

**National**

**Three key inland waterways projects were inaugurated on the Brahmaputra in Dibrugarh**

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated three major infrastructure projects on National Waterway-2 along the Brahmaputra in Dibrugarh, Assam. These include the Bogibeel and Dhubri Customs and Immigration Complexes and the renovated IWAI Heritage Building. The projects aim to improve cargo handling, cross-border trade with Bangladesh and Bhutan, logistics efficiency, and river tourism. Highlighting the "Vikas and Virasat" approach, the initiative balances development with heritage conservation while strengthening inland waterways as a cost-effective transport network in Northeast India.



**India's foreign exchange reserves declined by 2.11 billion USD to reach 723.61 billion USD**

India's foreign exchange reserves fell by 2.11 billion USD to 723.608 billion USD for the week ending February 20, 2026, according to the Reserve Bank of India. The decline was mainly due to reduced foreign currency assets caused by global currency valuation changes. Forex reserves comprise foreign currency assets, gold, Special Drawing Rights, and the reserve position with the International Monetary Fund. Despite the weekly drop, India remains among the top reserve-holding nations, maintaining strong external stability and investor confidence.

**Mount Abu has been renamed Aburaj**

The Rajasthan government has renamed Mount Abu as Aburaj, with Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma announcing the decision in the Assembly. Kaman and Jahazpur have also been renamed Kamvan and Yagyapur to reflect traditional identities. Located in the Aravalli Range, Mount Abu is known for the Dilwara Jain Temples. The move aims to restore historical names, respect cultural heritage, and update official records accordingly.

**India's fiscal deficit reached Rs. 9.8 trillion, accounting for 63% of the FY26 target by January, according to the CGA**

India's fiscal deficit reached Rs. 9.8 trillion, or 63% of the annual target, by January 2026, according to the Controller General of Accounts. The Centre aims to limit the deficit to 4.4% of GDP (Rs. 15.58 trillion) in FY26. Total receipts stood at Rs. 27.08 trillion, supported by strong tax revenues, while expenditure reached Rs. 36.9 trillion. Higher tax collections and controlled spending indicate improved fiscal management, though final-quarter outlays may rise due to capital and subsidy payments.

**Jitendra Singh launches India's first State Innovation Mission in Tripura**

Union Minister Jitendra Singh launched India's first State Innovation Mission in Agartala under the Atal Innovation Mission 2.0 of NITI Aayog. The initiative aims to help states build inclusive innovation ecosystems aligned with national goals. During the event, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha unveiled T-NEST, the state's first incubation hub, and introduced a District Innovator Fellowship, along with plans for an upcoming AI policy.

**Maharashtra Introduces Divyang Sahayak Online Platform to Simplify Access to Disability Welfare Schemes**

The Maharashtra government has launched the Divyang Sahayak Portal, a unified digital platform to streamline disability welfare delivery across the state. The portal lets persons with disabilities view, apply for, and track welfare schemes online, avoiding multiple office visits and paperwork.

It consolidates all state disability schemes and integrates with existing systems like the Unique Disability ID for accuracy. With features such as online processing and real-time tracking, it aims to boost accessibility, transparency, and ease of use for beneficiaries.



### Amit Shah unveiled the 'Pragati' and 'Vikas' mascots for Census-2027

Union Home Minister Amit Shah unveiled the mascots 'Pragati' and 'Vikas' for Census 2027 in New Delhi, marking the launch of India's first fully digital population census. The exercise will be conducted in two phases and will include a Self-Enumeration option for citizens to submit details online. Four digital tools will support the process, with over 30 lakh enumerators and officials involved. The mascots symbolize gender equality and national development, while the initiative represents a major technological upgrade in India's census system.



### Mizoram takes step towards Official Recognition of Mizo Language

The Mizoram Legislative Assembly has unanimously passed a resolution to include the Mizo language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Education Minister Vanlalhlana moved the motion following consultations by the Mizo Language Development Board. Chief Minister Lalduhoma assured members that this constitutional recognition would not jeopardize the community's Scheduled Tribe (ST) status, which remains protected under the 1950 Order.



### India Invokes Essential Commodities Act to Ensure LPG Availability

India invoked the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to secure LPG and natural gas supplies amid West Asia tensions following the Israel–United States strikes on Iran. The government directed refineries to maximise LPG output, barred diversion of propane and butane to petrochemicals, and prioritised domestic household supply. It also introduced the Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026, giving priority to PNG households, CNG transport and fertiliser plants to prevent shortages and maintain stable energy distribution.

## Fiscal Deficit Ratios Revised Following GDP Base Year Update

India revised fiscal deficit ratios after adopting a new GDP series with 2022-23 as the base year, replacing 2011-12. According to Pankaj Chaudhary, the deficit now stands at 6.7% of GDP for FY23, 5.7% for FY24 and 4.9% for FY25. In absolute terms, deficits were Rs. 17.38 lakh crore, Rs. 16.55 lakh crore and Rs. 15.74 lakh crore respectively. The updated GDP estimates aim to better reflect current economic conditions and help assess fiscal indicators and government borrowing needs.



## Madurai Airport Granted International Status by Indian Cabinet

The Union Cabinet led by Narendra Modi approved international status for Madurai Airport on March 10, 2026. The upgrade will allow the airport to handle international flights, improving connectivity for southern Tamil Nadu. Located in the temple city of Madurai, the airport will support tourism, pilgrimage to Meenakshi Amman Temple, and business travel, while also boosting trade, investment and regional economic growth.

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

The Supreme Court of India allowed withdrawal of life support in the passive euthanasia case of Harish Rana, who has remained in a vegetative state since a 2013 accident at Panjab University. The bench of Justice J. B. Pardiwala and Justice K. V. Viswanathan directed All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi to oversee the process, emphasizing dignity in end-of-life decisions under strict medical and legal safeguards.

## Lok Sabha rejects no-confidence motion against Speaker Om Birla

Following a 13-hour debate involving 42 MPs, the Lok Sabha rejected a no-confidence motion against Speaker Om Birla via a voice vote. Home Minister Amit Shah defended the Speaker as the non-partisan protector of the House, criticizing the opposition's rare move, the first such motion in nearly forty years since 1987. Shah emphasized that the Speaker represents the entire assembly, rather than a specific political party. The Article 94 of the Constitution provides the procedure for the removal of the speaker of Lok Sabha.

## Supreme Court allows Passive Euthanasia in Harish Rana case

In the Harish Rana case, the Supreme Court of India reaffirmed the legality of passive euthanasia, distinguishing it from active euthanasia, which remains a criminal offense. The court ruled that continuing treatment was 'prolonging his agony,' marking a significant application of the 'right to die with dignity' under Article 21. In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court authorized passive euthanasia for Harish Rana, comatose for 13 years. This historic first-ever court-ordered death in India, delivered by Justices Pardiwala and Viswanathan, further clarifies the nation's 2018 legal framework on end-of-life care.

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Passive euthanasia is defined as the intentional withdrawal or withholding of life-sustaining treatments, such as ventilators, feeding tubes, or life-prolonging medication, when a patient is terminally ill or in an irreversible vegetative state.

### UIDAI Launches Bug Bounty Programme

UIDAI has launched its inaugural Bug Bounty Programme on March 11 to bolster the security of Aadhaar's digital infrastructure. By inviting ethical hackers and cybersecurity experts to identify and report system vulnerabilities, the authority aims to pre-emptively address potential risks. Participants will earn rewards based on the severity of their findings, fostering a transparent, data-driven approach to protecting India's massive biometric ecosystem against evolving cyber threats.



### Supreme Court Clarifies OBC Creamy Layer Criteria, Says Income Alone Not Enough

The Supreme Court has ruled that determining the creamy layer status for Other Backward Classes cannot depend solely on parental income. The court emphasized that authorities must evaluate the social and occupational status of parents within their organizations rather than just reviewing salary figures.

This judgment provides relief to several candidates who were denied appointments despite clearing exams. By rejecting the mechanical application of income limits, the top court ensures that reservation benefits effectively reach those who truly belong to the backward categories.



### Canara Bank Updates MCLR Lending Rates Across Multiple Loan Tenures

Canara Bank has announced a revision in its Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate affecting specific long term loan tenures. Effective from March 12 2026 the bank has increased rates for two and three year buckets by ten basis points. Other tenures including overnight and one year rates remain unchanged to provide stability for most retail borrowers. This adjustment follows regular reviews of market conditions and funding costs. Borrowers with existing loans linked to these specific tenures may experience a slight increase in monthly installments.

### Government Transfers Two Thousand Rupees to Farmers Under PM Kisan Scheme Installment

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the twenty second installment of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme today from Guwahati. Over nine crore farmer families across India received a total of eighteen thousand six hundred forty crore through direct benefit transfer. This initiative provides six thousand annually to support small landholders with agricultural

expenses like seeds and fertilizers. With this latest disbursement the cumulative financial aid provided under the program has reached four lakh twenty seven thousand crore since its inception.

**The government launched “Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat” to eradicate child marriage**

Child marriage remains a major challenge in India, especially for girls, but the government is addressing it through strict laws, awareness drives, digital reporting tools, and support systems. Key measures include the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, the Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat campaign, and a 100-day special drive. Officials like CMPOs and District Magistrates play an important role in prevention. Supported by helplines, legal aid, and girl-child empowerment schemes, these efforts aim to build a child-marriage-free India.



**Fitch raised India’s FY26 GDP growth forecast to 7.5% on strong domestic demand**

Fitch Ratings has raised India’s FY26 GDP growth forecast to 7.5%, reflecting confidence in the country’s strong domestic demand, rising consumption, and higher investment activity. This upgrade suggests that India remains one of the fastest-growing major economies despite global uncertainty. Fitch also improved its FY27 outlook to 6.7%, while noting that inflation and global conditions may affect future growth. Overall, the revised forecast highlights India’s economic resilience and stable growth momentum.



**RBI launched an awareness programme on digital payments to encourage safe digital transactions**

The RBI has launched a pilot Digital Payments Awareness Program to promote safe and confident use of online payments in India. Starting in Maharashtra, the initiative will educate people, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, about secure transactions, fraud risks, and online safety through in-person sessions. Launched during Digital Payments Awareness Week 2026, it is supported by CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. The RBI also introduced the “Thoda Dhyam Se” campaign to strengthen public trust in digital payments.

**NHAI Revises FASTag Annual Pass Fee**

The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has updated the FASTag Annual Pass fee for the 2026-27 fiscal year. Effective next month, the cost for non-commercial vehicles rises from ₹3,000 to ₹3,075. Valid for one year or 200 crossings at over 1,000 plazas, this pass offers a convenient one-time payment alternative to frequent recharges for eligible highway and expressway users nationwide. The FASTag Annual Pass scheme was officially launched on August 15, 2025 (Independence Day). While the plan was first announced in June 2025 by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari to address concerns over rising toll costs, it became operational a few months later.



### **Punjab Assembly Approves Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur World Class University Bill 2026**

The legislative assembly recently passed a significant bill to establish a premier educational institution at the historic site of Anandpur Sahib. This university aims to provide high-quality education in cutting-edge fields such as aerospace, cyber security, and quantum computing. With a planned investment of three hundred crore, the project seeks to bridge the gap in specialized technical training across northern regions. By integrating spiritual heritage with modern science, the institution will prepare thousands of students for future technological challenges and global opportunities.



### **Supreme Court Rules No Age Restriction for Adoptive Mothers to Avail Maternity Leave**

The Supreme Court recently struck down a discriminatory provision that restricted maternity benefits for adoptive mothers based on the age of the child.

Previously, leave was only available if the adopted infant was under three months old. The bench declared this age cap unconstitutional, emphasizing that motherhood is defined by caregiving rather than biological birth. Now, all adoptive mothers are entitled to twelve weeks of paid leave from the date of adoption, ensuring equal support for diverse family structures and bonding.

### **Maharashtra Assembly Passes Freedom of Religion Bill 2026**

The state legislative assembly has passed a stringent bill aimed at regulating religious conversions and preventing those achieved through force, fraud, or inducement. This legislation mandates that individuals intending to convert must provide a formal declaration to district authorities well in advance. It also introduces heavy financial penalties and imprisonment for those found guilty of organized mass conversions. While the government emphasizes protecting vulnerable sections from exploitation, the bill includes specific provisions to ensure that genuine personal faith choices remain legally protected.

### **India Metro System Emerges as the Third Largest Network Globally**

The domestic metro rail network has achieved a significant milestone by becoming the third largest operational system in the entire world. Surpassing several developed nations, the total functional length now exceeds Nine hundred kilometers across twenty-one cities. This rapid expansion reflects a massive commitment to urban infrastructure and sustainable public transport solutions. With over six hundred kilometers currently under construction, the network aims to enhance last-mile connectivity and reduce carbon emissions significantly for millions of daily urban commuters.

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## Kalinjar Hill declared National Geo Heritage site

On March 16, 2026, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) designated the hills surrounding Kalinjar Fort in Banda, Uttar Pradesh, as a National Geo-Heritage Site. Located in the Vindhya range, the site features the rare Eparchaeon Unconformity, where 2.5-billion-year-old granite meets 1.2-billion-year-old sandstone. This recognition bridges geological science with historical legacy, positioning Kalinjar as a vital hub in the Kalinjar-Khajuraho-Chitrakoot tourism circuit. The Fort holds immense historical and religious value. It is known for ancient temples, including the renowned Neelkanth Mahadev temple, associated with the legend of Lord Shiva consuming poison during the Samudra Manthan.

## Tanker Jag Laadki reaches Mundra port amid West Asia tensions

The Indian-flagged tanker Jag Laadki successfully delivered 80,886 metric tonnes of crude oil from the UAE's Fujairah Port to Mundra Port, Gujarat. This follows the safe passage of LPG carriers MT Shivalik and MT Nanda Devi through the Strait of Hormuz. These arrivals highlight the resilience of India's maritime logistics and the strategic importance of secure energy corridors amidst rising West Asian tensions. India continues to maintain a strong naval presence in the region under 'Operation Sankalp'. The mission is aimed at ensuring the safety of Indian vessels and securing vital sea lanes, particularly in the Persian Gulf and surrounding waters.

## Aadhaar has become the world's largest Biometric ID system

With 134 crore users and 17,000 crore transactions, Aadhaar is now the world's largest biometric system. Minister Jitin Prasada informed Parliament on Wednesday 18 March, that UIDAI utilizes AI-driven face, fingerprint, and iris authentication via authorized AUAs (Authentication User Agencies) or KUAs (KYC User Agencies).

This ecosystem ensures secure identity verification for service delivery, with authentication logs retained for two years and archived for five years before deletion to facilitate grievance redressal and data security.



## Indian educator Alakh Pandey makes Forbes World's Billionaires List 2026

PhysicsWallah co-founder Alakh Pandey and Prateek Maheshwari, debuted on the 2026 Forbes World's Billionaires List. He is among 229 Indians featured, a group led by Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani. While Savitri Jindal remains India's wealthiest woman, steel tycoon Lakshmi Mittal emerged as the year's biggest gainer. Pandey's inclusion marks a milestone for the Indian edtech sector since his 2014 YouTube beginnings. One notable change in the composition of the top ten this year is billionaire banker Uday Kotak, founder of Kotak Mahindra Bank, who was recently bestowed the Padma Bhushan. The founder of payments app Paytm, Vijay Shekhar Sharma, has also returned to the list this year.

## India invites global bids for rare earth magnet manufacturing units

To bolster domestic self-reliance, India's Ministry of Heavy Industries has invited global bids to establish integrated NdFeB-based rare earth permanent magnet (REPM) manufacturing units. Targeting a total annual capacity of 6,000 MTPA, the scheme offers ₹750 crore

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in capital subsidies and ₹6,450 crore in sales-linked incentives. This initiative aims to secure a complete value chain for critical sectors like electric vehicles, defense, and aerospace, reducing import dependency. Rare-earth permanent magnets are among the most powerful magnets available. They are typically made using rare earth elements such as neodymium, along with iron and boron. Known for their high magnetic strength and efficiency, they are critical components used in the manufacturing of advanced technologies. These magnets are widely used in electric vehicles, wind turbines, high-end electronics, as well as aerospace and defence systems.



### Union Cabinet approved Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna

The Union Cabinet has approved the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA), on March 19, a landmark scheme designed to transform India into a global manufacturing hub. With an initial outlay of ₹33,660 crore the scheme focuses on developing 12 new industrial smart cities across major regional corridors and to develop 100 'plug-and-play' industrial parks across the country. Its duration is 6 years (FY 2026–27 to 2031–32). BHAVYA aims to attract high-tech investments, generate over 1 million jobs, and bolster the 'Make in India' initiative. It prioritizes sustainable infrastructure, 'plug-and-play' facilities, and seamless

multimodal connectivity to reduce logistics costs for businesses. Industrial parks ranging from 100 (25 acres for NE & hilly regions) to 1000 acres would be chosen for the said scheme.

### Kusunpur is set to become Odisha's first smart village

The village of Kusunpur in Kendrapada district, Odisha, has been selected to become the state's first smart village under a mission-mode initiative led by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

The project aims to bring modern technologies, scientific solutions, and sustainable infrastructure to rural life, improving quality of life and promoting resilient development.

It involves collaboration between CSIR research institutes, local administration, and partners to implement climate-resilient buildings, community facilities, and comprehensive village planning.

### India submits its seventh national report to the Convention on Biological Diversity

**Statement 1 is correct:** The CBD was indeed adopted at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit with three primary goals: biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and equitable benefit-sharing.

**Statement 2 is correct:** In early 2026, India submitted its Seventh National Report (NR7). This report is a critical assessment of India's progress toward 23 national targets that align with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) adopted in 2022.

**Statement 3 is incorrect:** Net-zero carbon targets fall under the UNFCCC (Paris Agreement), not the CBD. The CBD focuses on ecosystems and genetic resources, not atmospheric carbon mandates.

## PM Modi becomes India's longest serving Head of Government

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has achieved a historic milestone by becoming India's longest-serving head of government, surpassing the previous record of 8,930 days held by former Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling on March 22, 2026. With 8,931 days in office, this record combines his tenure as Gujarat's longest-serving Chief Minister (2001–2014) and his national leadership since 2014. In July 2025, he surpassed Indira Gandhi's record of 4,077 consecutive days in office, becoming the second-longest-serving Prime Minister in an uninterrupted tenure, after Jawaharlal Nehru. As the first Prime Minister born after Independence and the one with the most prior gubernatorial experience, his career reflects an unprecedented span of administrative continuity at both state and federal levels.



International

## USA-Iran Talks end with no Deal

Oman-mediated talks between the United States of America and Iran concluded in Switzerland with moderate progress, though no definitive breakthrough was reached. Despite intensive negotiations aimed at de-escalating regional tensions and addressing Tehran's nuclear program, a final resolution still remains pending. Technical discussions are slated to resume in March in Vienna, while Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Albusaidi prepares for high-level follow-up meetings with U.S. officials (Vice President JD Vance) in Washington.



## Israel launches attack on Iran, declares state of Emergency

Israel's Defence Minister, Israel Katz, has declared a state of emergency following proactive strikes against Iran on February 28, 2026. Witnesses reported multiple explosions and rising smoke in downtown Tehran, specifically near Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's offices. Simultaneously, sirens sounded across Israel as the military alerted citizens to potential retaliatory missile attacks. This escalation marks a significant shift in regional hostilities, with both nations now on high alert.



## UAE Launches World's First Sovereign Financial Cloud

The Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates (CBUAE) has introduced the world's first Sovereign Financial Cloud Services Infrastructure (SFCSI), developed alongside Core42. This AI-driven platform provides a secure digital foundation specifically for the UAE's financial industry. By centralizing

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regulated data and fostering innovation, the initiative solidifies the nation's position as a global leader in secure, digital finance and advanced technological integration within the banking sector.

### Chile eliminates Leprosy, verified by WHO

Chile has made history as the first nation in the Americas to receive official WHO verification for eliminating leprosy as a public health threat. Following over thirty years without local transmission, the last indigenous case occurring in 1993, this achievement stems from rigorous surveillance and early diagnostic protocols. By maintaining vigilant monitoring of imported cases, Chile's healthcare system has set a global benchmark for long-term infectious disease control.

### Mojtaba Khamenei declared as Iran's next Supreme Leader

Following the reported death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a joint U.S.-Israeli strike, Iran's Assembly of Experts has allegedly appointed his second-eldest son, Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei, as the new Supreme Leader. Born in 1969 in Mashhad, Mojtaba rose within an influential family shaped by the 1979 Islamic Revolution. His sudden elevation places him at the helm of Iran's religious and political hierarchy amid unprecedented regional volatility.

### Balen Shah Likely to Become Nepal's Prime Minister After Election

Nepal's 2026 parliamentary elections have brought a major political shift, with the Rastriya Swatantra Party emerging as the leading force. Party leader Balendra Balen Shah, a former Kathmandu mayor and rapper-turned-politician, is set to become Nepal's next Prime Minister after the fall of K P Sharma Oli's government following 2025 protests. The RSP gained strong leads across many constituencies, signaling growing public support for new leadership and reform-focused politics in Nepal.



### EAM S Jaishankar meets Cyprus FM Constantinos Kombos in Brussels

External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar met Cyprus's Foreign Minister, Constantinos Kombos, in Brussels on March 15 to enhance their strategic partnership. Their discussions focused on regional stability in West Asia and deepening India-EU engagement. Dr. Jaishankar specifically lauded Cyprus, the current President of the Council of the EU, for its pivotal role in bridging cooperation between India and the European Union through high-level diplomatic channels. Dr. Jaishankar is on an official visit to Brussels, Belgium, from March 15 to 16 at the invitation of European Union (EU) High Representative and Vice President Kaja Kallas to interact with Foreign Ministers of the 27 EU member states at the Foreign Affairs Council Meeting.



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### **FIFA Collaborates with YouTube for Broadcasting 2026 World Cup Matches**

In a significant move to expand global viewership, the international football governing body has partnered with a major video sharing platform, YouTube, to broadcast the upcoming World Cup. This collaboration ensures that fans across select territories can access live matches, highlights, and exclusive behind the scenes content for free. By leveraging digital streaming, the initiative aims to reach younger audiences and regions with limited traditional television infrastructure. This digital first strategy marks a shift in how major sporting events are consumed by millions worldwide.

### **India-Indonesia to restore Prambanan Temple Complex**

India and Indonesia have partnered to restore the Prambanan Temple in Sleman near Yogyakarta, in southern Java. Locally known as Roro Jonggrang or the "Temple of the Slender Virgin," strengthening cultural diplomacy and shared civilizational bonds. Constructed in the 9th century by the Sanjaya dynasty, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is Indonesia's largest Hindu complex, dedicated to the Trimurti (Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma). Known locally as Roro Jonggrang, the restoration aims to preserve this architectural icon of Southeast Asian heritage.

### **Bhumika Shrestha becomes Nepal's first Transgender Woman MP**

Bhumika Shrestha (Born as Kailash Shrestha), a 37-year-old LGBTQ activist, has made history as Nepal's first transgender woman Member of Parliament on March 16. Representing the Rastriya Swatantra Party through the proportional representation system, her appointment is a landmark for South Asian inclusivity. A long-time advocate for the dignity of sexual minorities, Shrestha has dedicated her career to fighting discrimination and securing legal recognition for marginalized communities, now bringing these vital voices into Nepal's formal governance.

### **India Initiates Probe into Ethyl Chloroformate Imports**

The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) has launched an anti-dumping probe into ethyl chloroformate imports from China following a complaint by Paushak Ltd. As India's sole producer, Paushak Ltd alleges that underpriced Chinese imports are causing significant financial injury and price suppression. This organic intermediate is vital for synthesizing pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals. The investigation's outcome is critical, as potential anti-dumping duties could shift input costs within these essential industrial supply chains. DGTR is the nodal body for anti-dumping and trade remedy investigations in India. The investigation will cover the period from October 2024 to September 2025.

### **India reiterates Indus Waters Treaty to remain in abeyance**

At a UN event on World Water Day 2026, India's Permanent Representative Harish Parvathaneni reaffirmed that the Indus Waters Treaty remains in abeyance. He stated that India's past goodwill was met with Pakistan's continued support for terrorism. Consequently, New Delhi maintains that the 1960 treaty will not be reinstated until Pakistan takes 'credible and irreversible' steps to end cross-border terror. Parvathaneni emphasized that Pakistan must uphold human life before demanding the sanctity of international treaties. India had placed the treaty in abeyance following the Pahalgam terror attack last year, attributed to The Resistance Front, an outfit linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba. Reaffirming its global commitment, India said it looks forward to engaging in upcoming international platforms, including future UN water-related forums, to advance inclusive and sustainable approaches to water governance.

### **India emerged as the leading producer of coconut**

India is the world's largest producer of coconuts, contributing over 30% of global production.

Coconut cultivation in India spans approximately 2.16 million hectares, producing over 21,000 million nuts annually.

The Coconut Promotion Scheme, announced in the Union Budget 2026-27, aims to increase production and enhance productivity by replacing old or non-productive trees with new saplings and improved varieties.

This initiative supports livelihoods, particularly of farmers dependent on coconut farming, and strengthens India's competitiveness in global coconut production.



### India-China Trade via Lipulekh Pass Set to Resume After 7 Years

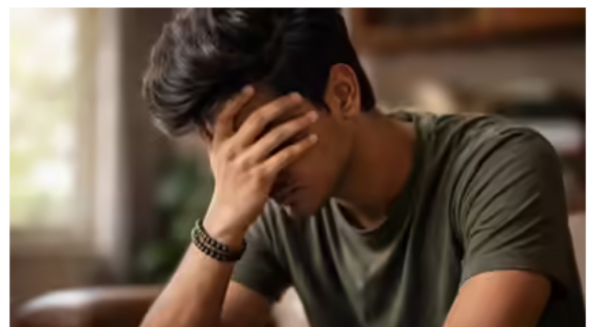
The Lipulekh Pass is a strategic high-altitude Himalayan pass located in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand. It sits at the tri-junction connecting India's Pithoragarh district, Nepal, and the Tibet region of China. In March 2026, it was announced that border trade would resume in June after a six-year hiatus. While it is a vital route for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, it remains a point of diplomatic friction due to Nepal's territorial claims over the Kalapani region.



### Ranks/Reports/Indices

#### India ranks 60th globally in a mental health report on young adults

American NGO Sapien Labs released its 2025 global mind health report, assessing emotional and cognitive wellbeing through the Mind Health Quotient (MHQ). India's youth (18-34) ranked 60th among 84 nations with an MHQ score of 33, while those aged 55+ ranked 49th with a score of 96. The global average MHQ stood at 66. The findings highlight greater mental health challenges among younger adults compared to older populations worldwide.



### 22-Year-Old Surya Midha Becomes Youngest Billionaire

Surya Midha became one of the youngest self-made billionaires in the Forbes World's Billionaires List 2026 at just 22 years old. He co-founded Mercor in 2023, which later achieved a valuation of about \$10 billion.

With an estimated net worth of \$2.2 billion, he surpassed the record set by Mark Zuckerberg, who became a billionaire at 23, making Midha among the youngest in history.

### 150 self-made women billionaires were reported in 2026

In 2026, the number of self-made women billionaires globally reached a record 150, with combined wealth of \$470 billion.

China leads with 78 self-made women billionaires, more than the rest of the world combined, followed by the United States with 40. India has only three self-made women billionaires: Radha Vembu, Falguni Nayar, and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.

The rapid wealth creation among women is largely driven by sectors like artificial intelligence, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and consumer electronics.

These industries are fueling new entrepreneurial opportunities and enabling women to achieve unprecedented financial success globally.



### Pakistan Tops Global Terrorism Index 2026

According to the Global Terrorism Index 2026, Pakistan, with a score of 8.57, is now the world's most terrorism-affected nation, surpassing Burkina Faso. With 1,139 fatalities in 2025, violence has reached its highest point since 2013. The Institute for Economics and Peace attributes this resurgence to intensified attacks by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), compounded by regional instability and porous borders, marking Pakistan's first return to the top ranking since 2011. India is ranked 13th in the GTI 2026 with a score of 6.43. The country recorded over 140 incidents, more than 100 fatalities and over 100 injuries in 2025. Globally, terrorism-related deaths declined by 28 per cent to 5,582 in 2025, while incidents fell to their lowest level since 2007.

### China Becomes India's 3rd Largest Export Market, Surpassing Netherlands

In February 2026, China overtook the Netherlands to become India's third-largest export destination. According to Commerce Department data, exports to China surged by 32.4% to reach 1.67 billion dollars, driven primarily by a low base from the previous year and increased shipments of electronics and marine products. Conversely, exports to the Netherlands fell by 31.3% to 1.29 billion dollars largely due to a sharp decline in refined petroleum exports.



### Global Terrorism Index 2026

**Statement 1 is correct:** The report explicitly states that Pakistan secured the 1st rank for the first time, recording its highest fatality levels since 2013 (1,139 deaths). It moved ahead of Burkina Faso, which slipped to the 2nd spot.

**Statement 2 is correct:** While the report mentions a 'significant shift,' it highlights that global terrorism deaths actually declined by 28% to 5,582 in 2025, and total incidents dropped by 22% to 2,944—the lowest since 2007.

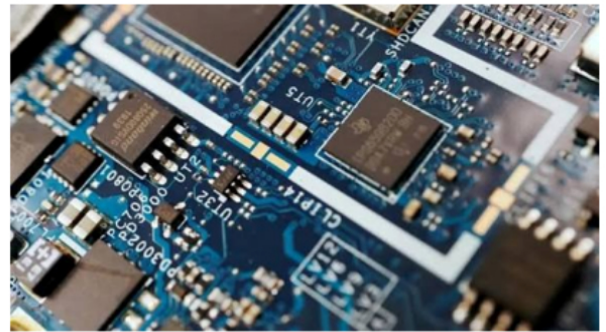
**Statement 3 is correct:** India is indeed positioned at the 13th spot with a score of 6.428. In the GTI scoring system (0–10), a score above 6 generally categorizes a country as having a high impact of terrorism.



### Summits/MoUs/Conferences/Agreement

#### Japan, South Korea and Malaysia Collaborate with Gujarat to Boost Semiconductor Ecosystem

At the Gujarat SemiConnect 2026 event in Gandhinagar, the state government announced significant commitments from firms based in Japan, South Korea and Malaysia to strengthen Gujarat's semiconductor ecosystem. These global companies pledged combined investments of approximately 1600 crore, including plans for new chip manufacturing and research facilities aimed at developing advanced semiconductor capabilities. The collaborations align with Gujarat's broader strategy to attract international partnerships and build a competitive chip manufacturing and supply chain network within India's emerging high-tech industrial landscape.



#### International Rail Coach Expo 2026 Opens at Integral Coach Factory in Chennai

The International Rail Coach Expo 2026 launched at the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai to showcase global advancements in rolling stock and manufacturing. Organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry, the three day event features over 125 companies displaying cutting edge railway technologies and sustainable design. Key highlights include the participation of public sector giants and private firms focusing on passenger comfort and indigenous development. This platform facilitates critical networking between policymakers and industry leaders to modernize national and international transport systems.



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## **José Antonio Kast Rist was sworn in as Chile's President**

José Antonio Kast has assumed office as Chile's President, signalling a sharp conservative turn in national politics. In his inaugural address, he vowed urgent action on crime, illegal migration, economic reforms, and corruption. Calling his rule an "emergency government," he promised improvements in security, jobs, healthcare, and education. Kast also announced tax cuts, border measures, and financial audits. However, his administration faces major tests from political divisions, economic strain, and sensitive international relations with powers like the US and China.

## **HDFC ERGO General Insurance named Parthanil Ghosh as its new MD and CEO**

HDFC ERGO General Insurance has appointed Parthanil Ghosh as its new Managing Director and CEO, effective April 16, 2026, subject to regulatory approvals. He will succeed Anuj Tyagi and brings over 30 years of experience in financial services, including strong expertise in general insurance. Since joining HDFC ERGO in 2016, Ghosh has contributed across key business areas and major integrations. His appointment is expected to support the company's focus on growth, innovation, and customer-centric leadership.

## **Lieutenant General (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain sworn in as Bihar Governor**

In a historic first, Lieutenant General (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain was sworn in as the 43rd Governor of Bihar on Saturday, March 14, at Patna's Lok Bhavan. Chief Justice Sangam Kumar Sahoo administered the oath, marking Hasnain as the first former military officer to hold this position. Succeeding Arif Mohammad Khan, the new Governor was welcomed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and other high-ranking officials to lead the state's constitutional affairs.

## **Global Conference on Women in Agri-Food Systems (GCWAS) 2026**

The Global Conference on Women in Agri-Food Systems (GCWAS–2026), from March 12-14, 2026, concluded in New Delhi, emphasizing gender-inclusive leadership in agriculture. ICAR Director General M. L. Jat announced a new national gender platform linking over 900 institutions to boost research and capacity-building for women. The summit highlighted that empowering women through data and decision-making is vital for enhancing global farm productivity, profitability, and sustainable agricultural development.



## **World Bank and India Launch \$299.66 Million Air Quality Program**

Recently, the World Bank signed a \$299.66 million agreement with the Government of India and Uttar Pradesh to implement the Clean Air Management Program.

The initiative focuses on reducing pollution in transport, agriculture, and industrial sectors, along with installing around 200 air quality monitors. It will also promote electric vehicles, clean cooking for 3.9 million households, and generate employment opportunities.

The program is part of a broader regional air quality improvement strategy in the Indo-Gangetic Plains.



### **Bharat Tribes Fest 2026 Scheduled to Begin in New Delhi from March 18**

A major cultural and commercial event has commenced in the national capital to showcase the vibrant traditions and entrepreneurial spirit of indigenous communities. Organized at a historic nursery, the festival features over two hundred stalls representing numerous cooperative centers and master artisans from across the nation. Visitors can experience authentic tribal handicrafts, handlooms, and traditional cuisines through specialized initiatives. The event serves as a comprehensive platform for tribal entrepreneurs to integrate into global value chains while celebrating their unique heritage.



### Science and tech/Space/Defence

#### **Gujarat Announces STI Policy 2026–31 Featuring 1,000 Crore Innovation Fund**

The Gujarat government unveiled its Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Policy 2026–31, aimed at strengthening the state's innovation ecosystem and scientific capabilities. A central component is a 1,000 crore innovation fund to support domestic research and reduce dependence on imports in areas including artificial intelligence, semiconductors, space technologies and green energy. The policy will foster research clusters across regions, support over 100 high-impact projects annually, nurture skilled researchers, enhance intellectual property filings, and promote industry-academia collaboration to boost competitiveness.



#### **MoD Signs ₹5,083 Cr Defence Procurement Deals**

Ministry of Defence signed contracts worth ₹5,083 crore for defence acquisitions, including six Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III for the Indian Coast Guard and VL Shtil surface-to-air missiles for the Indian Navy. The ALH Mk-III helicopters will be supplied by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, while the missiles will be procured from JSC Rosoboronexport. The deals aim to strengthen maritime surveillance and naval air defence capabilities.



### Third edition of Future Warfare Course concludes in New Delhi

The third Future Warfare Course, concluded in New Delhi on February 25, 2026, focused on Multi-Domain Operations and strategic readiness. Organized by the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff, the program emphasized civil-military fusion by involving startups, MSMEs, and academia. A key highlight was a Hyderabad-based phase exploring space technology and counter-UA(Unmanned Aircraft) systems, culminating in a high-level strategic wargaming exercise.

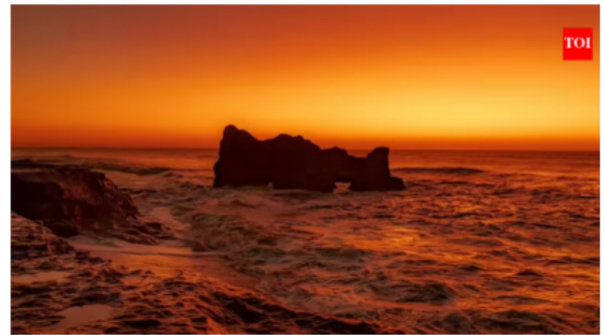
### DRDO successfully conducts trials of VSHORADS

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) completed three successful flight tests of the Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) at Odisha's Chandipur range on February 27, 2026. According to the Defence Ministry, these trials revalidated the missile's ability to neutralize high-speed aerial threats across diverse altitudes and ranges. The system effectively intercepted targets mimicking enemy aircraft, proving its precision and reliability in extreme combat scenarios.

### Mars Beaches Discovered by Zhurong Rover Radar

Recent radar data from China's Zhurong rover strengthens the hypothesis that Mars once possessed an ancient ocean. While surface features like dry riverbeds previously suggested a watery past, subsurface scans published in PNAS now reveal buried structures resembling terrestrial coastal deposits. These findings provide compelling

geological evidence of prehistoric waves and shorelines, indicating that liquid water significantly shaped the Martian landscape billions of years ago. These structures are tilted at approx 15 degrees.



### IBM opens its first Infrastructure Innovation Centre in Bengaluru to support AI development in India

IBM launched its first Infrastructure Innovation Centre in Bengaluru within the IBM India Systems Development Lab. The centre will support the development of enterprise artificial intelligence, hybrid cloud, and advanced computing infrastructure. It will bring together engineers working on processors, operating systems, firmware, and virtualization to accelerate innovation. The initiative highlights India's growing role in IBM's global technology ecosystem and aims to create secure, scalable, and responsible AI infrastructure solutions.

### US Tests Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

The United States recently conducted a test launch of the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile. It is a key component of the country's nuclear triad and serves as the land-based leg of the strategic deterrence system. The missile is operated by the US Air Force Global Strike Command and is designed for long-range nuclear delivery. Minuteman III uses three solid-propellant rocket motors and can reach speeds of about Mach 23 at burnout, with a range exceeding 6,000 miles.

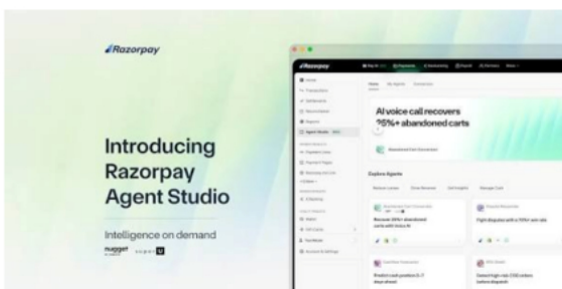


### Razorpay Launches AI Agent Studio to Enable Automated Smart Payment Operations for Businesses

Razorpay has introduced the Agent Studio to help businesses automate complex financial operations using autonomous artificial intelligence. This platform enables merchants to deploy specialized agents that handle tasks like dispute resolution, subscription recovery, and

#### Freedom Shield

abandoned cart conversion in real time. By utilizing natural language processing, the system allows teams to manage workflows without writing extensive code or monitoring manual dashboards. This innovation aims to reduce operational overhead while improving revenue recovery across billions of transactions within the digital commerce ecosystem.



### Perplexity Introduces Personal Computer AI Agent Designed to Assist Users Round the Clock

Perplexity has unveiled its Personal Computer system which functions as a persistent digital proxy to manage complex tasks autonomously. This innovation operates on a dedicated hardware setup allowing it to execute workflows continuously for users. By integrating multiple frontier artificial intelligence models the system can conduct research and handle files without human supervision. Security remains a priority with features like audit trails and a kill switch included. This release transforms standard computing into an agentic experience where the machine interprets high level goals.

### V O Chidambaranar Port Unveils India First Digital Twin Technology Platform

V O Chidambaranar Port in Tuticorin has become the first major Indian port to implement a comprehensive digital twin technology platform. This system creates a virtual replica of the physical infrastructure and operational assets to provide real time monitoring and predictive analytics. By integrating sensors and data streams, the port can now visualize vessel movements and berth occupancy to optimize logistics. The initiative aims to reduce turnaround times by 25 percent while enhancing safety and sustainability through proactive asset management and simulations.



### Wipro inaugurates an AI Hub at GIFT City

Wipro's new hub at GIFT City is designed to strengthen its capabilities in delivering advanced technology and consulting services specifically for the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sector.

The center focuses on AI-powered solutions for digital banking, capital markets, risk management, compliance, and core platform modernization.

It also aims to foster innovation, co-create with clients, and develop local talent to support the growing demand for intelligent financial services globally.



### Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati develops MXene-based material for clean hydrogen and desalination

The dual-purpose MXene-based material for clean hydrogen production and solar-powered water desalination was developed by the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IIT Guwahati).

This innovative catalyst can generate hydrogen fuel through water electrolysis while also enabling efficient desalination using solar energy.

The material exhibits ultra-low hydrogen evolution reaction (HER) overpotential, ensuring high efficiency. By combining sustainable fuel generation with water purification, IIT Guwahati's development addresses critical global challenges in clean energy and water accessibility.

### Sports

#### Mangaluru International Airport Secures 2025 ASQ Best Arrivals Award for Second Straight Year

Mangaluru International Airport has been honoured with the 2025 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Award for Best Airport at Arrivals, claiming the global accolade for the second consecutive year. The recognition is based on passenger feedback and independent surveys evaluating multiple service parameters including efficiency, comfort and customer experience. Airports Council International's award highlights the consistent excellence in arrival services delivered by the airport, underscoring its operational improvements and focus on traveller satisfaction.



#### India national cricket team becomes the first team to qualify for four Men's T20 World Cup finals

India national cricket team made history by becoming the first team to reach four finals of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup after defeating England national cricket team by seven runs in the 2026 semi-final at Wankhede Stadium. India previously reached the finals in 2007, 2014, and 2024. The team will face the New Zealand national cricket team in the 2026 final in Ahmedabad. A victory could give India a third title and make it the most successful team in T20 World Cup history.

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### India launches the world's first franchise-based road cycling league

Mansukh Mandaviya unveiled the logo of the Cycling League of India (CLI), the world's first franchise-based professional road cycling league. The league will feature eight city-based teams, each with 10 cyclists, including international and junior riders. Events will include criterium races, team time trials, and mass-start races held in three stages before the final. The initiative aims to develop cycling talent, attract global participation, and strengthen India's sporting presence, while also supporting the Fit India Movement.

### Chhattisgarh to Host Khelo India Tribal Games 2026

Union Sports Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya announced that the first Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) 2026 will be held in Chhattisgarh from March 26 to April 6, 2026. The event will take place in Raipur, Jagdalpur and Sarguja, featuring seven medal sports: athletics, football, hockey, weightlifting, archery, swimming and wrestling. The initiative aims to promote tribal sporting talent, strengthen grassroots sports infrastructure and integrate promising athletes into the national sports ecosystem under the Khelo India Scheme.

### Jasprit Bumrah Joins Elite Club with 500 International Wickets

Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah completed 500 international wickets during the semifinal of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 against England at Wankhede Stadium. He reached the milestone by dismissing Harry Brook on the first ball of his spell. Since debuting in 2016, Bumrah has become a key figure in India's bowling attack across formats. His tally includes 234 Test, 149 ODI and 117 T20I wickets, placing him among India's leading wicket-takers in international cricket.

### Finn Allen Hits Fastest T20 World Cup Century

New Zealand opener Finn Allen created history by scoring the fastest century in T20 World Cup history during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup semi-final against South Africa in Kolkata. Allen reached the milestone in just 33 balls, setting a new record for the fastest century in the tournament. He surpassed the previous men's record held by Chris Gayle, who scored a 47-ball century in the 2016 T20 World Cup. Allen also broke the overall World Cup record set by Deandra Dottin.



### India wins third ICC Men's T20 World Cup Title

India made history on March 8 by clinching an unprecedented third ICC Men's T20 World Cup title, defeating New Zealand by 96 runs in the final at Ahmedabad. Led by Suryakumar Yadav, the 'Men in Blue' posted a formidable target of 256 runs before

bowling out the opposition for 159 in 19 overs. Jasprit Bumrah's stellar 4-wicket haul earned him Player of the Match and Sanju Samson was given the Player of the Series. India became the first team to successfully defend the trophy, it became the first country to win two back to back titles also it became the first country to win the title at home.



### Lionel Messi becomes second footballer to score 900 goals

Lionel Messi, the Argentine National made history, on March 19, as the second male footballer to reach 900 official goals, achieving the feat during Inter Miami's draw against Nashville SC. Joining Cristiano Ronaldo (965 goals) in this elite club, Messi reached the milestone in 1,142 matches, faster than Ronaldo's 1,236. The Portugal legend and Al-Nassr skipper Ronaldo achieved this historic feat in September 2024. While Ronaldo now has his eyes on 1,000 goals, Messi's strike ensured Inter Miami's progression in the CONCACAF Champions Cup.



### Anahat Singh Beats Hana Moataz 3-1 to Win India Open 2026 Title

The Indian Open 2026 squash tournament was held in Mumbai, where Anahat Singh successfully defended her women's title. The finals were held at the CCI Brabourne Stadium, a prominent sporting venue in the city. Mumbai often hosts major national and international sporting events due to its world-class infrastructure. Hence, among the given options, Mumbai is the correct location of the tournament.



### 15-Year-Old Sets Record as Youngest T20I Centurion

In March 2026, Rwanda's Fanny Utagushimaninde made history by becoming the youngest centurion in Women's T20I cricket. At just 15 years and 223 days old, she smashed an unbeaten 111 runs off 65 balls

during her debut match against Ghana in the Nigeria Invitational Tournament. She surpassed the previous record held by Uganda's Prosscovia Alako (16 years) and broke Karen Rolton's 2005 record for the highest individual score on a T20I debut.

### Miscellaneous

#### The UN Road Safety Fund launched a road safety financing initiative in India

The United Nations Road Safety Fund launched a Sustainable Road Safety Financing Project in New Delhi to support India's long-term road safety reforms. Unveiled during the visit of Jean Todt, the initiative promotes stable funding through road safety bonds, dedicated taxes, and public-private partnerships. Implemented with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and global partners, the project aligns with international road safety goals to reduce fatalities and strengthen infrastructure nationwide.



#### Maharashtra Launches AI-Based Saksham Skill Census

Maharashtra launched India's first AI-driven skill census 'Saksham' in Mumbai, inaugurated by IT Minister Ashish Shelar. Conducted by Sapio Analytics, the initiative will assess skills of youth aged 18–40 across 55,000 households in Mumbai's H-West ward. The programme aims to map employability gaps, align training with market demand, train 15,000 candidates by 2027, and promote jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities.



#### GeM Marks 7 Years of the SWAYATT Initiative

The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) marked seven years of the SWAYATT initiative, launched on 19 February 2019 to promote inclusive public procurement. The programme supports startups, women entrepreneurs, youth, SHGs and micro enterprises by providing direct access to government markets through the GeM platform. Over time, participation and order values from women-led businesses and startups have grown significantly. Initiatives like Startup Runway and Womaniya further enhance product visibility, strengthening opportunities for small enterprises in India's digital procurement ecosystem.



### International Women's Day 2026

International Women's Day 2026 will be observed on March 8 to celebrate women's achievements and promote gender equality worldwide. The 2026 campaign theme is "Give To Gain," encouraging support, cooperation and opportunities for women's progress, while the UN theme is "Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls." The day highlights issues like equal pay, education, safety and leadership representation. Celebrations often feature the colors purple, green and white, symbols of dignity, hope and equality in the global women's rights movement.

### Global Study Warns of Rising Metabolic Diseases in India

A recent Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study analysis shows that India and China have the highest metabolic disease burden in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2023, India recorded about 21 million DALYs and 5.8 lakh deaths from Type 2 diabetes, along with large health impacts from high blood pressure, obesity, LDL cholesterol and fatty liver disease. Rising risk factors such as increasing BMI may further worsen the burden by 2030, highlighting the need for preventive policies, healthier diets, physical activity and early health screening.

### Shrishti Sharma Sets Fastest 50m Limbo Skating Record

Indian roller skater Shrishti Dharmendra Sharma set a new Guinness World Records title by completing 50-metre limbo skating under descending poles in 7.46 seconds. The record was achieved on 28 February 2025 in Umbred, Maharashtra. She improved her previous 2023 record of 9.59 seconds, showing exceptional flexibility, speed and balance. Her achievement highlights India's growing presence in niche sports and inspires young athletes to pursue roller skating at a global level.

### SEBI Introduces Voluntary Folio Lock for Mutual Funds

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has introduced a voluntary debit freeze facility for mutual fund folios to enhance investor protection and digital security. Under this system, investors can temporarily lock their mutual fund folios, preventing any debit of units until the folio is unlocked. The facility will apply to both demat and non-demat folios and will be implemented through the MF Central platform by Registrar and Transfer Agents (RTAs). It will be available only to KYC-compliant investors with valid contact details.



### Kerala Launches MeHEALTH App for Public Healthcare Access

Kerala's Health Department has launched the MeHEALTH mobile application to improve public access to government healthcare services across the state. The app allows citizens to easily locate nearby government hospitals and medical institutions while providing details about specialty departments, laboratory tests, and service charges. It also helps users find blood banks, pharmacies, and radiology services. The initiative aims to enhance transparency, accessibility, and convenience in public healthcare by offering comprehensive information about available medical facilities through a single digital platform.



### YES Bank Launches Essence Women's Salary Account

YES Bank has launched the YES Essence Women's Salary Account ahead of International Women's Day to address the financial and lifestyle requirements of working women. The account offers several benefits including a free locker for the first year, complimentary health insurance cover, and an annual preventive health check-up. It also provides an Elegance Debit Card with cashback on selected spending categories. Separately, YES Bank recently detected unauthorized transactions related to forex prepaid cards and successfully blocked hundreds of fraudulent attempts.

### World Engineering Day 2026 Promotes Smart Sustainable Innovation

World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development was observed on March 4, 2026, marking its seventh annual celebration. The day highlights the crucial role of engineering in achieving sustainable development and addressing global challenges. The theme for 2026, "Smart Engineering for Sustainable Future through Innovation and Digitalization," emphasizes the use of advanced technologies, digital transformation, and innovative engineering solutions to support sustainable growth. The observance encourages engineers worldwide to contribute to resilient infrastructure, environmental protection, and sustainable development goals.



### Free Access to Prasar Bharati's SHABD Platform Extended Until 2027

Prasar Bharati announced that the PB-SHABD platform will remain free for media organisations until March 2027. Launched in March 2024, it offers logo-free news content in video, audio, text and photo formats. Supported by over 1,500 reporters and 60 editing desks, the platform distributes more than 1,000 verified stories daily in multiple languages. It also provides live feeds of national events, helping media outlets access reliable and ready-to-use news.

### Rare blue and white Flycatcher spotted on Gujarat's Pavagadh hill

During a seed-collection mission, Gujarat forest officials documented a rare male blue and white flycatcher at Pavagadh Hill, Panchmahal district, Gujarat. This striking migratory bird, distinguished by its royal blue plumage and white underparts, was spotted near the Maachi area. The bird typically breeds in NE Asia (Japan, Korea, and China), finding it on Pavagadh Hill is significant as it sits outside the species' usual migration corridor. The bird's unusually calm demeanor allowed for clear photography before it retreated into the forest, marking a significant, unexpected sighting for local biodiversity and bird enthusiasts. The sighting occurred on March 8, 2026.

### International Solar Alliance (ISA) Foundation Day

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi announced that India's solar capacity has hit nearly 136 GW, representing almost 50% of its total renewable energy. A great leap toward India's goal of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030. Speaking at the International Solar Alliance (ISA) 10th Foundation Day, he highlighted India's policy-driven growth and the ISA's vital role in global energy transitions. Shri Joshi noted that nearly a decade ago, India and France came together with a bold vision to place the power of the sun at the centre of global development.



### KSRTC Receives National Recognition for Dhvani Spandana Initiative Supporting Visually Impaired Passengers

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation has won the twelfth PSU National Award for its innovative Dhvani Spandana initiative. This onboard navigation system assists visually impaired passengers by providing audio signals to identify buses and locate entry points safely. Currently operational in two hundred Mysuru city buses the technology was developed in collaboration with IIT Delhi. The recognition highlights excellence in creating inclusive public transport solutions that enhance the confidence and independence of commuters who face significant visual challenges daily.

### PM Modi launched Rs. 526 crore Assam waterways project

PM Narendra Modi launched four inland waterway projects worth Rs. 526 crore in Assam to strengthen trade, tourism, and connectivity along the Brahmaputra. These include an elevated road corridor from Pandu Port to NH-27, two modern cruise terminals, and a Regional Centre of Excellence at Bogibeel for maritime skill development. The projects aim to reduce logistics costs, expand river cruise tourism, support local businesses, create jobs, and develop skilled manpower, making Assam a key hub for Northeast growth and regional connectivity.

### Union Jal Shakti Minister launched Sujal Gaon ID for digital mapping of rural water supply schemes

Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0 aims to provide safe tap water to every rural household by December 2028 through stronger funding, digital reforms, and community-led governance. A major step is the launch of Sujal Gaon ID, enabling digital mapping and monitoring of rural water schemes. The mission stresses quality infrastructure, timely completion, Panchayat participation, and sustainable operation and maintenance. With increased financial support and stricter compliance conditions, JJM 2.0 seeks to ensure transparent, reliable, and long-term rural water supply systems.

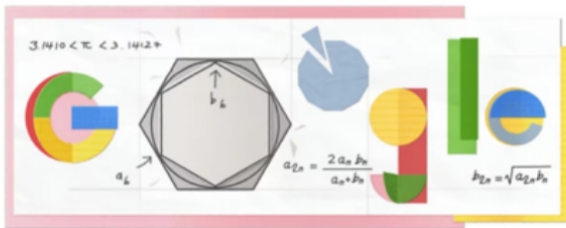
### MoHUA held AMRUT Mitra Mahotsav to honour women SHGs supporting urban water management under AMRUT 2.0

The AMRUT Mitra Mahotsav 2026 celebrated the role of women Self-Help Groups in strengthening urban water services under AMRUT 2.0. Over 45,000 SHG members across 1910 cities are contributing through water testing, billing, maintenance, sanitation work, and awareness campaigns. The event highlighted how women's participation improves livelihoods, transparency, and community engagement.

The government now plans to expand the AMRUT Mitra model to 5000 cities, promoting women-led governance, sustainable water management, and stronger urban service delivery.

### Pi Day 2026

Pi Day, celebrated on 14 March, honors the mathematical constant  $\pi$  (3.14) and promotes interest in mathematics and STEM education. The day marks the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter and is observed through quizzes, recitation contests, workshops, and pie-themed events. First celebrated in 1988 by Larry Shaw, Pi Day later gained wider recognition, including UNESCO's declaration of 14 March as the International Day of Mathematics. It also coincides with Albert Einstein's birthday.



### South Indian Bank launched an EPF payment service integrated with EPFO

South Indian Bank has launched a new EPF payment service in partnership with EPFO, allowing employers to pay provident fund contributions directly through its SIBerNet internet banking platform. Introduced on March 12, 2026, the service makes statutory payments faster, safer, and more convenient. It helps businesses complete monthly EPF contributions, pending dues, and related payments online with less paperwork and manual effort, supporting smoother compliance and strengthening the bank's digital banking services.

### Myiophanes kempii was rediscovered in the limestone caves of the Andaman Islands

Researchers have rediscovered Myiophanes kempii, a rare cave-dwelling assassin bug, in the limestone caves of the Andaman Islands after nearly a century. First described in 1924, the species is specially adapted to dark subterranean habitats and preys on small arthropods. Its rediscovery highlights the hidden biodiversity of cave ecosystems and the importance of exploring and conserving these fragile environments. It also shows that many underground species remain poorly studied and potentially undiscovered.

### International Mathematics Day 2026

The International Day of Mathematics, observed on 14 March, celebrates the role of mathematics in daily life, science, and technology. Proclaimed by UNESCO and celebrated globally since 2020, it promotes awareness, creativity, and practical learning through competitions, workshops, and interactive activities. The 2026 theme, "Mathematics and Hope," highlights how math helps solve global challenges through logic and collaboration. Coordinated by the International Mathematical Union, the day also connects with Pi Day and encourages student engagement worldwide.



### **Samriddhi Kendra was launched under the BharatNet rural digital initiative**

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia inaugurated the Samriddhi Kendra in Umri village, Madhya Pradesh, under the Samriddh Gram Phygital Services Pilot Initiative. The centre combines physical facilities with digital platforms to deliver services such as education, healthcare, agriculture support, e-governance, and financial inclusion in rural areas. Supported by BharatNet, the pilot aims to show how high-speed internet can improve village-level service delivery. If successful, this model could help strengthen digital access and inclusive rural development across India.

### **KSRTC received a PSU award for its 'Dhwani Spandana' accessibility initiative**

KSRTC has received the Governance Now 12th PSU National Award for "Excellence in Innovation" for its Dhwani Spandana initiative. This accessibility project helps visually impaired passengers identify and navigate buses more independently through audio-based onboard assistance. Implemented in 200 Mysuru City Transport buses with support from GIZ Germany, the system improves safety, confidence, and mobility for disabled commuters. The award highlights the importance of using innovation to build a more inclusive public transport system.

### **IISc Professor Arpita Patra scaled the world's highest volcano**

Arpita Patra, professor at IISc, summited Nevado Ojos del Salado on March 6, becoming the second Indian woman to scale the world's highest volcano and Chile's tallest mountain at 6,893 metres. The climb, known for extreme altitude, cold, and technical difficulty, marks another major milestone in her mountaineering journey. Patra has also climbed the top volcanic peaks across several continents, showing an inspiring balance of academic excellence, determination, and adventure.

### **R. Vairamuthu honoured with 2025 Jnanpith award**

In March 2026, Bharatiya Jnanpith announced celebrated Tamil writer R. Vairamuthu as the recipient of the 60th Jnanpith Award for 2025. Chaired by Pratibha Ray, the selection committee honored his decades-long contribution to Tamil literature, citing his unique poetic voice and emotional depth. This prestigious recognition highlights Vairamuthu's mastery in merging creative excellence with social reflection, cementing his enduring influence on modern Indian writing. Over a literary career spanning more than four decades, he has authored more than 37 books including poetry collections, essays and novels.

Some of his notable works include "Kallikattu Ithikasam", "Karuvachi Kaaviyam", "Thanneer Desam" and "Moondraam Ulagapor".

### **Illegal Earth cutting threatens wetland linked to Deepor Beel**

Local residents have raised concerns over large-scale soil excavation at the Kalshila wetland, warning that the activity could damage the fragile ecosystem connected to the internationally recognised Deepor Beel wetland. Despite strict bans from the Gauhati High Court and district authorities, illegal soil excavation persists at the Kalshila wetland near Guwahati's Deepor Beel. Located in the Satmile area, this unauthorized activity threatens the region's delicate ecosystem. Residents allege that earth cutting has continued for over a month near the Assam Engineering College, urging the Assam Forest Department and local police to enforce existing environmental regulations.

### **Arun Mammen Re-elected as ATMA Chairman**

Recently, Arun Mammen was re-elected as Chairman of the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA), the apex body representing India's tyre industry. Along with this leadership update, Rajarshi Moitra, Managing Director of

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Bridgestone India, was appointed as the new Vice Chairman of ATMA.

This change reflects the industry's focus on strong leadership to guide growth, innovation, and policy coordination in India's automotive tyre sector, which plays a vital role in the country's economy.

### Sahitya Akademi Award 2025

Sahitya Akademi announced the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025 for 24 Indian languages on 16 March 2026.

It is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture, established in 1954 to promote Indian literature. Each award carries ₹1 lakh, a shawl, and a copper plaque, with the ceremony scheduled on 31 March 2026 in New Delhi.

The awards are not limited to poetry and novels; they include 8 poetry, 4 novels, 6 short stories, essays, autobiography, and memoirs, covering diverse literary forms.



साहित्य अकादेमी

### Oscar Awards 2026

Michael B. Jordan won the Best Actor award at the Academy Awards 2026 for his role in Sinners. The ceremony also highlighted One Battle After Another, which claimed Best Picture and emerged as one of the most awarded films of the night.

Jessie Buckley received the Best Actress award for her performance in Hamnet. Jordan's victory stood out as he surpassed strong contenders such as Timothée Chalamet.

Overall, Sinners performed exceptionally well, securing multiple honors and ranking among the evening's most successful films.



### HDFC Bank chairman Atanu Chakraborty resigns

Atanu Chakraborty stepped down as HDFC Bank's part-time chairman and independent director on 18 March, over ethical disagreements with recent internal practices. His resignation letter emphasized a misalignment between his personal values and the bank's governance over the last two years. Consequently, the RBI has appointed Keki Mistry as interim chairman for a 3 month term starting March 19, 2026, to maintain leadership stability. The sudden exit of Atanu Chakraborty has drawn attention to governance standards at one of India's largest private sector banks.

### William Dalrymple wins Mark Lynton History Prize 2026

Historian William Dalrymple has won the 2026 Mark Lynton History Prize for his book, "The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World." The other finalist in the category was Siddharth Kara for 'The Zorg: Tale of Greed and Murder That Inspired the Abolition of Slavery'.

Administered by Columbia University School of Journalism and the Nieman Foundation for Journalism, the \$10,000 award honors historical works that pair scholarly depth with literary excellence. Dalrymple was specifically recognized for his rigorous research and engaging narrative regarding India's historical global influence. The award is named after Mark Lynton, a noted author and advocate of historical writing.

### **289-Million-Year-Old Reptile Skin Fossil Discovered in Oklahoma**

In a landmark discovery at Oklahoma's Richards Spur cave system, researchers identified a 289-million-year-old reptile skin fossil, the oldest ever found. Collected by Bill and Julie May in a limestone quarry and analyzed by Ethan Mooney's team, the Permian-era fragment, likely from Captorhinus aguti, pushes back the skin evolution timeline by 130 million years. Its remarkable preservation provides unprecedented insights into how early vertebrates adapted to terrestrial life.

### **Kaveh Madani wins 2026 Stockholm Water Prize**

On March 18, 2026, Kaveh Madani, Director of United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), was named the 2026 Stockholm Water Prize laureate at UNESCO. At 44, he is the youngest recipient ever, as well as the first UN official and former politician to win the award. The committee honored his impactful blend of scientific research, diplomacy, and public outreach, successfully bridging the gap between water science and global policy. Madani is widely famous for introducing the concept of "water bankruptcy", describing a condition where water scarcity reflects long-term systemic failure rather than temporary shortage.

### **Ladakh Magmatic Arc reveals tectonic evolution**

On March 19, researchers decoded the Ladakh Magmatic Arc (LMA), revealing a 130-million-year geological record of the Indian-Eurasian plate interaction.

Formed above the ancient Neo-Tethys Ocean through subduction, this igneous belt developed between the Jurassic and Eocene periods. The findings provide critical evidence of magmatic evolution and tectonic processes that occurred long before the Himalayan uplift, documenting the transition from oceanic subduction to continental collision. Researchers from the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology analysed geochemical and isotopic signatures of rocks to reconstruct the arc's evolution.

### **World Puppetry Day 2026 is celebrated on March 21**

World Puppetry Day is observed annually on this date to celebrate and promote the art of puppetry across the globe. The day was initiated by UNIMA in 2003 to preserve traditional puppet theatre while encouraging modern innovations.

It highlights puppetry as an effective medium for education, storytelling, and cultural exchange, helping connect communities and pass on heritage to future generations.



### **World Water Day 2026**

World Water Day, observed annually on March 22, established by the United Nations following the 1992 Rio Conference, has promoted freshwater conservation since 1993.

It remains a critical platform for addressing water challenges and advancing

Sustainable Development Goal 6, which targets universal access to clean water and sanitation by 2030 through collective global action and equitable management. The theme for 2026, "Water and Gender", underscores the critical role played by women and girls in water management. India also actively participated in celebrating World Water Day 2026. The Jal Mahotsav 2026 was observed as a 15-day nationwide campaign from 8 March, International Women's Day, to 22 March, World Water Day, marked by widespread community participation and Jal Arpan of drinking water assets to Gram Panchayats across the country.

### **Sarhul Festival celebrates Nature Worship and Tribal Traditions**

The President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday 21 March shared greetings for Sarhul, a major Adivasi festival (celebrated by several tribal groups, including the Oraon, Munda, Santal, Khadia, and Ho communities) in Jharkhand and the surrounding regions celebrating nature and the new agricultural cycle. Meaning 'worship of the Sal tree,' the festival honors the Sal tree as the protector deity's home. It symbolizes the union of Sun and Earth, reflecting the deep ecological harmony and spiritual devotion tribal communities maintain with the natural environment. The rituals of Sarhul are deeply symbolic. The village priest, known as the pahan, represents the Sun, while his wife, the pahen, symbolises the Earth. Their roles reflect the essential relationship between sunlight and soil for agricultural fertility. Devotees offer prayers, perform sacrifices, and seek blessings for prosperity, good harvest, and community well-being.



### **Chuck Norris star of Walker and Texas Ranger dies at 86**

Legendary action star and martial arts champion Chuck Norris passed away on March 19, 2026, at age 86. Born as Carlos Ray Norris on March 10, 1940 in Ryan, Oklahoma, a six-time karate champion, he became a cinema icon in films like The Way of the Dragon (along with the legendary Bruce Lee) and the series Walker, Texas Ranger. His family confirmed he died peacefully in Hawaii. Renowned for his tough-guy persona and viral 'facts,' Norris's legacy spans decades of influential martial arts and heroic film roles. Time magazine described him as "the ultimate tough guy".

### **Kalpana Soren Receives Global Honour**

Jharkhand MLA Kalpana Soren was recently honored with the 'Women Empowerment Trailblazer Award' at the BRICS CCI WE Annual Women Summit 2026. This prestigious international recognition highlights her significant contributions to social justice, tribal rights, and the political and economic mobilization of women in Jharkhand. The summit, organized by the Women's Vertical of the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry, celebrates women leaders who drive impactful change across the BRICS nations.

Date : 2026-04-01

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## World TB Day 2026

The World Health Organization (WHO) designated this theme for World TB Day 2026 as a bold call to action and a message of hope. It emphasizes that ending the epidemic is achievable through decisive leadership, increased investment, and the adoption of new innovations, such as near-point-of-care diagnostic tools. According to WHO data, although 1.23 million died from TB in 2024, approximately 83 million lives have been saved since 2000.

