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# Current Affairs Today – February 3, 2026

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# Current Affairs Today — February 3, 2026

3 February 2026

## WHY IN NEWS

February 3, 2026 brought India's 97th and 98th Ramsar sites on World Wetlands Day, a landmark India-US tariff deal reducing reciprocal duties from 50% to 18%, the Delhi Declaration 2026 from the India-Arab League summit, and a 16th Finance Commission warning on the fiscal risks of rapidly expanding state cash transfer schemes.

## DRDO SUCCESSFULLY TESTS SOLID FUEL DUCTED RAMJET (SFDR) PROPULSION

**DRDO** successfully demonstrated **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)** propulsion technology on **February 3, 2026** at approximately 10:45 AM from the **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur**, off the coast of Odisha. Participating labs: Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL), Research Centre Imarat (RCI), and ITR. Unlike conventional solid rockets that exhaust their fuel quickly, SFDR uses **atmospheric oxygen** to sustain combustion of solid fuel during cruise flight — delivering higher speed, extended range, and greater manoeuvrability. A ground booster motor initially accelerates the missile to the required Mach number, then the SFDR engine engages. Key subsystems validated: Nozzle-less Booster, Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet motor, Fuel Flow Controller. **India joins a select club of nations** (USA, Russia, France, China) possessing this technology — considered the “holy grail” of Beyond Visual Range (BVR) aerial warfare. Future use: **Astra Mk-3** and next-generation long-range air-to-air missiles for the **Indian Air Force**.

**UPSC Angle (GS3):** Science & Technology, defence indigenisation, Aatmanirbhar Bharat, BVR missile capability.

## YANTRA INDIA LIMITED GRANTED MINIRATNA CATEGORY-I STATUS

**Yantra India Limited (YIL)** — a Defence Public Sector Undertaking headquartered in **Nagpur** formed from the corporatisation of the **Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) in 2021** — was granted **Miniratna Category-I** status by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Miniratna Category-I powers: Board can independently approve capital expenditure up to **Rs 500 crore** (or net worth, whichever is less); enter joint ventures, subsidiaries, and M&A; design HR policies. YIL manufactures ammunition and weapons; is a profit-making CPSE. CPSE hierarchy: Maharatna → Navratna → Miniratna Cat-I → Miniratna Cat-II.

**UPSC Angle (GS3):** Defence manufacturing, CPSE classification, Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence, 2021 OFB reform.

## INDIAN COAST GUARD — 50TH RAISING DAY (FEBRUARY 1)

The **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** celebrated its **50th Raising Day on February 1, 2026**. Established **February 1, 1977** under the Ministry of Defence; formally inaugurated **August 19, 1978** by PM Morarji Desai under the **Coast Guard Act, 1978**. 2026 theme: “Suraksha, Seva, Samarpan” (Security, Service, Dedication). Strength: **206 surface platforms, 77 aircraft**; 4th-largest Maritime Law Enforcement Agency globally. Maritime mandate: Guards India’s **7,516 km coastline** and **2.01 million sq km Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**. Achievements: 4,219+ Search and Rescue (SAR) missions; 11,806 lives rescued.

**UPSC Angle (GS3):** Maritime security, EEZ governance, Coast Guard Act 1978, difference from Navy.

## CARLOS ALCARAZ COMPLETES CAREER GRAND SLAM — AUSTRALIAN OPEN 2026

**Carlos Alcaraz** (Spain, World No.1) won the **2026 Australian Open** Men’s Singles title, defeating Novak Djokovic (Serbia) 2-6, 6-2, 6-3, 7-5 at Melbourne Park. Alcaraz became the **youngest man to complete the Career Grand Slam at 22 years, 272 days** — surpassing Rafael Nadal’s record (24 years, 101 days). Career Slam titles: 2 French Opens, 2 Wimbledons, 2 US Opens, 1 Australian Open = **7 Grand Slam titles**. Sixth man in the Open Era to complete the Career Grand Slam. **Women’s Singles:** Elena Rybakina (Kazakhstan) defeated Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus) 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 — first Kazakh woman to win the Australian Open.

**UPSC Angle (Prelims):** Persons in News; Career Grand Slam, Australian Open venue (Melbourne Park, Rod Laver Arena).

## DEVIKA SIHAG WINS BWF THAILAND MASTERS SUPER 300

**Devika Sihag** (India, World Rank 63) won the **Women’s Singles title at the BWF Thailand Masters Super 300** tournament. Final: Devika defeated **Goh Jin Wei** (Malaysia, former Junior World Champion) — Jin Wei retired hurt trailing 21-8, 6-3. Devika became the **third Indian woman to win a BWF Super 300+ Women’s Singles title** — after **PV Sindhu** and **Saina Nehwal**.

**UPSC Angle (Prelims):** Persons in News, India’s rise in badminton.

## TWO NEW RAMSAR WETLAND SITES — INDIA REACHES 98 (HIGHEST IN SOUTH ASIA)

India added **Patna Bird Sanctuary** (Etah district, Uttar Pradesh) and **Chhari-Dhand Wetland Reserve** (Kutch district, Gujarat) to the Ramsar List on the occasion of **World Wetlands Day (February 2, 2026)**. India’s total Ramsar sites now stand at **98** — the highest in South Asia. The **Ramsar Convention** was signed on **February 2, 1971** in Ramsar, Iran; there are 172 contracting parties and 2,520+ listed sites globally.

World Wetlands Day 2026 theme: “Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge: Celebrating Cultural Heritage.” Chhari-Dhand in Kutch supports flamingos and the Desert Fox. Tamil Nadu leads among Indian states with **20 Ramsar sites**. India’s wetlands cover ~15.9 million hectares (~5% of land area).

**UPSC Angle (GS3):** Environment — wetland conservation, Ramsar Convention, biodiversity.

## INDIA-US TARIFF DEAL — RECIPROCAL DUTIES SLASHED FROM 50% TO 18%

EAM **S. Jaishankar** visited Washington D.C. (February 2–4, 2026) and met **US Secretary of State Marco Rubio** on February 3. The US reduced reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods from **50% to 18%** — a rollback encompassing the “**Liberation Day**” tariffs (imposed April 2025) and the **25% Russian oil penalty tariff**. India’s total goods imports in FY2024–25 were **\$720.24 billion**. Reports indicate India will commit to significant purchases from the US in energy (LNG, coal), technology, agricultural goods, and nuclear equipment, and will gradually reduce Russian oil imports. The deal is framed as part of strategic alignment against China’s supply chain dominance.

**UPSC Angle (GS2/GS3):** India-US bilateral trade, strategic autonomy, energy security trade-offs.

## JAISHANKAR AT INAUGURAL US CRITICAL MINERALS MINISTERIAL — INDIA JOINS PAX SILICA

India formally joined **Pax Silica** — a coalition to build secure supply chains for silicon and critical minerals essential for semiconductors, advanced computing, and AI hardware — at the first-ever **US Critical Minerals Ministerial** in Washington D.C. (February 3–4). Jaishankar emphasised “risks from excessive concentration in global supply chains.” China controls **60–80%** of global processing of most critical minerals. India’s **National Critical Mineral Mission (2025)** and Pax Silica membership form part of its critical mineral supply security strategy. Other participants: major democracies co-hosted by US Secretary of State Rubio.

**UPSC Angle (GS2/GS3):** Multilateral diplomacy, India-US technology partnership, semiconductor supply chain.

## DELHI DECLARATION 2026 — INDIA-ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS SUMMIT

India hosted the **second India-Arab League Foreign Ministers’ Summit** (first was held in Bahrain a decade ago), with all **22 League of Arab States members** participating. The **Delhi Declaration 2026** was adopted, covering Sudan, Libya, Somalia, Yemen, Syria, and Israel-Palestine. Notable positions: India explicitly condemned the **Houthis** (a shift from earlier policy avoidance); reaffirmed support for the **Arab Peace Initiative (2002)** on Israel-Palestine (land-for-peace: Arab recognition of Israel in exchange for

independent Palestinian state on pre-1967 borders); declined Trump’s “Board of Peace” proposal. India-Arab League trade exceeds **\$240 billion** annually. ~9 million Indians in Gulf states; remittances ~**\$40 billion/year**.

**UPSC Angle (GS2):** India-West Asia policy, strategic autonomy, diaspora diplomacy, multilateral forums.

## 16TH FINANCE COMMISSION FLAGS FISCAL RISK OF CASH TRANSFER SCHEMES

The **16th Finance Commission** (constituted under **Article 280** of the Constitution) warned that unconditional cash transfers by states grew from **3% of state subsidy spending (2018–19)** to **20.2% (2025–26 Budget Estimates)**. States most affected: **Maharashtra** (0.6% → 6.2% of revenue expenditure), **Jharkhand** (0.8% → 13%), **Odisha** (nil → 5.1%). Key schemes: Majhi Ladki Bahin (Maharashtra — Rs 1,500/month to eligible women), Gruha Lakshmi (Karnataka — Rs 2,000/month), Lakshmir Bhandar (West Bengal). Commission concerns: crowds out capital expenditure, poorly targeted, off-budget financing undermines fiscal transparency. Recommendations: sunset clauses, exit reviews, beneficiary rationalisation.

**UPSC Angle (GS2/GS3):** Fiscal federalism, Finance Commission role, freebie debate, state finances.

## BHAIRAV BATTALIONS — INDIAN ARMY’S NEW COMPACT COMBAT UNITS

India’s new “**Bhairav Battalions**” — lightweight, multi-arm combat units of approximately **250 soldiers** each (vs. 800+ in standard infantry battalions) — were showcased at the Republic Day 2026 parade. Drawing from infantry, artillery, air defence, signals, and combat support, they are designed for “fight-tonight” readiness and short-notice border deployments. Approximately **15 battalions** have been raised, with plans for up to **25**. Deployment zones: **Rajasthan, Jammu, Ladakh, and Northeast India**. They represent the Army’s transformation toward leaner, technology-intensive, theatre-aligned combat formations.

**UPSC Angle (GS3):** Defence modernisation, border management, Theatre Commands restructuring.

## SC ORDERS PENNAIYAR RIVER TRIBUNAL IN ONE MONTH

The **Supreme Court** directed the Union government to constitute an **Inter-State River Water Dispute Tribunal** for the **Pennaiyar River** within one month. The dispute is between **Tamil Nadu and Karnataka**. The Pennaiyar (also called Dakshina Pinakini / South Pennar) is 497 km long; originates at **Nandi Hills, Chikkaballapura, Karnataka**; flows 80 km through Karnataka before entering Tamil Nadu; drains into the Bay of Bengal at Cuddalore. Governed by **Article 262** of the Constitution and the **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**. The Supreme Court has no original jurisdiction over inter-state water disputes under Article 262(2). Tamil Nadu’s concern: Karnataka’s check dams/diversion structures reducing downstream flow.

**UPSC Angle (GS2):** Federalism, Article 262, inter-state water disputes, Cauvery and Pennaiyar comparisons.

### PGIMER BREAKTHROUGH — ALUMINIUM PHOSPHIDE POISONING TREATMENT

Doctors at **PGIMER Chandigarh** (Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research) achieved a global breakthrough by clinically validating **intravenous (IV) lipid emulsion therapy** as the first effective treatment for **aluminium phosphide (ALP)** / “Celphos” poisoning. ALP releases lethal **phosphine gas** on contact with moisture, causing cellular hypoxia and cytochrome C oxidase inhibition. Previously no antidote existed; fatality rate without treatment is very high. ALP is widely used as a **grain fumigant** pesticide in India; Celphos poisoning (both accidental and suicidal) is prevalent in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. WHO has flagged it as a high-risk pesticide. PGIMER is a premier national institute under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

**UPSC Angle (GS3):** Medical research, pesticide regulation, farmer welfare, One Health approach.

### NEOPHYTEID APP — KERALA AI TOOL FOR INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

**Kerala** launched **NeophyteID**, an AI-powered mobile app for real-time identification and distribution mapping of invasive plant species. Developed by **MBGIPS (Malabar Botanical Garden and Institute for Plant Sciences)**, it uses the **YOLOv11 machine learning model** for image recognition and geospatial tracking. Available in English and Malayalam; enables citizen science-based biodiversity monitoring. Common invasive species in Kerala: *Lantana camara*, *Mikania micrantha* (“mile-a-minute”), water hyacinth. Invasive alien species are one of the five primary drivers of biodiversity loss identified by **IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services)**.

**UPSC Angle (GS3):** Invasive species, biodiversity conservation, AI in conservation, citizen science.

### IIT COUNCIL RECOMMENDS ADAPTIVE TESTING FOR JEE-ADVANCED

The **IIT Council** recommended a phased transition to **adaptive computer-based testing** for **JEE-Advanced** over 2026–2028. The system uses **Item Response Theory (IRT)** — question difficulty adjusts dynamically in real time based on student performance. Already used in **GRE and GMAT** internationally. Rationale: reduces luck and paper-level bias; rewards conceptual depth. JEE-Advanced is conducted by IITs for ~17,000 seats across 23 IITs. Free adaptive mock tests proposed for familiarisation. Concerns: digital equity issues for rural aspirants.

**UPSC Angle (GS2):** Education policy, higher education reforms, IIT governance, NEP 2020 alignment.

## SC EXAMINES RIGHT TO VOTE IN BIHAR ELECTORAL ROLL REVISION

The **Supreme Court** scrutinised the **Election Commission of India's Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls in **Bihar** ahead of state elections. Constitutional framework: **Article 326** (universal adult franchise), **Representation of People Act, 1950** (Sections 16, 19), and **RPA 1951** (Section 62). Judicial evolution on right to vote: *N.P. Ponnuswami (1952)* – purely statutory; *PUCL Case (2003)* – potentially constitutional; *Raj Bala (2015)* – constitutional right; *Anoop Baranwal (2023)* – majority: statutory; dissent: voting as expression under **Article 19(1)(a)** and free elections as **basic structure** component. SC scrutiny focuses on potential arbitrary deletions affecting marginalised communities.

**UPSC Angle (GS2):** Fundamental rights, electoral jurisprudence, ECI powers, basic structure doctrine.

## SBI LAUNCHES CHAKRA CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

**State Bank of India (SBI)** launched the **CHAKRA Centre of Excellence** in Mumbai to channel financing into eight sunrise sectors: Renewable Energy, Battery Storage, Green Hydrogen, Semiconductors, Decarbonisation, Smart Infrastructure, Data Centres, and select others. **Investment target: Rs 100 trillion by 2030**. Inaugurated by **M. Nagaraju** (Secretary, Department of Financial Services). **21 MoUs** signed with global financial institutions including Japan's **Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation** and **Mitsubishi UFJ**. SBI Chairman: **Challa Sreenivasulu Setty**.

**UPSC Angle (GS3):** Green finance, banking sector, infrastructure investment, energy transition.

## SUNETRA PAWAR — MAHARASHTRA'S FIRST WOMAN DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

**Sunetra Pawar** was sworn in as Maharashtra's **first woman Deputy Chief Minister** on January 31, 2026, at Raj Bhavan Mumbai by Governor **Acharya Devvrat**. She is a Rajya Sabha MP; her husband **Ajit Pawar** (former Deputy CM) died in a plane crash on January 29, 2026. Under **Article 164(4)** of the Constitution, a non-legislator sworn as minister must become a member of the state legislature within **6 months**, or the position lapses.

**UPSC Angle (GS2):** Article 164, State Council of Ministers, women in governance.

## IPS OFFICERS — MANDATORY 2-YEAR CENTRAL DEPUTATION RULE

The Union government (effective **January 2026**) made a minimum **2-year central deputation** mandatory for **IPS officers** at SP/DIG rank to qualify for promotion to IGP (Inspector General of Police). Applies from the **2011 batch** onwards. Intent: address chronic understaffing at central postings as states had been reluctant to release officers. IPS is an **All India Service** under **Articles 312 and 315** of the Constitution; Centre determines conditions of service and deputation quotas.

**UPSC Angle (GS2):** All India Services, Centre-State administrative relations, police governance.

## SAKSHAM 2026 — PETROLEUM MINISTRY FUEL CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN

The **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** launched **SAKSHAM 2026** (Sanrakshan Kshamata Mahotsav) fortnight from **February 2–16, 2026**. Theme: “Conserve Oil and Gas, Go Green.” Activities include debates, wall paintings, cyclothons, walkathons, and seminars targeting schoolchildren, LPG users, fleet operators, farmers, and industry. Annual campaign by oil and gas PSUs (IOCL, BPCL, HPCL, GAIL).

**UPSC Angle (GS3):** Energy conservation, oil & gas sector, sustainable consumption.

## NIPAH VIRUS OUTBREAK REPORTED IN WEST BENGAL

A **Nipah Virus** outbreak was reported in **West Bengal**. Natural host: **fruit bats** (Pteropus genus / Pteropodidae family). Transmission: zoonotic (bat→human), contaminated food, human-to-human contact. **Fatality rate: 40–75%**. First outbreak: 1998–99, Sungai Nipah village, Malaysia. Incubation: 4–14 days. Symptoms: fever, headaches, encephalitis. **No approved vaccine or specific treatment** — only supportive care. WHO R&D Blueprint **priority pathogen**. Previous Indian outbreaks: Kerala (2018, 2019, 2021, 2023).

**UPSC Angle (GS3):** Zoonotic diseases, epidemic preparedness, One Health approach, WHO R&D Blueprint.

## DEVNIMORI BUDDHA RELICS EXHIBITED IN SRI LANKA

India sent **Devnimori Buddha Relics** (from **Aravalli district, Gujarat**) to Sri Lanka for cultural diplomacy. Site first explored in 1957 by **Prof. S.N. Chowdhry**; found inside a stupa at 24 feet — a **green schist relic casket** with Brahmi script inscription “dashabala sharira nilay” containing copper box, silk cloth, gold-coated silver-copper bottle, holy ashes, and beads. Devnimori dates to the Gupta era. Brahmi script is India’s oldest documented script.

**UPSC Angle (GS1/GS2):** Buddhist heritage, Gupta period art, India-Sri Lanka Buddhist diplomacy.

## GUJARAT RECLAIMS TIGER STATE STATUS — THREE BIG CATS IN ONE STATE

A **Royal Bengal Tiger** (*Panthera tigris tigris*) was confirmed in the **Jambughoda** and **Ratanmahal** forest ranges of Gujarat, making Gujarat the **only Indian state hosting all three major big cats simultaneously** — Asiatic Lions (Gir), Bengal Tigers, and Leopards.

### Key Facts:

The tiger migrated approximately **60 km** from **Katthiwada Wildlife Sanctuary**, Alirajpur district, Madhya Pradesh

**Jambughoda Wildlife Sanctuary** (established 1990): Dry southern tropical and deciduous forests; key species: teak, mahua, bamboo; four-horned antelope (chausingha), sloth bear, nilgai, leopard

**Ratanmahal Wildlife Sanctuary** (established **1982**): Dry teak and mixed deciduous forest; highest sloth bear density in Gujarat; significant leopard population; catchment for **River Panam** (Godhi-Panam basin)

**Conservation response:** NTCA coordinating introduction of a female tiger for breeding; Herbivore Breeding Centre established near Kada Dam (breeds chital/sambar for prey base)

**90 km corridor identified:** Kanjeta–Jambughoda–Ratanmahal linking sanctuaries; contains natural caves and water bodies

Gujarat previously had tigers before local extinction in the 1950s; natural recolonisation from MP corridors indicates corridor health

### Context — India’s Tiger Population:

India tiger census (2022): **3,682 tigers** ( $\pm 191$ ) — **~75% of world’s wild tigers**

Project Tiger launched: **April 1, 1973**; National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA): statutory body under **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (Section 38L)**

Major tiger reserves: Corbett (oldest, 1936), Kaziranga, Ranthambore, Bandhavgarh, Nagarhole

**Integrated Habitat Assessment (IHA):** 5-year cycle; co-ordinated by Wildlife Institute of India (WII)

**UPSC Angle (GS3):** Wildlife corridors, Project Tiger, NTCA, big cat conservation, habitat fragmentation, transboundary animal migration.

## 68TH GRAMMY AWARDS 2026 — HISTORIC FIRSTS

The **68th Grammy Awards** were held on **February 1, 2026** at **Crypto.com Arena, Los Angeles**, with several historic firsts:

### Major Winners:

**Album of the Year:** *Debi Tirar Mas Fotos* — **Bad Bunny** (Puerto Rico) — **first Spanish-language album** ever to win Album of the Year in Grammy history

**Record of the Year:** “Luther” — **Kendrick Lamar & SZA**

**Song of the Year:** “Wildflower” — **Billie Eilish & Finneas O’Connell**

**Best New Artist:** **Olivia Dean** (UK)

**Best Audio Book:** “Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness” — **14th Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso)** — first Grammy for the Tibetan spiritual leader

**Best Song Written for Visual Media:** “Golden” — **Demon Hunters** (South Korean band) — **first K-Pop act to win a Grammy award**

**Best Music Film:** *Music for John Williams* — **Steven Spielberg** (producer) — first Grammy for the legendary film director

**UPSC Angle (GS1/Prelims):** Grammy Awards significance; Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso; born 1935; Nobel Peace Prize 1989; resides Dharamsala, India); K-Pop as global cultural diplomacy (South Korea's soft power); Indo-US cultural relations context.

## UPSC RELEVANCE

*SFDR (Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet); test site: ITR Chandipur, Odisha; future use: Astra Mk-3; nations with SFDR: USA, Russia, France, China, India; YIL (Yantra India Limited; Nagpur; OFB corporatisation 2021; Miniratna Category-I; Board capex Rs 500 cr); ICG 50th Raising Day (Feb 1, 1977 established; 206 vessels; 77 aircraft; 7,516 km coast; 2.01 mn sq km EEZ; 4th largest MLEA globally); Carlos Alcaraz (youngest Career Grand Slam at 22y 272d; 7 Grand Slam titles; defeated Djokovic in AO 2026 final); Elena Rybakina (AO 2026 Women's champion; Kazakhstan; beat Sabalenka 6-4, 4-6, 6-4); Devika Sihag (3rd Indian woman to win BWF Super 300+ after PV Sindhu + Saina Nehwal; Thailand Masters 2026); Ramsar sites 98 (Patna Bird Sanctuary/UP + Chhari-Dhand/Gujarat; Tamil Nadu = 20 sites; Convention signed Feb 2, 1971); India-US tariff deal (50% → 18%; Jaishankar-Rubio meeting); Pax Silica (critical minerals coalition); Delhi Declaration 2026 (India-Arab League; 22 members; Arab Peace Initiative 2002); 16th Finance Commission (Article 280; cash transfers 3% → 20.2%; Maharashtra/Jharkhand/Odisha most affected); Bhairav Battalions (250 soldiers; 15 raised; Rajasthan/Jammu/Ladakh/NE); Pennaiyar River (Article 262; ISRWDA 1956; TN vs Karnataka; Nandi Hills origin); PGIMER ALP treatment (IV lipid emulsion, phosphine gas, Chandigarh); NeophyteID (MBGIPS Kerala, YOLOv11, invasive species); CHAKRA SBI (Rs 100 trillion, 8 sectors); Gujarat Tiger (Jambughoda + Ratanmahal; only state with Asiatic lions+tigers+leopards; 60 km migration from Katthiwada WS, MP; NTCA; Project Tiger 1973); Grammy 2026 (Bad Bunny first Spanish-language Album of Year; 14th Dalai Lama Best Audio Book; Demon Hunters first K-Pop Grammy; Kendrick Lamar Record of Year); Article 164(4) (minister must be legislator in 6 months); Sunetra Pawar (Maharashtra first woman Deputy CM; Jan 31, 2026; Raj Bhavan Mumbai); IPS central deputation (2 years mandatory, 2011 batch); Nipah Virus (Pteropus bats, 40–75% fatality, WHO R&D Blueprint priority); Devnimori (Gupta era, green schist casket, Aravalli district).*

*India-US trade deal and strategic autonomy; Delhi Declaration and India's West Asia policy; 16th FC freebie warning and fiscal federalism; Article 262 and inter-state water disputes; IPS deputation and Centre-State administrative tensions. **GS-3:** Ramsar wetland conservation; Pax Silica and critical minerals; PGIMER ALP breakthrough; invasive species management.*

**★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA**
**DRDO SFDR TEST (FEB 3, 2026):**

Full form: **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet**

Test site: **ITR Chandipur**, Odisha (Bay of Bengal coast)

Key subsystems tested: Nozzle-less Booster, SFDR motor, Fuel Flow Controller

How it works: Uses **atmospheric oxygen** for combustion (vs. self-contained solid rockets)

Advantage: Higher cruising speed, longer range, better manoeuvrability

Future use: **Astra Mk-3** air-to-air missile (IAF)

Nations with SFDR: **USA, Russia, France, China** — India now joins this group

DRDO labs involved: DRDL, HEMRL, RCI, ITR

**YANTRA INDIA LIMITED (YIL):**

HQ: **Nagpur**; formed from OFB corporatisation in **2021** into 7 DPSUs

Status granted: **Miniratna Category-I**

Board capex authority: up to **Rs 500 crore**

CPSE hierarchy: Maharatna → Navratna → Miniratna Cat-I → Miniratna Cat-II

**INDIAN COAST GUARD — 50TH RAISING DAY:**

Established: **February 1, 1977**; formally inaugurated **August 19, 1978**

Act: **Coast Guard Act, 1978**; first PM to inaugurate: **Morarji Desai**

Ministry: **Ministry of Defence**

Strength: **206 surface platforms, 77 aircraft**

Global rank: **4th largest** Maritime Law Enforcement Agency

Coastline guarded: **7,516 km**; EEZ: **2.01 million sq km**

Rescue record: 11,806 lives saved

**AUSTRALIAN OPEN 2026:**

Men's: **Carlos Alcaraz** (Spain) beat Novak Djokovic 2-6, 6-2, 6-3, 7-5

Youngest Career Grand Slam: **22 years, 272 days** (previous: Rafael Nadal, 24y 101d)

Alcaraz Grand Slams: 2 French Open + 2 Wimbledon + 2 US Open + 1 Australian Open = 7

Sixth man in Open Era to complete Career Grand Slam

Women's: **Elena Rybakina** (Kazakhstan) beat Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus) 6-4, 4-6, 6-4

Venue: Melbourne Park (Rod Laver Arena), Melbourne, Australia

**DEVIKA SIHAG — BWF THAILAND MASTERS SUPER 300:**

Result: Won Women's Singles; defeated Goh Jin Wei (Malaysia) who retired hurt

World Rank at time of win: **63** (unseeded)

Historic: **3rd Indian woman** to win BWF Super 300+ Women's Singles

Previous: **PV Sindhu** and **Saina Nehwal**

**RAMSAR WETLANDS — INDIA (2026):**

Total sites: **98** (highest in South Asia; 276% expansion since 2014)

New Feb 2026 additions: Patna Bird Sanctuary (Etah, UP) + Chhari-Dhand (Kutch, Gujarat)

Tamil Nadu: **20 sites** (most among Indian states)

World Wetlands Day: **February 2** annually

Ramsar Convention signed: **February 2, 1971**, Ramsar, Iran

Global Ramsar sites: **2,520+** across 172 countries

India wetlands: **~15.9 million hectares** (~5% of land area)

#### INDIA-US TRADE DEAL (FEB 3, 2026):

US reciprocal tariff before: **50%** → after: **18%** on Indian goods

Meeting: EAM Jaishankar + US Secy of State Marco Rubio; Washington D.C., Feb 3

India FY24-25 total goods imports: **\$720.24 billion**

“Liberation Day” tariffs: Imposed **April 2025** by Trump on all trading partners

#### PAX SILICA:

Type: Critical minerals coalition (silicon + semiconductor minerals)

India joined: February 3, 2026 (US Critical Minerals Ministerial)

China’s dominance: **60–80%** of global critical mineral processing

India’s National Critical Mineral Mission: **2025**

#### DELHI DECLARATION 2026 (INDIA-ARAB LEAGUE):

League of Arab States members: **22**

India-Arab League trade: **\$240+ billion/year**

Indians in Gulf: **~9 million**; annual remittances: **~\$40 billion**

Arab Peace Initiative (2002): Arab normalisation with Israel in exchange for independent Palestinian state on pre-1967 borders

#### 16TH FINANCE COMMISSION (ARTICLE 280):

Unconditional cash transfers: **3% (2018-19)** → **20.2% (2025-26 BE)** of state subsidy spending

Key schemes: Majhi Ladki Bahin (Maharashtra, Rs 1,500/month), Gruha Lakshmi (Karnataka, Rs 2,000/month), Lakshmir Bhandar (West Bengal)

Most affected: Maharashtra, Jharkhand (0.8% → 13%), Odisha

#### BHAIRAV BATTALIONS:

Strength per battalion: **~250 soldiers** (vs. 800+ standard)

Raised: **~15** battalions (target: 25)

Deployment: Rajasthan, Jammu, Ladakh, Northeast India

#### PENNAIYAR RIVER:

Length: **497 km**; origin: Nandi Hills, Chikkaballapura, Karnataka

Karnataka stretch: **80 km**; empties into Bay of Bengal at **Cuddalore**

Other names: Dakshina Pinakini / South Pennar / Thenpennai

Dispute: Tamil Nadu vs Karnataka; governed by **Article 262 + ISRWDA 1956**

#### PGIMER CELPHOS BREAKTHROUGH:

Drug: **IV Lipid Emulsion** (first clinically validated ALP antidote)

Poison: Aluminium phosphide (ALP) / Celphos; releases **phosphine gas**

Mechanism: Cellular hypoxia, cytochrome C oxidase inhibition

Prevalence: Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh agrarian belts

#### OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Nipah Virus: First outbreak: **Sungai Nipah, Malaysia, 1998–99**; fatality: **40–75%**; host: Pteropus genus fruit bats; **no approved vaccine/treatment**

SBI CHAKRA: Rs **100 trillion** target by 2030; **21 MoUs** signed; 8 sunrise sectors

Article 164(4): A non-legislator minister must become an MLA/MLC within **6 months**

IPBES: Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; identifies 5 drivers of biodiversity loss (habitat change, overexploitation, climate change, invasive species, pollution)

Devnimori: Gupta-era Buddhist stupa; Aravalli district, Gujarat; discovered 1957

#### GUJARAT TIGER STATE – THREE BIG CATS:

Gujarat = **only Indian state** hosting Asiatic lions (Gir), Bengal tigers, and leopards simultaneously

Tiger location: **Jambughoda WLS** (est. 1990) + **Ratanmahal WLS** (est. 1982), Gujarat

Migration distance: **~60 km** from **Katthiwada Wildlife Sanctuary**, Alirajpur, MP

Corridor identified: **90 km Kanjeta–Jambughoda–Ratanmahal**

NTCA coordinating female tiger introduction for breeding; Herbivore Breeding Centre at Kada Dam

India tiger census (2022): **3,682** tigers — ~75% of global wild tiger population

Project Tiger launched: **April 1, 1973**; NTCA under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (Section 38L)

#### GRAMMY AWARDS 2026 (68TH EDITION – FEBRUARY 1, 2026):

Venue: **Crypto.com Arena, Los Angeles**

Album of the Year: *Debi Tirar Mas Fotos* — **Bad Bunny** (Puerto Rico) — **first Spanish-language album** to win

Record of the Year: “Luther” — **Kendrick Lamar & SZA**

Song of the Year: “Wildflower” — **Billie Eilish & Finneas O’Connell**

Best Audio Book: **14th Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso)** — “Meditations: The Reflections of His Holiness” — first Grammy for Dalai Lama

Best Song (Visual Media): “Golden” — **Demon Hunters** (South Korea) — **first K-Pop Grammy award ever**

Best Music Film: *Music for John Williams* — **Steven Spielberg** (producer) — first Grammy for Spielberg

Sources: AffairsCloud, Insights on India, Drishti IAS

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