

Weekly One Liners 23rd to 29th of March 2026

Ramnath Goenka Awards 2026 Winners List

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

Category	Winner(s)	Organization/Publication
Print (Hindi)	Avadhesh Akodia	Dainik Bhaskar
Broadcast/Digital (Hindi)	Sarvapriya Sangwan	BBC News Hindi
Print/Digital (Regional Languages)	Muhammad Sabith & Akhil Sivanand	Mathrubhumi
Broadcast/Digital (Regional Languages)	Fousiya Musthafa News	Malayalam 24*7
Environment, Science & Technology Reporting	Jayashree Nandi & Tannu Jain	Hindustan Times
Environment, Science & Technology Reporting (Broadcast/Digital)	Rohini Krishnamurthy & Dhruval Parekh	Down to Earth
Uncovering India Invisible	Vijay Pal Dudi	Dainik Bhaskar
Uncovering India Invisible (Broadcast/Digital)	Basant Kumar	NewsLaundry
Business & Economic Journalism	Praveen Paramasivam, Munsif Vengattil & Aditya Kalra	Thomson Reuters
Reporting on Politics and Government	Deeptiman Tiwary	The Indian Express
Reporting on Politics and Government (Broadcast/Digital)	Rishika Kashyap	Deccan Herald
Sports Journalism	Srikanth Dhasarathy	DT Next
Investigative Reporting (Print/Digital)	Mridulika Jha	Aaj Tak
Investigative Reporting (Broadcast)	Sreya Chatterjee	India Today
Feature Writing	Vidheesha Kuntamalla	The Indian Express
Civic Journalism	Sandip Dighe	The Times of India
Civic Journalism	Sreya Chatterjee & Arvind Ojha	India Today
Photojournalism	Praveen Jain	The Print
Books (Non-Fiction)	Aparajith Ramnath	Penguin Random House

Supreme Court Rules on SC Status

In the significant ruling the Respectable Supreme Court of India has clarified that Scheduled Caste (SC) status is limited to the individuals belonging to Hindu, Sikhs or Buddhist communities only. The top court stated that conversion to any other religion such as the Christianity will leads to the immediate loss of SC status regardless of that one's birth background. Judgement was delivered in March 2026 and it upholds an earlier decision of the Andhra Pradesh High Court. And it reinforced the constitutional framework which will governing caste-based reservations and protections.

What Did the Supreme Court Rule?

The Supreme Court bench which comprising Justice P. K. Mishra and Justice Manmohan clearly stated that once the person converts to Christianity and actively practices the new religion they are no longer be treated as a member of a Scheduled Caste.

The Court said that the restriction is itself rooted in the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. This order explicitly defines the eligibility criteria for SC status.

According to the judgment the rule is absolute and left no scope for interpretation which is based on birth alone.

This means that even if the person is born into a Scheduled Caste their legal status changes after conversion to a religion outside the specified list.

Constitutional Basis: The 1950 Presidential Order

The Court heavily relied on heavily on Clause 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.

This clause states that,

- Only persons professing Hinduism were initially eligible for SC status

Over year the scope was expanded to include Sikhism (1956) and Buddhism (1990)

However individuals who are practicing religions such as Christianity or Islam are excluded from SC classification under this order.

The Court confirmed that this constitutional provision is binding and cannot be diluted through the judicial interpretation.

Impact on SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act

Another key aspect of the judgment is its implication on legal protections. As per court ruling if that a person who has converted to Christianity cannot claim protection under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

This is important as because the Act is designed to protect the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from discrimination and violence.

Once SC status is lost and the legal safeguards under this Act also cease to apply.

Why Religion Matters in SC Classification

The linkage between religion and caste status has long historical roots. The SC category was originally created to address social discrimination within the Hindu caste system and main focus point was untouchability.

The logic behind limiting SC status to certain religions is based on the argument that,

- Caste-based discrimination is traditionally associated with Hindu social structure
- Sikhism and Buddhism were included later due to historical and social connections with caste dynamics in country

Understanding Scheduled Caste Status in India

In India Scheduled Castes are groups identified under the Constitution. As they were historically disadvantaged due to untouchability and social exclusion.

They are entitled to get,

- Reservation in education and government jobs
- Political representation
- Legal protection under special laws

The list of Scheduled Castes are notified by the Honorable President of India under Article 341 of the Indian Constitution. Any changes to this list require Parliamentary approval not just the judicial interpretation.

Supreme Court Panel Urges Union Government to Withdraw Transgender Rights Amendment Bill 2026

The panel appointed by the Supreme Court of India has urged the Union government to withdraw the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill 2026. As the committee states the raising serious concerns over its impact on transgender rights. The recommendation was sent to Union Minister Virendra Kumar on the same day the Lok Sabha passed the Bill and it intensifying the debate. This advisory committee was chaired by former judge Justice Asha Menon highlighted that the proposed amendments could roll back the rights for them.

Background: Why the Panel Was Formed

The committee was constituted in the October 2025 by the Supreme Court while hearing the case which involving a transgender woman who was dismissed from teaching jobs in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat due to her gender identity.

The court has noted the gaps in the implementation of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019. So it has formed panel to,

- Identify legal and policy shortcomings
- Recommend the an equal opportunity framework
- Ensure the reasonable accommodation for transgender individuals

Key Changes Proposed in the 2026 Amendment Bill

The 2026 Amendment Bill introduced the several major changes that have become the core of the controversy. One of the most debated provisions is the removal of the right to self-identify gender.

This right was earlier recognized in the landmark judgement NALSA v. Union of India (2014). This judgement allowed the individuals to identify their gender without medical intervention.

Under the new Bill,

- Gender identity would require the medical certification
- A district-level medical board will be headed by a Chief Medical Officer and he would assess individuals
- The definition of the transgender persons is narrowed

Opposition and Public Reaction Intensify

The passage of the Bill in Parliament was saw the strong opposition. Several MPs have demanded that the Bill to be referred to a parliamentary standing committee for deeper detailing but the request was rejected.

Outside Parliament protests have erupted across major cities. Members of the LGBTQIA+ community and activists argue that the Bill,

- Undermines gender autonomy
- Imposes unscientific and invasive procedures
- Risks erasing diverse gender identities

Government's Stand vs Critics Concerns

The government has defended the Bill while stating that it is part of the broader effort to create a more structured and inclusive framework for all sections of society.

However the critics have argue that the amendments contradict earlier judicial principles and weaken protections already granted.

They question both the timing and the haste with which the legislation was passed.



National Affairs

- **PRARAMBH 2026 IT Awareness Campaign Launched** FM Nirmala Sitharaman launched PRARAMBH 2026 (Policy Reform and Responsible Action for Mission Viksit Bharat) in New Delhi on **March 2026**, a nationwide Income Tax Department awareness campaign for the implementation of the **Income Tax Act, 2025**, effective from **April 1, 2026**. The campaign is a **multi-channel initiative** across print, television, radio, digital, and social media platforms, guided by the **M.A.N.A.V. framework** (Moral and Ethical Systems, Accountable Governance, National Sovereignty, Accessible and Inclusive AI, and Valid and Legitimate Systems). Key features include the launch of **upgraded Income Tax Website 2.0** and **AI-enabled chatbot Kar Saathi** for improved taxpayer services.
- **National Dental Commission Constituted, Replaces Dental Council of India** The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)** constituted the **National Dental Commission (NDC)** in **March 2026**, replacing the **Dental Council of India (DCI)**, under the **National Dental Commission Act, 2023**, which came into force on **March 19, 2026**. The newly constituted body aims to **transform dental education** and align it with global standards, with **Dr. Sanjay Tewari** appointed as Chairperson and **Dr. Mousumi Goswami** as part-time member. Three autonomous bodies have been constituted under NDC: the **Undergraduate and Postgraduate Dental Education Board, Dental Assessment and Rating Board, and Ethics and Dental Registration Board**.
- **Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species Constituted by NBA** The **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)**, a statutory body under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, constituted a **multi-disciplinary Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species** in **March 2026** under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002** (amended in 2023), to address rising ecological and socio-economic threats to biodiversity and food security in India. **Dhananjai Mohan**, former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of Uttarakhand, was appointed as Chair, and **A. Biju Kumar**, Vice Chancellor of **Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies**, as Co-Chair for a **two-year tenure**. The committee will prepare a consolidated national list of invasive alien species, prioritize high-risk species, and recommend science-based strategies for prevention, control, and eradication.
- **Seven Empowered Groups Announced to Address West Asia Crisis Impact** PM Narendra Modi announced the formation of **seven empowered groups** on **March 24, 2026**, to address the long-term strategic and economic impacts of the escalating **West Asia conflict** on energy supplies, trade routes, and global supply chains. The groups are led by senior secretaries including **Vikram Misri** (defence and external affairs), **Anuradha Thakur** (finance and supply chains), **Neeraj Mittal** (oil, LNG, and energy), **Rajat Kumar Mishra** (fertilizers), **Nidhi Khare** (consumer affairs and price stability), **Vijay Kumar** (transport systems), and **Sanjay Jaju** (communication). The initiative aims to strengthen **multi-sectoral preparedness** through real-time monitoring and inter-ministerial coordination.
- **Gujarat Becomes Second State to Pass Uniform Civil Code Bill** The **Gujarat Legislative Assembly** passed the **Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill 2026** in **March 2026** under **Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel**, making Gujarat the **second state** after Uttarakhand to pass such legislation. The bill provides a **common legal framework** governing marriage, divorce, succession, and live-in relationships irrespective of religion, with **mandatory registration** of live-in relationships and **prohibition of bigamy**. The law will apply to **all residents of Gujarat** but will **exclude Scheduled Tribes (STs)** whose customary rights are protected under the Constitution.
- **PM Modi Becomes India's Longest-Serving Elected Head of Government** PM Narendra Modi became **India's longest-serving elected head of government** in **March 2026**, completing **8,931 days in office** and entering his **25th year in executive leadership**, surpassing **Pawan Kumar Chamling's** record of **8,930 days**. His tenure combines over **13 years** as Chief Minister of Gujarat (2001-2014) and as PM since **May 2014**, making him the first non-Congress PM to secure full majorities in three consecutive Lok Sabha elections (2014, 2019, 2024). He maintains one of the strongest global digital presences with over **30 million YouTube subscribers**, **100+ million Instagram followers**, and approximately **106.4 million followers on X** (formerly Twitter).
- **Cabinet Approves Revamped UDAN Scheme for Regional Air Connectivity** The **Union Cabinet** approved the **Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) – Modified Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN)** in **March 2026** to strengthen regional air connectivity, especially in underserved areas, with a **total financial outlay of ₹28,840 crore** over a **10-year period (FY27-FY36)**. The revamped program is expected to **connect around 120 new destinations** and cater to nearly **40 million passengers**, driving economic growth, trade, and tourism in **Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities**.
- **Cabinet Extends IVFRT Scheme Until 2031 with ₹1,800 Crore Outlay** The **Union Cabinet** approved the extension of the **Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme** on **March 2026** from **April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2031** (five-year extension) with a **total budget of ₹1,800 crore**, up from the original **₹1,011 crore** approved in May 2010. The scheme aligns with the **Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025**, and focuses on **three main areas**: emerging technology innovations, transformation of core infrastructure, and technology and service optimization, implemented by the **Ministry of Home Affairs** through the **Bureau of Immigration (BoI)**.

- **Cabinet Approves India's NDC Targets 2031-35; Emissions Intensity Reduction Raised to 47%** The Union Cabinet approved **India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for 2031-2035** in **March 2026**, raising the **emissions intensity reduction target to 47%** by 2035 compared to 2005 levels (building on 36% reduction achieved 2005-2020). India committed to achieving **60% installed electric power capacity from non-fossil fuels** by 2035 (from current 52.57% as of February 2026) and creating an **additional 3.5-4 billion tonnes CO₂ equivalent carbon sink** through forest and tree cover by 2035.
- **Railway Ministry Introduces Five New Reforms Under 'Reform Express' Initiative** Union Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw** announced **five new reforms** under the **'Reform Express' (52 Reforms in 52 Weeks)** initiative on **March 24, 2026**, bringing total approved reforms in 2026 to **nine**, focusing on cargo efficiency, construction quality, and passenger convenience. The reforms cover **Stainless Steel Containers (SSC) for salt transport**, **Specialized Wagon Design (SWD) for automobiles**, **stricter Contractor Eligibility Criteria (CEC) for construction**, **revised ticket cancellation rules with 72/24/8-hour slabs**, and **digital boarding changes allowed up to 30 minutes before departure**.
- **Lok Sabha Extends JPC Tenure on One Nation One Election Proposal till Monsoon Session 2026** The Lok Sabha extended the tenure of the **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)** examining the **One Nation One Election proposal on March 2026** until the **first day of the last week of Monsoon Session 2026**, allowing additional time to examine constitutional, legal, and logistical challenges. The committee is reviewing the **Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024** and **Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024**, which propose synchronizing election cycles across the country for simultaneous Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly elections.
- **Operation Urja Suraksha Launched for Energy Security** The Indian Navy launched **'Operation Urja Suraksha'** in March 2026 to escort and safeguard **22 India-bound energy vessels** through the **Strait of Hormuz**, with deployment of **5+ frontline warships**. The mission protects critical shipments of **LNG, LPG, and crude oil**, with successful escort of vessels like **Pine Gas, Jag Vasant, Shivalik, and Nanda Devi** already completed.
- **Project 'Vayu Baan' - India's First Helicopter-Dropped Drone Initiated** The Indian Air Force launched **'Vayu Baan'** in March 2026, India's pioneering project for a **helicopter-launched Unmanned Aerial System (UAS)**, making India only the **3rd country** after USA and China with this capability. The small autonomous drone allows helicopters to engage targets from **50+ km distance**, keeping aircrew outside **MANPADS range**.
- **PRISM-SG Portal Launched for Road-Rail Bridge Projects** Union Ministers **Nitin Gadkari (MoRTH)** and **Ashwini Vaishnaw (Railways)** jointly launched **'PRISM-SG Portal'** in New Delhi on March 26, 2026, reducing approval timelines from **12 months to 3-4 months for Road Over Bridges (ROBs)**. The End-to-End Digital Workflow integrates **QAP, WPSS, FSI, and RTMS** for seamless infrastructure project management.
- **Ministry of Culture Signs MoU with YouTube for Folk-Tribal Music Promotion** The Ministry of Culture signed an MoU with **YouTube** in March 2026 to globally promote India's **folk and tribal music** through digital platforms. The initiative, led by **Joint Task Force (JTF)** with YouTube as **Knowledge Partner**, aims to preserve cultural heritage and align with PM's **'Vocal for Local, Local for Global'** vision.
- **Department of Posts Partners with TRIFED for Tribal e-Commerce** The Department of Posts signed an MoU with **TRIFED** (under Ministry of Tribal Affairs) in March 2026 for **2-year logistics partnership** to deliver tribal products through **Tribes India marketplace**. DoP will leverage its nationwide network for **Speed Post delivery**, with a dedicated **BNPL account** created under Post Nation Account Facility.
- **Indian Army-IITM Pravartak MoU for Defence Indigenisation** The Indian Army's **Corps of EME** signed an MoU with **IITM Pravartak Technologies Foundation**, Chennai, in March 2026 to accelerate indigenous defence technology development. A **Nodal Indigenisation Centre (NIC)** was established at **Avadi, Chennai**, to serve as strategic hub for defence innovation leveraging the **Tamil Nadu Defence Corridor (TNDC)**.
- **Noida International Airport Inauguration on March 28, 2026** Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate **Phase I of Noida International Airport (Jewar)** on March 28, 2026, developed at **₹11,200 crore** cost with **12 million annual passenger capacity**. The airport features a **3,900-metre runway**, designed as **net-zero emissions facility**, with integrated cargo terminal handling **2.5 lakh metric tonnes annually** and **40-acre MRO facility**.
- **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill 2026 Introduced** Minister **Jitin Prasada** introduced **Jan Vishwas Bill 2026** in Lok Sabha after Cabinet approval, proposing amendments to **784 provisions across 79 Central Acts** under **23 Ministries**. The bill decriminalizes **717 provisions** and amends **67 provisions** for ease of living, replacing imprisonment with **monetary penalties and warnings** for minor violations.
- **Government Allocates ₹1.77 Lakh Crore for Fertilizer Subsidies in 2024-25** The Department of Fertilizers allocated **₹1,77,129.50 crore** in FY 2024-25 for fertilizer subsidies, maintaining stable supply through the **Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme**. The subsidy expenditure shows declining trend from **₹1,95,420.51 crore (FY23-24)** and **₹2,54,798.93 crore (FY22-23)**, indicating strategic rationalization while ensuring farmers' access.

- **TV Ratings Policy (TRP) 2026 Notified for Transparency**
The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting released **TV Ratings Policy 2026** on March 27, 2026, reducing minimum net worth requirement for TV rating agencies from **₹20 crore to ₹5 crore**. The policy mandates **50% independent directors**, expansion to **80,000 metered homes within 18 months** (eventually **1,20,000 homes**), and **quarterly internal + annual external audits** for enhanced transparency and accountability.

States in the News

- **Telangana Budget 2026-27: ₹3.24 Lakh Crore with Focus on Infrastructure and Welfare**
Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister **Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka** presented **Telangana's budget for FY 2026-27** in **March 2026** with a **total outlay of ₹3,24,234 crore**, an increase of nearly **₹20,000 crore** compared to FY26 (₹3.04 lakh crore). The state's **Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)** is estimated at **₹17,82,198 crore** with a **10.7% growth rate** (2.7% above national average), with the government aiming for a **₹1 trillion economy by 2034**. Key allocations include **₹2,34,406 crore for revenue expenditure** and **₹47,267 crore for capital expenditure**, emphasizing infrastructure development, welfare programs, urban expansion, and economic growth.
- **Himachal Pradesh Budget 2026-27: ₹54,928 Crore Focuses on Fiscal Consolidation**
Chief Minister **Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu** presented **Himachal Pradesh's budget for FY27** in **March 2026** with **₹54,928 crore** (a contraction of **₹3,586 crore** from previous year's **₹58,514 crore**), focusing on fiscal consolidation, social welfare, green energy, rural development, and employment generation. The budget projects a **Revenue Deficit (RD) of ₹6,577 crore** with **Revenue Receipts (RR) of ₹40,361 crore** against **Revenue Expenditure (RE) of ₹46,938 crore**, and a **fiscal deficit of ₹9,698 crore** (3.49% of GSDP). The state economy is expected to grow at **8.3%** with **GSDP estimated at ₹2,54,000 crore** and **Per Capita Income (PCI) at ₹2,83,626**.
- **Delhi Budget 2026-27: ₹1.03 Lakh Crore with Green Development Focus**
Chief Minister **Rekha Gupta** presented **Delhi's budget for FY27** in **March 2026** with a **total outlay of ₹1,03,700 crore**, representing a **3.7% increase** compared to the previous year (₹1 lakh crore), described as a "**Green Budget**" with emphasis on environmental sustainability. **About 21% of the total allocation** has been earmarked for green initiatives to address air pollution, with major allocations including **₹19,148 crore for education**, **₹12,645 crore for health**, **₹11,666 crore for Municipal Corporation**, and **₹9,000 crore for the Delhi Jal Board**. The budget estimated **Revenue Surplus of ₹9,092 crore for FY27** with **GSDP growth projected at 5.09%** and **GSDP expected to reach ₹13.27 lakh crore in FY26** (from ₹12.13 lakh crore in FY25).

- **UP CM Launches 'Nivesh Mitra 3.0' for Enhanced Ease of Doing Business**
Chief Minister **Yogi Adityanath** launched **'Nivesh Mitra 3.0'** on **March 24, 2026**, in Lucknow, an **upgraded digital single-window platform** integrating over **530 services from 43 departments** into fewer than **200 streamlined digital services** using **PAN-based single user ID**. The platform features an **AI-based chatbot** providing instant assistance with **real-time SMS alerts** and application tracking. Simultaneously, **'UP Private Business Park Development Scheme-2025'** and **'Plug-and-Play Industrial Sheds Scheme'** were unveiled to boost industrial infrastructure through government land and private investment.
- **Bharat Electricity Summit 2026: Indian Carbon Market Portal Launched**
The first edition of **Bharat Electricity Summit (BES 2026)** was held from **March 19-22, 2026** at Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, New Delhi, inaugurated by **Union Minister Manohar Lal** with the theme "**Electrifying Growth. Empowering Sustainability. Connecting Globally**". During the event, the **Indian Carbon Market Portal (www.indiancarbonmarket.gov.in)**, a central platform for implementing and administering the carbon market, was launched. The summit facilitated **high-level bilateral meetings** with countries such as Malawi, Tajikistan, Mauritius, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia, with the **next edition (BES 2028) scheduled for Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.
- **Telangana Announces Major Welfare Schemes: Family Life Insurance and Cashless Health**
The **Telangana State Budget 2026** announced the **Indiramma Family Life Insurance Scheme** (to be launched on **June 2, 2026**) providing **₹5 lakh insurance coverage per family** for approximately **1.15 crore families**, ensuring financial protection in case of death of the primary earning member. The **Cashless Health Scheme**, implemented through **Rajiv Aarogyasri Trust**, covers **23.51 lakh beneficiaries** including government employees, pensioners, and dependents for **1,998 diseases**, with **₹1.20 crore accident insurance** and **₹10 lakh term life insurance** (up to 60 years) for government employees and pensioners.
- **Kalinjar Fort Hill Declared National Geo-Heritage Site by GSI**
Kalinjar Fort Hill in Banda district, **Uttar Pradesh** was declared a **National Geo-Heritage Site** by the **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** in **March 2026**, recognizing its rare geological formations, historical significance, and tourism potential. The site features the **Eparchaeon Unconformity**, representing approximately **2.5 billion-year-old Bundelkhand granite** beneath **1.2 billion-year-old Kaimur sandstone**, reflecting distinct geological eras critical for studying Earth's long-term evolution. The designation is expected to boost tourism, research activities, and support the local economy in Banda district while promoting **Kalinjar Fort** alongside **Khajuraho Group of Monuments** and **Chitrakoot** as a regional tourism circuit.

- **Gujarat Digitalizes 20 Citizen Services Under Sugam Digital Gujarat Initiative** The Government of Gujarat digitalized 20 high-demand citizen services under the Sugam Digital Gujarat Initiative announced on March 23, 2026, promoting faceless, cashless, and paperless governance through the Digital Gujarat Portal. Services digitalized across five departments include Caste Certificates (SC, SEBC), Income Certificates, Ration card services, Certified documents, ST Certificates, and ready affidavits using technologies like Aadhaar authentication, DigiLocker, eSign, and UPI payments. The initiative is expected to reduce approval timelines and dependency on in-person visits while ensuring faster and more efficient service delivery.
- **Sikkim's Stuti Pradhan Selected for World Youth Parliament 2026** Stuti Pradhan from Sikkim was selected in March 2026 to represent India at the World Youth Parliament (WYP), showcasing India's growing youth role in global policy and diplomacy. She was recognized for excellence in parliamentary debate and secured state winner title at Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament 2025, being honored as special guest at Lok Bhawan, Sikkim during Republic Day 2026.
- **Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti Assumes NCBC Chairperson Role** Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti, former Union Minister of State, assumed charge as Chairperson of National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) in March 2026. Mrs. Kiran Umesh Mahalle, former Mayor of Municipal Corporation Amravati, assumed charge as NCBC Member, both bringing extensive social welfare and governance experience to strengthen the commission's mandate.

International Affairs

- **India-Indonesia Collaborate to Restore Prambanan Temple in Yogyakarta** India and Indonesia announced a collaborative initiative on March 16, 2026, in Jakarta, to restore the Prambanan Temple complex in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, strengthening cultural diplomacy and heritage conservation. The temple, the largest Hindu temple complex in Indonesia, was built in the 9th century by the Sanjaya dynasty and is dedicated to the Hindu Trimurti (Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma), recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991. The restoration will use the anastylosis method, a scientific archaeological conservation technique, with the Archaeological Survey of India providing technical expertise and experience.
- **9th India-Italy Foreign Office Consultations Held in New Delhi** India and Italy held the 9th round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) on March 20, 2026, in New Delhi, led by Sibi George, Secretary (West), Ministry of External

Affairs, and Nicoletta Bombardiere, Director General at Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Both sides reviewed progress of the Joint Strategic Action Plan (JSAP) 2025-29 covering trade, technology, space, defence, security, renewable energy, education, research, innovation, culture, and people-to-people ties. They agreed to expedite the Joint Initiative to Counter Financing of Terrorism (CFT) and hold the first Maritime Security Dialogue (MSD), with both countries deciding to hold the 10th FOC in Italy.

- **India-Bhutan Sign MoU to Strengthen Postal Cooperation** India and Bhutan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Thimphu on March 19-22, 2026, during the visit of Vandita Kaul, Secretary (Posts), Ministry of Communications, to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the postal sector. The MoU established a structured framework for collaboration between India Post and Bhutan Post across areas such as postal operations, technology development, capacity building, logistics connectivity, e-commerce, financial services, and philately. A key initiative under the MoU is the launch of the Universal Postal Union–Unified Payments Interface (UPI–UPI) cross-border remittance system.
- **Indian Navy Participates in Exercise Kakadu 2026 in Australia** INS Nilgiri, a frigate of the Indian Navy, participated in the sea phase of Exercise Kakadu 2026 in March 2026 in Australia as part of its Western Pacific deployment, aimed at enhancing maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. The 17th edition of Exercise Kakadu 2026 witnessed participation from over 19 nations and 6,000 personnel, covering the area from Jervis Bay to Darwin, Australia, with a Fleet Review held in Sydney Harbour on March 21, 2026, marking the largest gathering of foreign warships in over a decade. The crew of INS Nilgiri won the Kakadu Shield Trophy during sporting events at Darwin, demonstrating India's maritime strength and interoperability with regional partners.
- **Global Terrorism Index 2026: Pakistan Most Affected; India Ranked 13th** The Global Terrorism Index 2026, released by the Australian think tank Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) in March 2026, indicated a significant shift in the global security landscape, with Pakistan ranked as the country most impacted by terrorism with a score of 8.574, recording 1,139 deaths and 1,045 terrorist incidents in 2025 (highest fatality levels since 2013). India ranked 13th with a score of 6.428, followed by Afghanistan (11th with 6.678). The report highlighted that terrorist incidents in 2025 were nearly six times higher than in 2020, while terrorism-related deaths declined by 28% to 5,582 in 2025, marking a significant global improvement.

- **QS World University Rankings 2026: IIT-ISM Dhanbad and IIM Ahmedabad Rank 21st Globally** The 16th edition of QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026, released in March 2026, showed Indian Institute of Technology – Indian School of Mines (IIT-ISM) Dhanbad, Jharkhand ranked 21st globally in Engineering – Mineral and Mining, and Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad, Gujarat secured 21st place in both Business and Management Studies and Marketing. India now has 99 institutions (up from 79 in 2025) with 599 subject entries and 27 positions in top-50 subject rankings across 12 institutions. The USA leads globally with 228 institutions and first place in 37 subjects, while India became the fourth-largest higher education system by entries.
- **UNESCO Raises Concerns Over Aghanashini-Vedavathi River-Linking Project** The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) raised concerns over the proposed Aghanashini–Vedavathi river-linking project in March 2026, urging India to strictly follow World Heritage conservation norms under the World Heritage Convention, 1972. The project plans to divert around 35 thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft) of water from the Aghanashini river to the Vedavathi river, raising concerns over large-scale ecological alteration and affecting thousands of families dependent on the river system for livelihood, agriculture, and water security.
- **Asia Africa Agri Alliance Launched in New Delhi** Senior ambassadors, diplomats, policymakers, and agribusiness leaders from over ten nations formally launched the Asia Africa Agri Alliance (AAAA) in New Delhi in March 2026, a new institutional platform aimed at strengthening trade, agricultural cooperation, investment, and technology exchange between Asia and Africa. Established as a Section 8 Not-for-Profit Organization under the Companies Act, 2013, the AAAA operates through five key pillars: Trade and Market Access, Technology and Innovation Transfer, Investment and Finance, Policy Standards and Agriculture Diplomacy, and Capacity Building and Knowledge Exchange.
- **Carolina Marín Announces Retirement from Professional Badminton** Spanish Olympic and World Badminton Champion Carolina María Marín Martín announced her retirement in March 2026 at age 32 after failing to recover from a third serious knee injury. She held World Number One ranking for 66 weeks, won Olympic gold (Rio 2016) becoming the first non-Asian woman to claim singles title, and secured 3 World Championships (2014, 2015, 2018).
- **IOC Approves New Policy on Female Category Protection in Olympic Sport** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) approved landmark 'Protection of the Female (Women's) Category in Olympic Sport' policy in March 2026, effective from LA28 Olympics (July 14-30, 2028). The policy requires athletes to be SRY-negative to compete in female categories; SRY-positive athletes including XY transgender individuals are ineligible except for CAIS

cases, with exceptions for specific DSD cases without testosterone advantage.

- **United Nations Declares 2026 as International Year of the Woman Farmer** The United Nations declared 2026 as International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF 2026) recognizing their critical agricultural role. In India, 80% of rural women are engaged in agriculture and allied sectors (33% as laborers, 48% as farmers); India hosted Global Conference on Women in Agri-Food Systems (GCWAS-2026) in New Delhi focusing on gender-inclusive policies and climate-smart agriculture.
- **Balendra Shah Sworn-in as Nepal's Youngest PM** Balendra Shah (35), a Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) leader and former rapper, was sworn-in as Nepal's youngest Prime Minister on March 27, 2026, after RSP secured 182 seats out of 275 in parliamentary elections held on March 5, 2026. He succeeded Sushila Karki (Interim PM) and crossed the 138-seat majority threshold, enabling formation of first majority government under Nepal's federal framework.
- **NASA Scraps Lunar Gateway Plan, Announces \$20 Billion Moon Surface Base** NASA announced major Artemis Program shift in March 2026, scrapping the Lunar Gateway space station and instead constructing a \$20 billion lunar surface base. NASA unveiled plans for nuclear-powered Mars mission with "Space Reactor 1 Freedom" spacecraft launching before 2028, featuring advanced nuclear electric propulsion and deploying helicopters on Mars, with Moon landing targeted by 2028.
- **Prime Minister Modi Remains Most Popular Global Leader** According to US-based Morning Consult survey (March 2-8, 2026), Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains world's most popular global leader with 68% approval rating and 26% disapproval, beating Switzerland's Guy Parmelin (62%) and South Korea's Lee Jae-myung (62%). Major global leaders ranked: Donald Trump (39%), Keir Starmer (24%), Friedrich Merz (20%), Emmanuel Macron (17%).

Agreements/MoUs Signed

- **FSI and BISAG-N Sign MoU to Boost Geospatial Tech in Forestry** The Forest Survey of India (FSI) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Bhaskarcharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N) during the 90th meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, to enhance the use of geospatial technologies in forestry and environmental management. The MoU aims to strengthen the use of remote sensing and AI/ML-based tools for enhanced forest management, wildlife conservation, and data-driven decision support systems.

- **NPC Signs Agreement with MoEF&CC to Act as Environment Audit Designated Agency** The National Productivity Council (NPC), under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I), signed an agreement with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in March 2026 to act as the Environment Audit Designated Agency (EADA) under the Environment Audit Rules (EAR) 2025, officially notified on August 29, 2025. The NPC's role encompasses certification and registration of auditors, development of eligibility criteria and screening methodologies, monitoring performance, issuing guidelines, and taking disciplinary actions including suspension, cancellation, or renewal of environmental auditor registrations.
- **RRU and SSB Academy Sign MoU to Enhance National Security Training** Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU), an Institution of National Importance under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) Academy in New Delhi in March 2026 to strengthen national security training and capacity building. Under the strategic partnership, RRU will offer academic accreditation for training programs conducted at the SSB Academy, facilitating exchange of resources including faculty expertise, pedagogical tools, and specialized training facilities, while reviewing existing curriculum and jointly developing additional course content.
- **DPIIT Signs MoU with Blue Star to Support Product-Based Startups** The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Blue Star Limited, a leading Air Conditioning company, in New Delhi in March 2026, to promote innovation and support startups in India. The partnership aims to strengthen India's manufacturing and innovation ecosystem with focus on Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) technologies, digital solutions, and advanced manufacturing, with startups receiving mentorship from industry experts, access to R&D laboratories, and testing facilities for infrastructure support.
- **DPIIT Signs MoUs with Razorpay to Strengthen Startup Ecosystem; Launches 'Startup Sahayak' Platform** The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoC&I), signed strategic Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with Razorpay on March 25, 2026, to empower startups, especially in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, by providing financial tools, technical and advisory support, and digital payment solutions. A dedicated platform, 'Startup Sahayak', has been launched to provide end-to-end assistance including company incorporation, access to central and state government schemes, and guidance on funding opportunities, organized through the Startup India Hub (SIH) and Bharat Startup Grand Challenge (BSGC).
- **BHASHINI-PFRDA Sign MoU to Enable Multilingual Pension Services** The Digital India BHASHa Interface for India (BHASHINI) Division (DIBD) under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) under Ministry of Finance (MoF), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on March 25, 2026, under the initiative 'BHASHINI for Seva-Sanchalan' to enhance multilingual accessibility of pension services across India. The initiative enables multilingual access across PFRDA platforms in all 22 Eighth Schedule languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, and Sanskrit, leveraging BHASHINI as a Digital Public Infrastructure with AI models for real-time translation and contextual processing.
- **Cochin Chamber Signs MoU with Latvian Chamber to Strengthen Bilateral Trade** The Cochin Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Latvia, in March 2026, to bolster bilateral trade and economic cooperation between Latvia and India. The CCCI (established 1857, the oldest Chamber of Commerce in Kerala) became the second Chamber of Commerce in India and first in South India to enter into an agreement with the LCCI, opening significant business opportunities across key sectors like pharmaceuticals, education, and the wood industry.
- **BHASHINI-PFRDA MoU for Multilingual Pension Services** The Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) under MeitY and Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) signed MoU under "BHASHINI for Seva-Sanchalan" initiative. The collaboration enables pension service access in all 22 Eighth Schedule languages (Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Sanskrit) using AI-driven real-time translation and voice-enabled interfaces, strengthening multilingual digital governance and inclusive financial services.



Books and Authors

- **William Dalrymple Wins Mark Lynton History Prize 2026 for 'The Golden Road'** Historian William Dalrymple was awarded the Mark Lynton History Prize 2026 in March 2026 for his book "The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World," published by Bloomsbury India. The prize, administered by the Nieman Foundation for Journalism and Columbia University School of Journalism, carries a cash prize of USD 10,000 and recognizes outstanding historical writing with emphasis on intellectual depth, literary excellence, and clarity of expression. The book draws from Dalrymple's decades of research and challenges traditional narratives by placing ancient India at the center of global history.
- **Kailash Satyarthi's 'Karuna: The Power of Compassion' Book Launched 2014 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kailash Satyarthi's latest book titled 'Karuna: The Power of Compassion'** was formally launched in March 2026 by the Satyarthi Movement for Global Compassion (SMGC) in association with Harper Collins India, in the presence of Justice Surya Kant, Chief Justice of India, and Dr. Kiran Bedi, former Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry. The book emphasizes compassion as a transformative, active force to combat global crises such as inequality and conflict, introducing the concept of Compassion Quotient (CQ), a scientific approach to measure and increase compassion in individuals and organizations.
- **Bengali Writer Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay Selected for Saraswati Samman 2025** Eminent Bengali writer Ramkumar Mukhopadhyay was selected for the 35th Saraswati Samman (2025) in March 2026 for his novel 'Hara Parbati Katha (2020)', marking a significant recognition for Bengali literature. The Saraswati Samman, instituted in 1991 by the K. K. Birla Foundation, is one of India's highest literary honours, awarded for outstanding works published in the last 10 years in any of the 22 languages listed in Schedule VIII of the Constitution, carrying a cash prize of ₹15 lakh along with a citation and plaque.

Banking/Economy/Business News

- **Bank of Baroda Launches UPI-Linked Credit Line for Women SHGs** Bank of Baroda (BoB), one of India's leading Public Sector Banks, launched the Overdraft (OD) facility on credit line on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in March 2026 for verified women Self-Help Group (SHG) members who hold Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts, enabling eligible women to access up to ₹5,000 as an OD. BoB becomes the 1st bank in the country to launch such a digital credit solution, launched in collaboration with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), Indian Banks Association (IBA), and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).

- **RBI Imposed ₹31.80 Lakh Penalty on HSBC for Non-Compliance with Deposit Norms** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed a monetary penalty of ₹31.80 lakh on Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited, India (HSBC India) in March 2026 for non-compliance with regulatory directions related to inoperative accounts and unclaimed deposits. The bank failed to maintain a searchable database of unclaimed deposits, did not generate Unclaimed Deposits Reference Numbers (UDRN), and showed lapses in deposits transferred to the Depositor Education and Awareness (DEA) Fund under Section 26A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- **Goldman Sachs Lowers India's GDP Growth Rate Forecast to 5.9% for CY26** Goldman Sachs lowered India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast to 5.9% in Calendar Year 2026 (CY26) in March 2026, down from its pre-Iran war forecast of 7%. The report also projected India's inflation to increase to 4.6% in CY26 compared to its previous forecast of 3.9%, with India's Current Account Deficit (CAD) expected to widen to 2% of GDP in CY26. The bank lowered its growth projection for the South Asian economy to 6.5% in CY26.
- **S&P Global Lifts India FY27 GDP Forecast to 7.1%, Raises Growth Outlook** Standard & Poor's (S&P) Global raised India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) forecast by 40 basis points (bps) to 7.1% for Financial Year 2026-27 (FY27) in March 2026, reflecting confidence in the country's economic momentum despite global uncertainties. The rating agency also upgraded its projections: FY28 to 7.2% (increased by 20 bps) and FY29 to 7.0% (also increased by 20 bps). S&P projected Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation to rise to 4.3% in FY27 from 2.5% in FY26.
- **Razorpay Partners with Sarvam AI to Launch Voice-Led Multilingual Digital Commerce in India** Razorpay, an Indian fintech company, partnered with Sarvam AI, an Indian Artificial Intelligence (AI) startup, in March 2026, to introduce voice-led, multilingual digital commerce solutions in India. The collaboration enables users to discover products, place orders, and complete payments through voice commands in their preferred language, with Sarvam AI's models and agentic technology stack integrated with Razorpay's payment infrastructure. The feature initially rolled out on Sarvam AI's Indus App, with Swiggy as an early partner for voice-based food ordering.
- **L&T Finance Becomes Signatory to United Nations Global Compact** L&T Finance Ltd. (LTF) became a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) in March 2026, marking a key step in strengthening its sustainability and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) framework. The move reaffirms LTF's ethical practices and aligns its long-term strategy with UNGC principles on human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption. LTF will report annually on its progress in implementing the 'Ten Principles of the Global Compact,' and is also a signatory to the Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF) to measure and manage financed emissions.

- **SEBI Announces Major Reforms at 213th Board Meeting Held in Mumbai** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) approved a wide-ranging set of regulatory changes at its 213th board meeting held in Mumbai, Maharashtra in March 2026, covering market intermediaries, foreign investors, alternative investment funds (AIF), and governance norms. **Social Impact Funds (SIF)** saw their **minimum investment value reduced from ₹2 lakh to ₹1,000** for individual investors, and the board introduced **flexibility for AIFs in winding up schemes** to retain liquidation proceeds beyond tenure under specific conditions such as pending litigation, tax liabilities, or operational expenses.
- **SEBI Launches 'Verified App Label' Initiative To Strengthen Investor Protection** Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), launched the 'Verified Application (App) Label' Initiative in March 2026 to protect investors against fraudulent mobile applications and ensure safe digital investing in India. Over **1.3 lakh fraudulent investment apps, including 66 fake trading apps**, have been reported and removed, prompting the initiative built on the principle: **"First verify. Then invest."** Apps of SEBI-registered intermediaries will display a **verified badge on the Google Play Store** to help investors easily identify genuine apps.
- **HDFC Securities Launches NxtOption to Simplify Advanced Options Trading for Traders** HDFC Securities Limited, a subsidiary of HDFC Bank, launched "NxtOption" in March 2026, a **next-generation trading platform** designed to help retail investors examine, build, and execute **Futures & Options (F&O) strategies** through a single interface. The platform enables users to create and analyze options strategies such as **Straddles, Strangles, and Iron Condors**, with real-time tracking and monitoring through pay-off charts. It provides **advanced derivatives analytics** including **Delta, Gamma, Theta, Vega, Implied Volatility (IV), and Open Interest (OI) trends**.
- **JICA Signs Four ODA Loan Agreements Worth ₹16,420 Crore for Key Projects in India** The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed **Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan agreements worth ₹16,420 crore** with the **Government of India (GoI)** in March 2026 to fund **4 major projects** across Punjab, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. Projects include a **healthcare project in Maharashtra** (supported by **62,294 million JPY**), **climate-resilient horticulture in Punjab** (**18,684 million JPY**), **Bengaluru Metro Rail Project Phase 3** (**102,480 million JPY** for **44.65 km of elevated corridors**), and **Mumbai Metro Line 11 Project** (**92,400 million JPY** for **17.51 km underground corridor**).
- **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions 2.0 (CGSMFI-2.0) Introduced** The Government of India introduced the **Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions 2.0 (CGSMFI-2.0)** in March 2026, effective from **March 20, 2026**, to facilitate increased credit flow to **Microfinance Institutions (MFI)**. The scheme provides **guarantee cover to Member Lending Institutions (MLI)** against expected losses on financial assistance extended to **Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)-MFIs and MFIs**, managed by the **National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC)**. The scheme is expected to benefit approximately **36 lakh borrowers** and remain valid till **June 30, 2026** or until loans of **₹20,000 crores** are guaranteed, whichever comes first.
- **Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs (MCGS-MSME) Revised Under Budget 2025-26** The **Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs (MCGS-MSME)**, launched in **January 2025**, was revised in **March 2026** to improve credit access for MSMEs through the **National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC)**. The scheme provides **60% guarantee coverage to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs)** for loans up to **₹100 crore** for purchase of plant and machinery, with **5% upfront contribution by borrowers now refundable in instalments** from the **4th year** subject to satisfactory loan performance. **Exporter MSMEs** with exports of at least **25% of turnover** in each of the last three financial years are eligible for special provisions with guaranteed loan amounts up to **₹20 crore**.
- **Lloyd's of London to Launch Operations in GIFT City, Boosting India's Role as Regional Reinsurance Hub** Lloyd's of London, a leading underwriting marketplace, is set to establish operations in **GIFT City** in **March 2026**, under review with the **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)**, to set up a statutory insurance and reinsurance entity. As of **December 2025**, the number of **IFSC Insurance Offices (IIOs)** increased to **24 from 19**, while **Insurance Intermediary Offices (IIIOs)** reached **31 from 25**, with premiums transacted by **IIOs and IIIOs together reaching ₹299 million in Q3 FY2025–26**, more than double the **₹148 million** a year earlier.
- **Health Insurance Sector Shows Strong Growth; Premiums Cross ₹1.2 Lakh Crore in 2024–25** India's health insurance sector is witnessing robust growth of around **9%**, with **total premiums exceeding ₹1.2 lakh crore in 2024–25**, driven by rising awareness and increasing demand for financial protection. The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** introduced strict timelines for cashless health insurance claim processing: **1-hour pre-authorization** and **3-hour final authorization**, with **claims paid ratio (by number of claims) standing at 87.50% in 2024–25** (up from **66% in 2022–23**).
- **NHB Launches 'Gruh Sugam Portal' for Defence Personnel Home Loans** The **National Housing Bank (NHB)** launched 'Gruh Sugam Portal' on **March 26, 2026**, digitizing home loan access for **defence personnel, paramilitary forces, and government employees**. The portal enables digital loan applications through administrative units without bank visits, allowing beneficiaries to **compare and apply for loans online** through a **single seamless interface**, improving accessibility especially for **remotely posted personnel**.

- **Lakshya AMC Receives SEBI Approval for Mutual Fund Business** Lakshya Asset Management Company (AMC) received SEBI approval in March 2026 to commence Mutual Fund business in India, sponsored by Wealth First Portfolio Managers (NSE and BSE listed company). The AMC, headquartered in Ahmedabad, Gujarat (first AMC in this city), onboarded key leadership from Benchmark AMC including Sanjiv Shah, Rajan Mehta, and Sanjay Gaitonde, which pioneered ETFs like Nifty BeES, Gold ETF, Gold BeES.
- **OECD Revises India Growth Forecast to 6.1% for FY27** The OECD released 'Testing Resilience' Interim Report in March 2026, projecting India's growth at 6.1% in FY27 (revised down 10 basis points from 6.2%) citing global uncertainty. OECD also projected India will grow at 7.6% in FY26 and 6.4% in FY28, while global growth outlook remained 2.9% for 2026 but lowered to 3% for 2027 (from 3.1%).
- **Government Maintains Inflation Target at 4% for 2026-31 Period** The Government of India (GoI) kept inflation target unchanged at 4% for 5-year period (April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2031), marking 2nd consecutive instance of unchanged targets. The decision made by Ministry of Finance in consultation with RBI under Section 45ZA of RBI Act, 1934, with upper tolerance level at 6% and lower tolerance level at 2% under Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT) framework (introduced 2016).
- **Nippon India ETF Gold BeES Ranks 6th Globally in Gold ETF Inflows** Nippon India ETF Gold BeES ranked 6th globally among top 15 gold ETFs by fund flows as per World Gold Council (as of Feb 28, 2026), with strong inflows of USD 1,085.2 million (≈6.6 tonnes gold demand). The fund holds 36.2 tonnes of gold, making it the only Indian ETF in global top 10 gold funds; top 15 global gold ETFs collectively attracted USD 42.86 billion (≈301.3 tonnes) inflows.
- **Reserve Bank Approves Avenir Investment's Acquisition of Sammaan Capital** The RBI approved Avenir Investment RSC Limited's (Abu Dhabi-based International Holding Company PJSC) acquisition of controlling stake in Sammaan Capital Limited (formerly Indiabulls Housing Finance) in March 2026. Avenir will invest ₹8,850 crore through preferential share allotment, acquiring 41.23% stake, expandable to 63.36% majority control if open offer fully subscribed; SEBI approval still pending.
- **Competition Commission Approves State Street's Acquisition in Groww Asset Management** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved State Street Global Advisors Inc.'s acquisition of shareholding in Groww Asset Management Limited in March 2026. State Street Global Advisors (subsidiary of State Street Corporation, asset management arm) is acquiring stake in wholly-owned Billionbrains Garage Ventures' Groww Mutual Fund, offering diversified range including equity, hybrid, debt funds, and ETFs.

- **ASSOCHAM Projects India GDP Growth Above 7% for FY27** ASSOCHAM projected India's GDP growth above 7% in FY27 driven by strong demand and rising investments, indicating economic resilience despite global uncertainties and OECD's lower forecast of 6.1%.

Appointments/Resignations

- **South Indian Bank Appoints Jose Joseph Kattoor as Part-Time Chairman** South Indian Bank (SIB) appointed Jose Joseph Kattoor, a former Executive Director (ED) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as the Non-Executive Part-Time Chairman (Independent Director) on March 23, 2026, for a three-year term in compliance with the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, following RBI approval. He succeeds V. J. Kurian, whose tenure concluded on March 22, 2026, and brings over three decades of experience in central banking and financial regulation, having served in the RBI from 1991 to 2023, retiring as ED and leading key departments including Enforcement, Corporate Strategy, Currency Management, and Human Resources.
- **City Union Bank Appoints Ravindra Jadeja as Brand Ambassador** City Union Bank Limited (CUB) appointed Indian cricketer Ravindrasinh Anirudhsinh Jadeja as its brand ambassador in March 2026, valid for a two-year period, as per a regulatory filing made in compliance with disclosure norms. The initiative aims to strengthen the bank's visibility and connect with a broader customer base across India. The agreement was executed in association with Baseline Ventures India Private Limited, which manages sports personalities and brand partnerships.
- **KV Ramana Murty Appointed Whole-Time Member of SEBI** The Government of India appointed Kompella Venkata (K.V.) Ramana Murty as a Whole-Time Member (WTM) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in March 2026 for a tenure of three years from the date of assuming charge or until further orders. K.V. Ramana Murty is a retired 1991-batch Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS) officer with extensive experience in public financial administration, having served as Additional Controller General of Defence Accounts under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- **CA P.V. Narayana Rao Appointed Co-opted Member of ICAI's SRSB for 2026-27** Chartered Accountant (CA) P.V. Narayana Rao was appointed as a Co-opted Member of the Sustainability Reporting Standards Board (SRSB) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) on March 23, 2026, for the term 2026-27. As a co-opted member, he will contribute to the development and strengthening of sustainability reporting standards in India, with the ICAI's SRSB established in February 2020 to develop globally aligned sustainability frameworks and reporting standards.

- **UNIQLO Names Indian Cricketer Jasprit Bumrah as Brand Ambassador in India** UNIQLO appointed Indian cricketer Jasprit Bumrah as its brand ambassador in India in March 2026, marking a strategic collaboration between sports and lifestyle fashion. The partnership aligns with UNIQLO's LifeWear philosophy, focusing on simple, high-quality, comfortable, and functional clothing designed for everyday life, with the campaign highlighting the AIRism collection, particularly the AIRism Oversized T-shirt.
- **Yamaha Music India Appoints AR Rahman as Brand Ambassador** A. R. Rahman was appointed as the brand ambassador of Yamaha Music India Private Limited in March 2026. Yamaha Music India is the Indian subsidiary of Yamaha Corporation, Japan, engaged in manufacturing musical instruments and professional audio equipment, operating a manufacturing facility in Chennai, a corporate office in Gurugram, and an experience centre in Bengaluru.
- **Balendra Shah Becomes Nepal's Youngest Prime Minister at 35** Balendra Shah (35), leader of Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) and former rapper, was sworn-in as Nepal's youngest Prime Minister on March 27, 2026, succeeding Sushila Karki (Interim PM). His party secured 182 out of 275 seats in March 5, 2026 elections, crossing 138-seat majority to form first majority government under Nepal's federal framework.
- **Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti Assumes NCBC Chairperson Position** Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti, former Union Minister of State (Rural Development, Consumer Affairs), assumed charge as Chairperson of National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) in March 2026 with extensive experience in social and community development for weaker sections.
- **Kiran Umesh Mahalle Appointed as NCBC Member** Mrs. Kiran Umesh Mahalle, former Mayor of Municipal Corporation Amravati, was appointed as Member of NCBC in March 2026, bringing strong governance, women empowerment, and grassroots development experience from her roles in cooperative and social institutions.
- **Indian Navy to Commission Advanced Stealth Frigate 'Taragiri' (F41)** The Indian Navy is set to commission its latest stealth Frigate, Taragiri (F41), on April 3, 2026 at Visakhapatnam, with the ceremony presided over by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh. Taragiri (F41) is the fourth platform of the Project 17A class and weighs 6,670 tonnes, built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai, with indigenous content exceeding 75% and involvement of over 200 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The ship is equipped with a world-class weapon suite, including supersonic Surface-to-Surface Missiles, Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missiles, and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) suite, integrated through a state-of-the-art Combat Management System (CMS).
- **Indian Army Holds 'Amogh Jwala' Exercise at Babina Field Firing Ranges in Uttar Pradesh** The Indian Army Southern Command conducted Exercise 'Amogh Jwala' at the Babina Field Firing Ranges, Uttar Pradesh from March 6 to 18, 2026, a 13-day military exercise aimed at validating the Indian Army's preparedness for mechanised warfare in a multi-domain operational environment. The exercise demonstrated high-tempo mechanised operations using Attack Helicopters, Fighter Aircraft, drones, and counter-drone systems, with key highlights including deployment of Apache attack helicopters alongside network-enabled battlefield platforms. Lieutenant General Dhiraj, Army Commander, praised the troops for professionalism, operational excellence, and battle readiness, highlighting the importance of Tech-Absorption, Jointness, and integration of land, air, cyber, space, and ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) capabilities.
- **Ministry of Defence Signs ₹858 Crore Defence Procurement Deals** The Ministry of Defence signed two contracts worth ₹858 crore in New Delhi: (1) ₹445 crore contract with JSC Rosoboronexport (Russia) for Tunguska Air Defence Missile System for Indian Army enhancing multi-layered air defence against aircraft, drones, and cruise missiles; (2) ₹413 crore contract with Boeing India Defense for P-8I Maritime Reconnaissance Aircraft depot-level inspection under 'Buy Indian' category (100% indigenous content), enabling in-country MRO facility reducing foreign dependence.
- **Operation Urja Suraksha Protects Energy Vessels in Strategic Waters** The Indian Navy deployed 5+ frontline warships under 'Operation Urja Suraksha' in March 2026 to escort 22 India-bound energy vessels including 20 priority ships carrying LNG, LPG, and crude oil through Strait of Hormuz strategic chokepoint. Successful escorts completed for Pine Gas, Jag Vasant, Shivalik, Nanda Devi, and Jag Laadki strengthening India's energy security infrastructure.

Defence News

- **Indian Navy Participates in 'Exercise KAKADU 2026' in Australia** The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Nilgiri, a frigate of the Indian Navy, participated in the sea phase of 'Exercise Kakadu 2026' in March 2026 in Australia as part of its deployment to the Western Pacific, aimed at enhancing maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. The 17th edition of Exercise Kakadu 2026 witnessed participation from over 19 nations and 6,000 personnel, covering the area from Jervis Bay to Darwin, Australia, with a Kakadu Fleet Review held in Sydney Harbour on March 21, 2026, marking the largest gathering of foreign warships in over a decade and commemorating the 125th anniversary of the RAN. The crew of INS Nilgiri won the Kakadu Shield Trophy during sporting events held in the harbour phase at Darwin, Australia.

- **Project 'Vayu Baan' Develops India's First Helicopter-Launched Drone** The Indian Air Force's Directorate of Aerospace Design (DAD) launched 'Vayu Baan' project in March 2026, issuing Request for Proposal (RFP) to domestic vendors for autonomous helicopter-launched UAS that deploys from 50+ km stand-off distance, protecting aircrew from MANPADS range. India joins USA and China as 3rd country with this helicopter-drone capability.
- **Indian Army-IITM Pravartak Partnership Accelerates Defence Indigenisation** The Indian Army's Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) signed MoU with IITM Pravartak Technologies Foundation in March 2026 establishing Nodal Indigenisation Centre (NIC) at Avadi, Chennai, for identifying equipment issues, developing prototypes, and supporting deployment. Partnership focuses on sensing, Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS), and Autonomous Technologies (AT) leveraging Tamil Nadu Defence Corridor (TNDC).

Awards and Recognitions

- **Indian Mountaineer Bhupathiraju Anmish Varma Sets Guinness World Record for Seven Volcanic Summits** Bhupathiraju Anmish Varma, a native of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, set a Guinness World Record (GWR) in March 2026 for the fastest time to climb the Seven Volcanic Summits (in male category), completing the challenge in 92 days, 4 hours, and 45 minutes, breaking previous global benchmarks. He officially started his expedition from Mount Elbrus (Europe) in Southwest Russia on October 23, 2024, and concluded at Mount Sidley, Antarctica on January 23, 2025. The record was officially recognized on February 6, 2026, and he received his certificate in Delhi on March 17, 2026.
- **Rituparna Sengupta Receives Women Empowerment Award at House of Commons UK** Indian actress Rituparna Sengupta, a National Film Awardee, was honored with the Women Empowerment Award for Arts and Culture at the House of Commons (British Parliament) in London, United Kingdom in March 2026. She received the award in recognition of her work in art and culture during an event organised by GloWomen CiC (a UK-based registered Community Interest Company) to mark International Women's Day (March 8). She is best known for films like Rajkahini (2015), Ahaa Re (2019), and Parcel (2020), and won the National Film Award in 'Best Actress' category for her role in Rituparno Ghosh's film Dahan (1998).
- **Kalpana Soren Conferred Women Empowerment Trailblazer Award at BRICS CCI WE Summit 2026** Kalpana Soren, Member of Legislative Assembly from Gandey, Jharkhand, was honoured with the Women Empowerment Trailblazer Award 2026 during the BRICS CCI WE Annual Women Summit and Felicitations 2026 held in New Delhi in

March 2026. The recognition was given for her contribution to promoting women-led development and grassroots empowerment, particularly in rural and tribal areas of Jharkhand.

- **Karnataka Grameena Bank Receives National Award for SHG-Bank Linkage 2024-25** The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) conferred the National Award for Outstanding Performance in Self-Help Groups (SHG)-Bank Linkage 2024-25 to Karnataka Grameena Bank (KGB) in March 2026 for its significant contribution to rural economic empowerment and financial inclusion. Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, MoRD, presented the award to V. M. Rukmini Devi, General Manager (GM) of KGB, during the National Conference on Financial Literacy and Capacity Building and 25th Central Level Coordination Committee (CLCC) meeting held in Hyderabad, Telangana. KGB has extended ₹2,835 crore credit to 80,904 SHGs aligned with Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
- **Kaveh Madani Named Stockholm Water Prize 2026 Laureate** Kaveh Madani, Director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health, was named the Stockholm Water Prize 2026 Laureate in March 2026, during the World Water Day (March 22) event held at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France. At 44 years of age, he became the youngest recipient in the 35-year history of the Stockholm Water Prize and the first United Nations official and first former politician to receive the award.
- **Natarajan Chandrasekaran Conferred Honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire** Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Sons, was conferred the Honorary Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by the United Kingdom government in March 2026. The honour was awarded for his contribution to strengthening India–United Kingdom business relations, presented by Lindy Cameron at the British High Commissioner's residence in New Delhi on behalf of Charles III.
- **Nandamuri Balakrishna Receives Lifetime Achievement Award at IFFD 2026** Veteran Telugu actor Nandamuri Balakrishna was honored with Lifetime Achievement Award at International Film Festival of Delhi 2026 on March 26, recognizing his 50-year contribution to Indian cinema. The award was presented by Rekha Gupta at Bharat Mandapam; his film 'Bhagavanth Kesari' (directed by Anil Ravipudi) won Best Telugu Film at 71st National Film Awards, and he received Padma Bhushan (2025).
- **Shabana Azmi Honored with BRICS CCI WE Trailblazer Award** Veteran actress Shabana Azmi was honored with BRICS CCI WE Trailblazer: Living Legend Award at 6th BRICS Chamber of Commerce Women Empowerment Summit (March 21-23, 2026) in New Delhi for "50 Years of Excellence in Indian Cinema" contributing significantly to Indian film industry and cultural excellence.

- **Meenakshi Lekhi Unveils Mission ShakthiSAT Initiative**
Meenakshi Lekhi, former Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Global Chair of Mission ShakthiSAT, unveiled the initiative at 6th BRICS CCI WE Summit (March 21-23, 2026) in New Delhi promoting women's participation in space, science, and advanced technology domains across BRICS nations.

Summits and Conferences News

- **Bharat Electricity Summit 2026 Held in New Delhi; Launches Carbon Market Portal**
The first edition of Bharat Electricity Summit (BES 2026) was held from March 19-22, 2026 at Yashobhoomi, Dwarka in New Delhi, bringing together global stakeholders to strengthen India's energy transition and power sector reforms. The Summit was inaugurated by Union Minister Manohar Lal, Ministry of Power (MoP), with the theme "Electrifying Growth. Empowering Sustainability. Connecting Globally." The Indian Carbon Market Portal (www.indiancarbonmarket.gov.in), a central platform for implementing and administering the carbon market, was launched during the event, with the next edition (BES 2028) scheduled for Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- **Overview of BRICS CCI WE Summit 2026 Held in New Delhi**
The 6th edition of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) Chamber of Commerce and Industry Women Empowerment (BRICS CCI WE) Summit was held from March 21 to 23, 2026 in New Delhi, Delhi. The theme for the 2026 summit was "Women in Innovation, Science Leadership, Innovation & Entrepreneurship (WISE) – Inspiring Change, Shaping Tomorrow," organized by the BRICS CCI WE vertical with support from the BRICS Women Business Alliance (BRICS WBA). A significant highlight was the unveiling of Mission ShakthiSAT by Meenakshi Lekhi, former MoS for External Affairs and Global Chair of the initiative.
- **India Submits Proposals at WTO's 14th Ministerial Conference to Safeguard Food Security and Fishermen's Livelihoods**
India submitted proposals for the World Trade Organization's (WTO) 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14) scheduled from March 26 to 29, 2026 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, focusing on food security and the livelihoods of traditional fishermen. The Ministerial Conference, the highest decision-making body of the WTO, will be chaired by Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, Cameroon's Minister of Trade.
- **United Nations to Host Inaugural High Seas Summit in New York in January 2027**
The United Nations (UN) will host the first-ever High Seas Summit in January 2027 at its headquarters in New York, based on the High Seas Treaty (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction – BBNJ) adopted in June 2023. The High Seas Summit (Conference of Parties – COP) is proposed from January 11 to 22, 2027, focusing on implementation mechanisms and institutional setup, addressing challenges such as climate change, marine pollution, and overfishing, which threaten ocean ecosystems.

- **6th BRICS Chamber of Commerce Women Empowerment Summit Held in New Delhi**
The 6th BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry Women Empowerment (BRICS CCI WE) Summit was held from March 21-23, 2026 in New Delhi with theme "Women in Innovation, Science Leadership, Innovation & Entrepreneurship (WISE) – Inspiring Change, Shaping Tomorrow." The event organized by BRICS CCI WE vertical with support from BRICS Women Business Alliance (BRICS WBA) focused on strengthening women's role in science, innovation, leadership, and entrepreneurship across BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa).
- **India Invited to G7 Summit 2026 in France**
India was invited to attend the G7 Summit 2026 scheduled for June 15-17 in France as key partner nation, highlighting India's growing role in global economic and strategic cooperation.
- **WTO MC14 Begins in Cameroon**
The WTO's 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14) started on March 26, 2026 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, with participation from 160+ nations discussing global trade, commerce, and economic cooperation.

Ranks and Reports

- **Global Terrorism Index 2026: Pakistan Most Affected by Terrorism; India Ranked 13th**
The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2026, released by the Australian think tank Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) in March 2026, indicated a significant shift in the global security landscape, with Pakistan ranked as the country most impacted by terrorism with an overall score of 8.574, recording 1,139 deaths and 1,045 terrorist incidents in 2025 (highest fatality levels since 2013). India ranked 13th with an overall score of 6.428, followed by Afghanistan (11th) with 6.678. The report highlighted that terrorist incidents in 2025 were nearly six times higher than in 2020, while terrorism-related deaths declined by 28% to 5,582 and incidents decreased by 22% to 2,944, marking the lowest figures since 2007.
- **QS World University Rankings 2026: IIT (ISM) Dhanbad and IIM Ahmedabad Topped Among Indian Institutes**
The 16th edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026, released in March 2026, showed Indian Institute of Technology – Indian School of Mines (IIT-ISM) Dhanbad, Jharkhand ranked 21st globally in Engineering – Mineral and Mining, and Indian Institute Of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad, Gujarat, secured 21st place in both Business and Management Studies and Marketing, marking India's debut in the Marketing subject ranking. India now has 99 institutions (up from 79 in 2025) with 599 subject entries, and India has doubled its top-50 subject presence since 2024, achieving 27 positions across 12 institutions. The USA leads globally with 228 institutions and first place in 37 subjects, while India became the fourth-largest higher education system by entries.

- **World Trade Organization Trade Outlook 2026: Global Goods Trade Growth Expected to Ease to 1.9%** The World Trade Organization (WTO) released its 'Global Trade Outlook and Statistics – March 2026' in March 2026, projecting global merchandise trade growth to slow sharply to 1.9% in 2026, down from 6% in 2025. The slowdown is attributed to geopolitical tensions in West Asia, normalization of AI-related demand, and tariff-driven front-loading of shipments, with global merchandise trade growth expected to recover to 2.6% in 2027. Commercial services trade growth is expected to decline to 4.8% in 2026 from 3% in 2025, before rising to 5.1% in 2027, while global GDP growth is forecast to moderate slightly from 9% in 2025 to 2.8% in 2026 and 2027.
- **Hurun Report 2026: Number of Self-Made Women Billionaires Reaches Record 150 Globally** As per the Hurun Report 2026 released in March 2026, the number of self-made women billionaires worldwide reached 150, with combined wealth rising to \$470 billion. The number has doubled from 75 in the last decade, reflecting strong growth in women-led entrepreneurship globally, with total wealth increasing by 52% in the last three years and 60 new entrants added in 2026. China ranked first globally with 78 self-made women billionaires, accounting for more than half of the total, followed by the United States of America (USA) with 40 billionaires, with Diane Hendricks topping the list with wealth of \$24 billion.
- **India's Sports Economy Crosses \$2 Billion Mark in 2025: Reaches ₹18,864 Crore** India's sports economy crossed the \$2 billion mark in 2025, reaching ₹18,864 crore (\$2.13 billion), according to the WPP Media report titled 'Sporting Nation: Building a Legacy' released in March 2026. The sector recorded a 4% year-on-year growth compared to ₹16,633 crore in 2024, with media spending remaining the largest contributor, accounting for 51% of the total market in 2025. Cricket continued to dominate India's sports economy, contributing ₹16,704 crore (about 89% of the total market) in 2025.
- **China Becomes India's Third-Largest Export Destination in February 2026** China became India's third-largest export destination in February 2026, overtaking Netherlands, with India's exports to China increasing by 32.4% to 1.67 billion United States dollars in February 2026. India's overall exports declined slightly by 0.81% year-on-year to 36.61 billion United States dollars during the month, with the increase driven by higher shipments in electronics and marine products.
- **OECD Interim Report: India's FY27 Growth Revised to 6.1%** The OECD Economic Outlook Interim Report (March 2026), titled 'Testing Resilience', projected India's GDP growth at 6.1% for FY27 (down 10 bps from 6.2%) citing global uncertainty, with projections of 7.6% for FY26 and 6.4% for FY28. Global growth outlook remained 2.9% for 2026 but was lowered to 3% for 2027 from 3.1%.

- **Prime Minister Modi Tops Global Leader Approval Rankings** Prime Minister Narendra Modi ranked as world's most popular global leader in Morning Consult survey (March 2-8, 2026) with 68% approval rating and 26% disapproval, surpassing Switzerland's Guy Parmelin (62%) and South Korea's Lee Jae-myung (62%), while Donald Trump (39%), Keir Starmer (24%), Friedrich Merz (20%), and Emmanuel Macron (17%) ranked lower among major global leaders.
- **Nippon India ETF Gold BeES Ranks 6th Globally in Gold ETF Inflows** Nippon India ETF Gold BeES achieved 6th rank globally among top 15 gold ETFs by fund flows (per World Gold Council, Feb 28, 2026) with USD 1,085.2 million inflows (≈6.6 tonnes), holding 36.2 tonnes of gold as the only Indian ETF in global top 10 gold fund rankings.

Sports News

- **Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 Begins in Chhattisgarh from 25 March 2026** The Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 will be held from March 25 to April 3, 2026 in Chhattisgarh, hosted across Raipur, Jagdalpur, and Surguja. The Games will bring together over 6,000 participants, including around 2,300 athletes from across the country, aiming to promote tribal sporting talent at the national level and preserve indigenous sports traditions. Chhattisgarh was selected as the host state due to its strong tribal cultural connection and the presence of over 32% tribal population, with the Games featuring major sports disciplines including Archery, Athletics, Football, Hockey, Swimming, Weightlifting, and Wrestling, along with special focus on indigenous sports like Mallakhamb and Kabaddi.
- **LeBron James Becomes National Basketball Association's All-Time Leader in Regular Season Games Played** LeBron James became the National Basketball Association's all-time leader in regular season games played, appearing in his 1,612th game for the Los Angeles Lakers against the Orlando Magic in March 2026. He surpassed the previous record of 1,611 games held by Robert Parish since 1997, achieving this milestone at the age of 41 across 23 seasons, highlighting exceptional longevity, durability, and consistency in professional basketball. The Los Angeles Lakers secured a 105–104 victory over the Orlando Magic, with Luke Kennard scoring a buzzer-beating three-pointer, extending the Lakers' winning streak to nine games.
- **Arundhati Reddy Named International Cricket Council Women's Player of the Month for February 2026** Arundhati Reddy was named the International Cricket Council Women's Player of the Month for February 2026 for her outstanding performance in the Twenty20 International series against Australia. She emerged as the leading wicket-taker of the series, taking 8 wickets in 3 matches with a bowling average of 10.87 and an economy rate of 7.25, recording a career-best performance of 4 wickets for 22 runs in Sydney. This marks her first International Cricket Council Player of the Month award.

- **Sahibzada Farhan Named International Cricket Council Men's Player of the Month for February 2026** Sahibzada Farhan was named the International Cricket Council Men's Player of the Month for February 2026 following his outstanding performance in the International Cricket Council Men's Twenty20 World Cup 2026. He emerged as the highest run-scorer of the tournament, scoring 383 runs in 7 matches at an average of 76.60 and a strike rate of 160.25, including 2 centuries and 2 half-centuries. He broke the record for most runs in a single edition of the ICC Men's Twenty20 World Cup, surpassing Virat Kohli, and became the first batter to score two centuries in a single edition of the tournament.
- **India to Host World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028** in Bhubaneswar, Odisha India secured the hosting rights for the World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028, marking the first time the country will host this prestigious indoor athletics event, with the championships to be held at the Kalinga Indoor Athletics Stadium, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The announcement was made by Sebastian Coe, President of World Athletics, with India joining Asian countries such as Japan, Qatar, and China that have previously hosted the championships.
- **India Wins Two Bronze Medals & Assures Multiple Finals Spots at Asia Cup World Ranking Tournament Stage 1** India won two bronze medals in team events at the Asia Cup World Ranking Tournament Stage 1 in March 2026. The Women's Recurve Team comprising Ruma Biswas, Kirti, and Ridhi Phor defeated Malaysia 5–1 to win the bronze medal, while the Men's Compound Team comprising Rajat Chauhan, Rishabh Yadav, and Uday Kamboj secured the bronze medal after defeating Bhutan 234–232. Indian archers also secured multiple finals berths, ensuring strong medal prospects in upcoming matches.
- **Carolina Marín Retires from Professional Badminton at 32** Spanish Olympic and World Badminton Champion Carolina María Marín Martín announced retirement in March 2026 at age 32 after failing to recover from third serious knee injury. She held World Number One ranking for record 66 weeks, won Olympic gold (Rio 2016) becoming first non-Asian woman in singles badminton, and achieved 3 World Championships (2014, 2015, 2018) making her the first woman with this feat.
- **IOC Approves New Female Category Protection Policy for 2028 Olympics** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) approved 'Protection of the Female (Women's) Category in Olympic Sport' policy in March 2026, effective from LA28 Olympics (July 14-30, 2028). The policy requires SRY-negative testing for female category eligibility; SRY-positive athletes including XY transgender individuals are ineligible for female events except CAIS cases and certain DSD cases without testosterone advantage, implementing "once-in-a-lifetime sex test" using saliva/cheek swab/blood sample.

Schemes and Committees News

- **DoT Launches 5G Innovation Hackathon 2026** The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), under the Ministry of Communications, launched the '5G Innovation Hackathon 2026', the second edition of its flagship initiative under the '100 5G Use Case Labs program' in March 2026, to promote indigenous, scalable solutions using 5G, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies. Open to students, start-ups, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and independent innovators across India, the hackathon ran from March 20 to April 17, 2026, with final results announced on October 1, 2026. The hackathon offered a total prize pool exceeding ₹10 lakh, including ₹5,00,000 for first prize, ₹3,00,000 for second prize, and ₹1,50,000 for third prize, with ₹50,000 award for the Best Idea and IPR support for up to 25 teams.
- **MoRD Launches Real-time Internal Audit Portal to Revolutionize Governance and Oversight** The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) announced the operationalization of a comprehensive 'Internal Audit Portal' in March 2026, aimed at transitioning from conventional manual audit processes to a real-time, centralized digital system. The portal was developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), integrating Secretary-level access, enabling direct monitoring of audit performance across departments and helping senior leadership identify administrative bottlenecks. The portal is expected to reduce the 'compliance gap' by enhancing the speed at which audit observations are resolved.
- **NITI Aayog Sanctions ₹1.55 Crore to RISE Centre for Skill Development and Women-led Enterprise** The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) sanctioned ₹1.55 crore as financial assistance in March 2026 to support programs at Rural Incubation, Skilling and Entrepreneurship (RISE) Centre at Guntupalli in Ibrahimpatnam mandal, NTR district, Andhra Pradesh (AP). The approved financial assistance aims to empower women and help transform women from rural areas into entrepreneurs through AI-based skills survey, skill development and training programmes, with over 1,000 women already trained in domains like AI, spoken English, paper crafts, and solar panel installation, and more than 300 families having started their small enterprises.
- **Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Launches National AI Skilling Initiative, My WAVES, In-built TV Tuner** Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB), launched three major initiatives in March 2026: National AI Skilling Initiative, MyWAVES, and

Advanced Electronic Programme Guide (EPG) with in-built satellite tuners in Television (TV) sets. The **National AI Skilling Programme** was launched in partnership with **Google and YouTube**, designed to **train 15,000 participants from the creative and media sectors** through the **Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT)**. **MyWAVES**, introduced as a new feature within the **WAVES OTT platform**, allows citizens to **create, upload, and share content**, while the **Advanced EPG & In-built Satellite Tuner** enables viewers to watch **DD Free Dish channels** directly on TV sets without needing a **separate set-top box**.

- **MoE Issues 3-Year Action Plan for Nationwide Implementation of 'Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan'** A joint advisory from the **Secretary of Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSL)**, **Ministry of Education (MoE)**, and **Home Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, was issued in **March 2026** to the **Chief Secretaries of all States and Union Territories (UTs)** for **mission-mode implementation** of the **'Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) Action Plan'** in schools. The national initiative aims at **creating a drug-free India**, focusing on **preventing substance abuse among students** and raising awareness about the harmful effects of drugs in schools, with key provisions including **declaring a 500-metre radius around schools as drug-free zones** and requiring **school heads or nodal teachers to report any violations** to local authorities.
- **Government Revamps PM Internship Scheme 2026: Expands Scope, Eases Eligibility & Increases Stipend** The **Government revamped the PM Internship Scheme in March 2026** to improve participation and outcomes, expanding scope to include **new-age sectors** such as **semiconductors, renewable energy, and Global Capability Centres (GCCs)**. A major reform was the **removal of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) requirement** for companies, enabling **all companies to now participate**. Eligibility criteria were relaxed to allow **Postgraduates and MBA graduates**, with **minimum age reduced from 21 to 18 years** and **maximum age increased from 24 to 25 years**. The **monthly stipend was increased from ₹5,000 to ₹9,000**, with the **third phase** currently underway targeting **1 lakh (100,000) internship opportunities**.
- **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill 2026 Introduced in Parliament** **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill 2026** was introduced in **Lok Sabha** by **Minister Jitin Prasada** after **Union Cabinet approval**, proposing **784 amendments** across **79 Central Acts** under **23 Ministries**. The bill **decriminalizes 717 provisions** and amends **67 provisions** for ease of living, replacing **imprisonment with monetary penalties/warnings**, introducing **graded enforcement** and appointing **Adjudicating Officers and Appellate Authorities** for faster dispute resolution while maintaining **natural justice principles**.

- **Nutrient Based Subsidy Scheme Continues Supporting Balanced Fertilization** The **Government promotes Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme** providing subsidies based on **nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K), and sulphur (S)** content in fertilizers. In **FY 2024-25**, **Government allocated ₹1,77,129.50 crore** ensuring fertilizer availability at subsidized rates, with consumption trends showing **DAP declining to 96.29 LMT, NPKS reaching 149.72 LMT, and Nano Urea sales totaling 201.14 lakh bottles** (till Feb 2026) reflecting increasing farmer adoption.
- **Department of Fertilizers Highlights DBT System Implementation Success** The **Department of Fertilizers** highlighted successful **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system** implementation maintaining **₹1,77,129.50 crore fertilizer subsidy allocation** in **FY 2024-25**. The system employs **Aadhaar-based authentication at Point of Sale (PoS) devices**, enforcing **monthly limit of 50 bags** and **seasonal cap of 300 bags per farmer** to prevent hoarding while ensuring transparent delivery to farmers.

Science and Technology News

- **NIOT Tests Indigenous Floating LiDAR Buoy to Enhance Weather Forecasting & Offshore Wind Energy** The **National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)**, an autonomous body under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**, successfully tested an **indigenously developed Floating Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) Buoy System** off the coast of **Muttom, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu (TN)** in **March 2026**. The **Floating LiDAR Buoy** is an **ocean-based device** that uses **LiDAR technology** mounted on a floating platform to **measure offshore wind speed and direction** at various heights, providing accurate, continuous data even in deep-sea areas where traditional towers are not feasible. The technology **enhances weather forecasting, cyclone prediction** through improved atmospheric and oceanographic modelling and **supports offshore wind energy** through better modelling, assessment, and optimization of renewable energy generation.
- **Gol Establishes Rare Earth Magnet Pilot Plant at ARCI Hyderabad, Telangana** The **Government of India (Gol)** established a **pilot plant** for manufacturing **Neodymium-Iron-Boron (Nd-Fe-B) rare earth permanent magnets** at the **International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI)** under the **Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science & Technology (MoS&T)**, in **Hyderabad, Telangana** in **March 2026**. The newly established **pilot-plant** uses an **end-to-end process** which includes **strip-cast alloy production to finished sintered magnets**, enabling the development of a **robust and self-reliant manufacturing system**. These **high-performance magnets** are **essential for electric vehicles (EV), Renewable Energy (RE) systems, and advanced electronics**, and the initiative is expected to **reduce import dependence** while strengthening **India's position in the global rare earth supply chain**.

- ZSI Scientists Discover New Cockroach Species 'Neoloboptera peninsularis' in Maharashtra** Scientists from the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** discovered a **new species of cockroach**, named '**Neoloboptera peninsularis**', in the **agricultural areas of the Deccan Peninsula**, specifically in **Nathachiwadi, Pune (Maharashtra)** in **March 2026**. The discovery was published in the scientific journal '**Records of ZSI**', and the study used **integrative taxonomy**, combining **morphological analysis, genitalic study, DNA barcoding, and phylogenetic analysis**, marking it as the **first DNA-based cockroach identification in India**. The species is the **third of the genus Neoloboptera** recorded in India, raising the **total cockroach species count to 190**, about **3.8% of global cockroach diversity**, and confirming it as **endemic to India**.
- IIT-Kharagpur and PRL Scientists Study Formation of Titanium-Rich Lunar Basalts** Researchers from **IIT-Kharagpur and Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad**, conducted a study on the **formation of titanium-rich basalts on the Moon**, published in **Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta** in **March 2026**. **Lunar volcanic rocks** contain unusually high levels of **titanium dioxide (TiO₂)**, with some basalts having up to **18% TiO₂**, compared to less than **2% TiO₂** in **Earth's volcanic rocks**. Researchers simulated **lunar interior conditions** using **high-pressure and high-temperature experiments**, replicating depths of up to **700 km** inside the Moon, with findings expected to aid planning for future lunar missions, including **India's Chandrayaan-4 mission (2028)**.
- Agnikul Cosmos Successfully Test Fires World's First Fully 3D-Printed Booster Engine 'Agnite'** Agnikul Cosmos Private Limited, an **end-to-end space transportation company**, successfully conducted a **critical booster engine test** of its rocket engine '**Agnite**' at the **Agnikul Launchpad (ALP-01) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu (TN)** in **March 2026**. The test marked a **major milestone in India's private space sector**, with **Agnikul successfully testing a full metre-long rocket engine**. The **Agnite engine is fully 3D printed**, reducing **manufacturing time from 7 months to just 7 days**, significantly **lowering costs to one-tenth** and improving production efficiency. The test demonstrated **large-scale 3D printing capability**, positioning **Agnikul as a leader in advanced aerospace manufacturing**.
- National Biodiversity Authority Constitutes Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species** The **National Biodiversity Authority**, a statutory body under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, constituted a **multi-disciplinary Expert Committee on Invasive Alien Species** in **March 2026** under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002 (amended in 2023)**. The committee, formed to address **rising ecological and socio-economic threats** to biodiversity and food security in India, has **Dhananjai Mohan**, former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of **Uttarakhand**, as Chair and **A. Biju Kumar**, Vice Chancellor of **Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies**, as Co-Chair for a **two-year tenure**. The committee will **prepare a consolidated national list of invasive alien species**,
- prioritize high-risk species**, and **recommend science-based strategies** for prevention, control, eradication, and ecological restoration.
- Central Electricity Authority Releases National Generation Adequacy Plan 2026–27 to 2035–36** The **Central Electricity Authority** under the **Ministry of Power** released the **midterm review of the 20th Electric Power Survey** titled "**National Generation Adequacy Plan (2026–27 to 2035–36)**" during the **Bharat Electricity Summit 2026** held at **Yashobhoomi, New Delhi** in **March 2026**. India's installed **power generation capacity** is projected to **increase from around 520 Gigawatt (as of January 31, 2026) to 1,121 Gigawatt by 2035–36**. **Solar Photovoltaic capacity** is expected to lead the energy mix with **509 Gigawatt capacity (45 percent share) by 2035–36**, followed by **coal-based capacity at 315 Gigawatt (28 percent share)** and **wind power at 155 Gigawatt (14 percent share)**.
- Elon Musk Unveils Terafab, Set to Become the Largest Semiconductor Factory Globally** **Elon Musk** launched the "**Terafab**" project in **March 2026** to manufacture **in-house AI chips** for robotics, artificial intelligence, and space technologies. The project will be set up in **Austin, Texas**, and will be jointly operated by **Tesla and SpaceX**, with involvement from **xAI**. **Terafab** will begin with an **advanced technology fabrication unit**, producing **2-nanometre chips**, with a projected cost of **\$20–25 billion**. The facility is expected to support **100–200 GW of computing power annually** and produce **1 million chip wafers per month**, compared to **TSMC's plan to produce 140,000 2-nanometer chip wafers per month by end of 2026**.
- New Wild Kiwi Species "Actinidia indica" Discovered in Arunachal Pradesh** by **BSI Scientists** from the **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** identified a **new species of wild kiwi** named "**Actinidia indica**" in **Arunachal Pradesh** in **March 2026**. The discovery was recorded near **Ziro Valley, Arunachal Pradesh**, at an **elevation of 1,725 metres**, adding to **India's botanical diversity** and highlighting the **ecological richness of the Eastern Himalayas**. The species grows in a **transition zone between temperate and subtropical forests** with **high biodiversity and favourable climatic conditions**, increasing the **global count of Actinidia species to 56**, with few species found in India.



- **Desert Moss *Syntrichia caninervis* Identified as Key for Future Mars Ecosystems** *Syntrichia caninervis*, a resilient desert moss, was identified as a **potential candidate for future Mars colonisation** in **March 2026**, with the study published in **The Innovation** journal. The moss can **survive extreme dehydration, freezing temperatures, and intense radiation**, making it highly adaptable to harsh conditions. It can **lose over 98% of its cellular water and enter a dormant state**, resuming **photosynthesis within seconds when exposed to moisture**. Tested in **simulated Martian conditions** with high carbon dioxide, low pressure, and UV radiation, the **moss survived for several days** and regenerated growth, with resilience due to **efficient cellular repair systems** that recover damage lethal to other organisms.
- **BHASHINI Initiative Enhances Multilingual Digital Governance** The **Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD)** under **MeitY** implemented **BHASHINI (National Language Translation Mission)** supporting **36 Indian languages, 23 voices, and 35 international languages** as **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**. The AI-driven initiative uses **APIs and AI models for real-time translation and contextual language processing** with **voice-enabled interfaces** featuring **speech-to-text and text-to-speech technologies**.
- **Project 'Vayu Baan' Develops Autonomous Helicopter-Launched Drone** The **Indian Air Force's Directorate of Aerospace Design (DAD)** initiated **'Vayu Baan'** project in **March 2026** issuing **Request for Proposal (RFP)** to design **small autonomous drone** deployed from **moving helicopter mid-flight** that **unfolds wings and activates propulsion** post-release. The system allows **50+ km stand-off engagement distance**, protecting aircrew from **MANPADS range**, making India **3rd country** after **USA and China** with this capability.
- **IIT Ropar's ANNAM.AI Deploys 100 AI-Based Weather Stations** **ANNAM.AI** (Government-supported Centre of Excellence at **IIT Ropar**) launched initiative deploying **100 AI-based weather stations** across **Punjab by March 30, 2026**. The hyperlocal real-time weather data system, provided free to farmers, improves decisions on **sowing, irrigation, and crop protection**, enhancing **farm productivity and climate resilience** as **digital public good** supported by **Ministry of Education** with planned expansion to **Haryana, UP, Kerala, Odisha, Bihar, J&K, HP, Maharashtra**.
- **National Commission for Women Partners with Truecaller for Digital Safety** The **National Commission for Women (NCW)** collaborated with **Truecaller** launching **"TrueCyberSakhi: A Digital Safety Toolkit, Created for Her"** initiative at **Sushma Swaraj Bhawan**. The toolkit includes **interactive modules, quizzes, self-assessment tools** educating on **spam, phishing, impersonation, harassment, financial fraud**, and provides **NCW 24x7 helpline** guidance

with **Truecaller's Government Directory Service (GDS)** verification improving trust and access to institutional support.

- **NASA Announces Major Artemis Program Shift Toward Moon Surface Base** **NASA** scrapped **Lunar Gateway space station** plan in **March 2026**, announcing **\$20 billion lunar surface base** construction under **Artemis Program** with step-by-step approach similar to **Apollo Program**. **NASA Chief Jared Isaacman** unveiled plans for **nuclear-powered Mars mission** with **"Space Reactor 1 Freedom"** spacecraft launching **before 2028** featuring **advanced nuclear electric propulsion** and **Mars helicopters**, targeting **Moon astronaut landing by 2028**.

Important Days News

- **World Sparrow Day 2026 – March 20** **World Sparrow Day (WSD)** is observed globally on **March 20** each year to highlight the **alarming decline in sparrow populations**, especially the **house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)**, and to encourage efforts toward their **conservation and the protection of urban biodiversity**. **March 20, 2026** marked the **17th observance of the WSD**, with the **2026 Theme** being **"Creating Bird-Friendly Cities & Communities."** **WSD** was initiated by the **Nature Forever Society (NFS)**, founded by **Mohammed Dilawar**, in collaboration with the **Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France)**, with the **first WSD** celebrated on **March 20, 2010**.
- **World Day of Theatre for Children and Young People 2026 – March 20** The **World Day of Theatre for Children and Young People** is observed annually across the globe on **March 20** to advocate for the **cultural rights of youth** and promote the **transformative power of live performance**. The **2026 campaign** is centered on the theme: **"Staging the Rights of the Child to Arts and Culture."** The day was established in **2001** by the **International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People** or **Association Internationale du Théâtre de l'Enfance et la Jeunesse (ASSITEJ)**, with the **first celebration worldwide** on **March 20, 2001**.
- **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2026 – March 21** The **United Nations (UN)** observes the **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** annually on **March 21** to raise awareness about **racism, racial discrimination**, and the challenges faced by **people of African descent** and other affected communities. **2026** marked the **61st anniversary** of the **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Racial of Discrimination (ICERD)**. The day was first observed on **March 21, 1967**, following the **UN General Assembly's adoption of Resolution A/RES/2142 (XXI)** on **October 26, 1966**.

- **World Down Syndrome Day 2026 – March 21** The United Nations (UN) observes World Down Syndrome Day (WDSO) annually on March 21 to raise awareness and promote the rights, inclusion, and well-being of people with Down syndrome. March 21, 2026 marked the 15th observance of WDSO, with the 2026 Theme being "Together Against Loneliness." The global awareness campaign began in 2006 when the Down Syndrome Association Singapore, on behalf of Down Syndrome International (DSI), launched and hosted the WDSO website (2006–2010), with the UN officially declaring March 21 as WDSO through Resolution A/RES/66/149 on December 19, 2011.
- **International Nowruz Day 2026 – March 21** The United Nations (UN's) International Nowruz Day is observed annually across the world on March 21 to promote cultural exchange, peace, solidarity, and good neighbourliness. On February 23, 2010, the UNGA adopted Resolution A/RES/64/253, officially declaring March 21 as International Nowruz Day, with the inaugural International Nowruz Day celebrated on March 21, 2010. Nowruz was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009.
- **World Poetry Day 2026 – March 21** The United Nations (UN) observed World Poetry Day every year across the world on March 21 to promote linguistic diversity and support endangered languages through poetry. March 21, 2026 marked the observance of the 27th World Poetry Day, with the 2026 Theme being "Poetry as a Bridge for Peace and Inclusion." In 1999, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaimed March 21 (first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere) as World Poetry Day during its 30th General Conference in Paris, France, with the first World Poetry Day observed on March 21, 2000.
- **World Glacier Day 2026 – March 21** The United Nations (UN's) World Glacier Day is observed annually across the globe on March 21 to highlight the urgent need to protect glaciers, emphasizing their vital role in ecosystems, freshwater supply, and climate stability. March 21, 2026 marked the 2nd World Glacier Day, following the UN General Assembly's (UNGA) declaration through Resolution A/RES/77/158 (2022), with the day first observed on March 21, 2025. The UNGA proclaimed 2025 as the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, supported by UNESCO and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
- **International Day of Forests 2026 – March 21** The United Nations (UN's) International Day of Forests (IDF) is observed annually across the globe on March 21 to celebrate all types of forests and raise global awareness about their importance and the need to protect them. March 21, 2026 marked the 14th observance of IDF, with the 2026 Theme being "Forests and Economies." The UNGA proclaimed March 21 as IDF through Resolution A/RES/67/200 on December 21, 2012, with the first IDF observed on March 21, 2013, organized by the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of UN.
- **World Puppetry Day 2026 – March 21** World Puppetry Day (WPD) is observed annually across the world on March 21 to celebrate puppetry as a global art form and educational tool, and to honour puppeteers worldwide. WPD was launched in 2003 by UNIMA (Union Internationale de la Marionnette), to unite puppetry artists worldwide, with the first WPD observed on March 21, 2003. The annual observance of WPD is led by UNIMA, the world's oldest international theatre organisation and an NGO affiliated with UNESCO.
- **World Water Day 2026 – March 22** The United Nations (UN's) World Water Day is observed annually across the globe on March 22 to emphasize the significance of freshwater and raise awareness about the worldwide water crisis. The 2026 Theme is "Water and Gender" with the sub-theme "Where water flows, equality grows." The day was first observed on March 22, 1993, following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. World Water Day is annually organized by United Nations Water (UN-Water) and led by one or more of its Members and Partners with relevant mandates.
- **World Meteorological Day 2026 – March 23** The United Nations (UN's) World Meteorological Day (WMD) is annually observed across the globe on March 23 to raise awareness about the vital role of understanding weather and climate and to commemorate the formal establishment of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1950. The 2026 Theme is "Observing Today, Protecting Tomorrow." WMD was declared by the WMO, during its 12th Executive Committee session (EC-XII) held from June 27 to July 15, 1960, adopting Resolution 6 (EC-XII) proclaiming March 23 as WMD, with the 1st Observance held on March 23, 1961.
- **Shaheed Diwas 2026 – March 23** Shaheed Diwas or Martyrs' Day is observed annually across India on March 23 to commemorate the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar, who were executed by the British. The three revolutionaries were arrested for their involvement in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, which included the assassination of British officer John Saunders in 1928. On March 23, 1931, the three revolutionaries were executed by the British government at Lahore Central Jail (now in Pakistan), with the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) annually organising Shaheed Diwas across India to honour the sacrifices of freedom fighters.

- **World Tuberculosis Day 2026 – March 24** World Tuberculosis Day (WTD) is observed annually across the globe on **March 24** every year to raise awareness about Tuberculosis (TB), a preventable and curable infectious disease, and to accelerate efforts toward its elimination. The 2026 Theme is "Yes! We Can End TB! Led by Countries, Powered by People." In 1982, on the centenary of Koch's discovery, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (IUATLD) and the World Health Organization (WHO) proposed designating **March 24** as **World TB Day**, with the first official World TB Day observed on **March 24, 1983**.
- **International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations – March 24** The United Nations (UN's) International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims is observed annually across the world on **March 24** to honour victims of serious human rights abuses and promote justice. The day also commemorates Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero of El Salvador, who was assassinated on **March 24, 1980** for opposing oppression and violence. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution A/RES/65/196 on **December 21, 2010**, officially designating **March 24** as this international day, with the day first observed on **March 24, 2011**.
- **International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade 2026 – March 25** The United Nations (UN's) International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is observed annually across the world on **March 25** each year to honour millions who suffered under the transatlantic slave trade, one of history's gravest human rights violations. The 2026 Theme is "Justice in Action: Confronting History, Advancing Dignity, Empowering Futures." The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution A/RES/62/122 on **December 17, 2007**, proclaiming **March 25** as this international day, with the day first observed on **March 25, 2008**.
- **International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members 2026 – March 25** The United Nations (UN's) International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members is observed annually on **March 25** each year to honour personnel who face detention, abduction, or violence during peace and humanitarian missions. The day marks the anniversary of the 1985 abduction of Alec Collett, a journalist with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), who was kidnapped in Lebanon by the Abu Nidal group.
- **World Theatre Day 2026 – March 27** World Theatre Day was observed globally on **March 27, 2026**. The theme for 2026 is "Theatre and a Culture of Peace." The day highlights the importance of theatre arts in educating, entertaining, and promoting social change across societies. World Theatre Day was designated in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute (ITI), celebrating the essence, beauty, and significance of theatre arts and their role in cultural expression and public awareness, with the first World Theatre Day celebrated in 1962 by ITI Centres, Theatre professionals, and organisations worldwide.
- **World Theatre Day 2026 Observed on March 27** World Theatre Day was observed globally on **March 27, 2026**, marking the 64th observance of the annual celebration recognizing theatre's cultural importance and role in promoting global unity. Initiated in 1961 by International Theatre Institute (ITI) founded in 1948 by UNESCO, the first observance was **March 27, 1962**, marking Theatre of Nations season opening in Paris; 2026 celebration held **March 25-27** in Luxembourg City, Luxembourg.
- **Earth Hour 2026 Observed on March 28** Earth Hour 2026 was observed globally on **March 28, 2026**, marking the 20th year of the annual event organized by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The campaign encouraged switching off non-essential electric lights from **8:30-9:30 PM** as commitment symbol to the planet. Earth Hour was first launched by WWF in 2007 in Sydney, Australia (March 31, 2007) as "lights off" initiative to raise awareness about environmental challenges.

Obituaries News

- **Veteran BJP Leader and Former MP 'Datta Meghe' Passed Away** Veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former Member of Parliament (MP) 'Datta Meghe' passed away at the age of 89 in Maharashtra in March 2026. He was born on **November 11, 1936**, in Pawnar village of Wardha district, Maharashtra, with his political career spanning over five decades across multiple legislative bodies. He was first elected to the Maharashtra Legislative Council (MLC) in 1978 and served three consecutive terms until 1991, served as a four-time LS MP from Nagpur, Ramtek, and Wardha, and also served as an RS member from 2002 to 2008.
- **French Former PM Lionel Jospin, Architect of 35-hour Week, Passed Away** Lionel Robert Jospin, former Prime Minister (PM) of France, passed away at the age of 88 in Paris, France in March 2026. He was born on **July 12, 1937** in Meudon, near Paris, France, and served as PM of France from 1997 to 2002 under President Jacques Chirac. He enacted the Parity Law and introduced Civil Unions (CU) for both LGBTQ+ and heterosexual couples, and reduced the work week from 39 hours to 35 hours, a landmark labour reform in France.

- **Birutė Galdikas, Renowned Orangutan Expert, Passes Away at 79** **Birutė Galdikas**, globally renowned orangutan researcher, passed away in March 2026 at age 79 after decades of wildlife research in Borneo, significantly contributing to understanding and conservation of endangered orangutan species through pioneering field studies and advocacy.
- **E A Rajendran, Veteran Malayalam Actor, Dies at 71** **E A Rajendran**, veteran Malayalam actor and theatre artist, passed away in March 2026 at age 71 after a long illness, leaving significant impact on Malayalam film industry and theatre arts community through his distinguished career spanning multiple decades.

Miscellaneous News

- **Lok Sabha Passes Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026** The Lok Sabha passed the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 in March 2026. The Bill redefines the term "transgender" by excluding sexual orientation and self-perceived gender identity from its scope, aiming to bring clarity in implementation of welfare schemes. The amended definition focuses on traditionally and socially recognised transgender communities, including Hijras, Kinnars, Aravanis, Jogtas, and persons with intersex variations. The amendment introduces graded punishments for offences against transgender persons, with the maximum punishment increased from 2 years (under the 2019 Act) to 14 years imprisonment.
- **Supreme Court Rules SC Status Lost After Conversion to Christianity** The Supreme Court of India ruled in March 2026 that Scheduled Caste (SC) status is limited to persons professing Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism. The Court clarified that conversion to Christianity results in immediate loss of SC status, irrespective of birth background. The ruling upheld an earlier decision of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, reinforcing the constitutional framework governing caste-based reservations and protections under the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.



- **Pondicherry University Introduces 'Blue Voice' Mobile App to Aid Coastal Fishing Communities** Pondicherry University launched a mobile application named 'Blue Voice' in March 2026 to improve safety and disaster preparedness among coastal fishing communities. The initiative aims to bridge critical information gaps by delivering real-time, location-specific weather updates in a simplified and accessible format, with a user-friendly interface suitable for those with limited digital literacy. The app provides precise, real-time weather data tailored to specific coastal locations, helping fishers anticipate sudden climatic changes with timely alerts on storms, wind patterns, and sea conditions.
- **Chandigarh University Uttar Pradesh Launches Centre of Excellence in Smart Healthcare** Chandigarh University, Uttar Pradesh, India's first private Artificial Intelligence-augmented multidisciplinary university, launched a Centre of Excellence in Smart Healthcare in March 2026 to strengthen the state's vision of AI-driven healthcare and governance. The Centre of Excellence is headed by Thipendra P. Singh, Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Pro Vice Chancellor. The infrastructure is powered by advanced Graphics Processing Unit systems with 168 Gigabyte memory, based on NVIDIA Blackwell architecture, enabling high-end research and AI model development.
- **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited Launches India's First LPG ATM in Gurugram, Haryana** Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, launched India's first Liquefied Petroleum Gas Automated Teller Machine in Gurugram, Haryana in March 2026. The initiative was launched under the BharatGas Insta Liquefied Petroleum Gas pilot project to enable automated round-the-clock Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinder distribution in urban areas. The LPG Automated Teller Machine ensures continuous availability of LPG cylinders, especially during supply disruptions and emergency situations, with key features including Mobile One-Time Password based customer verification, Quick Response code or barcode scanning, and UPI and debit card digital payment.
- **PRISM-SG Portal Launched to Digitise and Fast-Track Approval Processes for ROBs** Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari and Hon'ble Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting, Electronics & IT Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw launched the PRISM-SG (Portal for Rail-Road Inspection & Stages Management – Steel Girders) Portal in New Delhi in March 2026 to enhance efficiency, transparency, and inter-agency coordination in infrastructure development. The PRISM-SG Portal is designed to digitise key approval and inspection processes for the construction of Road Over Bridges (ROBs), enabling end-to-end online submission of documents, scrutiny, raising and resolution of queries, approvals, and inspection scheduling. The initiative is expected to reduce the approval and inspection timeline from around 12 months to 3–4 months.

- Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust Listed on BSE with 14-Times Oversubscription** The Raajmarg Infra Investment Trust (RIIT), sponsored by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), was listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) in March 2026, in the presence of Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari. The maiden public issue of RIIT witnessed a highly successful response, being oversubscribed nearly 14 times, reflecting strong investor confidence in India's infrastructure sector and highway assets. The RIIT aims to monetise national highway assets, with a target to monetise 1,500 km of highways over the next 3 years.
- GHADC Makes Scheduled Tribe Certificate Mandatory to Contest Council Elections in Meghalaya** The Garo Hills Autonomous District Council in Meghalaya passed an amendment on March 24, 2026 making a Scheduled Tribe certificate mandatory to contest its elections. The amendment aims to reinforce the tribal character of the council by restricting eligibility to members of recognised Scheduled Tribes of Meghalaya. An earlier notification issued on February 17, 2026 attempting to enforce a similar rule was struck down by the Meghalaya High Court due to procedural lapses, with the amendment now following proper legislative procedure.
- Raksha Mantri Chairs Ministry of Defence Parliamentary Consultative Committee Meeting on BRO** Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh chaired a Parliamentary Consultative Committee meeting for the Ministry of Defence on the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in New Delhi in March 2026, discussing defence, infrastructure development, and strategic initiatives for national security and operational preparedness. The BRO has enhanced mobility of defence forces and positively transformed the lives of local residents, with the organization tasked with developing infrastructure along the Indo-Myanmar border spanning approximately 1,600 km. Since its establishment in 1960, the BRO has constructed over 64,000 km of roads, 1,179 bridges, 22 airfields, and 7 tunnels.
- US Currency Design Change Announced with Trump Signature** The US Treasury announced in March 2026 that US currency notes will feature President Donald Trump's signature from June 2026 onwards, marking a historic shift in American currency design reflecting presidential tradition updates.
- TV Ratings Policy (TRP) 2026 Released for Enhanced Transparency** The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting released TV Ratings Policy 2026 on March 27, 2026, reducing minimum net worth requirement for TV rating agencies from ₹20 crore to ₹5 crore, mandating 50% independent directors, expanding to 80,000 metered homes (18 months) eventually 1,20,000 homes. The policy introduces quarterly internal + annual external audits, Nodal Officer for 10-day complaint resolution, and graded penalties (temporary suspension to registration cancellation) for violations ensuring transparency, accountability, and privacy compliance under Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.
- Department of Financial Services Reviews Long-Pending Grievances** The Department of Financial Services (DFS) conducted 18 video conferences since 2024 reviewing 360 total grievances with RBI, IRDAI, banks, insurers, and 20 randomly selected CPGRAMS complainants. Notable resolutions include: ₹2,00,000 PMSBY claim (PNB, June 2025), ₹9,65,000 LIC superannuation (June 2025), ₹33,058 pensioner arrears (BoM, July 2025), ₹18,53,121 HDFC Ergo medical claim (Oct 2025), ₹13,30,000 Axis Max death claim (Dec 2025), ₹10,00,000 Canara HSBC mis-selling (Dec 2025), ₹14,75,299 family pension since 2003 (Feb 2026), demonstrating effective grievance redressal mechanism strengthening governance transparency.

Static Takeaways

Category	Entity	Key Details
Ministry	Ministry of Finance	Minister: Nirmala Sitharaman
Organization	World Trade Organization	Founded: 1995; HQ: Geneva; DG: Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala; Members: 166
Organization	SEBI	Estd: 1988; HQ: Mumbai; Chairman: Tuhin Kanta Pandey
Organization	IRDAI	Founded: 1999; HQ: Hyderabad; Chairperson: Ajay Seth
Organization	NABARD	Founded: 1982; HQ: Mumbai; Chairman: Shaji K V
Organization	NITI Aayog	Founded: 2015; VC: Suman Bery; CEO: Nidhi Chhibber
Organization	ICAI	Founded: 1949; HQ: New Delhi; President: Charanjot Singh Nanda
Organization	CCI	Founded: 2003; HQ: New Delhi; Chairperson: Ravneet Kaur
Organization	PFRDA	Estd: 2003; HQ: New Delhi; Chairman: Sivasubramanian Ramann

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Category	Entity	Key Details
Organization	UNESCO	Founded: 1945; HQ: Paris; DG: Khaled El-Enany
Organization	International Olympic Committee	Founded: 1894; HQ: Lausanne; President: Kirsty Coventry
Bank	Bank of Baroda	Founded: 1908; HQ: Vadodara; CEO: Debadatta Chand
Bank	South Indian Bank	Founded: 1929; HQ: Thrissur; CEO: P R Seshadri
Bank	Karnataka Grameena Bank	Founded: 2025; HQ: Ballari; Chairman: Shrikant M Bhandiwad
State	Haryana	CM: Nayab Singh Saini; Governor: Ashim Kumar Ghosh; Capital: Chandigarh
State	Uttar Pradesh	CM: Yogi Adityanath; Governor: Anandiben Patel; Capital: Lucknow
State	Telangana	CM: Anumula Revanth Reddy; Governor: Shiv Pratap Shukla; Capital: Hyderabad
State	Punjab	CM: Bhagwant Mann; Governor: Gulab Chand Kataria; Capital: Chandigarh
UT	Delhi	CM: Rekha Gupta; LG: Vinai Kumar Saxena; Capital: New Delhi
Country	Indonesia	Capital: Jakarta; President: Prabowo Subianto; Currency: Rupiah
Country	Bhutan	Capital: Thimphu; King: Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck
Country	Italy	Capital: Rome; President: Sergio Mattarella; Currency: Euro
Ministry	Ministry of Rural Development	Minister: Shivraj Singh Chouhan
Ministry	Ministry of Road Transport and Highways	Minister: Nitin Gadkari
Ministry	Ministry of Defence	Minister: Rajnath Singh
Ministry	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment	Minister: Virendra Kumar Khatik

