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MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS DIGEST

MARCH 2026

Complete one-month revision compiled from daily current affairs for APPSC, TGPSC, UPSC and other competitive exams

113

Current Affairs
Articles

40

Quick Revision
One-Liners

20

Practice MCQs
with Explanations

11 subject-wise sections • Polity to Awards & Sports • Exam-focused fact bullets

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How to use this digest

Read one section at a time and tick off each article after revision. The bullets under every title carry the core facts - names, numbers, articles of the Constitution and locations - that examiners pick for Prelims. After finishing the sections, attempt the 40 one-liners as rapid recall, then take the 20 practice MCQs in exam conditions before checking the Answers & Explanations at the end. Revisit this digest once a week until the facts stick.

1. Polity & Governance

President's Address & Motion of Thanks (Article 87)

- ▶ President Droupadi Murmu addressed the joint sitting of Parliament at the start of the Budget Session 2026, outlining the Viksit Bharat roadmap.
- ▶ The President's Address is governed by Article 87 and is mandatory at the first session after general elections and the first session of each year.
- ▶ After the Address, a Motion of Thanks is moved and must be passed in both Houses.
- ▶ If the Motion of Thanks is defeated in the Lok Sabha, it is treated as a no-confidence motion and the government must resign.
- ▶ The Address functions as a policy-direction statement for Parliament.

Motion of Thanks Passed Without PM's Reply

- ▶ The Lok Sabha passed the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address without the customary reply from the Prime Minister.
- ▶ Normally, the PM responds to the debate before the motion is put to vote.
- ▶ Continuous Opposition protests disrupted proceedings during the session.
- ▶ Despite the disruptions, the motion was adopted by majority.
- ▶ The episode was an unusual parliamentary development of the Budget Session.

No-Confidence Motion Against the Lok Sabha Speaker

- ▶ The Opposition submitted a notice seeking removal of the Lok Sabha Speaker, meeting the minimum support threshold.
- ▶ Removal is provided under Article 94(c) through a resolution of the House after 14 days' written notice.
- ▶ At least 50 MPs must support the motion for admission.
- ▶ The Speaker cannot preside during such proceedings but can participate and defend himself under Article 96.
- ▶ Passage requires an effective majority (majority of all the then members); even if removed, the person continues as an MP.

Substantive Motion in the Lok Sabha

- ▶ A substantive motion was proposed in the Lok Sabha against the Leader of Opposition, seeking cancellation of membership.
- ▶ A substantive motion is an independent, self-contained proposal seeking a definite decision of the House.
- ▶ Its admission depends entirely on the Speaker's discretion.
- ▶ It differs from subsidiary motions (which depend on another motion) and procedural motions.
- ▶ Examples include election of the Speaker, the Motion of Thanks, no-confidence motions and resolutions for removal of the Speaker.

Budget Session 2026 and Parliamentary Sessions

- ▶ The Budget Session 2026 was scheduled from 28 January to 2 April.
- ▶ Under Article 85, the President summons each House at intervals not exceeding six months, so Parliament meets at least twice a year.
- ▶ By convention India holds three sessions: Budget, Monsoon and Winter.
- ▶ Prorogation formally ends a session under Article 85(2); pending Bills do not lapse.
- ▶ Dissolution applies only to the Lok Sabha, ending its term and triggering fresh elections.

16th Finance Commission Recommendations Accepted

- ▶ The 16th Finance Commission report, chaired by Dr Arvind Panagariya, was tabled in Parliament on 1 February 2026 for the award period 2026-27 to 2030-31.
- ▶ Vertical devolution was retained at 41% of the divisible pool, unchanged from the 15th FC.
- ▶ Grants-in-aid for 2026-27 total Rs 1.4 lakh crore, covering rural and urban local bodies and disaster management.
- ▶ Horizontal formula tweaks: income distance reduced to 42.5%, population (2011) raised to 17.5%, and a new 10% weight for contribution to GDP.
- ▶ The Finance Commission is a constitutional body under Article 280, constituted every five years.

Rajya Sabha Elections 2026: 37 Seats Notified

- ▶ The Election Commission notified elections to 37 Rajya Sabha seats, with polling in March 2026 as terms expired in April.
- ▶ The Rajya Sabha has a maximum strength of 245: 233 elected from states/UTs and 12 nominated by the President.
- ▶ It is a permanent House; one-third of members retire every two years (Article 83).
- ▶ Seat allocation is based on population under the Fourth Schedule.
- ▶ Nominated members (Article 80(3)) come from literature, science, art and social service and may join a party within six months.

Kerala to be Renamed 'Keralam' (Article 3)

- ▶ The Union Cabinet approved renaming Kerala as 'Keralam', initiating the process under Article 3.
- ▶ Article 3 empowers Parliament to form new states and alter areas, boundaries or names.
- ▶ A name-change Bill needs prior Presidential recommendation and is referred to the state legislature for its (non-binding) opinion.
- ▶ Such changes amend the First and Fourth Schedules but are passed by simple majority and are not constitutional amendments (Article 4).
- ▶ The Bill becomes effective after Presidential assent.

SC/ST Sub-Classification: Court Seeks Centre's Report

- ▶ The Supreme Court asked the Union Government to report on action taken after its 2024 sub-classification verdict.
- ▶ A seven-judge bench in *State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh* (Aug 2024) upheld sub-classification within SC/ST categories by a 6:1 majority.
- ▶ It held that SC/ST groups are not homogeneous and states may give preference to the most backward sub-castes.
- ▶ The judgment overruled the 2004 *E.V. Chinnaiah* case.
- ▶ Article 341 lets the President notify SCs for each state; only Parliament can modify the list, but internal classification for reservation is allowed.

Karnataka Hate Speech Bill Reserved for the President

- ▶ The Karnataka Governor reserved the Karnataka Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill, 2025 for the President's assent.
- ▶ Under Article 200, a Governor may assent, withhold assent, return a non-money Bill, or reserve it for the President.
- ▶ Reservation is mandatory if a Bill threatens the High Court's position and discretionary if it conflicts with the Constitution or national interest.
- ▶ Under Article 201, the President may assent, withhold assent, or return a non-money Bill for reconsideration.
- ▶ If the legislature re-passes a Bill returned by the President, the President is not obliged to assent.

Reservation in Private Colleges: Article 15(5)

- ▶ The Opposition pressed for proper implementation of reservation in private educational institutions under Article 15(5).
- ▶ Article 15(5), added by the 93rd Amendment (2005), allows special provisions, including reservation, for SEBCs, SCs and STs in private unaided institutions.
- ▶ It expressly excludes minority educational institutions under Article 30(1).
- ▶ Article 15(6), inserted by the 103rd Amendment (2019), enables up to 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections.
- ▶ EWS reservation applies to private aided and unaided institutions, again excluding minority institutions.

NCST Marks its 23rd Foundation Day (Article 338A)

- ▶ The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes celebrated its 23rd Foundation Day in New Delhi.
- ▶ NCST is a constitutional body under Article 338A, created by the 89th Amendment (2003) when the combined SC-ST body was split.
- ▶ It comprises a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and three members appointed by the President for three years.
- ▶ Functions: investigate and monitor ST safeguards and inquire into complaints of rights deprivation.
- ▶ It presents annual reports to the President on ST welfare.

PESA Act Implemented in Jharkhand After 25 Years

- ▶ The Jharkhand Cabinet approved PESA Rules, 25 years after the Act, empowering Gram Sabhas in Fifth Schedule areas.
- ▶ PESA, the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 extends Panchayati Raj to Scheduled Areas.
- ▶ It recognises the Gram Sabha as the central authority in tribal governance.
- ▶ Gram Sabhas get powers over minor forest produce, land acquisition decisions and regulation of intoxicants.
- ▶ PESA applies in 10 states including Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.

Lokpal Foundation Day (16 January)

- ▶ The Lokpal of India observes its Foundation Day on 16 January, marking its establishment in 2014.
- ▶ It functions as the apex anti-corruption ombudsman at the central level.
- ▶ It was set up under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, based on the Scandinavian ombudsman concept.
- ▶ The term 'Lokpal' was coined by Dr L. M. Singhvi in 1963.
- ▶ It has a Chairperson and up to 8 members serving 5-year terms or until age 70.

Praveen Vashista Appointed Vigilance Commissioner

- ▶ The President appointed Praveen Vashista as Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission.
- ▶ The CVC is India's apex anti-corruption watchdog, based on the K. Santhanam Committee recommendation.
- ▶ It was set up in 1964 and given statutory status by the CVC Act, 2003.
- ▶ It has a Central Vigilance Commissioner and up to two Vigilance Commissioners, appointed by the President on a high-level committee's advice.
- ▶ The CVC superintends CBI investigations under the Prevention of Corruption Act and handles whistleblower complaints.

2. National Schemes & Missions

White Revolution 2.0 Launched

- ▶ The Government launched White Revolution 2.0 under the Ministry of Cooperation to boost the dairy sector and women's empowerment.
- ▶ Aim: increase milk procurement by 50% in five years, reaching 1,007 lakh kg per day by 2028-29.
- ▶ Strategy: establish 75,000 new Dairy Cooperative Societies and strengthen 46,422 existing ones.
- ▶ It promotes women's participation, rural employment and better market access.
- ▶ It builds on Operation Flood; Dr Verghese Kurien is the 'Father of the White Revolution' and founder of NDDB.

PM RAHAT: Cashless Treatment for Road Accident Victims

- ▶ The Government launched the PM RAHAT scheme for cashless treatment of road accident victims.
- ▶ RAHAT stands for Road Accident victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment.
- ▶ It covers victims on all categories of roads, including national highways and state roads.
- ▶ Financial cover is up to Rs 1.5 lakh per victim.
- ▶ Treatment is covered for 7 days from the date of the accident.

SAHI & BODH: Safe AI in Healthcare

- ▶ The Union Health Minister launched the SAHI and BODH initiatives at the India AI Impact Summit.
- ▶ SAHI (Strategy for AI in Healthcare for India) is a national governance framework ensuring transparent, accountable, people-centric AI.
- ▶ Its core principle is that AI should assist healthcare workers, not replace them.
- ▶ BODH, developed by IIT Kanpur with the National Health Authority, benchmarks and validates AI tools.
- ▶ Together they promote safe, ethical and evidence-based use of AI in healthcare.

PRAHAAR: First National Counter-Terrorism Policy

- ▶ The Ministry of Home Affairs released PRAHAAR, India's first comprehensive National Counter-Terrorism Policy and Strategy.
- ▶ It adopts a 'zero tolerance' approach to terrorism.
- ▶ It shifts India from a reactive to a proactive, intelligence-led security framework.
- ▶ Focus areas include cyber-terrorism, terror financing and cross-border threats.
- ▶ It emphasises strengthened inter-agency coordination.

PM-RKVY Restructuring (Rs 1.75 Lakh Crore, 2026-31)

- ▶ The Agriculture Ministry proposed merging three schemes into the Pradhan Mantri-Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana.
- ▶ Merged schemes: Krishonnati Yojana, National Mission on Natural Farming and National Bee and Honey Mission.
- ▶ For the first time, 30% of funds will be tied to a state 'Reform Score', shifting to an outcome-based approach.
- ▶ States are incentivised for land-leasing reforms and agricultural market liberalisation.
- ▶ Funding pattern: 60:40 for general states, 90:10 for NE/Himalayan states and 100% for UTs.

Atal Pension Yojana Extended till 2030-31

- ▶ The Union Cabinet extended the Atal Pension Yojana up to FY 2030-31.
- ▶ APY, launched in 2015, targets unorganised-sector workers.
- ▶ It guarantees a monthly pension of Rs 1,000 to Rs 5,000 after age 60.
- ▶ Eligibility: Indian citizens aged 18-40 years.
- ▶ It is regulated by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).

25 Years of PMGSY

- ▶ The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana completed 25 years, having been launched on 25 December 2000.
- ▶ Over 7.87 lakh km of roads have been completed out of 8.25 lakh km sanctioned.
- ▶ It provides all-weather connectivity to unconnected rural habitations.
- ▶ Coverage thresholds: 500+ population in plains and 250+ in hill, tribal and desert areas.
- ▶ The nodal ministry is the Ministry of Rural Development.

PM POSHAN: Breakfast Inclusion Examined

- ▶ The Centre is examining proposals from several states to add breakfast under the PM POSHAN scheme.
- ▶ PM POSHAN was originally the Mid-Day Meal Scheme launched in 1995.
- ▶ It was renamed PM Poshan Shakti Nirman in 2021.
- ▶ India's first school-meal initiative began in Madras in 1920, expanded by K. Kamaraj in 1956.
- ▶ Cost sharing: 60:40 Centre-State and 90:10 for NE and Himalayan states.

BHARATI Initiative by APEDA

- ▶ APEDA launched the BHARATI Initiative to strengthen India's agri-food export ecosystem.
- ▶ BHARATI stands for Bharat's Hub for Agritech, Resilience, Advancement and Incubation for Export Enablement.
- ▶ Target: USD 50 billion in agri-food exports by 2030.
- ▶ It aims to support and incubate 100 agri-food startups.
- ▶ APEDA, established in 1986, is a statutory body under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

3. Andhra Pradesh

AP Three-Zone Growth Model Approved

- ▶ The AP Government approved a Three-Zone Growth Model to accelerate industrialisation and balanced regional development.
- ▶ North Coastal Zone (Visakhapatnam) focuses on port-led industry, IT, pharma and tourism.
- ▶ Central Coastal Zone (Amaravati) targets agro-industries, food processing, logistics and digital services.
- ▶ Rayalaseema Zone (Tirupati) emphasises renewable energy, mining, horticulture and spiritual tourism.
- ▶ Each zone is led by a senior IAS officer as CEO, aiming at 15% GSDP growth.

Union Budget 2026-27: Key Benefits for Andhra Pradesh

- ▶ The Union Budget 2026-27 announced several initiatives benefiting Andhra Pradesh.
- ▶ AP was identified among mineral-rich states under the Rare Earth Corridor initiative.
- ▶ It will benefit from the Hyderabad-Bengaluru and Hyderabad-Chennai High-Speed Rail Corridors.
- ▶ A hyperscale data centre was proposed in Visakhapatnam by Google via Raiden Infotech.
- ▶ Ecotourism projects include bird-watching trails at Pulicat Lake and a mountain trail in Araku Valley.

NIELIT to Set Up India's First Quantum AI University

- ▶ NIELIT signed an MoU with the AP Government to establish India's first dedicated Quantum AI University in Amaravati.
- ▶ NIELIT functions under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- ▶ It will be India's first specialised university campus focused on quantum computing and AI.
- ▶ The project strengthens AP's quantum and AI ecosystem.
- ▶ It complements the Amaravati Quantum Valley initiative.

AP Cluster Development Programme (Rs 200 Crore)

- ▶ The AP Cabinet approved a Rs 200-crore Cluster Development Programme to strengthen MSMEs.
- ▶ It will set up 45 Common Facility Centres over five years.
- ▶ CFCs provide shared machinery, R&D; support, packaging units and quality-testing labs.
- ▶ State assistance ranges from Rs 5 crore to Rs 10 crore per project.
- ▶ The scheme boosts technology access and competitiveness for small units.

Dagadarthi Greenfield Airport Approved

- ▶ The AP Cabinet approved the Dagadarthi Greenfield Airport in Nellore district - the state's 8th airport.
- ▶ A greenfield airport is built from scratch on undeveloped land.
- ▶ Phase-1 capacity is 1.40 million passengers per annum.
- ▶ AP's existing international airports are Visakhapatnam, Tirupati and Vijayawada.
- ▶ Bhogapuram International Airport near Visakhapatnam is also upcoming.

Dugarajapatnam Shipbuilding Cluster Approved

- ▶ AP approved a Rs 29,253-crore greenfield port and National Mega Shipbuilding Cluster at Dugarajapatnam, Tirupati district.
- ▶ It is envisioned as India's first mega greenfield shipbuilding cluster under Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.
- ▶ A special purpose vehicle, 'National Shipbuilding and Heavy Industries Park AP Limited', will oversee development.
- ▶ The hub includes 1,000 acres for shipyards and 1,000 acres for ancillary industries with a 2 km waterfront.
- ▶ Targeted capacity is 1.2 million Gross Tonnage per annum.

India's First Mega Green Ammonia Plant in Kakinada

- ▶ The AP Chief Minister laid the foundation for India's first mega green ammonia plant in Kakinada.
- ▶ It is developed by AM Green (part of the Greenko Group).
- ▶ Production capacity is 1.5 million metric tonnes per annum.
- ▶ Green ammonia is produced using renewable energy and green hydrogen instead of fossil fuels.
- ▶ It is India's first large-scale green ammonia project.

World's First Human-Carrying Drone Ambulance

- ▶ AP, with Anna University Chennai, is developing the world's first long-range human-carrying drone ambulance.
- ▶ It is built with the Dr Kalam Advanced UAV Research Centre (CASR).
- ▶ Payload capacity is 150 kg with flight endurance up to 90 minutes.
- ▶ The aim is rapid medical response in remote and underserved regions.
- ▶ It is described as a first-of-its-kind initiative globally.

Satellite Launch Facility Planned on Hope Island

- ▶ AP announced plans for a satellite launching facility on Hope Island, part of a Space City near Kakinada.
- ▶ Hope Island, off Kakinada in the Bay of Bengal, acts as a natural breakwater protecting the port.
- ▶ It is known for mangroves in the Godavari estuary and Olive Ridley turtle nesting.
- ▶ It is part of the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary - India's second-largest mangrove forest.
- ▶ The project aims to boost India's space infrastructure.

AP Green Cover Project: 50% Green Cover by 2047

- ▶ AP is launching a Green Cover Project on Ugadi to expand forest and tree cover.
- ▶ Current green cover is about 30%, targeted to reach 50% by 2047.
- ▶ Intermediate target: 37% green cover by 2030.
- ▶ Short-term plantation target: 9 lakh hectares.
- ▶ The initiative is part of long-term environmental sustainability goals.

AP FIRST Research Centre in Tirupati

- ▶ AP approved the AP FIRST research centre in Tirupati.
- ▶ FIRST stands for Andhra Pradesh Futuristic Innovation and Research in Science and Technology.
- ▶ It is set up in collaboration with IIT Tirupati and IISER Tirupati.
- ▶ The aim is to prepare a future workforce for evolving industrial demands.
- ▶ It focuses on 11 sunrise sectors.

Ponduru Khadi Gets GI Tag

- ▶ Ponduru Khadi from Srikakulam district received the Geographical Indication tag.
- ▶ It is a premium handspun, handwoven cotton fabric, locally called Patnulu.
- ▶ The Khadi and Village Industries Commission is named the registered proprietor.
- ▶ GI tags are governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods Act, 1999 (in force 2003).
- ▶ A GI registration is valid for 10 years and is renewable.

AP Free Power Scheme for Weavers (2026)

- ▶ AP announced a Free Power Scheme for weavers from 1 April 2026.
- ▶ Handloom weavers get up to 200 free units per month; powerloom weavers up to 500 units.
- ▶ Total beneficiaries: 1,03,534 families (93,000 handloom, 10,534 powerloom).
- ▶ Weaver pension was raised from Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000 per month for those aged 50 and above.
- ▶ About 87,280 individuals benefit from the enhanced pension.

Pashu Aushadhi Centres Across Districts

- ▶ AP announced Pashu Aushadhi Vikraya Kendras in all districts to supply affordable generic veterinary medicines.
- ▶ They are run by the Department of Animal Husbandry with central support under the NADCP.
- ▶ Centres are set up through PM Kisan Samriddhi Kendras and cooperative societies.
- ▶ A 20% operating-margin incentive is provided to the centres.
- ▶ The initiative strengthens livestock healthcare.

APLINC and AP Logistics Fund Approved

- ▶ The AP Cabinet approved the AP Logistics Infrastructure Corporation (APLINC) and an AP Logistics Fund.
- ▶ APLINC is an integrated holding company for logistics infrastructure.
- ▶ The AP Logistics Fund is structured as an Alternative Investment Fund (AIF).
- ▶ It will mobilise institutional investment integrating road, inland waterways and sea transport.
- ▶ Implementation support comes from the Andhra Pradesh Maritime Board.

4. Telangana

Indiramma Housing Scheme Expanded to CURE

- ▶ Telangana extended the Indiramma Indlu housing scheme to the Core Urban Economy Region (CURE).
- ▶ CURE covers Hyderabad, Rangareddy and Medchal districts.
- ▶ Beneficiaries are economically weaker sections and homeless and landless families.
- ▶ Assistance is Rs 5 lakh per family, with about 250 sq yards of land for landless beneficiaries.
- ▶ The target is 22.5 lakh houses over five years.

GHMC Expansion 2026

- ▶ Telangana merged 27 Urban Local Bodies into the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation.
- ▶ The merger includes 7 municipal corporations and 20 municipalities.
- ▶ GHMC area expands from about 650 sq km to 2,053 sq km, covering over 1.34 crore people.
- ▶ Zones double from 6 to 12 and circles from 30 to 60.
- ▶ Wards rise from 150 to 300, each representing roughly 50,000 people.

Telangana Abolishes Two-Child Norm for Local Polls

- ▶ The Telangana Assembly passed the Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2026 removing the two-child disqualification.
- ▶ Individuals with more than two children can now contest local body elections.
- ▶ The change responds to the state's declining fertility rate.
- ▶ Telangana's Total Fertility Rate is 1.7, below the replacement level.
- ▶ Replacement-level fertility is about 2.1 children per woman.

34% BC Reservation Proposed in ULBs

- ▶ The Dedicated BC Commission recommended 34% reservation for Backward Classes in Urban Local Bodies.
- ▶ The total reservation ceiling remains 50% as per the legal framework.
- ▶ The Busani Venkateshwara Rao 'One-Man Commission' was set up after court directions for a 'triple test'.
- ▶ Its mandate is to enumerate the BC population and provide a legal basis for higher reservation.
- ▶ The state targets BC reservation of around 42%.

Dr Manmohan Singh Earth Sciences University

- ▶ The Telangana legislature passed the Telangana Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2026.
- ▶ It establishes and names an Earth Sciences university after Dr Manmohan Singh.
- ▶ The university is located at Kothagudem, Bhadrachalam district.
- ▶ It is granted statutory public-university status.
- ▶ It focuses on earth sciences and applied research for resource and environmental management.

Telangana Next-Gen Life Sciences Policy 2026-30

- ▶ Telangana unveiled the Next-Gen Life Sciences Policy 2026-30 to become a top-five global life sciences cluster by 2030.
- ▶ Targets: USD 25 billion in investment and 5 lakh high-quality jobs.
- ▶ Focus shifts from a supply hub to a global originator of advanced therapies like cell and gene therapy.
- ▶ A Life Sciences Innovation Fund starts at Rs 100 crore, scalable to Rs 1,000 crore.
- ▶ Infrastructure includes Green Pharma City, 10 Pharma Villages and an expanded Genome Valley.

Solar Model Village Programme Launched

- ▶ Telangana inaugurated the Solar Model Village Programme at Ravinuthala village, Khammam district.
- ▶ It aims to convert rural households and farms into solar power producers.
- ▶ The pilot phase covers 81 villages across the state.
- ▶ It aligns with the PM Surya Ghar Yojana and PM-KUSUM Component-C.
- ▶ The programme is fully funded by the State Government.

Gauravelli Reservoir Project Fast-Tracked

- ▶ Telangana initiated steps to expedite the Gauravelli Reservoir Project in Siddipet district.
- ▶ Storage capacity was enhanced from 1.41 TMC to 8.23 TMC.
- ▶ It will irrigate about 1.20-1.60 lakh acres.
- ▶ Beneficiary districts include Siddipet, Karimnagar, Hanamkonda and Jangaon.
- ▶ The project is awaiting environmental clearance.

Munneru-Palair Link Project

- ▶ Telangana initiated the Munneru-Palair Link Project to stabilise the Nagarjuna Sagar ayacut.
- ▶ A 9.6 km gravity-based link canal will divert surplus Munneru floodwaters to the Palair reservoir.
- ▶ It will utilise about 50 TMC annually and stabilise 1.38 lakh acres downstream.
- ▶ It also helps mitigate recurring flash floods in Khammam district.
- ▶ Beneficiary districts include Khammam, Suryapet and Mahabubabad.

Telangana Opposes Almatti Dam Height Increase

- ▶ Telangana decided to oppose Karnataka's proposal to raise the Almatti Dam height on the Krishna River.
- ▶ The Almatti (Lal Bahadur Shastri) Dam currently stores 123.08 TMC at 519 metres.
- ▶ Karnataka proposes raising the height to 524.256 metres, increasing storage to around 300 TMC.
- ▶ Telangana fears reduced downstream flow to itself and Andhra Pradesh.
- ▶ Krishna water sharing is governed by Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal awards.

Medaram Maha Jatara 2026

- ▶ The Telangana CM inaugurated the renovated shrine at Medaram ahead of the Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara.
- ▶ It is Asia's largest tribal religious congregation, held biennially.
- ▶ It commemorates Sammakka and Saralamma's 13th-century fight against Kakatiya tax laws.
- ▶ It is held in Medaram village, Mulugu district, within the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary.
- ▶ Devotees offer 'Bangaram' (jaggery) equal to their body weight; it is celebrated mainly by the Koya tribe.

Musi Riverfront Development Project

- ▶ Telangana began land acquisition for the Musi Riverfront Development Project in Hyderabad.
- ▶ It targets rejuvenation of the 55 km Musi River corridor.
- ▶ Goals include 100% sewage treatment, linking the Musi to the Godavari, and flood mitigation.
- ▶ Plans include 29 new bridges, an elevated East-West corridor and public spaces.
- ▶ Phase I (21 km, Rs 6,500-7,000 crore) features the Gandhi Sarovar with a 150-ft Mahatma Gandhi statue at Babu Ghat.

5. Economy & Banking

India's GDP Growth Projected at 7.4% in FY26

- ▶ India's real GDP growth is projected at 7.4% for FY26 in the First Advance Estimates.
- ▶ GDP measures the value of final goods and services produced within India's borders.
- ▶ Nominal GDP is at current prices; real GDP is adjusted for inflation.
- ▶ GDP counts production within the country while GNP counts income of nationals globally.
- ▶ The projection holds despite global uncertainties such as US tariff pressures.

CPI Inflation Rises to 1.33% in December 2025

- ▶ Retail inflation (CPI) rose to 1.33% in December 2025, up from 0.71% in November.
- ▶ Data is released by the National Statistical Office under MoSPI.
- ▶ The revised 2024 CPI series has 358 items across 12 divisions.
- ▶ Food and beverages remain the largest component at about 46%.
- ▶ CPI differs from WPI, which measures wholesale prices of goods only.

RBI Strengthens Priority Sector Lending Norms

- ▶ The RBI amended Priority Sector Lending guidelines to improve credit-flow monitoring and financial inclusion.
- ▶ PSL directs a fixed share of bank credit to under-served but essential sectors.
- ▶ Covered sectors include agriculture, MSMEs, export credit, education, housing, renewable energy and weaker sections.
- ▶ Domestic commercial banks must lend 40% of Adjusted Net Bank Credit to priority sectors.
- ▶ Regional Rural Banks and Urban Cooperative Banks have a higher 75% target.

Rs 5,000 Crore Equity Infusion into SIDBI

- ▶ The Union Cabinet approved a Rs 5,000 crore equity infusion into SIDBI to expand MSME credit.
- ▶ It strengthens SIDBI's lending capacity and Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR).
- ▶ SIDBI, set up in 1990, is the principal financial institution for MSME promotion and finance.
- ▶ CRAR (Capital Adequacy Ratio) measures capital against risk-weighted assets.
- ▶ It is governed by the Basel Accords of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision.

Payments Regulatory Board Holds First Meeting

- ▶ The Payments Regulatory Board held its first meeting in Mumbai under the RBI Governor.
- ▶ The PRB is a six-member statutory body within the RBI.
- ▶ It replaced the Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS).
- ▶ It includes two RBI representatives and three central-government nominees.
- ▶ It must meet at least twice a year; the Chairperson holds a casting vote in a tie.

RBI Proposes BRICS Digital Currency Link

- ▶ The RBI recommended including a BRICS CBDC-linkage proposal in the 2026 BRICS Summit agenda.
- ▶ The aim is faster, cheaper and more efficient cross-border payments.
- ▶ It could reduce dependence on the US dollar in global trade.
- ▶ A Central Bank Digital Currency is the digital form of fiat currency, a direct liability of the central bank.
- ▶ India's CBDC, the e-Rupee, has retail (e-R) and wholesale (e-W) variants.

India-GCC FTA Talks Begin

- ▶ India and the Gulf Cooperation Council signed the Terms of Reference to start Free Trade Agreement negotiations.
- ▶ The GCC is a regional political and economic alliance of six Gulf countries.
- ▶ Its headquarters are in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- ▶ Members are Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain.
- ▶ The ToR marks a major step in strengthening India-Gulf economic ties.

India Launches BRICS 2026 Website, Theme and Logo

- ▶ India launched the official website, theme and logo for its BRICS Presidency 2026.
- ▶ The logo blends tradition and modernity with a petal design representing member diversity.
- ▶ A central 'Namaste' gesture symbolises unity, respect and cooperation.
- ▶ BRICS now has 11 full members after Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Indonesia joined.
- ▶ Ten partner countries were also inducted in 2025.

Bulgaria Adopts the Euro

- ▶ Bulgaria officially adopted the Euro from 1 January 2026.
- ▶ It became the 21st member of the Eurozone.
- ▶ The Eurozone comprises EU countries using the Euro as their official currency.
- ▶ The move marks a major step in European economic integration.
- ▶ It reflects Bulgaria's convergence with EU monetary standards.

6. Science & Technology

IIT Madras Launches 'Param Shakti' Supercomputer

- ▶ IIT Madras launched the indigenously developed 'Param Shakti' supercomputer.
- ▶ It was developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC).
- ▶ It is built under the National Supercomputing Mission.
- ▶ NSM is jointly led by MeitY and the Department of Science and Technology.
- ▶ India's PARAM series began with PARAM 8000 in 1991; NSM targets a network of 70+ supercomputers.

India's First Hydrogen Train Trial Begins

- ▶ India began trials of its first indigenous hydrogen-powered train on the Jind-Sonipat section in Haryana.
- ▶ The trial was conducted by the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO).
- ▶ The train was developed by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai.
- ▶ It uses hydrogen fuel cells, emitting only water vapour and heat.
- ▶ India joins Germany, Japan, China and Sweden in hydrogen-train technology.

India First to Produce Bio-Bitumen Commercially

- ▶ India became the first country to commercially produce bio-bitumen for road construction.
- ▶ Bio-bitumen is made by pyrolysis (thermal decomposition) of biomass.
- ▶ It is an eco-friendly alternative to petroleum-based bitumen.
- ▶ It is produced from renewable biological sources rather than crude oil.
- ▶ It helps cut carbon emissions and fossil-fuel dependence.

ISRO Tests Improved SSLV Third Stage

- ▶ ISRO successfully tested an improved third stage (SS3) of the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle.
- ▶ The SSLV is a three-stage, all-solid vehicle for small satellites (10-500 kg) to Low Earth Orbit.
- ▶ Payload capacity is up to 500 kg to a 500 km planar orbit and 300 kg to Sun-Synchronous Orbit.
- ▶ It offers a quick 72-hour turnaround and can be integrated by a team of six.
- ▶ SSLV serves small satellites; PSLV is versatile and GSLV handles heavy geostationary payloads.

PSLV-C62 / EOS-N1 Mission Fails

- ▶ The PSLV-C62 mission carrying the EOS-N1 satellite was declared unsuccessful due to an upper-stage anomaly.
- ▶ It is the second consecutive PSLV failure after PSLV-C61 (May 2025).
- ▶ The mission carried 16 satellites; the main payload was EOS-N1 (Anvesha).
- ▶ EOS-N1 was a DRDO hyperspectral Earth-observation satellite for strategic use.
- ▶ The PSLV is a four-stage vehicle alternating solid and liquid stages.

Dhruv-NG Helicopter's First Flight

- ▶ HAL conducted the first flight of the Dhruv New Generation (NG) helicopter in Bengaluru.
- ▶ It marks HAL's entry into the civil helicopter market.
- ▶ Dhruv-NG is a 5.5-tonne, twin-engine, multi-role helicopter designed and built in India.
- ▶ It is powered by the indigenous Shakti civil engine.
- ▶ The Shakti engine is the first indigenous aircraft engine to receive DGCA manufacturing approval.

Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td) Vaccine Launched

- ▶ The Union Health Minister launched a Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td) vaccine programme.
- ▶ Td is a dual-protection shot for older children and adults.
- ▶ Tetanus is caused by Clostridium tetani, found in soil and dust, entering through wounds.
- ▶ Diphtheria is caused by Corynebacterium diphtheriae, spread via respiratory droplets.
- ▶ Diphtheria forms a thick grey pseudomembrane in the throat.

India to Establish First State-Funded BSL-4 Lab

- ▶ The Union Home Minister laid the foundation for a Bio-Safety Level 4 containment facility in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- ▶ BSL-4 is the highest biosafety level for highly dangerous, often untreatable pathogens like Ebola and Marburg.
- ▶ BSL-4 labs require complete isolation and full-body positive-pressure suits.
- ▶ The levels rise BSL-1 to BSL-4 with increasing containment.
- ▶ Such labs study the world's most dangerous infectious pathogens.

Azista Space Captures ISS Images

- ▶ Hyderabad-based Azista Space captured images of the International Space Station with its own satellite.
- ▶ It demonstrated an 'in-orbit snooping' capability.
- ▶ This strengthens India's indigenous Space Situational Awareness (SSA).
- ▶ SSA helps detect, track and identify objects in space and prevent collisions.
- ▶ It protects critical assets like communication satellites and navigation systems.

World's First Mountain Ice Core Vault in Antarctica

- ▶ Scientists inaugurated the world's first global mountain ice-core repository, the Ice Memory Sanctuary, in Antarctica.
- ▶ It is located at the Concordia Research Station on the Antarctic Plateau.
- ▶ It will store ice cores from mountain glaciers worldwide.
- ▶ The vault maintains about -52 degrees C for long-term preservation.
- ▶ It safeguards climate records from rapidly melting glaciers.

Haven-1: World's First Private Space Station

- ▶ The world's first private space station, Haven-1, is scheduled to launch in 2027 aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9.
- ▶ It is developed by the US aerospace company Vast.
- ▶ It marks a shift from government-led missions to commercial space infrastructure.
- ▶ It comes as the International Space Station is expected to be retired by the decade's end.
- ▶ The ISS is an LEO research lab run by NASA, Roscosmos, ESA, JAXA and CSA.

7. Defence & Security

Mission Sudarshan Chakra: Counter-Drone Grid

- ▶ India is building a joint Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (CUAS) grid under Mission Sudarshan Chakra.
- ▶ It is a 10-year initiative launched on 15 August 2025 for an AI-enabled, multi-layered air-defence shield by 2035.
- ▶ Project Kusha is an indigenous Long-Range SAM with M1 (150 km), M2 (250 km) and M3 (350-400 km) variants.
- ▶ It includes a two-tier Ballistic Missile Defence system for endo- and exo-atmospheric interception.
- ▶ The IADWS layer combines QRSAM, VSHORADS and laser-based directed-energy weapons.

President Murmu's Submarine Sortie on INS Vagsheer

- ▶ President Droupadi Murmu undertook a submarine sortie aboard INS Vagsheer at Karwar Naval Base.
- ▶ She is only the second Indian President to dive in a submarine, after Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (2006).
- ▶ INS Vagsheer is the sixth and final Project-75 (Kalvari-class) submarine.
- ▶ It was built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited with France's Naval Group.
- ▶ The Kalvari class comprises six diesel-electric (not nuclear) attack submarines.

India-Germany Submarine Deal under Project-75I

- ▶ India and Germany are in the final stages of a submarine deal under Project-75I.
- ▶ P-75I aims to build six advanced conventional diesel-electric attack submarines indigenously.
- ▶ The estimated cost is about USD 8 billion.
- ▶ Germany is the foreign partner.
- ▶ The submarines will feature Air Independent Propulsion for greater stealth and underwater endurance.

Suryastra Multi-Calibre Rocket System Procured

- ▶ The Ministry of Defence signed a Rs 292.69 crore deal for Suryastra Multi-Calibre Rocket Launcher Systems.
- ▶ Suryastra is India's first indigenous universal multi-calibre long-range rocket launcher.
- ▶ It was inducted into the Army in January 2026 with a range of 150-300 km.
- ▶ It is manufactured by NIBE Limited (Pune) with Israel's Elbit Systems.
- ▶ It can launch different types of rockets from a single platform.

Navy to Induct Drishti-10 MALE Drones

- ▶ The Indian Navy will induct 10 indigenous Drishti-10 Starliner drones for maritime surveillance.
- ▶ Drishti-10 is India's first indigenously manufactured Medium-Altitude Long-Endurance UAV.
- ▶ It is developed by Adani Defence & Aerospace with Israel's Elbit Systems.
- ▶ Endurance exceeds 36 hours at 30,000-32,000 feet with a 450 kg payload.
- ▶ It boosts round-the-clock surveillance in the Indian Ocean Region.

DRDO Conducts Twin Launch of 'Pralay' Missiles

- ▶ DRDO carried out a salvo launch of two Pralay missiles from the Odisha coast.
- ▶ Pralay is India's first indigenous short-range, surface-to-surface tactical ballistic missile.
- ▶ It has a range of 150-500 km and reaches terminal speeds of about Mach 6.1.
- ▶ It carries conventional warheads of 500-1,000 kg via solid-propellant propulsion.
- ▶ It is a quasi-ballistic missile with a low trajectory and in-flight manoeuvrability to evade interceptors.

DRDO Tests 120 km Range Pinaka Rocket

- ▶ DRDO conducted the maiden test of the Pinaka Long Range Guided Rocket (LRGR-120) at Chandipur, Odisha.
- ▶ Pinaka is an indigenous Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher that fires 12 rockets in 44 seconds.
- ▶ Variants: Mark-I (about 40 km), Mark-II (60-75 km) and LRGR (up to 120 km with guidance).
- ▶ India exported the Pinaka system to Armenia in a deal worth about Rs 2,000 crore.
- ▶ France and others have shown interest in evaluating the system.

First 'Made in India' C-295 Aircraft

- ▶ The first 'Made in India' C-295 military transport aircraft is set to roll out from Vadodara, Gujarat.
- ▶ It is the first complete military aircraft produced in India by a private firm, Tata Advanced Systems (TASL).
- ▶ India signed a Rs 21,935 crore deal in 2021 with Airbus for 56 C-295 aircraft.
- ▶ 16 aircraft come fly-away from Spain; the remaining 40 are made in India by TASL.
- ▶ The C-295 will replace the IAF's ageing Avro fleet.

US Invites India to Join Pax Silica

- ▶ The US announced India will be invited to join Pax Silica as a full member in February 2026.
- ▶ Pax Silica is a US-launched multilateral technology and economic-security initiative.
- ▶ It focuses on trusted global supply chains.
- ▶ It aims to reduce dependence on China in critical technologies.
- ▶ It seeks to build a secure technology ecosystem with like-minded countries.

8. Environment & Ecology

Project Tiger Completes 50 Years

- ▶ The Government constituted four expert working groups to review 50 years of tiger conservation under Project Tiger.
- ▶ Project Tiger was launched on 1 April 1973 at Jim Corbett National Park.
- ▶ It is a centrally sponsored scheme and the world's largest species-conservation programme.
- ▶ Its objective is a viable population of Bengal tigers in natural habitats.
- ▶ The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), statutory since 2006, supervises it under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

World Wetlands Day 2026 and the Montreux Record

- ▶ World Wetlands Day is observed on 2 February, marking the Ramsar Convention (1971).
- ▶ The 2026 theme is 'Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge: Celebrating Cultural Heritage'.
- ▶ The Ramsar Convention is the only global treaty focused on a single ecosystem - wetlands.
- ▶ India joined on 1 February 1982.
- ▶ The Montreux Record lists threatened wetlands; India's entries are Keoladeo National Park and Loktak Lake.

Asian Waterbird Census at Kolleru

- ▶ The Asian Waterbird Census was conducted at Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary, Andhra Pradesh.
- ▶ AWC is part of the global International Waterbird Census, launched in 1967 by Wetlands International.
- ▶ It is held every January during the mid-winter non-breeding season.
- ▶ Kolleru is Asia's largest shallow freshwater lake, a Ramsar site (2002) between the Krishna and Godavari deltas.
- ▶ Key species include the Spot-billed (Grey) Pelican and Painted Stork on the Central Asian Flyway.

Flamingo Festival at Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary

- ▶ The Flamingo Festival began at Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary, celebrating migratory bird arrivals.
- ▶ Nelapattu is in Tirupati district, Andhra Pradesh, near Pulicat Lake.
- ▶ It is a major breeding site for the endangered Spot-billed Pelican in South India.
- ▶ Flamingos visit seasonally during winter.
- ▶ Pulicat Lake is India's second-largest brackish-water lagoon after Chilika.

GEF Approves \$372 Million for Biodiversity

- ▶ The Global Environment Facility approved \$372 million for 36 environmental projects in developing countries.
- ▶ It supports the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022).
- ▶ GEF, established in 1991, is the world's largest multilateral environment fund.
- ▶ It serves the CBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD, Stockholm Convention and Minamata Convention.
- ▶ The KMGBF is the 'Paris Agreement for Nature', aiming to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

High Seas Treaty (BBNJ) Enters into Force

- ▶ The High Seas Treaty, or BBNJ Agreement, came into force on 17 January 2026.
- ▶ It is the first legally binding global agreement to protect marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction.
- ▶ It operates under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- ▶ Its four pillars cover marine genetic resources, area-based management tools, environmental impact assessments and capacity building.
- ▶ Area-based tools enable Marine Protected Areas toward the 30% ocean-protection target by 2030.

US Withdraws from the International Solar Alliance

- ▶ The United States withdrew from the India-backed International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- ▶ The ISA is a treaty-based intergovernmental organisation launched in 2015 by India and France at COP21, Paris.
- ▶ Its headquarters in Gurugram is the first international organisation headquartered in India.
- ▶ It promotes solar-energy adoption, especially in tropical countries.
- ▶ The exit is part of a broader US decision to leave several international bodies.

Dulhasti Stage-II Hydropower Project Approved

- ▶ An Environment Ministry panel approved the 260 MW Dulhasti Stage-II Hydropower Project in Jammu & Kashmir.
- ▶ It is located in Kishtwar district.
- ▶ It extends the existing 390 MW Dulhasti Stage-I project.
- ▶ It uses water from the Chenab and Marusudar rivers.
- ▶ The Chenab, formed by the Chandra and Bhaga rivers at Tandi, is a major Indus tributary.

Shahpur Kandi Dam Nears Completion

- ▶ India is set to complete the Shahpur Kandi Dam on the Ravi River in Pathankot district, Punjab.
- ▶ It will help India fully utilise its share of waters under the Indus Waters Treaty.
- ▶ It aims to prevent unused Ravi water flowing into Pakistan.
- ▶ Under the treaty, the eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) are allocated to India.
- ▶ The western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) are allocated to Pakistan.

9. International Relations

US-Russia New START Treaty Ends

- ▶ The New START Treaty expired on 5 February 2026, ending the last major US-Russia nuclear arms-control pact.
- ▶ Its formal name is the Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.
- ▶ It was signed in 2010, entered into force in 2011, and was extended until 2026.
- ▶ It limited deployed nuclear warheads and strategic delivery systems (ICBMs, SLBMs, bombers).
- ▶ Its expiry raises concerns over global nuclear stability and a renewed arms race.

Israel Recognises Somaliland

- ▶ Israel reportedly became the first UN member state to formally recognise Somaliland.
- ▶ Somaliland is a self-declared independent republic in the Horn of Africa.
- ▶ It declared independence from Somalia in 1991.
- ▶ It has functioned as a separate entity but lacked wide international recognition.
- ▶ The move has significant implications for regional stability in the Horn of Africa.

India-Bangladesh Ganga Water Treaty Renewal Talks

- ▶ India and Bangladesh began talks to renew the Ganga Water Sharing Treaty, expiring in December 2026.
- ▶ The treaty was signed on 12 December 1996 for 30 years.
- ▶ It regulates water sharing at the Farakka Barrage in West Bengal.
- ▶ It focuses on the lean season (1 January to 31 May).
- ▶ The Ganga splits into the Bhagirathi-Hooghly (India) and the Padma (Bangladesh), forming the Sundarbans delta.

ICJ Begins Rohingya Genocide Hearings

- ▶ The International Court of Justice began hearings on alleged genocide by Myanmar against the Rohingya.
- ▶ The Rohingya are a Muslim minority mainly in Rakhine State, Myanmar.
- ▶ Over 900,000 refugees have fled to Bangladesh since 2015.
- ▶ The ICJ, the World Court, was established in 1945 and began functioning in 1946.
- ▶ It is based at The Hague with 15 judges elected for nine-year terms.

US Interest in Acquiring Greenland

- ▶ The United States expressed interest in acquiring Greenland as part of its strategic foreign policy.
- ▶ Greenland is an autonomous territory of Denmark and the world's largest island.
- ▶ The US operates the Pituffik Space Base (formerly Thule Air Base) there.
- ▶ Greenland is rich in rare-earth minerals vital for technology and defence.
- ▶ Arctic ice melt is opening new trade routes, intensifying competition with China and Russia.

Spain Joins the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative

- ▶ Spain officially joined the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).
- ▶ IPOI is an India-led, voluntary, non-treaty framework launched in 2019.
- ▶ It promotes a free, open and rules-based maritime order.
- ▶ It is an extension of India's SAGAR vision (Security and Growth for All in the Region).
- ▶ Spain's entry deepens its engagement in the Indo-Pacific.

India Engages with the Weimar Triangle

- ▶ India's External Affairs Minister took part in India's first engagement with the Weimar Triangle.
- ▶ The Weimar Triangle is a trilateral platform formed after the Cold War.
- ▶ Its members are France, Germany and Poland.
- ▶ It strengthens cooperation between Western and Central Europe.
- ▶ The engagement marks a new step in India-Europe diplomacy.

Nepal General Election: RSP Landslide

- ▶ Nepal held a general election on 5 March 2026.
- ▶ The Rastriya Swatantra Party, with Balen Shah as PM candidate, won a landslide.
- ▶ RSP secured 182 seats - the second-best showing in Nepal's electoral history.
- ▶ Balen Shah defeated former PM K.P. Sharma Oli in Jhapa-5.
- ▶ The Nepali Congress (38 seats) and CPN-UML (25 seats) faced their worst-ever results.

OPEC+ Maintains Oil Output Policy

- ▶ OPEC+ decided to continue its existing oil production policy.
- ▶ The decision came despite Saudi Arabia-UAE tensions over the Yemen conflict.
- ▶ OPEC+ combines the 12 OPEC members with 10 non-OPEC partners.
- ▶ OPEC members include Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iran, Iraq and Nigeria.
- ▶ Non-OPEC partners include Russia, Kazakhstan, Mexico and Oman.

Strait of Hormuz Partial Closure by Iran

- ▶ Iran announced a temporary closure of parts of the Strait of Hormuz for live-fire naval drills.
- ▶ The strait separates Iran from Oman's Musandam Peninsula and the UAE.
- ▶ It is the only sea passage from the Persian Gulf to the open ocean.
- ▶ About 20-25% of seaborne oil and 20-30% of global LNG pass through it.
- ▶ Nearly 40% of India's crude and 54% of its LNG imports transit the strait.

10. History & Culture

Somnath Temple: 1,000 Years Since the 1026 Attack

- ▶ India commemorated 1,000 years since the first recorded 1026 attack on the Somnath Temple by Mahmud of Ghazni.
- ▶ Events were held under 'Somnath Swabhimani Parv' (2026).
- ▶ The Somnath Temple in Prabhas Patan, Gujarat, is the first of the twelve Jyotirlingas of Shiva.
- ▶ Mahmud of Ghazni conducted 17 raids into India between 1000 and 1025 CE.
- ▶ Al-Biruni, who accompanied him, authored 'Kitab-ul-Hind' on Indian society and culture.

Rakhigarhi to be Developed as a Global Heritage Site

- ▶ The Centre allocated Rs 500 crore to develop Rakhigarhi as a global heritage site.
- ▶ Rakhigarhi belongs to the Indus Valley Civilization (c. 2500-1900 BCE) and is its largest site.
- ▶ It is located in Hisar district, Haryana, in the Ghaggar-Hakra basin.
- ▶ Initial excavations were by Amarendra Nath (ASI); later work by Vasanth Shinde confirmed its large size.
- ▶ It is one of five 'Iconic Sites' identified for development; the earlier largest site was Mohenjo-daro.

Zehanpora Stupa: 2,000-Year-Old Buddhist Site in Kashmir

- ▶ Archaeologists discovered a 2,000-year-old Buddhist monastic complex at Zehanpora Stupa in J&K.
- ▶ It is in Zehanpora village, Baramulla district.
- ▶ It dates to the Kushan period (1st-3rd century CE).
- ▶ Excavations revealed stupas, monastic structures and cultural remains along the ancient Silk Route.
- ▶ It confirms Kashmir's role as a major Buddhist centre.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati Birth Anniversary

- ▶ The birth anniversary of Swami Dayanand Saraswati was observed with tributes from the President and Vice-President.
- ▶ He gave the famous slogan 'Back to the Vedas'.
- ▶ He gave the first call of 'India for Indians' (Swaraj) in 1876.
- ▶ He led the Shuddhi movement and inspired the DAV institutions (first DAV School, Lahore, 1886).
- ▶ He authored 'Satyarth Prakash' and founded the Arya Samaj.

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar Death Anniversary

- ▶ 26 February marks the death anniversary of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (Veer Savarkar).
- ▶ He founded Mitra Mela (1899), later the Abhinav Bharat Society (1904).
- ▶ In London he was associated with India House and founded the Free India Society.
- ▶ He authored 'The History of the War of Indian Independence' (1909), first calling 1857 the 'First War of Independence'.
- ▶ He was sentenced to 50 years in the Cellular Jail (Andaman) in the Nasik Conspiracy Case (1910).

Savitribai Phule 195th Birth Anniversary

- ▶ Tributes were paid to Savitribai Phule on her 195th birth anniversary.
- ▶ She is regarded as India's first female teacher.
- ▶ With Jyotirao Phule she founded India's first girls' school at Bhide Wada, Pune, in 1848.
- ▶ She is hailed as the 'Mother of Indian Feminism'.
- ▶ She worked through the Satyashodhak Samaj and founded the Mahila Seva Mandal.

Rani Velu Nachiyar Birth Anniversary

- ▶ Tributes were paid to Rani Velu Nachiyar, a pioneer of armed resistance against the British.
- ▶ She was the Queen of Sivaganga in Tamil Nadu.
- ▶ She was the first Indian queen to launch an organised revolt against the East India Company.
- ▶ She raised one of the first all-women army units, named 'Udaiyaal'.
- ▶ In 1780 her commander Kuyili performed the first recorded suicide attack to destroy a British depot.

11. Awards & Sports

Padma Awards 2026: 131 Honoured

- ▶ The Government announced 131 Padma Awards on the eve of Republic Day 2026.
- ▶ The list includes 5 Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan and 113 Padma Shri.
- ▶ Padma Vibhushan awardees include Dharmendra Singh Deol (posthumous) and V.S. Achuthanandan (posthumous).
- ▶ Eleven awardees were from the Telugu states, including Padma Bhushan oncologist Dr Nori Dattatreyyudu.
- ▶ The Padma Awards, instituted in 1954, rank below the Bharat Ratna.

Padma Awards 2026: Sports Winners

- ▶ Several sportspersons featured in the Padma Awards 2026.
- ▶ Tennis legend Vijay Amritraj received the Padma Bhushan.
- ▶ Cricketers Rohit Sharma and Harmanpreet Kaur were honoured with the Padma Shri.
- ▶ Hockey goalkeeper Savita Punia and field hockey's Baldev Singh also received the Padma Shri.
- ▶ Para-athlete Praveen Kumar was among the Padma Shri awardees.

Kaamya Karthikeyan: Youngest Indian to Reach the South Pole

- ▶ Kaamya Karthikeyan, 18, from Mumbai, became the youngest Indian to reach the South Pole.
- ▶ She also completed the Seven Summits - the highest peak on each continent.
- ▶ The Seven Summits include Everest (Asia), Aconcagua (South America) and Denali (North America).
- ▶ Others are Kilimanjaro (Africa), Elbrus (Europe), Vinson Massif (Antarctica) and Puncak Jaya/Kosciuszko (Oceania).
- ▶ Her feat highlights Indian achievement in adventure and exploration.

India to Host 2028 World Athletics Indoor Championships

- ▶ India was awarded hosting rights for the 2028 World Athletics Indoor Championships on 19 March 2026.
- ▶ Bhubaneswar (Kalinga Stadium Complex) will be the host city.
- ▶ The decision was taken by the World Athletics Council in Torun, Poland.
- ▶ It will be India's first-ever global track-and-field championship.
- ▶ India becomes only the fourth Asian nation to host, after Japan, Qatar and China.

Gerd Faltings Wins the 2026 Abel Prize

- ▶ German mathematician Gerd Faltings won the 2026 Abel Prize.
- ▶ He was honoured for tools in arithmetic geometry and resolving the Mordell and Lang conjectures.
- ▶ Mordell's conjecture, proved by him, is now called Faltings' Theorem.
- ▶ He is the first German mathematician to receive the Abel Prize.
- ▶ The Abel Prize carries 7.5 million Norwegian Kroner (about USD 770,000).

Smiljan Radic Wins the 2026 Pritzker Prize

- ▶ Chilean architect Smiljan Radic Clarke won the 2026 Pritzker Architecture Prize on 12 March 2026.
- ▶ The Pritzker is often called the 'Nobel of architecture'.
- ▶ He is the second Chilean laureate, after Alejandro Aravena (2016).
- ▶ The jury praised his 'unorthodox', material-driven approach to design.
- ▶ He leads the Santiago-based practice he established in 1995.

98th Academy Awards (Oscars 2026)

- ▶ The 98th Academy Awards were held on 15 March 2026, hosted by Conan O'Brien.
- ▶ 'One Battle After Another' won Best Picture and Paul Thomas Anderson won Best Director.
- ▶ Michael B. Jordan won Best Actor for 'Sinners'; Jessie Buckley won Best Actress for 'Hamnet'.
- ▶ Sean Penn and Amy Madigan won the supporting acting awards.
- ▶ The ceremony introduced a new Best Casting category, the first new competitive category since 2001.

12. Quick Revision - 40 One-Liners

1. The 16th Finance Commission (Arvind Panagariya) retained 41% vertical devolution and added a 10% GDP-contribution criterion for 2026-31.
2. Census 2027, India's first fully digital census, began Phase I houselisting in April 2026.
3. Removal of the Lok Sabha Speaker is provided under Article 94(c) and needs an effective majority after 14 days' notice.
4. The President's Address to Parliament is governed by Article 87.
5. The Union Cabinet approved renaming Kerala as 'Keralam' under Article 3.
6. The 2024 SC/ST sub-classification verdict (State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh) overruled the 2004 E.V. Chinnaiyah case.
7. NCST is a constitutional body under Article 338A, created by the 89th Amendment (2003).
8. PESA, 1996 was implemented in Jharkhand 25 years after the Act.
9. White Revolution 2.0 under the Ministry of Cooperation targets 1,007 lakh kg/day milk procurement by 2028-29.
10. PM RAHAT provides cashless treatment up to Rs 1.5 lakh for road accident victims for 7 days.
11. PRAHAAR is India's first National Counter-Terrorism Policy.
12. Atal Pension Yojana was extended till FY 2030-31.
13. PMGSY completed 25 years, having launched on 25 December 2000.
14. NIELIT will set up India's first Quantum AI University in Amaravati.
15. AP's Dugarajapatnam will host India's first mega greenfield shipbuilding cluster (Rs 29,253 crore).
16. India's first mega green ammonia plant (1.5 MMTA) is being built by AM Green in Kakinada.
17. Ponduru Khadi of Srikakulam received a GI tag.
18. Telangana abolished the two-child norm for local body elections; its TFR is 1.7.
19. GHMC expanded to 2,053 sq km by merging 27 ULBs, with wards rising from 150 to 300.
20. Telangana's new Earth Sciences University at Kothagudem is named after Dr Manmohan Singh.
21. India's GDP growth is projected at 7.4% for FY26 in the First Advance Estimates.
22. CPI retail inflation rose to 1.33% in December 2025.
23. The Payments Regulatory Board, a six-member RBI body, replaced the BPSS.
24. Bulgaria adopted the Euro on 1 January 2026, becoming the 21st Eurozone member.
25. India and the GCC signed the Terms of Reference to begin FTA negotiations.
26. IIT Madras launched the C-DAC-built 'Param Shakti' supercomputer under the National Supercomputing Mission.
27. India began trials of its first hydrogen train on the Jind-Sonipat section in Haryana.
28. India became the first country to commercially produce bio-bitumen.
29. PSLV-C62 carrying EOS-N1 failed due to an upper-stage anomaly - the second straight PSLV failure.
30. President Murmu became the second Indian President to dive in a submarine, aboard INS Vagsheer.
31. Mission Sudarshan Chakra aims for a multi-layered air-defence shield by 2035, including Project Kusha.
32. DRDO test-fired the Pinaka LRGR with a 120 km range at Chandipur.
33. The US-Russia New START Treaty expired on 5 February 2026.
34. Israel reportedly became the first UN member to recognise Somaliland.
35. The High Seas Treaty (BBNJ) entered into force on 17 January 2026.
36. The US withdrew from the India-backed International Solar Alliance (HQ at Gurugram).

37. Nepal's RSP, led by Balen Shah, won a landslide (182 seats) in the 5 March 2026 election.
38. India will host the 2028 World Athletics Indoor Championships in Bhubaneswar.
39. Gerd Faltings won the 2026 Abel Prize; Smiljan Radic won the 2026 Pritzker Prize.
40. 'One Battle After Another' won Best Picture at the 98th Academy Awards on 15 March 2026.

13. Practice MCQs - 20 Questions

Q1. The 16th Finance Commission retained vertical devolution to states at what share of the divisible pool?

- A. 38%
- B. 41%
- C. 42%
- D. 45%

Q2. Removal of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha is provided for under which Article?

- A. Article 93
- B. Article 94(c)
- C. Article 96
- D. Article 100

Q3. The renaming of Kerala to 'Keralam' is carried out under which Article of the Constitution?

- A. Article 2
- B. Article 3
- C. Article 4
- D. Article 5

Q4. The 2024 Supreme Court verdict allowing SC/ST sub-classification overruled which earlier case?

- A. Indra Sawhney case
- B. E.V. Chinniah case
- C. M. Nagaraj case
- D. Maneka Gandhi case

Q5. White Revolution 2.0 has been launched under which ministry?

- A. Ministry of Agriculture
- B. Ministry of Cooperation
- C. Ministry of Rural Development
- D. Ministry of Food Processing

Q6. Under the PM RAHAT scheme, road accident victims receive cashless treatment up to:

- A. Rs 50,000
- B. Rs 1 lakh
- C. Rs 1.5 lakh
- D. Rs 2 lakh

Q7. NIELIT signed an MoU to set up India's first Quantum AI University in:

- A. Hyderabad
- B. Amaravati
- C. Bengaluru
- D. Visakhapatnam

Q8. India's first mega green ammonia plant (1.5 MMTA) is being built at:

- A. Visakhapatnam
- B. Kakinada
- C. Tirupati
- D. Nellore

Q9. Telangana abolished the two-child norm for local body elections. Its current Total Fertility Rate is:

- A. 1.7
- B. 2.1
- C. 2.4
- D. 1.4

Q10. The Payments Regulatory Board (PRB) replaced which earlier body?

- A. NPCI
- B. BPSS
- C. DICGC
- D. FSDC

Q11. Bulgaria adopted the Euro in 2026, becoming the Eurozone's:

- A. 19th member
- B. 20th member
- C. 21st member
- D. 22nd member

Q12. The 'Param Shakti' supercomputer launched at IIT Madras was developed by:

- A. ISRO
- B. C-DAC
- C. DRDO
- D. BARC

Q13. PSLV-C62, which failed in 2026, was carrying which main satellite?

- A. EOS-04
- B. EOS-N1 (Anvesha)
- C. RISAT-2B
- D. Cartosat-3

Q14. INS Vagsheer, aboard which President Murmu undertook a sortie, is the final submarine of which project?

- A. Project-75I
- B. Project-75 (Kalvari-class)
- C. Project-17A
- D. Project-28

Q15. The New START Treaty, which expired in February 2026, was signed between:

- A. US and China
- B. US and Russia
- C. Russia and China
- D. US and India

Q16. The High Seas Treaty (BBNJ), which entered into force in January 2026, operates under which framework?

- A. UNFCCC
- B. UNCLOS
- C. CBD
- D. Ramsar Convention

Q17. Which country won a landslide in Nepal's March 2026 general election?

- A. Nepali Congress
- B. CPN-UML
- C. Rastriya Swatantra Party
- D. Nepali Communist Party

Q18. India will host the 2028 World Athletics Indoor Championships in which city?

- A. New Delhi
- B. Bhubaneswar
- C. Bengaluru
- D. Chennai

Q19. Who won the 2026 Abel Prize in mathematics?

- A. Smiljan Radic
- B. Gerd Faltings
- C. Terence Tao
- D. Andrew Wiles

Q20. Which film won Best Picture at the 98th Academy Awards (2026)?

- A. Sinners
- B. Hamnet
- C. One Battle After Another
- D. Weapons

14. Answers & Explanations

Q1. Correct Answer: (B) 41%

The 16th Finance Commission, chaired by Arvind Panagariya, kept vertical devolution at 41% for 2026-31, unchanged from the 15th FC. It also introduced a new 10% weight for contribution to GDP in the horizontal formula.

Q2. Correct Answer: (B) Article 94(c)

Article 94(c) provides for removal of the Speaker through a resolution passed by an effective majority after 14 days' notice. Under Article 96, the Speaker cannot preside over such proceedings but can participate and defend himself.

Q3. Correct Answer: (B) Article 3

Article 3 empowers Parliament to alter the name of a state. Such a Bill needs prior Presidential recommendation and is referred to the state legislature for a non-binding opinion; it is passed by simple majority and is not a constitutional amendment.

Q4. Correct Answer: (B) E.V. Chinnaiiah case

In State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh (2024), a seven-judge bench upheld sub-classification within SC/ST categories by 6:1, overruling the 2004 E.V. Chinnaiiah case. Article 341 governs the SC list but permits internal classification for reservation.

Q5. Correct Answer: (B) Ministry of Cooperation

White Revolution 2.0 was launched under the Ministry of Cooperation to expand dairy cooperatives and empower women. It targets a 50% rise in milk procurement, reaching 1,007 lakh kg per day by 2028-29.

Q6. Correct Answer: (C) Rs 1.5 lakh

PM RAHAT (Road Accident victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment) provides cashless treatment up to Rs 1.5 lakh per victim, covering all road categories, for 7 days from the date of the accident.

Q7. Correct Answer: (B) Amaravati

NIELIT, under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, will establish India's first dedicated Quantum AI University campus in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh, focusing on quantum computing and artificial intelligence.

Q8. Correct Answer: (B) Kakinada

The plant is being built in Kakinada by AM Green (Greenko Group), with a capacity of 1.5 million metric tonnes per annum. Green ammonia uses renewable energy and green hydrogen instead of fossil fuels.

Q9. Correct Answer: (A) 1.7

Telangana's TFR is 1.7, below the replacement level of about 2.1. The Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2026 removed the two-child disqualification, allowing those with more than two children to contest local polls.

Q10. Correct Answer: (B) BPSS

The PRB is a six-member statutory body within the RBI that replaced the Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems (BPSS). It is chaired by the RBI Governor and meets at least twice a year.

Q11. Correct Answer: (C) 21st member

Bulgaria adopted the Euro from 1 January 2026, becoming the 21st member of the Eurozone. The move marks a significant step in European economic integration.

Q12. Correct Answer: (B) C-DAC

Param Shakti was developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under the National Supercomputing Mission, jointly led by MeitY and the Department of Science and Technology.

Q13. Correct Answer: (B) EOS-N1 (Anvesha)

PSLV-C62 carried the EOS-N1 (Anvesha) hyperspectral Earth-observation satellite developed by DRDO. The mission failed due to an anomaly in the upper (PS4) stage - the second consecutive PSLV failure after PSLV-C61.

Q14. Correct Answer: (B) Project-75 (Kalvari-class)

INS Vagsheer is the sixth and final Project-75 (Kalvari-class) diesel-electric submarine, built by Mazagon Dock with France's Naval Group. President Murmu became the second Indian President to dive in a submarine, after Dr Kalam.

Q15. Correct Answer: (B) US and Russia

New START was the last major nuclear arms-control treaty between the US and Russia, signed in 2010 and extended to 2026. It limited deployed warheads and strategic delivery systems; its expiry raises arms-race concerns.

Q16. Correct Answer: (B) UNCLOS

The BBNJ Agreement operates under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It is the first legally binding treaty to protect marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, enabling Marine Protected Areas in the high seas.

Q17. Correct Answer: (C) Rastriya Swatantra Party

The Rastriya Swatantra Party, with Balen Shah as PM candidate, won 182 seats - the second-best showing in Nepal's history. Balen Shah defeated former PM K.P. Sharma Oli in Jhapa-5; the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML had their worst-ever results.

Q18. Correct Answer: (B) Bhubaneswar

India was awarded the 2028 World Athletics Indoor Championships on 19 March 2026, to be held in Bhubaneswar (Kalinga Stadium). It will be India's first global track-and-field championship and makes India the fourth Asian host.

Q19. Correct Answer: (B) Gerd Faltings

German mathematician Gerd Faltings won the 2026 Abel Prize for tools in arithmetic geometry and resolving the Mordell and Lang conjectures. Mordell's conjecture, proved by him, is now called Faltings' Theorem.

Q20. Correct Answer: (C) One Battle After Another

'One Battle After Another' won Best Picture and Paul Thomas Anderson won Best Director at the 98th Academy Awards on 15 March 2026. Michael B. Jordan won Best Actor for 'Sinners' and Jessie Buckley won Best Actress for 'Hamnet'.