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Current Affairs Today - March 1, 2026

1 March 2026

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WHY IN NEWS

March 1, 2026 was defined less by a single headline and more by a cluster of governance-focused developments: new inland waterway infrastructure on the Brahmaputra, Indian Railways' technology reforms, NITI Aayog's state-capacity dialogue in Tripura, Assam's land-record modernisation push, and two globally observed days centred on dignity and disaster preparedness.

BRAHMAPUTRA WATERWAY PROJECTS REINFORCED THE NORTHEAST LOGISTICS PUSH

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways **Sarbananda Sonowal** inaugurated three key infrastructure projects linked to the **Brahmaputra or National Waterway-2 (NW-2)** on **28 February 2026** in Dibrugarh, and the development remained central to the March 1 current-affairs cycle. The assets included **Customs and Immigration Complexes at Bogibeel and Dhubri** and a renovated **IWAI heritage building at Dibrugarh**.

NW-2 stretches **891 km** along the Brahmaputra from the Bangladesh border near Dhubri to Sadiya in Assam and was declared a National Waterway on **1 September 1988**. The importance of these projects lies in the role of the Brahmaputra as an economic corridor rather than only a river system. The **Bogibeel complex** integrates customs, immigration, cargo storage, and IWAI administrative functions within a single facility, while the **Dhubri complex** is designed to enhance export-import operations in western Assam and position Dhubri as a gateway for cross-border commerce with Bangladesh and Bhutan.

River transport reduces freight costs for bulk cargo, supports multimodal logistics, and improves connectivity between Assam, the wider Northeast, and Bangladesh-linked trade routes under the **Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route**. For a region where terrain makes road and rail expansion costly, inland waterways are a strategic instrument of regional development.

From an exam perspective, this topic links **infrastructure, multimodal transport, Act East connectivity, and regional development**. It also invites a broader discussion on how logistics policy can reduce inequality between mainland growth corridors and frontier regions.

RAILTECH POLICY AND E-RCT MARKED A SHIFT TOWARD TECHNOLOGY-LED RAILWAY GOVERNANCE

Indian Railways pushed two important reforms into view: the **RailTech Policy** and the digitisation of the **Railway Claims Tribunal through e-RCT**. The RailTech initiative is meant to create a structured pathway for startups, industry, and academic institutions to test and scale solutions for operational problems inside the railway system.

Priority areas mentioned by the railways included **AI-based elephant intrusion detection, fire-detection systems, drone-based track monitoring**, and predictive safety tools. The **e-RCT** side of the reform is equally important because it shifts claims filing and tribunal procedures into a digital workflow across **23 benches in 21 cities**, reducing procedural barriers for passengers and claimants.

The larger lesson is that public-sector modernisation is no longer limited to procurement of hardware. It increasingly depends on digital platforms, data pipelines, and faster institutional interfaces between citizens and the state.

NITI AAYOG'S STATE SUPPORT MISSION PUT ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY AT THE CENTRE

Agartala hosted the **3rd Regional Dialogue under NITI Aayog's State Support Mission (SSM)** on **3 February 2026**, organised in collaboration with the **Tripura Institution for Transformation (TIFT)**. The dialogue covered **14 Eastern and North-Eastern States/UTs** and focused on state-capacity reform. Separately, on **26 February 2026**, Tripura Chief Minister **Dr. Manik Saha** launched the **State Innovation Mission (SIM)** — the first such mission under the approved **AIM 2.0 programme** — with **T-NEST** as its execution arm, connecting campuses to markets and ideas to investment.

The significance of the State Support Mission lies in what it tries to improve: data use, departmental coordination, project preparation, and implementation capacity inside state governments. In India's federal system, national schemes often fail or succeed not because of design alone, but because state institutions vary sharply in administrative depth and execution ability.

For UPSC, this is a good example of **cooperative federalism** moving beyond slogans. It shows how reform now includes backend governance architecture and not just flagship announcements.

MISSION BASUNDHARA 3.0 SHOWED WHY LAND GOVERNANCE IS A CORE DEVELOPMENT ISSUE

Mission Basundhara 3.0 in Assam remained important because it treats land services as a major governance reform area. Land records are not merely legal documents; they determine access to credit, welfare eligibility, investment security, inheritance clarity, and social stability.

Mission Basundhara 3.0 was launched on **20 October 2024** by Chief Minister **Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma** at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra, Guwahati, with seven new services including settlement of erstwhile Bhoodan/Gramdan lands, reclassification suits, and settlement of land in surveyed non-cadastral villages under SVAMITVA. The scheme uses digital processing through the official portal for services such as land settlement, mutation-linked approvals, and record corrections, integrating verified pattadar details with **drone imagery, ULPIN, Aadhaar, and geotagged property information** to issue Digital Pattas.

It connects with broader reforms such as **SVAMITVA** (Survey of Villages Abadi and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas), launched on **24 April 2020**, which uses drone surveys for property mapping in rural areas. As of April 2025, SVAMITVA has completed drone surveys in **3.20 lakh villages** covering **68,122 sq. km**, creating approximately **2.42 crore property cards** for **1.61 lakh villages**. In a state like Assam with riverine change, forest-linked claims, and a high dependency on agriculture, land administration is especially consequential.

The policy takeaway is clear: land reform in the 2020s increasingly means **record modernisation, service digitisation, and cleaner cadastral governance**, not only redistribution.

ZERO DISCRIMINATION DAY AND WORLD CIVIL DEFENCE DAY ADDED A SOCIAL-GOVERNANCE LENS

Two annual observances also frame March 1. **Zero Discrimination Day**, launched by **UNAIDS** on **1 March 2014** in Beijing by then Executive Director **Michel Sidibe**, highlights dignity, inclusion, and equal access to healthcare, education, and public services. **World Civil Defence Day**, initiated by the **International Civil Defence Organisation (ICDO)** and first observed in **1990**, focuses on emergency preparedness, community resilience, and the protection of civilians during disasters and crises. The date marks the anniversary of the ICDO Constitution entering into force as an intergovernmental organisation on **1 March 1972**. The ICDO currently has **61 member countries, 16 observer countries, and 21 affiliate members**.

Taken together, these observances connect rights-based governance with disaster-management capacity. That makes them relevant not as ceremonial dates, but as reminders that social inclusion and public safety are both state-capacity questions.

UPSC RELEVANCE

National Waterway-2, Brahmaputra, IWAI, Bogibeel and Dhubri complexes; RailTech Policy, e-RCT, Railway Claims Tribunal; NITI Aayog's State Support Mission; Mission Basundhara 3.0, SVAMITVA; Zero Discrimination Day; World Civil Defence Day.

MAINS GS-2:

Cooperative federalism, tribunal digitisation, land-governance reform, inclusive service delivery.

MAINS GS-3:

Inland waterways, logistics, public-sector technology, disaster preparedness.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

BRAHMAPUTRA INLAND WATERWAYS:

Brahmaputra is **National Waterway-2 (NW-2)**, declared on **1 September 1988**

Length: **891 km** from Bangladesh border near Dhubri to Sadiya, Assam

Key agency: **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)**

Three projects inaugurated on **28 February 2026** by Union Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal**: Bogibeel complex, Dhubri complex, renovated IWAI heritage building at Dibrugarh

Brahmaputra carries **~735 million metric tonnes** of suspended sediment annually

Trade connectivity via **Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route**

RAILTECH AND E-RCT:

RailTech Policy connects railways with startups, academia, and innovators

Priority areas: AI-based elephant intrusion detection, fire detection, drone-based track monitoring

Railway Claims Tribunal (RCT) has **23 benches in 21 cities**, Principal Bench at Delhi

e-RCT digitises filing and case processing across all benches

NITI AAYOG STATE SUPPORT MISSION:

3rd Regional Dialogue held on **3 February 2026** in Agartala for 14 Eastern and NE States/UTs

Organised in collaboration with **Tripura Institution for Transformation (TIFT)**

Tripura launched **State Innovation Mission (SIM)** on **26 February 2026** — first under **AIM 2.0**

T-NEST serves as execution arm of the State Innovation Mission

MISSION BASUNDHARA 3.0 AND SVAMITVA:

Mission Basundhara 3.0 launched on **20 October 2024** by CM **Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma**

Services include Digital Patta issuance, Bhoodan/Gramdan land settlement, reclassification suits

SVAMITVA launched on **24 April 2020** (National Panchayat Day)

SVAMITVA progress (April 2025): drone surveys in **3.20 lakh villages**, **2.42 crore property cards** created

OBSERVED ON 1 MARCH:

Zero Discrimination Day — launched by **UNAIDS** on **1 March 2014**

World Civil Defence Day — initiated by **ICDO**, first observed in **1990**; marks ICDO Constitution entering force on **1 March 1972**

ICDO has **61 member countries**, **16 observer countries**, **21 affiliate members**

Sources: [PIB](#) , [IWAI](#) , [Ministry of Railways](#) , [NITI Aayog](#) , [Government of Assam](#) , [United Nations](#)

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