

Daily Current Affairs 21 March 2025



 **Solve** 

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Q1. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey February 2026 released by the National Statistical Office, what was India's overall unemployment rate in February 2026?

- (a) 4.2%
- (b) 4.9%
- (c) 5.5%
- (d) 6.6%

Ans.(b)

Sol. Correct Answer: (b) 4.9%

Solution: In March 2026, the National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the PLFS Monthly Bulletin for February 2026.

- The report showed that India's overall unemployment rate (UR) declined to 4.9% in February 2026, down from 5% in January 2026.
- This indicates a slight improvement in employment conditions.

Information Booster :

- Urban unemployment rate (UR): Declined to 6.6% (from 7.0% in January 2026).
- Rural unemployment rate: Remained stable at 4.2%.
- Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):
 - Overall: 55.9%
 - Rural: 58.7%
 - Urban: 50.4%
- Worker Population Ratio (WPR):
 - Overall: 53.2%
 - Rural: 56.3%
 - Urban: 47%

The PLFS provides important insights into employment trends, labour participation, and economic health in India.

Q2. The Gyan Bharatam National Manuscript Survey, launched in March 2026 by the Ministry of Culture, aims to achieve which of the following objectives?

- (a) Digitisation of school textbooks
- (b) Mapping India's manuscript heritage
- (c) Promoting tourism in heritage sites
- (d) Preservation of wildlife species

Ans.(b)

Sol. Correct Answer: (b) Mapping India's manuscript heritage

Solution: On 16 March 2026, the Ministry of Culture launched the Gyan Bharatam National Manuscript Survey (GBNMS) under the Gyan Bharatam Mission.

- It is a first-of-its-kind nationwide survey aimed at mapping India's manuscript heritage.

• The survey is voluntary and non-intrusive, ensuring that ownership of manuscripts remains unchanged.

Information Booster :

- The survey will be conducted for three months across India.
- It follows a four-stage framework:
 - Identification
 - Physical verification
 - Cataloguing with metadata
 - Conservation and digitisation
- Implementation is done through:
 - State-level committees led by Chief Secretaries
 - District-level committees led by District Magistrates
- A dedicated Gyan Bharatam mobile application allows citizens to upload manuscript details.
- The initiative uses International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) for standardised digital access for researchers worldwide.

This initiative will help preserve India's rich manuscript heritage and promote global academic access.

Q3. In March 2026, NPCI International Payments Limited expanded the acceptance of UPI payments in which country?

- (a) Nepal
- (b) Sri Lanka
- (c) Singapore
- (d) UAE

Ans.(b)

Sol. Correct Answer: (b) Sri Lanka

Solution: In March 2026, NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) expanded the acceptance of Unified Payments Interface across merchant establishments in Sri Lanka.

- This initiative enables Indian tourists to make real-time payments by scanning Lanka QR codes using their UPI-enabled mobile apps.
- It aims to enhance cross-border payment convenience and strengthen India–Sri Lanka economic ties.

Information Booster:

- UPI allows instant account-to-account transactions using mobile applications.
- It processes over 20 billion monthly transactions and has 700 million+ QR touchpoints in India.
- UPI is now operational in multiple countries, including:
 - United Arab Emirates
 - Singapore
 - Bhutan
 - Nepal
 - Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius, and Qatar
- The expansion benefits merchants by reducing dependence on cash and improving transaction efficiency.

Q4. In March 2026, the British Council signed an MoU to support which initiative aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs in India?

- (a) SPARK – The 100K Collective
- (b) Startup India Women Initiative
- (c) Stand-Up India Scheme
- (d) Digital Saksham Programme

Ans.(a)

Sol. Correct Answer: (a) SPARK – The 100K Collective

Solution: In March 2026, the British Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Women's Collective Forum and the Alliance for Global Good Gender Equity and Equality to support SPARK The 100K Collective.

- The initiative aims to empower women entrepreneurs by enhancing skills, leadership, and market access.
- It targets 1 lakh women entrepreneurs across around 300 locations in India.

Information Booster :

- The British Council will provide:
 - English language training
 - Digital communication skills
- Key components of the SPARK initiative include:
 - SPARK Kaushal: Digital & vocational skills training
 - SPARK MBA: Business accelerator
 - SPARK X: Leadership development
 - SPARK Mitra: Mentorship support
 - SPARK Nidhi: Micro-credit & growth capital
 - SPARK Bazaar: Market access (domestic & global)

This initiative supports women-led entrepreneurship and inclusive economic growth in India.

Q5. In March 2026, Tata Steel Limited signed an MoU with which institution to develop low-carbon steelmaking technologies?

- (a) Tsinghua University
- (b) University of Science and Technology Beijing
- (c) Peking University
- (d) Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Ans.(b)

Sol. Correct Answer: (b) University of Science and Technology Beijing

Solution: In March 2026, Tata Steel Limited signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Science and Technology Beijing to develop low-carbon steelmaking technologies.

- The collaboration focuses on sustainable steel production and reducing carbon emissions in the steel industry.
- It involves Tata Steel's research arm working jointly with USTB's academic and experimental facilities.

Information Booster :

- Key areas of collaboration include:
- Scrap-based steelmaking
- Steel waste valorisation
- End-product performance improvement
- Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) technologies
- The partnership aims to test, validate, and scale new technologies for industrial use.
- It supports global efforts toward carbon neutrality and environmentally sustainable industrial practices.
- The steel sector is a major contributor to carbon emissions, making such collaborations crucial for green transformation.

Q6. In March 2026, the Reserve Bank of India won the 'Initiative of the Year' award for which initiative at the Central Banking Awards?

- (a) UPI Lite
- (b) e-Rupee
- (c) Digital Rupee Wallet
- (d) .bank.in domain rollout

Ans.(d)

Sol. Correct Answer: (d) .bank.in domain rollout

Solution: In March 2026, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) received the 'Initiative of the Year' award at the Central Banking Awards 2026 for its innovative '.bank.in' domain rollout initiative.

- The initiative was designed to combat cyber frauds and enhance security in digital banking.
- It was recognised by Central Banking.

Information Booster:

- The .bank.in domain was launched in February 2025.
- It is exclusively available to RBI-licensed banks, ensuring higher trust and security.
- India became the first country in the world to mandate a dedicated secure banking domain.
- The Institute for Development and Research on Banking Technology was appointed as the sole registrar.
- Banks were required to migrate to this domain by 31 October 2025.

Q7. In March 2026, who was appointed as the brand ambassador of the BHIM Payments App by NPCI BHIM Services Limited?

- (a) Virat Kohli
- (b) Rohit Sharma
- (c) Mahendra Singh Dhoni
- (d) Hardik Pandya

Ans.(c)

Sol. Correct Answer: (c) Mahendra Singh Dhoni

Solution: In March 2026, Mahendra Singh Dhoni was appointed as the brand ambassador of the BHIM Payments App by NPCI BHIM Services Limited (NBSL).

- The initiative aims to boost trust, adoption, and inclusion in India's digital payments ecosystem.
- Dhoni will feature in multi-channel campaigns promoting BHIM's security, simplicity, and accessibility.

Information Booster :

- The BHIM App was launched in 2016 on the Unified Payments Interface platform.
- It is popularly known as “Bharat Ka Apna Payments App”.
- Key features include:
 - Support for 15+ regional languages
 - Optimised for low-connectivity areas
 - Wide reach across Tier 1, 2, and 3 cities
- The campaign aims to increase user confidence and expand digital payment usage across India.

Q8. The newly discovered earthworm species *Drawida vazhania*, reported in March 2026, belongs to which family?

- (a) Lumbricidae
- (b) Megascolecidae
- (c) Moniligastridae
- (d) Glossoscolecidae

Ans.(c)

Sol. Correct Answer: (c) Moniligastridae

Solution: In March 2026, researchers from Christ College Kerala and Mahatma Gandhi University Kerala discovered a new earthworm species named *Drawida vazhania* in the Peechi Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary.

- The species belongs to the genus *Drawida* under the family Moniligastridae.
- The discovery was published in the scientific journal *Zootaxa*.

Information Booster :

- The species was found near Vazhani Dam in Kerala.
- Unique features include:
 - Grooved male genital field
 - Bean-shaped prostate gland
 - Specialised reproductive structures
- With this discovery:
 - Total *Drawida* species in India = 83
 - Western Ghats hosts 55 species
 - Kerala has the highest (31 species, 16 endemic)
- The Western Ghats is a global biodiversity hotspot, rich in endemic species.

This discovery highlights India’s rich soil biodiversity and ecological importance of the Western Ghats.

Q9. In March 2026, according to the Final Estimates (FE) of 2024–25 released by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, India’s total horticulture production reached approximately how many lakh tonnes?

- (a) 3547.44 lakh tonnes
- (b) 3600.00 lakh tonnes
- (c) 3707.38 lakh tonnes
- (d) 3800.00 lakh tonnes

Ans.(c)

Sol. Correct Answer: (c) 3707.38 lakh tonnes

Solution: In March 2026, Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan released the Final Estimates (FE) for 2024–25 and First Advance Estimates (FAE) for 2025–26 of horticulture production.

- As per the Final Estimates of 2024–25, India's total horticulture production reached 3707.38 lakh tonnes, up from 3547.44 lakh tonnes in 2023–24.
- This represents a growth of 4.51%, indicating strong performance in the horticulture sector.

Information Booster:

- Area under horticulture crops:
- Increased from 290.86 lakh hectares (2023–24) to 301.36 lakh hectares (2024–25)
- FAE 2025–26 projection:
- Production estimated at 3708.46 lakh tonnes
- Fruit production:
- Increased from 1129.78 lakh tonnes to 1176.49 lakh tonnes (growth of 4.13%)

This data highlights the growing importance of horticulture (fruits and vegetables) in India's agriculture sector.

Q10. What is the theme of World Consumer Rights Day 2026?

- (a) Fair Trade for All
- (b) Digital Consumer Protection
- (c) Sustainable Consumption
- (d) Safe products, confident consumers

Ans.(d)

Sol. Correct Answer: (d) Safe products, confident consumers

Solution: World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) is observed annually on 15 March to promote consumer rights, protection, and awareness.

- The theme for 2026 is "Safe products, confident consumers", focusing on ensuring that products are safe, reliable, and trustworthy, thereby boosting consumer confidence.

Information Booster :

- The day was inspired by John F. Kennedy, who addressed consumer rights on 15 March 1962.
- The first observance of WCRD was in 1983.
- It is supported globally by organizations like the United Nations.

This day emphasizes the need for informed consumers and fair market practices worldwide.

