content, with participation from 200+ MSMEs.

Why in news?
- The Indian Navy is set to commission Taragiri (F41) on 03 April 2026 at Visakhapatnam.

Background
- Part of India's push towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat and indigenous naval capability under Project 17A.

Significance
- Strengthens India's maritime combat capability with advanced stealth and weapon systems.
- Promotes self-reliance in defence manufacturing and reduces import dependency.
- Expands the indigenous defence ecosystem with strong MSME participation.
- Enhances India's capability in the Indian Ocean Region amid growing geopolitical competition.

Facts/General knowledge
- Class/Type: Project 17A stealth guided-missile frigate.
- Displacement: Approximately 6,670 tonnes, supporting long-duration, multi-role operations in blue-water environments.
- Propulsion: CODOG configuration combining diesel engines for fuel-efficient cruising and gas turbines for high-speed bursts.
- Stealth capability: Reduced Radar Cross Section (RCS) minimises detection by enemy radars, enabling surprise attacks and improved survivability.
- Weapon systems: Supersonic anti-ship missiles, air defence missiles, and anti-submarine warfare systems for comprehensive threat engagement.
- Combat Management System: Integrates sensors, weapons, and data networks into a single interface for real-time situational awareness and faster decision-making.
- Operational flexibility: Capable of warfare, escort duties, surveillance, and HADR missions.

Operation Urja Suraksha

Introduction

- A strategic maritime security mission launched by the Indian Navy to ensure the safe transit of India-bound energy cargo from the Persian Gulf region
- Focuses on protecting shipping routes in and beyond the Strait of Hormuz

Why in news?

- Initiated amid escalating tensions in West Asia
- Aimed at safeguarding energy supply routes through the Strait of Hormuz

Background

- Ensures uninterrupted energy supply to India by safeguarding oil and gas shipments
- Provides secure maritime navigation and escort services in conflict-prone waters

Significance

- Energy Security Assurance: protects critical imports (crude oil, LNG, LPG), reducing vulnerability to supply shocks
- Strategic Maritime Presence: enhances India's role as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region

Facts/General knowledge

- Naval escort mechanism: Indian warships escort vessels after they exit the Strait of Hormuz, ensuring safe passage through the Gulf of Oman into the Arabian Sea
- Layered maritime security: deployment of destroyers and frigates with coordinated monitoring and communication systems
- Safe route navigation: identification of secure maritime corridors to avoid threats such as sea mines and electronic disruptions
- The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most critical energy chokepoints

Exercise Kalari Leap (2026)

Introduction

- A high-tempo joint maritime drill by the Indian Armed Forces to enhance security and operational readiness in the strategically vital Lakshadweep and Minicoy archipelago.
- Led by the Southern Air Command (SAC), highlighting India's focus on jointmanship and rapid force projection in the Arabian Sea.

Why in news?

- Conducted in February 2026 in the Lakshadweep and Minicoy archipelago.
- Featured notable para-dropping at Agatti Airport, special heliborne missions, anti-ship strike simulations, and maritime search and rescue missions.

Background

- Designed as integrated operations bringing together air, maritime, and special operations elements.
- Executed across complex, dispersed island environments to refine coordination and mission execution.

Significance

- Enhances security and operational readiness in a strategically vital island chain.
- Validates joint planning, rapid force projection, and precision strike capabilities across services.
- Tests the ability to neutralise hostile threats in the Indian Ocean Region.

Facts/General knowledge

- Conducted by: Southern Air Command (SAC) of the Indian Air Force.
- Participants: Indian Air Force (IAF), Armed Forces Special Operations Division (AFSOD), and Indian Coast Guard (ICG).
- Location: Lakshadweep and Minicoy archipelago.
- Integrated assets: IAF Su-30MKI, AN-32, and Mi-17V5; ICG ships and Dornier 228 aircraft; AFSOD units.
- Special operations: Para-dropping at Agatti Airport, airborne/air-landed insertions, and special heliborne missions.
- Mission profiles: Anti-ship strike simulations and maritime search and rescue missions.

Freedom Shield Joint Military Exercise

Introduction

- Freedom Shield is a large annual defence exercise conducted by the armed forces of the United States and South Korea.
- It focuses on improving coordination between the two allies and strengthening their ability to respond to possible security threats.

Why in news?

- The current exercise began on Monday and will continue until 19 March.
- Recent media reports suggest some U.S. military

equipment in South Korea might be moved to support operations in the Middle East.

Background

- The drills include:
- Command-post simulations
- Field training exercises
- Joint military coordination activities

Significance

- These drills are considered an important part of the defence partnership between the United States and South Korea.
- They aim to improve coordination and strengthen the ability of both allies to respond to possible security threats.

Facts/General knowledge

- About 18,000 troops from South Korea are participating.
- United States Forces Korea has not revealed the number of American troops participating.
- According to Yonhap News Agency, large U.S. military transport aircraft — Lockheed C-5 Galaxy and Boeing C-17 Globemaster III — landed at Osan Air Base near Seoul and departed within a few days, leading to speculation that certain military assets might be relocated.

Cold Response Drill

Introduction

- Large-scale NATO military exercise in the European Arctic
- Conducted primarily in northern Norway and surrounding regions

Why in news?

- Integrated with the Arctic Sentry mission to strengthen NATO's presence in the Arctic
- Involves a civilian preparedness component engaging hospitals, businesses, and public institutions to support military operations
- Features medical and logistics drills such as treating mass casualties transported from a simulated frontline in Finland
- Linked to Norway designating 2026 as the Year of Total Defence, emphasising society-wide resilience

Background

- Core aims: strengthen NATO's collective defence capability in the Arctic; enhance interoperability among allied forces operating in harsh Arctic environments; demonstrate deterrence near Arctic borders
- Method: simulates collective defence scenarios under Article 5, incorporating amphibious operations, air support, logistics, and coordination between allied forces

Significance

- Strengthening Arctic security as melting ice opens new sea routes and heightens resource competition
- Deterrence against Russia by operating near the Russia–Finland border, reinforcing NATO's eastern flank after Finland joined NATO

Facts/General knowledge

- Conducted biennially
- Approximately 25,000 troops participate from 14 NATO and partner countries
- Arctic warfare conditions are simulated in snow-covered mountainous terrain and freezing temperatures to test combat readiness

Exercise LAMITIYE-2026

Introduction

- Exercise LAMITIYE-2026 is the 11th edition of the Joint Military Exercise between India and Seychelles.
- It aims to strengthen defence cooperation and operational coordination between the two nations.
- "LAMITIYE" means "Friendship" in Creole (official languages of Seychelles), reflecting the spirit of the exercise.

Why in news?

- An Indian Armed Forces contingent is participating in the 11th edition.
- This edition marks the first tri-service participation from India, involving personnel from the ASSAM Regiment, the Indian Navy, and the Indian Air Force, including INS Trikand and a C-130J Super Hercules.

Background

- Joint Military Exercise LAMITIYE is a biennial exercise conducted since 2001 between the Indian Armed Forces and the Seychelles Defence Forces.

Significance

- Enhances interoperability in sub-conventional operations in semi-urban environments.
- Strengthens peacekeeping coordination between the two forces.
- Facilitates the exchange of tactical skills and new

military technologies.
- Gains added importance due to Seychelles' strategic location along key maritime trade routes and its role as an important partner in India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision for maritime security.

Facts/General knowledge
- Seychelles is an archipelagic state of 155 islands in the western Indian Ocean, located northeast of Madagascar and off the east coast of Africa.
- It lies on the Mascarene Plateau and is Africa's smallest country.
- The capital is Victoria, situated on Mahé Island.

INS Nilgiri at Exercise Kakadu 2026

Introduction
- INS Nilgiri, a frontline Indian Navy warship, has joined the multinational Exercise Kakadu 2026.

Why in news?
- Participation of INS Nilgiri in Exercise Kakadu 2026 in Australia.

Background
- Exercise Kakadu is the Royal Australian Navy's flagship multinational maritime exercise, initiated in 1993 and held biennially to enhance maritime security cooperation, improve interoperability, and strengthen partnerships across the Indo-Pacific region.
- Project 17A (P-17A) was initiated in 2019 to build a series of stealth guided-missile frigates for the Indian Navy.
- INS Nilgiri is the first of seven frigates under Project 17A.

Significance
- Enhances naval cooperation and interoperability among Indo-Pacific maritime forces through participation in a flagship multinational exercise.
- Reinforces partnerships among regional navies engaged in collective maritime security.

Facts/General knowledge
- INS Nilgiri is an advanced stealth frigate of the Indian Navy from the indigenous Project 17A class, designed for multi-role operations including surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, and air defence.
- The ship was launched in September 2019 and commissioned into the Indian Navy in 2025.
- The six remaining Project 17A frigates are Himgiri, Udaygiri, Taragiri, Dunagiri, Vindhyagiri, and Mahendragiri.
- Project 17A frigates are being constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai, and Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata.

AVATAAR Amphibious Surveillance Drone

Introduction
- AVATAAR (Amphibious Vehicle for Autonomous Tactical Aerial & Aquatic Reconnaissance) is India's first amphibious drone capable of operating in both air and underwater.
- It supports intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions in maritime and coastal environments.

Why in news?
- In March 2026, AquaAirX Autonomous Systems unveiled AVATAAR.

Background
- Developed by AquaAirX Autonomous Systems, a deep-tech startup.

Significance
- Extends ISR coverage across maritime and coastal zones through amphibious operation.
- Enables continuous, real-time maritime monitoring.
- Supports automated surveillance and inspection missions.

Facts/General knowledge
- Dual-domain operation with the ability to transition between air and underwater within seconds.
- Equipped with imaging sonar, Doppler Velocity Logger (DVL), acoustic communication modem, Light-Emitting Diode (LED) lights and cameras, and an Ultra-Short Baseline (USBL) navigation system for underwater navigation and real-time data collection in low-visibility conditions.
- AI-assisted navigation and mission control software.
- Achieved Technology Readiness Level 6 (TRL 6), indicating a functional prototype has been successfully tested in operational environments.

Argentina's Withdrawal from the World Health Organization

Introduction
- Argentina has formally withdrawn from the World Health Organization (WHO).

Why in news?

- The withdrawal is effective in March 2026 after a one-year notification period.
- The notification was initiated by President Javier Milei's administration.

Background

- The WHO is a specialised agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health.
- Established on 7 April 1948.
- Primary objective: attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health, defined as complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease.
- Key functions:
- Global health leadership: directing and coordinating international health work and partnerships.
- Setting norms and standards: developing international guidelines, such as the International Health Regulations (IHR), and monitoring their implementation.
- Health emergency response: identifying, assessing, and managing global health risks, including pandemics.
- Policy and technical support: providing evidence-based policy options and technical assistance to help nations strengthen health systems.
- Monitoring health trends: collecting and analysing global health data to assess performance and identify emerging threats.

Significance

- Marks the completion of Argentina's exit from the UN's coordinating authority on global health after the stipulated one-year notification.

Facts/General knowledge

- Argentina is the second-largest country in South America and the eighth-largest in the world; it is a federal republic known for rich cultural heritage (including Tango), vast natural resources, and highly diverse landscapes.
- Location: occupies the southern portion of South America, stretching from the tropics in the north to the sub-antarctic region of Tierra del Fuego in the south.
- Border nations:
- North: Bolivia and Paraguay.
- Northeast: Brazil and Uruguay.
- West: Chile (separated by the Andes).
- East: the South Atlantic Ocean.
- Key geographical features:
- The Andes Mountains run along the western border and include Mount Aconcagua (6,960 metres), the highest peak in the Western Hemisphere.
- The Pampas are vast, fertile central plains serving as the agricultural heartland, famous for cattle ranching and grain production.
- Patagonia is a rugged southern region with a vast, cold plateau, deep canyons, and massive glaciers such as Perito Moreno.
- The Paraná River system feeds into the Río de la Plata estuary, providing a critical maritime link for the capital, Buenos Aires.

Prambanan Temple Restoration: India–Indonesia Partnership

Introduction

- India and Indonesia are collaborating on the restoration of the Prambanan Temple complex to preserve one of South-East Asia's most important heritage sites.
- The project addresses the entire cultural landscape to maintain historical continuity.

Why in news?

- On 16 March 2026, Indonesia's Culture Minister Fadli Zon met the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) team in Jakarta to discuss the collaboration.
- The engagement strengthened cultural ties and advanced the Prambanan restoration agenda.

Background

- The Prambanan Temple complex in Indonesia is a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its 9th-century Hindu architecture.
- It comprises multiple temples dedicated to Hindu deities.
- Natural disasters and ageing have caused structural damage, making restoration essential.

Significance

- Demonstrates growth in international cooperation in cultural conservation.
- Emphasises an integrated approach by preserving Prambanan alongside nearby Sewu and Plaosan temples, which reflect a blend of Hindu and Buddhist traditions.
- Blends the scientific anastylosis method with digital tools and artificial intelligence to enhance authenticity and effectiveness.

- Adopts a phased, evidence-based workflow to refine techniques before broader application.

Facts/General knowledge

- The project extends beyond a single structure to the wider cultural landscape.
- Anastylosis involves reconstructing structures using original stones from the site, with new materials added only when necessary for structural stability to ensure authenticity.
- The ASI has identified several perwara temples requiring restoration through anastylosis.
- A major challenge is the presence of thousands of scattered stones across the site.
- The Indonesian government is interested in using digital tools and artificial intelligence to identify and reassemble temple stones.
- The ASI provides technical expertise and has proposed beginning with a pilot on one or two temples to determine the most effective restoration strategy.

Sports

Jammu & Kashmir's Maiden Ranji Trophy Title, 2025-26

Introduction

- The Jammu & Kashmir cricket team created history by winning their first Ranji Trophy title in the 2025-26 season.

Why in news?

- A historic first Ranji Trophy crown for Jammu & Kashmir in the 2025-26 domestic season.

Background

- Jammu & Kashmir made their Ranji Trophy debut in the 1959-60 season.
- The triumph ended a 67-year wait for the prestigious domestic championship in Indian first-class cricket.

Significance

- Marks the first time Jammu & Kashmir have been crowned Ranji champions.
- Highlights the growth and resilience of cricket in a region long viewed as a peripheral player in Indian domestic cricket.

Facts/General knowledge

- Winner: Jammu & Kashmir cricket team.
- Runner-up: Karnataka cricket team.
- Venue: KSCA Cricket Stadium, Hubballi, Karnataka.
- Final result: Match ended in a draw; title decided by a 291-run first-innings lead in favour of Jammu & Kashmir over Karnataka.
- Captain: Paras Dogra led Jammu & Kashmir during the title-winning campaign.
- Man of the Match (final): Shubham Pundir for a crucial first-innings century (121 runs).
- Player of the Tournament: Auqib Nabi Dar, recognised for exceptional bowling and finishing as the leading wicket-taker.

Khelo India Winter Games 2026 in Ladakh

Introduction

- Sixth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2026
- Encompasses winter sports across ice and snow disciplines

Why in news?

- Declared open in Leh, Union Territory of Ladakh
- Inauguration held at Nawang Dorjan Stobdan (NDS) Stadium
- Opened by the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta

Background

- Organised by the Youth Services and Sports Department of Ladakh UT, under the supervision of the Sports Authority of India (SAI)
- Designed as a two-leg competition:
- Ice sports in Leh
- Snow events in Gulmarg (Jammu & Kashmir)

Significance

- Builds competitive exposure for athletes
- Aligns domestic competition with international standards
- Develops winter sports infrastructure in the Himalayan region

Facts/General knowledge

- Sports disciplines include ice hockey and ice skating
- Figure skating added to the programme for the first time
- Ladakh UT's first Sports Policy aims at:
- Talent identification
- Inclusive sports
- Support for women and Divyang athletes
- Scholarships

- Job reservations
- World-class sports infrastructure

Australian Grand Prix 2026 — George Russell's Win

Introduction

- The Australian Grand Prix 2026 took place at the Melbourne Grand Prix Circuit.
- The race delivered dramatic early action and close competition.

Why in news?

- George Russell won the Australian Grand Prix 2026, taking the first victory of the new Formula 1 season.

Background

- Ferrari drivers gained positions quickly at the start.
- Charles Leclerc overtook George Russell at Turn One to take an early lead, while Lewis Hamilton also moved up the order.
- The lead changed seven times within the first nine laps as Russell and Leclerc battled intensely, showcasing the competitiveness of the new 2026 cars and their energy deployment systems.
- Mercedes regained control of the race strategy; Russell maintained strong pace and defended his position to secure the win.
- The victory marked Russell's sixth career Formula 1 win.

Significance

- Mercedes dominated the race strategy and delivered a one–two finish, with Kimi Antonelli in second.
- Ferrari followed closely, with Charles Leclerc third and Lewis Hamilton fourth.

Facts/General knowledge

- Key moments:
- Oscar Piastri's home race ended before it began after a crash on the way to the starting grid.
- Max Verstappen recovered from 20th position, after a qualifying crash, to finish sixth.
- Lando Norris finished fifth, winning the midfield battle between McLaren and Red Bull.
- Debutant Arvid Lindblad finished eighth for Racing Bulls in an impressive first Formula 1 race.
- Top 10 results:
- 1 George Russell — Mercedes
- 2 Kimi Antonelli — Mercedes
- 3 Charles Leclerc — Ferrari
- 4 Lewis Hamilton — Ferrari
- 5 Lando Norris — McLaren
- 6 Max Verstappen — Red Bull
- 7 Oliver Bearman — Haas
- 8 Arvid Lindblad — Racing Bulls
- 9 Gabriel Bortoleto — Audi
- 10 Pierre Gasly — Alpine

India to Host World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028

Introduction

- India has secured hosting rights for the World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028, marking a historic first for the country.
- The event will be held in Odisha at the Kalinga Indoor Athletics Stadium in Bhubaneswar.
- The decision was announced by World Athletics President Sebastian Coe ahead of the 2026 championships in Poland.

Why in news?

- World Athletics has confirmed India as the 2028 host, highlighting the country's preparedness and organisational ability.
- The timing of the announcement, just before the 2026 edition in Poland, underscores global attention on the upcoming cycle.

Background

- The Athletics Federation of India submitted the bid, which was approved by the World Athletics Council.
- Odisha's selection reflects its rising reputation as a sports hub, supported by strong infrastructure and consistent investment in international events.
- The Kalinga Indoor Athletics Stadium, built in 2024, is India's only dedicated indoor athletics facility and meets international standards.
- A World Athletics delegation inspected the venue and confirmed it meets all technical requirements.

Significance

- Represents a major breakthrough in India's sports journey and the first time the country hosts this prestigious indoor competition.
- Places India alongside Japan, Qatar, and China as Asian hosts of the championship.
- Creates opportunities to strengthen indoor athletics domestically, addressing limited success to date and the absence of Indian participants in the 2026 edition.
- Reflects growing trust in emerging nations to host major sporting events and to expand global footprints.

Facts/General knowledge

- The World Indoor Athletics Championships are held every two years and feature top athletes competing in indoor track and field disciplines.
- The Kalinga Indoor Athletics Stadium has already attracted global attention as a compliant, purpose-built venue.
- No Indian athlete has ever won a medal at this event, and no Indian participants are competing in the 2026 edition.

FIFA–YouTube Streaming Preview for World Cup 2026

Introduction

- FIFA has partnered with YouTube to introduce a new streaming format for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.
- The first 10 minutes of matches will be streamed live on YouTube before viewers move to official broadcasters.
- This creates a hybrid viewing model that blends traditional broadcasting with digital accessibility.

Why in news?

- FIFA announced a plan enabling global fans to watch the opening 10 minutes of World Cup 2026 matches live on YouTube.
- After this preview, viewers will be redirected to official broadcasters for full match coverage.

Background

- The partnership marks a significant shift in how football content is delivered, reflecting changing viewing habits.
- Broadcasters will be able to stream selected match content directly on YouTube.
- FIFA is adapting to online platforms to make football more accessible and engage more fans worldwide.

Significance

- The strategy targets younger, mobile-first audiences who prefer online streaming.
- YouTube plays a key role by offering short live segments and interactive content to capture attention.
- The preview approach is designed to spark interest quickly and encourage viewers to continue watching on official platforms.
- The move expands the tournament's digital reach and strengthens fan engagement.

Facts/General knowledge

- The 2026 FIFA World Cup will be the largest edition, featuring 48 teams and 104 matches.
- It will be hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico.
- The tournament will run from 11 June to 19 July 2026.

Rank and Reports

Record Rise of Self-Made Women Billionaires – Hurun Report 2026

Introduction

- A record 150 self-made women billionaires worldwide in 2026, according to the latest Hurun report.
- Their combined wealth has surged to $470 billion, reflecting a sharp rise driven by various sectors.
- China continues to dominate the list, and new entrants highlight an expanding base of entrepreneurship.

Why in news?

- The count has doubled from 75 a decade ago to 150 today, showing strong momentum in wealth creation.
- Total wealth is up 52% in three years.
- 60 new entrants were added in 2026, while around 15 dropped off the list.
- Over 80% are new compared to a decade ago.

Background

- China maintains the top spot with 78 billionaires, followed by the United States with 40, while other countries lag far behind.
- Cities such as Shenzhen, Shanghai, and Beijing have become major hubs for women entrepreneurs.
- Artificial intelligence, semiconductors, and digital infrastructure are emerging as major wealth engines.

Significance

- The rapid increase underscores expanding entrepreneurship and sustained momentum in wealth creation among self-made women.
- Sectoral shifts show semiconductors and data infrastructure rising to compete with healthcare in generating wealth, supporting the global AI boom.
- Changing demographics reveal both an average age

of 61 and a growing cohort of younger billionaires, including 10 under 40, illustrating new pathways through consumer brands and digital platforms.

Facts/General knowledge

- Sectoral trends: healthcare leads with 16 billionaires, followed by retail and software; industrial products linked to electronics and AI hardware are gaining importance; semiconductors and data infrastructure are key rising areas.
- AI and technology: the rise of AI is a major trend; notable names include Daniela Amodei, Lucy Guo, Mira Murati, and Lisa Su.
- India's presence: three representatives—Radha Vembu (enterprise software), Falguni Nayar (retail), and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (biotechnology).
- Top wealth creators: Diane Hendricks leads with $24 billion, followed by Zhong Huijuan and Zhou Qunfei.
- Demographics: the average age is 61; there are now 10 women under 40, including Kylie Jenner.

Global Mind Health 2025 – India Highlights

Introduction

- Sapien Labs, a not-for-profit organisation, released the Global Mind Health 2025 report under its Global Mind Project.
- The report is based on the Mind Health Quotient (MHQ).

Why in news?

- Publication of the Global Mind Health 2025 report with specific findings related to India.

Background

- The Global Mind Project is an initiative of Sapien Labs.
- MHQ encompasses all aspects of mental function: emotional, cognitive, and social, as well as drive and resilience.

Significance

- Reveals a wide disparity between young adults (18–34) and older adults (55+) in India's mental health scores and global rankings.
- Benchmarks India's young adults notably below the global MHQ.

Facts/General knowledge

- Global MHQ: 66.
- India (ages 18–34): MHQ 33; rank 60th globally.
- India (ages 55 and above): MHQ 96; rank 49th globally.
- Ultra-processed food consumption among India's 18–34: 44%, associated with increased depression and diminished emotional and cognitive control.

World Obesity Atlas 2026 – India and Global Highlights

Introduction

- The World Obesity Atlas 2026, released by the World Obesity Federation on World Obesity Day (4 March), presents an assessment of overweight and obesity trends, with a particular focus on the escalating burden in India.

Why in news?

- The Atlas reveals alarming statistics for India, signalling a growing public health emergency that requires urgent attention.

Background

- Obesity is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that poses health risks.
- Body Mass Index (BMI) is a screening tool estimating body fat from height and weight (BMI = weight (kg) ÷ [height (m)]²).
- Adult BMI categories (20+ years): Underweight (<18.5), Healthy/Normal (18.5–24.9), Overweight (25.0–29.9), Obesity (≥30.0; Class I: 30.0–34.9, Class II: 35.0–39.9, Class III: ≥40.0).
- For those under 20 years, BMI is interpreted using ageand sex-specific percentiles: Underweight (<5th), Healthy weight (5th to <85th), Overweight (85th to <95th), Obesity (≥95th), Severe obesity (≥120% of 95th percentile or BMI ≥35).
- Higher BMI correlates with increased risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and other metabolic disorders; waist circumference, body composition, and clinical assessments should complement BMI.

Significance

- India has nearly 15 million children aged 5–9 years and more than 26 million aged 10–19 years who were overweight or obese in 2025, placing it 2nd-highest globally for children with high BMI (41 million).
- Disease indicators linked to high BMI among Indian children aged 5–19 are projected to rise from 2025 to 2040, underscoring escalating health needs.
- Expected increases in India (2025–2040): BMI-related

hypertension from 2.99 million to 4.21 million; hyperglycaemia from 1.39 million to 1.91 million; high triglycerides from 4.39 million to 6.07 million; MASLD from 8.39 million to 11.88 million.
- The world is set to miss the 2025 target to halve the rise in childhood obesity (now extended to 2030), highlighting the urgency for action.
- Policy recommendations include taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages, restrictions on marketing to children (including digital), implementing global physical activity recommendations, protecting breastfeeding, healthier school food standards, and integrating prevention and care into primary health systems.

Facts/General knowledge

- Global distribution: China, India, and the United States each have over 10 million children living with obesity; China leads (62 million high BMI, 33 million obesity), followed by India, and the US (27 million high BMI, 13 million obesity).
- Over 200 million school-age children (5–19 years) with overweight and obesity are concentrated in just 10 countries.
- Currently, 20.7% of children aged 5–19 worldwide are overweight/obese (up from 14.6% in 2010), with projections of 507 million affected children by 2040 and over 57 million showing early cardiovascular disease signs.
- Among women (15–49 years), 13.4% have high BMI and 4.2% live with type 2 diabetes.
- Preventable risk factors: 74% of adolescents (11–17 years) fail to meet physical activity recommendations; only 35.5% receive school meals; 32.6% of infants (1–5 months) experience sub-optimal breastfeeding; children aged 6–10 consume up to 50 ml of sugary drinks daily.

Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2026

Introduction

- The Global Terrorism Index is an annual report that measures the impact of terrorism in 163 countries, analysing trends, patterns, and the global distribution of terrorist activity.

Why in news?

- The Global Terrorism Index 2026 has been released by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), providing a global assessment of the impact and trends of terrorism across countries.

Background

- IEP is headquartered in Sydney.
- The GTI is based on data from Dragonfly's TerrorismTracker database, which maintains detailed and structured records of terrorist incidents reported in open sources worldwide since January 2007.

Significance

- Pakistan ranked first in the Global Terrorism Index 2026, indicating the highest impact of terrorism among all countries.
- India is ranked 13th with a score of 6.428 in terms of the impact of terrorism worldwide.
- The Sahel region accounted for more than half of all terrorism-related deaths in 2025, compared to less than 1% in 2007.
- Sub-Saharan Africa continued to be the global epicentre of terrorism, with terrorism-related deaths declining in ten countries while increasing in only four.
- Nearly 70% of terrorism-related deaths occurred in just five countries: Pakistan, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo recorded the largest increases in terrorism-related deaths, with rises of 237 and 102 deaths, respectively.

Facts/General knowledge

- Factors used: total number of terrorist incidents, total number of fatalities, total number of injuries, and total number of hostages in a given year.
- Methodology: each factor is assigned a weight ranging from zero to three, and a five-year weighted average is used to capture the prolonged psychological impact of terrorist incidents over time.
- Deadliest terror group: the Islamic State (IS) remains among the deadliest terrorist organisations globally.

Miscellaneous

Boost to National Waterway-2 on the Brahmaputra

Introduction

- Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated three key inland waterways projects on National Waterway-2 along the Brahmaputra in Dibrugarh, Assam.

- The initiative advances a balanced approach of development and heritage preservation under the banner of "Vikas and Virasat."

Why in news?

- Launch of the Bogibeel Customs and Immigration Complex, the Dhubri Customs and Immigration Complex, and the renovated IWAI Heritage Building.
- The projects aim to strengthen trade, logistics, tourism, and cross-border connectivity in the Northeast.

Background

- National Waterway-2 runs along the Brahmaputra River and is considered a crucial economic corridor for Assam and neighbouring states.
- The government is focusing on inland waterways as a cost-effective transport mode under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Significance

- Improves logistics efficiency and unlocks economic opportunities in the Northeast.
- Enhances cross-border connectivity and positions the region for greater regional and international trade.
- Bogibeel Customs and Immigration Complex: A tourist-cum-cargo terminal integrating key functions to raise cargo handling capacity and streamline commerce and passenger movement on NW-2.
- Dhubri Customs and Immigration Complex: Strengthens regulatory oversight to boost export–import activities and establish Dhubri as a key inland trade gateway.
- IWAI Heritage Building, Dibrugarh: Preserves architectural legacy while supporting IWAI operations and promoting riverine tourism, exemplifying the "Vikas and Virasat" model.

Facts/General knowledge

- Sarbananda Sonowal serves as Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- Bogibeel Customs and Immigration Complex includes arrival and departure halls, cargo storage, staff facilities, and security systems.
- The Bogibeel project is designed to facilitate smoother trade under the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route.
- Dhubri is strategically located near Bangladesh and Bhutan, supporting expanded inland waterways connectivity.

Aghanashini River and Aghanashini–Vedavathi River Link Project

Introduction

- Focuses on the Aghanashini River in Karnataka and the proposed Aghanashini–Vedavathi river-linking project.
- Highlights a proposed inter-basin water transfer intended to address regional water needs.

Why in news?

- UNESCO has advised the Government of India to strictly follow World Heritage Convention conservation guidelines for the proposed Aghanashini–Vedavathi river-linking project.

Background

- The project is announced as part of the National Perspective Plan for inter-basin water transfer.
- It seeks to divert surplus water from the Aghanashini River in Uttara Kannada district to the arid Chitradurga basin through a network of pipelines and canals.

Significance

- The Aghanashini Estuary is a highly productive estuarine ecosystem and has been designated as a Ramsar Site.
- The project prioritises drought mitigation, agricultural enhancement, and drinking water supply in water-scarce regions.
- Environmental concerns have been raised regarding potential ecological impacts on the Western Ghats.

Facts/General knowledge

- Location: A west-flowing river in Uttara Kannada District of Karnataka.
- Origin: Gadihalli (Sirsi) at an altitude of 676 m in the Western Ghats of Karnataka.
- Course: Flows for nearly 117 km before joining the Arabian Sea at Tadri, Karnataka.
- Catchment area: 1,449 sq km across Uttara Kannada and Shimoga (Sorba) districts.
- Tributaries: Bakurhole, Donihalla, Chandika hole, Masti mane halla, Benne holé, Badala, Divalli, Santeguli, Hulidevara kodalu, etc.
- Waterfalls formed: Burude falls, Dabbe falls, Waate halla, Benne hole falls, Unchalli falls.
- Estuary formation: The Aghanashini Estuary forms where the river meets the Arabian Sea in Karnataka.

International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF) 2026

Introduction

- Women are increasingly central to agriculture as rural men move to non-farm jobs, with women replacing them in farm roles.
- This ongoing shift is part of the wider feminisation of agriculture.

Why in news?

- The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation has declared 2026 the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF 2026).

Background

- Employment in agriculture surged by 135% in a decade under the rise in women's participation.
- Women now account for 42% of the agricultural workforce, and two in three working women are engaged in agriculture.
- This still remains lower than the rest of the world, where women's work participation was in the range 57%–63% in a majority of countries.
- In 2023–24, at least 117.6 million women worked in agriculture (21.7 million hired workers, 95.1 million self-employed, 0.8 million regular workers); the estimated male agricultural workforce was 127.5 million.
- Greater participation has not translated into higher income for the economy, as agriculture's share of national GVA fell from 15.3% in 2017–18 to 14.4% in 2024–25.

Significance

- The feminisation of agriculture has, in a way, reinforced inequities rather than enabling women's economic empowerment.
- High-value segments such as tea, spices, millets, and certified organic produce, supported by Geographical Indications, branding, and export standards, can move producers towards premium, value-added markets.
- Digital innovations can bridge gaps by connecting women to markets, knowledge systems, and financial services, formalising labour, and improving access to schemes, credit, and fair pricing.
- A range of government initiatives targets sustainable agriculture, land titles, credit, collective institutions, entrepreneurship, digital literacy, welfare, and export facilitation for women farmers.

Facts/General knowledge

- Unpaid labour:
- Nearly half of women in agriculture are unpaid family workers.
- Their numbers rose 2.5 times from 23.6 million to 59.1 million in eight years.
- In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, more than 80% of women workers are in agriculture, and over half receive no wages.
- Systemic inequities:
- Women own only 13%–14% of land holdings.
- They earn 20%–30% less than men for equivalent work.
- Asset ownership, decision-making power, and access to credit and government support remain male-dominated.
- Digital divide:
- Barriers in digital literacy, language, and affordability of devices limit participation in modern agri-markets.
- Emerging opportunities:
- India's value chains for tea, spices, millets, and certified organic produce are poised for expansion.
- Geographical Indications, branding initiatives, and support for meeting export standards can shift producers from subsistence to premium, value-added markets.
- Digital solutions:
- Platforms such as e-NAM, mobile-based advisory services, voice-assisted applications, and precision agriculture tools connect women to markets, knowledge systems, and financial services.
- These solutions help formalise women's labour while expanding access to schemes, credit, and fair pricing.
- Government initiatives:
- Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) under NRLM for sustainable agriculture, livestock, and NTFP.
- Joint land titles (land pattas) in the names of husband and wife.
- Priority Sector Lending for women farmers.
- Rural women SHGs and FPOs supported through NABARD and DAY-NRLM.
- Agri-Clinics & Agri-Business Centres (ACABC) with special provisions for women agri-entrepreneurs.
- Digital literacy initiatives such as Digital Sakhi and the BHASHINI platform for multilingual access to agri-services.
- Maternity benefits and health schemes.
- Support for women FPOs under the 10,000 FPOs

Scheme (2020).
- GI tags, branding, and export facilitation for spices, tea, millets, and organic produce.

WEF leadership transition (2026)

Introduction
- The World Economic Forum (WEF) announced a leadership change on 28 February 2026, with Børge Brende resigning and Alois Zwinggi appointed as Interim CEO.
- The transition is designed to maintain continuity in the Forum's operations and its global stakeholder capitalism agenda.

Why in news?
- Børge Brende stepped down after an eight-year tenure as President and CEO, having served since 2017.
- Alois Zwinggi, previously Managing Director and Head of Corporate Affairs at the WEF, will lead the organisation during the transition period as Interim CEO.

Background
- Børge Brende is a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway and led the Forum through the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical realignments from 2017 to 2026.
- Alois Zwinggi's senior roles at the Forum, including Managing Director and Head of Corporate Affairs, position him to manage the transition effectively.

Significance
- Zwinggi's appointment aims to ensure stability and continuity in the Forum's activities.
- It reinforces the Forum's commitment to advancing its global stakeholder capitalism agenda.

Facts/General knowledge
- World Economic Forum: Established 1971; Founder: Klaus Schwab; Headquarters: Cologny, Switzerland; Annual Meeting: Davos, Switzerland.
- Stakeholder capitalism: A system in which corporations serve the interests of all stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, and local communities.
- Great Reset: A WEF proposal to rebuild the economy sustainably following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Interim CEO: A temporary leader appointed to manage an organisation's operations until a permanent successor is selected.

Scheme and initiatives

CM Jan Sunwai Portal and Mobile App (Delhi, 2026)

Introduction
- A unified digital platform and mobile app for citizens in Delhi to file and track grievances.
- Enables complaint management across government departments and civic bodies.

Why in news?
- Launched by Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta as a city-wide grievance redress initiative.

Background
- Purpose: enhance accountability in public service delivery.
- Reduce middlemen by providing direct, digital access for citizens.
- Offer a transparent, centralised system for public complaints.

Facts/General knowledge
- Channels: portal, mobile app, dedicated call centre (1902), and physical submissions.
- Structure: a 3-tier system—Grievance Redressal Officer (JSAA), Appellate Authority (AA), and Final Appellate Authority (FAA).
- Feature: automated escalation to higher authorities if users provide negative feedback on resolutions.
- Scope: covers all Delhi government departments, MCD, DDA, and Delhi Police.
- Resolution approach: feedback-driven and time-bound.
- Related initiatives: strengthened EWS/DG/CWSN school admission portals (cloud-based/Aadhaar-linked); integrated 75 e-District services with 7,000 Common Service Centres (CSCs).

Gruha Sugam Portal

Introduction
- A digital portal to enable housing loans to be availed with ease from the location of posting.
- Designed as a unified marketplace digitally integrated with the National Housing Bank (NHB)

and lending institutions for streamlined operations.

Why in news?

- National Housing Bank has launched the Gruha Sugam Portal focusing on Defence, Paramilitary and Government personnel.

Background

- Eligible users include Defence personnel, members of Paramilitary Forces, and State and Central Government employees.
- Applications are submitted digitally through respective administrative units.
- Eliminates the need to visit banks and financial institutions for loan approvals and processing.
- Operates as a unified digital marketplace with seamless integration between NHB and lending institutions.

Significance

- Accelerates digital lending adoption and advances financial inclusion.
- Facilitates increased home ownership through improved access to housing loans, strengthening the mission of promoting affordable and sustainable housing finance.
- Enhances loan processing efficiency and ensures overall ease of operations.
- Promotes market transparency with discovery of the best-suited offer.
- Provides grievance redressal and consumer protection mechanisms.
- Offers an online chat facility for quick query resolution.

Facts/General knowledge

- National Housing Bank (NHB) is the apex agency established to promote Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) in India.
- It is an All-India Financial Institution (AIFI) wholly owned by the Government of India (GoI).
- NHB supervises HFCs, while regulation of HFCs rests with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- NHB became wholly owned by the GoI following the RBI notification dated 24 April 2019; the entire paid-up capital is held by the government.
- Functions of NHB include:
- Supervision and grievance redressal regarding HFCs
- Financing
- Promotion and development

PM Jan Dhan Yojana—Inoperative Accounts and Impact

Introduction

- PM Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) serves as a key platform for Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) and subsidies, and through integration with the JAM trinity (Jan Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile), ensures transparent and efficient delivery of welfare schemes.

Why in news?

- The Finance Ministry stated that nearly one-fourth of PMJDY accounts are inoperative, raising concerns about financial inclusion and account usage.

Background

- It provides a basic zero-balance account for every unbanked adult without any opening or maintenance charges.
- Account holders receive a RuPay debit card with Rs 2 lakh accident insurance cover.
- They are eligible for an overdraft facility of up to Rs 10,000 to meet emergencies.

Significance

- PMJDY has significantly boosted women's financial inclusion—women owning bank accounts rose from 53% (2015–16) to 79% (2019–21).
- Leveraging PMJDY's financial inclusion base, access to Mudra loans has expanded, recording a CAGR of 9.8% between 2019 and 2024.
- The scheme has boosted savings habits with an average deposit of Rs 4,352.

Facts/General knowledge

- Total PMJDY accounts: 56.04 crore.
- Inoperative accounts: 13.04 crore (23%).
- Uttar Pradesh has the highest share of inoperative accounts (2.75 crore), followed by Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.
- As per the Reserve Bank of India guidelines, a savings account is marked inoperative if there are no transactions for over 2 years.
- Direct Benefit Transfers continue to flow even into inactive accounts.

Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)

Introduction

- A flagship life insurance scheme by the Government of India providing affordable cover to economically weaker sections.

- Part of the Government's social security initiatives to ensure financial protection for families in case of untimely death of the insured.
- Characterised by a very low annual premium and simple bank-based enrolment, making it widely accessible.
- Recognised as one of the most successful insurance-based welfare schemes in India.

Background

- Launched in May 2015 by the Government of India under the Ministry of Finance.
- Designed to extend formal life insurance protection across rural and low-income populations through banking channels.

Significance

- Ensures financial security to families upon the death of the earning member.
- Provides affordable life insurance, reducing the burden of high premiums for low-income groups.
- Promotes financial inclusion by linking insurance with bank accounts.
- Encourages a habit of savings and social security among citizens.
- Supports the vision of "Insurance for All".
- Has enrolled crores of beneficiaries across rural and urban India.
- Offers financial relief to families during unforeseen deaths.
- Increases insurance penetration, particularly among low-income groups.
- Promotes financial literacy and inclusion through banks.
- Reduces dependency on informal borrowing during crises.
- Strengthens inclusive growth and welfare-based governance.
- Particularly impactful in rural areas with previously limited access to formal insurance.

Facts/General knowledge

- Life cover: ₹2 lakh payable on death of the insured due to any reason (natural or accidental).
- Premium amount: ₹436 per annum, auto-debited from the savings bank account.
- Eligibility: Indian citizens aged 18 to 50 years with a savings bank account.
- Renewal: Annual renewal available up to the age of 55 years.
- Coverage period: From 1 June to 31 May every year.
- Mode of payment: Auto-debit from the linked savings bank account.
- Risk coverage: Death due to both natural and accidental causes.
- Implementing agencies: Public and private sector life insurance companies in tie-up with banks.
- Voluntary scheme: Enrolment is optional but encouraged.
- Simple enrolment: Requires Aadhaar and bank account linkage.

Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)

Introduction

- A flagship social security initiative of the Government of India to protect citizens from financial distress due to accidental death or disability.
- Provides affordable personal accident insurance to those previously outside formal coverage, especially poor, rural and unorganised sector workers.
- Ensures basic financial safety and dignity for families during sudden life tragedies.

Why in news?

- In May 2026, PMSBY marks its 11th anniversary since launch on 9 May 2015.
- By April 2025, the scheme recorded major milestones in enrolments and claims, reflecting large-scale social impact.

Background

- Launched on 9 May 2015 to extend basic accident insurance at an extremely affordable cost.
- Built on Jan Dhan Yojana bank accounts, using the banking system as a platform for universal access.
- Designed as a one-year, annually renewable accident insurance scheme linked to bank or post office accounts with auto-debit consent.
- Administered through Public Sector General Insurance Companies and other approved insurers in partnership with banks and post offices.

Significance

- Extends accident insurance to vulnerable groups including unorganised workers, daily wage earners and rural households, with minimal regular financial burden.
- Provides immediate financial support after accidental death or disability, helping prevent debt traps and loss of livelihood.
- Ensures equitable reach across rural and urban

populations through banks, regional rural banks, cooperative banks and post offices.
- Demonstrates inclusive growth by converting small annual savings into life-restoring support for families, as seen in cases like Jyoti Nihal from Madhya Pradesh.

Facts/General knowledge

- Scheme structure and period:
- One-year personal accident insurance, renewable every year.
- Coverage valid from 1 June to 31 May after successful premium deduction.
- Eligibility:
- Age 18–70 years.
- Active savings bank or post office account required.
- Explicit consent for auto-debit of annual premium.
- Enrolment permitted through only one account even if multiple accounts exist.
- Annual renewal required; rejoining allowed if coverage lapses.
- Coverage:
- Accidental death: ₹2 lakh to the nominee.
- Total permanent disability: ₹2 lakh for loss of both eyes, both hands, both feet, or loss of one eye with one hand or foot.
- Partial permanent disability: ₹1 lakh for loss of one eye, one hand or one foot.
- Accidents arising from natural calamities (floods, earthquakes, storms) covered.
- Termination at age 70, on account closure, insufficient balance, or failed premium auto-debit.
- Premium and charges:
- Annual premium of ₹20 per member, auto-debited in one instalment.
- No additional administrative or service charges.
- Administration and linkage:
- Implemented by Public Sector General Insurance Companies and other approved insurers with banks and post offices.
- Coverage linked directly to the subscriber's bank or post office account.
- Achievements (as of April 2025):
- Total enrolments crossed 51 crore.
- Women enrolments around 23.87 crore.
- Approximately 72% beneficiaries from rural areas.
- Over 1.57 lakh claims settled with payouts exceeding ₹3,121 crore.

Nagaland–IMD MoU on Weather Forecasting (2026)

Introduction

- The Department of Higher Education, Nagaland, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the India Meteorological Department to strengthen weather forecasting, atmospheric research, and capacity building in the state.

Why in news?

- The agreement was signed in February 2026.

Background

- The India Meteorological Department functions under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- Mission Mausam was launched in 2024 by the Government of India and is implemented by the MoES through the IMD.
- The scheme focuses on modernising weather infrastructure, improving high-resolution forecasting, and strengthening early warning systems.

Significance

- Establishes a 20-year institutional partnership promoting academic engagement, joint research, training, and capacity building in meteorological and atmospheric sciences.
- Enhances understanding of Nagaland's state-specific weather hazards, including heavy rainfall and extreme weather events.
- Supports more reliable forecasts and disaster readiness.

Facts/General knowledge

- One X-band Polarimetric Doppler Weather Radar will be installed at Dimapur Government College, Oriental Colony, Dimapur, under the Mission Mausam scheme.
- The signing took place in Kohima, Nagaland.

ISRO–ESA Earth Observation Cooperation and Proba-3 Launch

Introduction

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the European Space Agency (ESA) have expanded their long-standing partnership with a new cooperation agreement for Earth observation missions.
- ISRO has successfully launched Europe's Proba-3 mission, further strengthening India–Europe collaboration in space.

Why in news?

- A new ESA–ISRO arrangement on joint calibration, validation and scientific studies for Earth observation missions has been concluded.
- The Proba-3 satellites were placed in their designated orbit about 20 minutes after launch.

Background

- Cooperation between ISRO and ESA began in 1978 and was renewed in 2002.
- Key areas of cooperation include Earth observation programmes, satellite navigation, ground station support, human spaceflight collaboration and deep-space communication support.
- ESA has supported Indian missions such as the Chandrayaan programme and Aditya-L1.

Significance

- Enhances the accuracy and reliability of Earth observation satellite data.
- Strengthens India–Europe cooperation in space science and applications.
- Demonstrates ISRO's capability in launching and supporting international space missions.
- Provides a framework important for ESA's upcoming Fluorescence Explorer (FLEX) mission.

Facts/General knowledge

- Agreement title: "ESA–ISRO Arrangement concerning Joint Calibration and Validation Activities and Scientific Studies for Earth Observation Missions."
- Focus areas: joint calibration and validation campaigns, and scientific studies for Earth observation missions.
- About FLEX: designed to study vegetation fluorescence, helping to understand plant photosynthesis and ecosystem health, and improving global monitoring of climate and vegetation dynamics.
- Proba-3 mission: two satellites — Coronagraph (about 310 kg) and Occulter (about 240 kg) — to study the Sun's outer atmosphere (corona) and improve understanding of space weather and solar activity.

Safeena Husain and Educate Girls — TIME Women of the Year 2026

Introduction

- Safeena Husain is the founder of the non-profit Educate Girls.
- Educate Girls focuses on identifying, enrolling, and retaining out-of-school girls in India's most rural and marginalised communities.

Why in news?

- Featured in TIME magazine's Women of the Year 2026 list.
- Recognised as one of 16 global leaders for transformative work advancing equity and opportunity for women and girls.
- Follows Educate Girls becoming the first Indian non-profit to win the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2025.

Background

- Educate Girls was established in 2007.
- Began work in 50 villages in Rajasthan and expanded to over 25,000 villages across Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.
- Operates a community-based volunteer model called Team Balika to bridge the gender gap in education

.

Significance

- Under Safeena Husain's leadership, Educate Girls has brought over 2 million girls back into the education system.
- Launched the world's first Development Impact Bond (DIB) in education, a performance-based financing tool linking funding to actual learning outcomes.

Facts/General knowledge

- In January 2026, Safeena Husain released her book "Every Last Girl: A Journey to Educate India's Forgotten Daughters".
- Previous honours include the Businessline Changemaker Award and the WISE Award for Innovation in education.

Appointments

Governor Reshuffle India 2026

Introduction

- President Murmu has appointed 9 new Governors and Lieutenant Governors in India.
- The reshuffle involves transfers as well as fresh appointments of senior political leaders, diplomats,

and former military officers.

Why in news?

- Key leadership changes have been announced across multiple states and Union Territories, including Telangana, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Bihar, Delhi, Ladakh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Himachal Pradesh.

Background

- The appointments are part of a broader effort to reorganise the Governor and Lieutenant Governor leadership across Indian states and Union Territories.
- The reshuffle also addresses recent developments, such as the resignation of the West Bengal Governor and the additional-charge arrangement in Maharashtra.

Significance

- The changes aim to ensure continuity in governance and administrative leadership in the respective states.
- Maharashtra now has a full-time Governor, ending the temporary additional-charge arrangement.

Facts/General knowledge

- Year: 2026.
- Total appointments: 9 Governors and Lieutenant Governors.
- Profile mix: senior political leaders, diplomats, and former military officers.
- State and Union Territory appointments:
- Telangana: Shiv Pratap Shukla (moved from Governor of Himachal Pradesh).
- Maharashtra: Jishnu Dev Varma (transferred from Governor of Telangana).
- Nagaland: Nand Kishore Yadav (appointed as Governor).
- Bihar: Lt. General (Retd.) Syed Ata Hasnain (appointed as Governor).
- Delhi (Lieutenant Governor): Taranjit Singh Sandhu (former Indian Ambassador to the United States).
- Ladakh (Lieutenant Governor): Vinai Kumar Saxena (moved from Lieutenant Governor of Delhi).
- West Bengal: R. N. Ravi (moved from Governor of Tamil Nadu), following the resignation of C. V. Ananda Bose.
- Tamil Nadu: Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar (Governor of Kerala) will discharge the functions of Governor of Tamil Nadu.
- Himachal Pradesh: Kavinder Gupta (moved from Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh).
- Maharashtra transition detail:
- The Governor of Gujarat, Aacharya Devvrat, had been holding additional charge of Maharashtra; with Jishnu Dev Varma's appointment, he continues solely in his primary role.

Appointment of Justice S.A. Dharmadhikari as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court

Introduction

- Justice Sushrut Arvind (S.A.) Dharmadhikari has been appointed as the 55th Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.

Why in news?

- He was sworn in on 6 March 2026 by Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi.

Background

- Formerly a Judge of the Kerala High Court.
- Originally from the Madhya Pradesh High Court.
- He succeeded Justice Manindra Mohan Shrivastava.
- Retiring from the Kerala High Court to assume this position.

Significance

- The appointment follows the collegium's policy of appointing new Chief Justices in advance to maintain administrative continuity.
- It ensures a seamless transition.

Facts/General knowledge

- Appointed by the President of India following a Supreme Court Collegium recommendation.
- The Supreme Court Collegium recommended his name on 26 February 2026.
- The appointment was made under the Constitution of India.
- The Central Government confirmed the appointment on 5 March 2026.

Keki Mistry as Interim Part-time Chairman of HDFC Bank

Introduction

- HDFC Bank's Board appointed Keki Mistry as interim Part-time Chairman to steer the board during a short transition.
- The move follows the sudden resignation of Atanu Chakraborty as Chairman.

Why in news?

- A sudden leadership change at HDFC Bank led to

an interim appointment to lead the board.
- Keki Mistry described the role as a temporary, three-month transition.

Background
- Atanu Chakraborty resigned over ethical concerns, citing personal reasons and a misalignment with bank practices over the past two years.
- Keki Mistry is a long-time HDFC insider.
- CEO Sashidhar Jagdishan said leadership is supporting Mistry, and a formal process will determine a permanent replacement.

Significance
- Ensures leadership continuity and stability during the transition period.
- Signals unified leadership support while a formal process selects a permanent Chairman.
- Provides clarity on intent and duration, aiding stakeholder confidence.

Facts/General knowledge
- Effective date: 19 March 2026.
- Tenure: three months.
- Resignation date of predecessor: 17 March 2026.
- Position: Interim Part-time Chairman of HDFC Bank.
- Approving authority: Reserve Bank of India.
- Transition framing: temporary three-month role; no major operational or governance issues; no power struggle.
- Succession planning: formal process to appoint a permanent Chairman; leadership support for Mistry in the interim.
-

Books and Author

Mahatma: A Great Communicator – Book Release

Introduction
- "Mahatma: A Great Communicator" is a book intended to generate awareness so people take inspiration from the life of Mahatma Gandhi and imbibe his ideals in their lives.

Why in news?
- Union Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya released the book "Mahatma: A Great Communicator".

Background
- The Minister said that Mahatma Gandhi ignited the spirit of patriotism first in his own life before igniting this spirit in the people of the country.
- He noted that many people have established Gandhian institutions after being inspired by Mahatma Gandhi.
- He stated that Mahatma Gandhi made non-violence a weapon against the British Regime.

Significance
- The book aims to motivate people to imbibe Gandhian ideals in their lives.
- It reinforces the message of patriotism and non-violence associated with Mahatma Gandhi.
- It underscores the continuing inspiration that has led to the establishment of Gandhian institutions.

India's Quantum Technology Push

Introduction
- A book release has drawn attention to India's trajectory in quantum technology.

Why in news?
- Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh released a book authored by Prof. V.P.N. Nampoori, coinciding with the National Quantum Mission.
- The Mission aims to establish India as a global quantum leader in computing and communication by 2031.

Background
- The book is authored by Prof. V.P.N. Nampoori.

Significance
- The release highlights India's advancements in quantum technology.

Facts/General knowledge
- Book title: "Quantum Physics: One Hundred Magical Years".

World Wildlife Day 2026 and Conservation of Medicinal Plants in India

Introduction
- World Wildlife Day 2026 was observed on 3rd March with the theme "Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods".
- The day commemorates the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Why in news?

- The United Nations-designated day was observed on 3rd March 2026 with a focus on medicinal and aromatic plants.

Background

- The United Nations General Assembly designated 3rd March as World Wildlife Day on 20th December 2013 during its 68th session.

Significance

- India promotes conservation of medicinal plants through in-situ and ex-situ approaches, institutional support, cultivation, market access, recognition of conservation efforts, and post-harvest and quality infrastructure.
- Geographical Indication protection showcases medicinal plant heritage, including recent registrations.

Facts/General knowledge

- India possesses 7% of global biodiversity with 45,000 plant species; 15,000 are medicinal plants and about 8,000 species are used in Indian systems of medicine and folk medicines.
- Nearly 70% of India's medicinal plants are found in the Western Ghats, Eastern Ghats, Himalayas, and Aravalli range.
- In-situ conservation: 115 Medicinal Plants Conservation Areas (MPCAs) in natural habitats.
- Ex-situ conservation: National Seed Gene Bank, New Delhi.
- Nodal agency: National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) under Ministry of Ayush implements the Central Sector Scheme for Conservation, Development and Sustainable Management of Medicinal Plants.
- Key initiatives:
- National Ayush Mission (2014) and Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture promote medicinal plant cultivation integrated with farming systems.
- e-CHARAK platform provides market access with fortnightly price updates of 100 medicinal plants from 25 herbal markets in multiple local languages.
- Aushadhi Vanaspati Mitra Program (AVMP) recognises outstanding contributions to medicinal plant conservation.
- Medicinal Plants Business Centre (MPBC) supports post-harvest management, scientific storage, and quality testing infrastructure.
- GI-tagged medicinal plants include: Navara Rice (Kerala), Green Cardamom (Kerala & Karnataka), Ganjam Kewda Flower (Odisha), Saffron (Jammu & Kashmir), and "Nagauri Ashwagandha" (Rajasthan) registered in November 2025.

Jan Aushadhi Diwas 2026 and PMBJP

Introduction

- Jan Aushadhi Diwas 2026 was observed on 7 March under the theme "Janaushadhi Sasti Bhi, Bharosemand Bhi, Sehat Ki Baat, Bachat Ke Saath".
- The Prime Minister highlighted the role of the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) in reducing medicine costs for millions.

Why in news?

- The 2026 observance spotlighted PMBJP's impact on affordable access to medicines and surgical items.
- The event underscored the scheme's role in lowering out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure.

Background

- PMBJP is a flagship scheme of the Department of Pharmaceuticals under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers.
- It aims to make quality generic medicines and surgical items available at 50–80% lower cost, especially for economically disadvantaged citizens.
- Launched in 2008 as the Jan Aushadhi Scheme and rebranded/expanded in 2016 as PMBJP.

Significance

- Improves affordability and availability of essential medicines and consumables across the country.
- Has enabled estimated citizen savings of approximately Rs 38,000 crore by June 2025 compared to branded alternatives.
- Expands last-mile access through rural and remote outreach, innovative locations, and cooperative networks.
- Promotes inclusive entrepreneurship by facilitating participation from under-represented groups.

Facts/General knowledge

- Product portfolio: roughly 2,110 medicines and 315 surgical items/consumables across 29 therapeutic categories, including anti-cancer, cardiovascular, and anti-diabetic drugs.
- Quality assurance: procurement exclusively from WHO-GMP certified manufacturers; testing in NABL-accredited laboratories.
- Citizen-centric initiatives:
- Janaushadhi Suvidha sanitary napkins (2019): oxo-

biodegradable; priced at Rs 1 per pad.
- Jan Aushadhi Sugam app (2019): provides geo-location of Kendras, real-time medicine availability, and price comparisons with branded options.
- Inclusive entrepreneurship model: franchise-based; special one-time incentives up to Rs 2 lakh (for furniture, fixtures, and computer equipment) for women, SC/ST, Divyangjan, and ex-servicemen.
- Strategic expansion and integration:
- Kendras to grow from over 18,000 (early 2026) to 25,000 by March 2027, focusing on rural, remote, and underserved areas.
- Innovative locations include 116 Kendras at railway stations (as of January 2026) and within government hospital premises.
- Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) leveraged to establish Kendras and extend reach to remote populations.

International Day of Women Judges 2025

Introduction
- The United Nations' International Day of Women Judges is observed annually on 10 March across the globe.
- It highlights the vital role of women in the judiciary.
- It emphasises women's representation and contributions to judiciaries worldwide.

Why in news?
- 10 March 2025 marks the observance of the 4th International Day of Women Judges.

Background
- On 28 April 2021, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/75/274, introduced by the State of Qatar, establishing the International Day of Women Judges as an annual observance.
- The resolution acknowledged the efforts of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, through its Global Judicial Integrity Network, in promoting the inclusion of women's representation within judicial systems.
- The first-ever International Day of Women Judges was observed on 10 March 2022.

Significance
- Advocates for gender equality within judicial systems.

No Smoking Day 2026

Introduction
- A global initiative encouraging people to quit tobacco and move towards a healthier, smoke-free life.
- Focuses on raising awareness about the harmful effects of smoking.
- Supports individuals seeking to overcome nicotine addiction.

Why in news?
- Marked in 2026 with widespread tobacco cessation campaigns led by health organisations, communities, and governments.

Background
- Originated in the United Kingdom in 1984 as a public health initiative to reduce tobacco use.
- Gained international recognition as governments and health organisations promoted similar anti-smoking efforts.
- Evolved into a global movement encouraging smokers to quit and adopt healthier lifestyles.

Significance
- Aims to motivate smokers to quit tobacco and adopt healthier habits.
- Emphasises the serious health risks associated with smoking and encourages the first step towards a smoke-free life.
- Highlights the need to reduce tobacco consumption, as smoking is linked to several life-threatening diseases.
- Uses awareness campaigns and support programmes to show that quitting can significantly improve long-term health outcomes.

Facts/General knowledge
- Observance date in 2026: 11 March.
- Held annually on the second Wednesday of March.

International Day of Forests 2025

Introduction
- The International Day of Forests, also known as World Forests Day (WFD), is celebrated each year on 21 March to raise awareness about the importance of forests and trees for the survival of humanity and the planet.

Why in news?
- The theme for 2025 is "Forests and Food".

Background

- Evolved from "World Forestry Day" established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1971.
- Formally recognised by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012.

Significance

- Ecological significance
- Carbon sequestration: Forests absorb approximately 30% of global CO_2 emissions from fossil fuel annually (FAO, 2020) and store 861 gigatonnes of carbon, making them crucial for climate change mitigation.
- Biodiversity conservation: Forests host 80% of terrestrial biodiversity (UNEP, 2021). In India, forests shelter species like tigers (3,167, NTCA 2022) and Asian elephants (approximately 30,000, MoEFCC 2023).
- Water security: Forests regulate hydrological cycles, recharge groundwater, and mitigate floods. Over 85% of major cities rely on forested watersheds for freshwater. In crises, forests provide up to 20% of rural family income and ensure food security. The Western Ghats in India sustain rivers that supply water to 245 million people.
- Economic and livelihood value
- Global dependence: 1.6 billion people, including 70 million indigenous communities, rely on forests for food, fuel, and medicine (World Bank, 2022).
- Employment in India: Over 30 million people depend on forestry activities for their livelihood, with MGNREGA supporting afforestation projects and rural livelihoods.
- Livestock support: Forests sustain 30–40 million pastoralists and provide fodder for 4 billion livestock; trees enhance rangelands by offering shade and protection, improving livestock productivity.
- Cultural and genetic significance
- Cultural significance: Forests are culturally revered for regeneration, health, and longevity. India has 100,000+ sacred groves (e.g., Kavus in Kerala, Law Lyngdoh in Meghalaya), preserving biodiversity and rare flora like Myristica malabarica (Karnataka).
- Genetic diversity: Forests safeguard wild relatives of crops (e.g., wild rice in Assam), essential for breeding climate-resilient varieties.

Facts/General knowledge

- Definition of forest in India: In T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad vs the Union of India (1996), the Supreme Court interpreted "forest" according to its dictionary meaning, covering all statutorily recognised forests, whether reserved, protected, or otherwise.
- Status of forests in India (ISFR 2023)
- Forest and tree cover: 25.17% of geographical area; forest cover 21.76%; tree cover 3.41%.
- Increase since 2021: 1,445.81 km² in forest and tree cover.
- Nineteen states/UTs have over 33% of their geographical area under forest cover.
- Forest carbon stock: 7,285.5 million tonnes, up by 81.5 million tonnes since 2021.
- Mangrove cover: 4,991.68 km² (0.15% of geographical area), with a 7.43 km² decline since 2021.
- Largest forest cover (area wise): Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh.
- Highest percentage of forest cover: Lakshadweep (91.33%), Mizoram (85.34%), Andaman & Nicobar (81.62%).

World Water Day Conclave 2026 and World Water Day 2026

Introduction

- The Ministry of Jal Shakti convened the World Water Day Conclave 2026 on World Water Day under the theme "Industry for Water," marking a strategic shift towards a circular water economy.
- The conclave marks India's transition to a data-driven, circular water economy by integrating industrial commitments with community participation.
- It prioritises glacier monitoring and wastewater recycling to counter plummeting per-capita water availability, aligning economic growth with environmental sustainability and gender-inclusive water security.

Why in news?

- World Water Day Conclave 2026 highlighted a circular water economy, treating wastewater as a precious, finite resource with a focus on Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle to ensure long-term climate resilience.
- Landmark data resources were released: 7th Minor Irrigation Census, 2nd Census of Water Bodies, 1st Census of Springs and Major & Medium Irrigation Projects, and the National Water Data Policy 2026.
- Leading industry associations (FICCI, ASSOCHAM, CII) made joint commitments: regular water audits by 2027, Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) by 2030, and

a 50% reduction in corporate water footprint by 2030.
- In collaboration with NRSC-ISRO, a Glacial Monitoring Framework and GLOF risk reduction initiatives using platforms like Bhuvan were emphasised for Himalayan security.
- Technological integration was underscored, leveraging AI and IoT to move from traditional management to precision water governance.

Background
- World Water Day is observed by the United Nations every year to highlight the critical importance of freshwater resources and advocate for their sustainable management.
- It is coordinated by UN-Water, the UN's inter-agency coordination mechanism on water and sanitation.
- The observance was proposed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and was first held on 22 March 1993.

Significance
- The circular water economy replaces the "take-use-discard" system and decouples water from consumption, supporting long-term climate resilience.
- The holistic approach aligns economic growth with environmental sustainability and gender-inclusive water security.
- Prioritising glacier monitoring and wastewater recycling directly addresses plummeting per-capita water availability.

Facts/General knowledge
- World Water Day is observed annually on 22 March.
- The 2026 theme is "Water and Gender" with the campaign slogan "Where water flows, equality grows," highlighting the disproportionate impacts of the global water crisis on women and girls.
- World Water Day directly supports Sustainable Development Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation for all by 2030.

Earth Hour 2026 — India's Participation and Global Context

Introduction
- Earth Hour is a global initiative organised by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) that urges individuals, governments, and institutions to switch off non-essential lights for one hour to raise awareness about climate change and environmental protection.
- Earth Hour 2026 marks 20 years of the campaign's journey.
- Theme: "Give An Hour For Earth" encourages dedicating 60 minutes to nature by reconnecting with it, restoring it, learning about it, or inspiring others to care for it.

Why in news?
- India participated in Earth Hour 2026 on 28th March 2026, 8:30–9:30 pm.
- Major landmarks such as India Gate, Qutub Minar, Red Fort, and others switched off lights in solidarity.

Background
- The movement began in Sydney, Australia, in 2007 as a symbolic "lights off" initiative.
- It has evolved into one of the largest global grassroots environmental campaigns.

Significance
- Moves beyond symbolic action to promote broader planet-positive activities.
- In India, it encourages long-term environmental action through clean-up drives, nature walks, cyclothons, citizen science initiatives, and educational events.

Facts/General knowledge
- The campaign engages millions across more than 190 countries and territories.
- In India, it has expanded since 2009 under WWF-India, with participation from 58 cities, widespread institutional support, and increasing digital engagement.

Important days

Date - Important Days
March 01, 2026 Zero Discrimination Day
World Civil Defence Day
World Compliment Day
March 02, 2026 Holika Dahan
March 03, 2026 World Wildlife Day,World Hearing Day
March 04, 2026 Holi
National Safety Day (India)
National Grammar Day
March 08, 2026 International Women's Day
March 11, 2026 No Smoking Day

March 12, 2026 Mauritius Day
March 13, 2026 World Sleep Day
March 14, 2026 Pi Day
International Day of Action for Rivers
March 15, 2026 World Consumer Rights Day
March 16, 2026 National Vaccination Day (India)
March 18, 2026 Ordnance Factories Day (India)
March 19, 2026 Chaitra Navratri
March 20, 2026 International Day of Happiness
Nowruz
World Sparrow Day
World Oral Health Day
March 20-21, 2026 Eid
March 21, 2026 World Forestry Day
World Down Syndrome Day
World Poetry Day
March 22, 2026 Bihar Diwas
World Water Day
March 23, 2026 World Meteorological Day
Martyr's Day (India)
March 24, 2026 World Tuberculosis Day
March 25, 2026 International Day of the Unborn Child
International Day of Solidarity with Detained and
Missing Staff Members
March 26, 2026 Purple Day of Epilepsy
March 27, 2026 World Theatre Day
March 28, 2026 World Piano Day
March 30, 2026 Rajasthan Day
March 31, 2026 Eiffel Tower Day
March 31, 2026 Mahavir Jayanti