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# Current Affairs Today — March 14, 2026

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## WHY IN NEWS

March 14, 2026 — observed as **International Day of Mathematics (Pi Day)** — saw a diverse range of developments: the Silverpit Crater in the North Sea was confirmed as an ancient asteroid impact site; a cave-dwelling assassin bug unseen for 100 years was rediscovered in the Andaman Islands; India's AI agricultural platform **Bharat-VISTAAR** was in focus ahead of its rollout; India supported a UNSC resolution on Iran; Parliament approved supplementary grants including a new Economic Stabilization Fund; and **Yoga Mahotsav 2026** launched the 100-day countdown to the 12th International Day of Yoga.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MATHEMATICS — MARCH 14 (PI DAY)

**March 14** is observed annually as the **International Day of Mathematics (IDM)**, declared by **UNESCO** in 2019. The date is chosen because it coincides with **Pi Day** — the mathematical constant  $\pi$  (pi)  $\approx 3.14159...$  making 3/14 (March 14 in the US date format) the natural choice.

Pi ( $\pi$ ) is the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter — a constant that appears across geometry, physics, engineering, probability, and statistics. The IDM promotes the role of mathematics in achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and raises awareness of mathematics as the foundation of science and technology.

**UPSC Angle — GS-3 (S&T):** UNESCO declared IDM in November 2019. March 14 was also the birthday of **Albert Einstein** (1879) and the date of death of **Stephen Hawking** (2018) — frequently tested in Prelims persons-in-news. Pi ( $\pi$ ) appears in probability distributions, signal processing, and quantum mechanics, making it relevant for Science & Technology prelims questions.

## SILVERPIT CRATER CONFIRMED AS ANCIENT ASTEROID IMPACT SITE

Scientists have confirmed that the **Silverpit Crater**, located in the **North Sea** approximately 80 miles off the coast of Yorkshire, England, was formed by a roughly **160-metre asteroid impact approximately 43 million years ago**. The confirmation came through new seismic imaging and the discovery of rare shocked minerals in rock samples, published in the journal *Nature Communications*. The study was led by **Dr. Uisdean Nicholson of Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh**, supported by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC).

The Silverpit Crater — approximately **3 km wide** with surrounding ring faults spanning about 20 km — was first identified in 2002 by oil industry seismic surveys. The impact would have triggered a **tsunami over 100 metres (330 feet) high**. The crater lies about 700 metres beneath the seabed. Impact craters are important geological records: they indicate the frequency of large asteroid collisions in Earth's history and help scientists understand the evolution of Earth's surface.

**UPSC Angle — GS-1 (Geography) / GS-3 (S&T):** Impact craters on Earth are rare because erosion, tectonic activity, and vegetation cover most evidence over time. The **Lonar Lake** in Maharashtra (India) is one of the world's few known impact craters filled with a saline lake — a frequently tested UPSC fact. Lonar Lake was designated a **Ramsar Wetland in 2020**. Its age was initially estimated at ~52,000 years, but newer studies revise it to approximately **576,000 years**. The Chicxulub crater (Mexico/Gulf of Mexico) is associated with the mass extinction 66 million years ago (end-Cretaceous).

## MYIOPHANES KEMPI — CAVE ASSASSIN BUG REDISCOVERED AFTER 100 YEARS

A rare cave-dwelling **assassin bug species**, *Myiophanes kempi*, has been **rediscovered in limestone caves** of the **Andaman Islands** after approximately **100 years** without any scientific documentation. The species was first described in **1924 by British entomologist William Edward China** from its type locality in **Siju Cave, Meghalaya** (then Assam). Two male specimens were collected during a 2019 survey, extending the species' known distribution by over **1,000 km**. The study was conducted by researchers from the **Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History** and published in the journal *Subterranean Biology*.

Assassin bugs (family **Reduviidae**, subfamily **Emesinae** — thread-legged assassin bugs) are predatory insects that inject a paralysing saliva into prey. Cave-dwelling species have adapted to permanent darkness — developing reduced or absent eyes, elongated appendages, and heightened chemosensory abilities. Their rediscovery in the Andaman limestone cave system underlines the rich and poorly documented biodiversity of India's island territories.

**UPSC Angle — GS-3 (Biodiversity):** The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are part of India's **Biodiversity Hotspot** (Indo-Burma hotspot). Limestone caves are fragile ecosystems — cave species are highly vulnerable to disturbance because they have evolved in stable, isolated environments. Rediscovery of species “lost to science” (called **Lazarus species**) is a conservation signal indicating that habitat is still intact.

## NEW PARASITIC WASP SPECIES — CHELONUS (CARINICHELONUS) MAHADEB DISCOVERED IN ASSAM

A new **parasitic wasp species**, *Chelonus (Carinichelonus) mahadeb*, has been recorded from **Nahortoli Tea Estate, Assam** — only the **second described species** of the subgenus *Carinichelonus* from India.

*Chelonus* wasps are **parasitoids** — they lay eggs inside or on caterpillar eggs/larvae, and the developing wasp kills the host. This makes them significant for **biological pest control** in agricultural ecosystems, including tea plantations. Biocontrol agents are environmentally preferable to chemical pesticides and are a key component of integrated pest management (IPM).

**UPSC Angle — GS-3 (Agriculture & Biodiversity):** Biological control is a major tool under India's **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)**. India is the world's second-largest tea producer and became the second-largest tea exporter in 2024, surpassing Sri Lanka. Assam accounts for ~50–55% of India's total tea production. The **Tea Board of India** (under Ministry of Commerce) regulates the sector.

## BHARAT-VISTAAR — AI AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY PLATFORM

**Bharat-VISTAAR** (Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources) is an **AI-powered multilingual digital platform** announced in the **Union Budget 2026–27** with an allocation of **₹150 crore**. **Phase-1 was launched on 17 February 2026**, currently available in Hindi and English. The platform is designed to deliver **real-time, location-specific agricultural advisories** to farmers in a voice-first format — making it accessible to those with low literacy. It is accessible via a dedicated telephone number (**155261**), a voice-based AI chatbot, a web portal, and a mobile application.

The platform integrates **AgriStack portals**, government databases, **ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research)** best practices, weather data, and soil information to generate personalised crop management advice. It integrates **10 major schemes** including PM-KISAN, PMFBY, Soil Health Card, KCC, and Agriculture Infrastructure Fund. Its voice-first design means farmers can interact using spoken queries in regional languages rather than requiring literacy or typing ability.

**UPSC Angle — GS-3 (Agriculture / S&T):** Bharat-VISTAAR addresses the **last-mile delivery problem** in agricultural extension services. India's Kisan Call Centres and the **e-NAM platform** are related digital agriculture tools. ICAR — headquartered in New Delhi — is the apex body for agricultural research under the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**. Digital agriculture also connects to the **Digital India** programme and India's **AI Mission** (₹10,372 crore, Budget 2024).

## YOGA MAHOTSAV 2026 — 100-DAY COUNTDOWN TO INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA

**Yoga Mahotsav 2026** was inaugurated on **13 March 2026** at **Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi** by Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) **Prataprao Jadhav** (Ministry of AYUSH), marking the **100-day countdown to the 12th International Day of Yoga (IDY)**, observed annually on **June 21**. The event also launched **10 Yoga Protocols for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and Target Groups** and a nationwide outreach across **100 cities**.

A notable addition in 2026 is a **5-minute seated yoga routine** designed specifically for air travel — targeting the stress and physical discomfort associated with long flights.

The International Day of Yoga was established by the **UN General Assembly** in December 2014 following a proposal by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the UNGA's 69th session. June 21 was chosen as the Summer Solstice — the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, considered auspicious in yogic tradition.

**UPSC Angle — Prelims:** IDY established: UN General Assembly Resolution 69/131 (December 2014). First IDY: June 21, 2015. The 12th IDY is in 2026. Ministry of AYUSH: Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, Homeopathy. Prataprao Jadhav = Minister of State (Independent Charge), AYUSH.

## SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS — ECONOMIC STABILIZATION FUND

Parliament approved **Supplementary Demands for Grants** worth **₹2 lakh crore**, including **₹57,381 crore** specifically allocated to a new **Economic Stabilization Fund** — created to buffer the Indian economy against global shocks including supply chain disruptions, rising crude oil prices, and geopolitical instability in West Asia.

**Supplementary Demands for Grants** are governed by **Article 115 of the Constitution**, which empowers Parliament to authorise additional expenditure beyond what was approved in the original Union Budget when unforeseen needs arise. They are presented by the Finance Ministry and require Lok Sabha approval.

**UPSC Angle — GS-2 (Polity / Governance):** Article 115 = Supplementary/Additional/Excess grants. Compare: **Article 112** = Annual Financial Statement (Union Budget); **Article 113** = Procedure for estimates; **Article 116** = Votes on account (used when Budget cannot be passed before April 1). The Economic Stabilization Fund concept is analogous to sovereign wealth funds and stabilization funds used by oil-exporting nations to smooth revenue volatility.

## UNSC RESOLUTION ON IRAN — INDIA VOTES IN FAVOUR

India supported a **UN Security Council resolution** condemning attacks linked to the Iran conflict, joining **130 nations** in support. In the UNSC vote, **13 members supported** the resolution while **Russia and China abstained**.

India's position was shaped by two strategic interests: the safety of approximately **10 million Indian nationals** in the Gulf region, and India's significant dependence on West Asian crude oil and LPG imports. India imports approximately **85% of its crude oil**, with a substantial share from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations.

The **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**, established in **1981** and headquartered in **Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**, comprises six Gulf monarchies: **Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain**. It is India's largest regional trading partner block, with bilateral trade exceeding \$180 billion annually.

**UPSC Angle — GS-2 (IR):** India's West Asia policy is guided by "multi-alignment" — maintaining relations with all Gulf states regardless of their rivalries. UNSC has 15 members: 5 permanent (P5: USA, UK, France, Russia, China) + 10 non-permanent (2-year terms). India is seeking permanent UNSC membership as part of the G4 (with Germany, Japan, Brazil).

## WHITE PHOSPHORUS USE IN WARFARE — INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

Human rights organisations condemned the use of **white phosphorus** in the Lebanon theatre of the West Asia conflict. White phosphorus is a **pale yellow/white chemical substance** that ignites spontaneously at around **30°C** and burns intensely, emitting thick white smoke.

Military uses include smoke screens, target marking, and illumination. When used near civilian populations, it causes **severe burns** that penetrate deep into tissue and can cause organ failure. White phosphorus is not completely banned under international humanitarian law but its use against civilians or in densely populated areas violates the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)** — specifically **Protocol III** on incendiary weapons.

**UPSC Angle — GS-2 (IR) / GS-3 (Security):** CCW (1980) = Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons. Protocol III restricts incendiary weapons. Compare with **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC, 1993)** — white phosphorus is not classified as a chemical weapon under the CWC. The **OPCW (Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons)** — Nobel Peace Prize 2013 — enforces the CWC.

## KURUMBA ART — ANCIENT TRIBAL PAINTING TRADITION

**Kurumba art** is an ancient tribal painting tradition originating in the **Nilgiri Hills** of South India, practised by the **Kurumba tribe** across **Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka**. Estimated to be over **3,000 years old** — linked to prehistoric rock art discovered at the **Jackanarai and Eluthu Paarai** archaeological sites in the Nilgiri Hills (discovered 1984) — the art uses natural pigments derived from the bark of the **Kino tree (*Pterocarpus marsupium*)** and tools including burnt twigs and bamboo sticks.

The Kurumba (also known as Kurumans) are a Scheduled Tribe and one of the indigenous communities of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve — India's first biosphere reserve (established 1986; UNESCO MAB World Network 2000). The Nilgiri Hills are part of the **Western Ghats**, inscribed as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2012**.

**UPSC Angle — GS-1 (Art & Culture):** Tribal art forms are regularly tested. Key Nilgiri tribes: Toda (known for embroidery/poetry), Kota (music/crafts), Badaga (agriculture), Irula (snake catchers), Kurumba. The Nilgiris district is also known for Toda embroidery — a GI-tagged textile. Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve was India's first biosphere reserve (established 1986); included in UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2000.

## SAVITRIBAI PHULE — PIONEER OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION

**March 14, 2026** was observed as a tribute to **Savitribai Phule** (1831–1897), India's first female teacher and a foundational figure of the 19th-century social reform movement in Maharashtra.

Born on **3 January 1831** in **Naigaon, Satara district, Maharashtra**, she founded **India's first girls' school** in **Pune in 1848**, together with her husband **Jyotirao Phule**. She also established the **Bal Hatya Pratibandhak Griha** (Child-killing Prevention Home) for widows and unwed mothers, and worked in the Satyashodhak marriage movement that opposed Brahminical rituals. She died on **March 10, 1897**, while tending to plague victims. Her literary works include *Kavya Phule* and *Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar*.

**UPSC Angle — GS-1 (History / Social Reform):** Savitribai Phule is central to questions on 19th-century social reform and women's education. Connected themes: Jyotirao Phule (founded Satyashodhak Samaj, 1873), Mahatma Phule's *Gulamgiri* (1873), anti-caste reform in Maharashtra.

## CONCENTRATED SOLAR THERMAL (CST) TECHNOLOGY

**Concentrated Solar Thermal (CST)** technology — which uses mirrors or lenses to concentrate sunlight, generating steam to drive turbines — is gaining policy attention as a tool for **industrial decarbonisation**. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy estimates India's CST potential at **6.45 GWth** (thermal) based on the MNRE-GEF-UNIDO CST Roadmap.

Unlike photovoltaic (PV) panels that generate electricity directly, CST generates **process heat** — directly usable in industries like textile bleaching/dyeing, ceramics, food processing, and chemical manufacturing, replacing fossil fuels (coal, natural gas) in industrial processes.

**UPSC Angle — GS-3 (Energy):** CST is different from regular solar PV. Key CST types: Parabolic Trough Collectors (PTC), Solar Power Tower (Central Receiver), Fresnel Reflectors. India's solar capacity (total, PV + thermal): ~100+ GW installed (2025). **National Solar Mission** (part of National Action Plan on Climate Change, NAPCC) targets 280 GW solar by 2030.

**UPSC RELEVANCE**

International Day of Mathematics (UNESCO, March 14, Pi Day); Silverpit Crater (North Sea); Lonar Lake (Maharashtra, impact crater); *Myiophanes kempi* (assassin bug, Reduviidae, Andaman caves); Lazarus species; *Chelonus mahadeb* (parasitic wasp, Assam, biological control); Bharat-VISTAAR (AI agriculture, ₹150 crore, Budget 2026-27, ICAR); Yoga Mahotsav 2026, IDY June 21, UN Res. 69/131; Article 115 (Supplementary Demands for Grants), Article 112, 116; GCC (1981, Riyadh, 6 members); White phosphorus, CCW Protocol III, OPCW; Kurumba art (Nilgiri Hills, 3000+ years); Savitribai Phule (1831–1897, Pune 1848 girls' school); CST technology, 6.4 GW India potential.

**MAINS GS-1:**

19th-century social reform — Savitribai Phule, Jyotirao Phule.

**MAINS GS-2:**

UNSC voting; India's West Asia policy.

**MAINS GS-3:**

Digital agriculture; solar energy; industrial decarbonisation.

## ★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

### KEY DATES / OBSERVANCES:

**March 14:** International Day of Mathematics (IDM) — Pi Day ( $\pi \approx 3.14159$ ); declared by UNESCO, 2019

**March 14, 1879:** Albert Einstein born; **March 14, 2018:** Stephen Hawking died

**June 21:** International Day of Yoga — established by UNGA Resolution 69/131 (December 2014); first observed 2015

**Yoga Mahotsav 2026:** 100-day countdown to 12th IDY; inaugurated by Prataprao Jadhav (MoS AYUSH)

### NEW SPECIES DISCOVERIES (MARCH 2026):

*Myiophanes kempi* — thread-legged assassin bug (Reduviidae, Emesinae); first described 1924 from Siju Cave, Meghalaya; rediscovered 2019 in Andaman limestone caves after ~100 years; distribution extended by 1,000+ km

*Chelonus (Carinichelonus) mahadeb* — parasitic wasp; Nahortoli Tea Estate, Assam; 2nd species of subgenus from India

### BHARAT-VISTAAR:

Full form: Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources

Budget 2026-27 allocation: ₹150 crore

Phase-1 launched: 17 February 2026 (Hindi and English)

Access: Telephone (155261), voice AI chatbot, web portal, mobile app

Type: AI-powered, voice-first, multilingual agricultural advisory platform

Data sources: AgriStack portals, ICAR practices, government databases, weather/soil data

Integrates 10 schemes: PM-KISAN, PMFBY, Soil Health Card, KCC, Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, etc.

### SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS:

**Article 115:** Constitutional basis for supplementary/additional grants

Total approved: ₹2 lakh crore; Economic Stabilization Fund: ₹57,381 crore

Compare Article 116: Votes on account (interim Budget)

### GCC — GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL:

Founded: 1981 | HQ: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Members (6): Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain

India-GCC trade: \$180+ billion/year | Indian diaspora in Gulf: ~10 million

### WHITE PHOSPHORUS:

Ignites spontaneously at ~30°C; burns intensely; causes deep tissue burns

NOT banned under CWC (not classified as chemical weapon)

Regulated under: CCW Protocol III (incendiary weapons, 1980)

OPCW enforces CWC (Nobel Peace Prize 2013)

### SILVERPIT CRATER & LONAR LAKE:

Silverpit: North Sea (off Yorkshire coast); ~3 km wide crater, ~43 million years old; ~160 m asteroid; confirmed via Nature Communications study by Dr. Uisdean Nicholson (Heriot-Watt University); first discovered 2002 via oil seismic surveys; impact triggered ~100 m tsunami

Lonar Lake (Maharashtra): Rare saline lake in meteor impact crater; age revised from ~52,000 years to ~576,000 years (newer studies); also a Ramsar site (designated 2020)

### SAVITRIBAI PHULE — KEY FACTS:

Born: 3 January 1831, Naigaon, Satara district, Maharashtra | Died: 10 March 1897 (plague service)  
 Founded India's first girls' school: 1848, Pune (with Jyotirao Phule)  
 Works: *Kavya Phule*, *Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar*  
 Established: Bal Hatya Pratibandhak Griha (home for widows/unwed mothers)

### CONCENTRATED SOLAR THERMAL (CST):

Mechanism: Mirrors concentrate sunlight → steam → turbine → electricity/heat  
 India's CST potential: **6.45 GWth** (thermal) — MNRE-GEF-UNIDO CST Roadmap  
 Industrial use: Process heat for textiles, ceramics, food processing, chemicals  
 Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve: UNESCO WHS (Western Ghats, 2012); India's first BR (1986)

### OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Kurumba art: Nilgiri Hills; Tamil Nadu/Kerala/Karnataka; 3,000+ years; linked to Eluthu Paarai rock art site (1984); pigments from Kino tree (*Pterocarpus marsupium*); tools: burnt twigs, bamboo  
 Tea Board of India: Under Ministry of Commerce; regulates tea sector  
 Assam: ~50–55% of India's total tea production  
 ICAR HQ: New Delhi; under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare  
 Lonar Lake is also a **Ramsar Wetland** (designated 2020) — important for Prelims

Sources: [GKToday](#), [GKToday Quiz March 14](#), [PW Live](#), [PIB](#)

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