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Current Affairs Today – March 17, 2026

17 March 2026

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IR

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GEOGRAPHY

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Current Affairs Today — March 17, 2026

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WHY IN NEWS

March 17, 2026 brings a rich slate of current affairs: Sahitya Akademi recognises literary excellence across 24 languages, India's NavIC navigation system faces a satellite setback, the World Bank signs a \$300 million clean air deal for Uttar Pradesh, rare species discoveries span Arunachal Pradesh to West Bengal, India eases FDI norms for firms with minor Chinese shareholding, the Indian Navy participates in Sea Dragon 2026 ASW drills in Guam, CSIR-NCL advances dimethyl ether fuel technology, Gulf energy producers invoke force majeure on Hormuz shipments, and James Webb telescope reveals a new class of permanently molten exoplanets.

SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARDS 2025 ANNOUNCED

The Sahitya Akademi announced its 2025 Annual Awards on March 16, 2026, honouring 24 writers across India's 24 recognised languages. The formal presentation ceremony is scheduled for **March 31, 2026, in New Delhi**.

About Sahitya Akademi: Established on **March 12, 1954**, it is India's national academy of letters. It functions as an autonomous body under the **Ministry of Culture** (registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860). The award — also known as Sahitya Akademi Samman — carries a cash prize of **₹1 lakh**, a copper plaque, and a shawl.

Key Winners:

English: Navtej Sarna — *Crimson Spring* (Novel). Sarna is a former IFS officer (1980 batch) who served as India's Ambassador to the United States (2016-2018), High Commissioner to the United Kingdom (2016), and Ambassador to Israel (2008-2012).

Hindi: Mamta Kalia — *Jeete Jee Allahabad* (Memoir). A veteran Hindi prose writer.

Kashmiri: Ali Shaida — *Najdavanek'y Pot Aalav* (Poetry)

Assamese: Devabrat Das — *Karhi Khelar Sadhu* (Novel)

Bodo: Sahaisuli Brahma — *Dwngnwi Lama Mwnse Gathwn* (Novel)

Manipuri: Haobam Nalini — *Kanglamdriba Eephut* (Short Stories)

Sanskrit: Mahamahopadhyaya Sadhu Bhadreshdas — *Prasthanacatustaye Brahmaghosah* (Poetry)

Urdu: Pritpal Singh Betab — *Safar Jaari Hai* (Poetry)

Tamil: Sa. Tamilselvan — *Thamiz Sirukathaiyin Thadangal* (Literary Criticism)

Telugu: Nandini Sidha Reddy — *Animesha* (Poetry)

Punjabi: Jinder — *Safety Kit* (Short Stories)

Bengali: Prasun Bandyopadhyay — *Shrestha Kabita* (Poetry)

Genre breakdown: 8 poetry, 4 novels, 6 short story collections, 2 essays, 1 literary criticism, 1 autobiography, and 2 memoirs. The awards cover all 22 Scheduled languages under the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, plus English and Rajasthani.

UPSC Relevance: GS1 (Indian Art & Culture), Prelims (Literary awards, 8th Schedule languages, Ministry of Culture)

SUPREME COURT TAKES SUO MOTU ACTION ON CHAMBAL SAND MINING

The Supreme Court bench of Justices **Vikram Nath** and **Sandeep Mehta** took **suo motu cognizance** of illegal sand mining in the Chambal River on the basis of media reports. The court is concerned about the destruction of nesting habitats of the critically endangered **gharial** (*Gavialis gangeticus*), whose largest surviving population lives in the Chambal. *(For detailed coverage of the National Chambal Sanctuary and gharial ecology, see the March 16, 2026 edition.)*

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Environment & Biodiversity — sand mining, gharial conservation), GS2 (Judicial activism, suo motu powers of the Supreme Court)

IRNSS-1F ATOMIC CLOCK FAILURE — NAVIC CONCERN

The last functioning **atomic clock aboard IRNSS-1F** stopped working on **March 13, 2026**, shortly after the satellite completed its **10-year design life**. The Department of Space confirmed the satellite will remain in orbit but can no longer provide full navigation data.

NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) is India's regional satellite navigation system, designed to provide accurate positioning services over India and up to 1,500 km beyond its borders. The original constellation consists of 7 satellites in two orbit types — 3 GEO (Geostationary) and 4 GSO (Geosynchronous). IRNSS-1F is a GEO satellite positioned at 32.5°E longitude.

Atomic clocks are the heart of any navigation satellite — they generate the precise time signals used to calculate position. With IRNSS-1F's clock failed, the satellite cannot contribute to navigation, though it can still broadcast messaging services. As of March 2026, only **3 satellites remain fully operational** for navigation (IRNSS-1B, IRNSS-1I, and NVS-01) — below the minimum of 4 needed for accurate positioning. Five first-generation IRNSS satellites have had all their atomic clocks fail.

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (S&T — space technology), Prelims (NavIC, IRNSS series, ISRO)

WORLD BANK \$300 MILLION UP CLEAN AIR PROGRAM

The World Bank signed an agreement with the **Government of India and Government of Uttar Pradesh** on **March 16, 2026**, for the **Uttar Pradesh Clean Air Management Program** worth **USD 299.66 million (~\$300 million)**. (A separate agreement for Haryana was signed on March 13, 2026.)

Key interventions under the program:

200 new air quality monitoring stations managed by the U.P. Pollution Control Board (UPPCB)

3.9 million households to receive access to clean cooking solutions

700+ brick kilns to transition to cleaner zig-zag kiln technology

Investment in **electric buses and three-wheelers**

Targeting agricultural stubble burning through efficient fertiliser use

Expected to leverage an additional **USD 150 million** in private capital

This is part of a broader **USD 600 million** World Bank clean air package approved in December 2025 for both Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

The lending arm involved is the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** — the World Bank's arm for middle-income countries.

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Environment — Air pollution, stubble burning), Multilateral financing, Federalism & Centre-State cooperation (GS2)

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2026 ANNOUNCED

The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** announced Assembly Elections in **four states and one Union Territory**. Key details:

Voting from **April 9, 2026**; results on **May 4, 2026**

Total voters: **~17.4 crore**

Model Code of Conduct (MCC) came into force immediately upon announcement

Special Intensive Revision (SIR) removed approximately **8 lakh voters from rolls in Kerala**

UPSC Relevance: GS2 (Polity — Election Commission, Constitutional Body, Model Code of Conduct, voter rolls)

HENCKELIA MONOPHYLLA — RARE PLANT REDISCOVERED IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Scientists from the **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** rediscovered the rare plant species *Henckelia monophylla* in **Arunachal Pradesh** after a gap of nearly **189 years** — it was last collected in 1837.

The plant belongs to the family **Gesneriaceae** and is notable for having a **single leaf** (as the name “monophylla” suggests). It was found growing on moist rocky cliffs in the Eastern Himalayas.

This rediscovery is significant for conservation: plants not observed for decades are often presumed extinct. BSI conducts systematic floral surveys under the **Flora of India** programme.

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Biodiversity — endemic species, BSI, Eastern Himalayas biodiversity hotspot), Prelims (Species in news)

MEGAMALAI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY — NINE NEW SPECIES DOCUMENTED

A faunal survey by the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** in Tamil Nadu’s **Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary** documented **nine newly recorded species**, including rare insects, amphibians, and reptiles.

Megamalai (also called the “High Wavy Mountains”) is located in **Theni district, Tamil Nadu**, within the **Western Ghats** — a UNESCO World Heritage biodiversity hotspot. The sanctuary is contiguous with Periyar Tiger Reserve and is home to elephants, leopards, sloth bears, and the endangered **lion-tailed macaque**.

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Biodiversity, Western Ghats, ZSI), Prelims (Species, Protected Areas in news)

LOWER KOPILI HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT, ASSAM

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** virtually inaugurated the **Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Project** (120 MW) in **Assam** — part of his push to strengthen clean energy infrastructure in Northeast India.

The Kopili River is a tributary of the **Brahmaputra**. This project adds to Assam’s hydropower capacity and supports India’s commitments under its **National Electricity Plan** and **500 GW non-fossil fuel target by 2030**.

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Energy — hydropower, Northeast infrastructure), Prelims (Kopili River — Assam tributary of Brahmaputra)

VELA CARLI CRAB — RARE GYNANDROMORPHY IN SILENT VALLEY

Scientists documented a rare case of **gynandromorphy** in the freshwater crab *Vela carli*, discovered in **Silent Valley National Park, Kerala** — the first such recorded case in the **Gecarcinucidae family**. The specimen displayed both male reproductive organs and female features (gonopores) simultaneously.

Gynandromorphy is an extremely rare biological condition where a single organism simultaneously expresses both male and female anatomical traits — distinct from hermaphroditism (physiological), as gynandromorphy is a structural condition.

About Silent Valley National Park:

Located in **Palakkad district, Kerala**, within the **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve** (UNESCO World Heritage Site, 2012)

Nourished by the **Kunthipuzha River** (tributary of the Bharathapuzha)

One of India's last undisturbed tropical rainforest patches

Harbours the endangered **lion-tailed macaque** (IUCN: Endangered), tigers, elephants, Nilgiri langurs, and over 1,000 flowering plant species

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Biodiversity — endemic species, Western Ghats, Protected Areas), Prelims (Gynandromorphy, Silent Valley NP location, Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve)

FORCE MAJEURE INVOKED — STRAIT OF HORMUZ DISRUPTIONS

Gulf energy producers invoked **force majeure** clauses on oil and gas shipments following disruptions to maritime traffic through the **Strait of Hormuz**.

Force majeure (French: “superior force”) is a legal clause releasing parties from contractual obligations when an extraordinary, unforeseeable event makes performance impossible. In India, it is governed under **Section 56 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872** (doctrine of frustration).

About the Strait of Hormuz:

Narrow waterway between the **Persian Gulf** and the **Gulf of Oman**; width ~54 km (navigable channel ~3 km each way)

Approximately **20% of global traded oil** (~20 million barrels/day) transits through Hormuz

Borders: **Iran** (north), **Oman** and **UAE** (south)

Any disruption directly affects India: ~85% of India's crude imports originate in the Gulf region

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Energy Security — Hormuz chokepoint), GS2 (IR — Gulf relations), Prelims (Force majeure, Section 56 Contract Act 1872, Hormuz geography)

BUTIS BARGABHIMAE — NEW ESTUARINE FISH, WEST BENGAL

A new fish species named *Butis bargabhimae* was discovered in the **Rupnarayan River** near **Tamluk, West Bengal** — a tributary of the Hooghly (Ganga delta system).

The species belongs to the **Butidae family** (gudgeon gobies), distinguished by:

Interorbital scales between the eyes

Light-dark banded pectoral fins — absent in closely related species

Habitat: estuaries and mangrove ecosystems (brackish water, fluctuating salinity)

Nomenclature: Named after the Hindu deity **Bargabhima**, revered in Tamluk — the ancient port city known historically as *Tamralipta*, a major maritime trade hub in ancient Bengal.

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Biodiversity — new species, estuarine ecology), Prelims (Species in news, Rupnarayan River, Ganga delta)

ANCIENT PETROGLYPHS DISCOVERED IN TELANGANA

Two **ancient petroglyphs** were discovered on a flat rock surface inside a rock shelter near the **Beerappa Temple, Manchirevula, Telangana**.

Petroglyphs (from Greek *petra* = rock + *glyphein* = carve) are images created by physically removing material from a rock surface through pecking, incising, abrading, or drilling — distinguishing them from *petrographs* (painted rock art like Bhimbetka). They represent early human communication, artistic expression, and ritual/astronomical recording.

India's major rock art sites:

Bhimbetka Rock Shelters, Madhya Pradesh — UNESCO World Heritage Site; oldest paintings ~30,000 years old

Edakkal Caves, Kerala — Neolithic petroglyphs (~6,000–8,000 years old)

Now: Manchirevula, Telangana

UPSC Relevance: GS1 (Indian History — prehistoric art, Neolithic/Mesolithic cultures, rock art), Prelims (Petroglyphs vs petrographs, Edakkal Caves, Bhimbetka)

PROGERININ THERAPY — HOPE FOR PROGERIA

Sentynl Therapeutics (subsidiary of **Zydu Lifesciences**, India) and South Korean firm **PRG S&T** announced collaborative development of **Progerinin**, an oral drug targeting **Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome**.

Progeria is an extremely rare, fatal genetic disorder caused by a point mutation in the **LMNA gene**, which produces an abnormal protein called **Progerin**. Children with progeria age approximately **7–8 times faster** than normal and typically die of cardiovascular disease in their early teens.

About Zydus Lifesciences (formerly Zydus Cadila):

Founded: 1995; HQ **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**; listed on BSE/NSE

Known for **ZyCoV-D** — the world’s first DNA-based COVID-19 vaccine approved for human use (DCGI approval: August 2021)

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Science & Tech — rare disease research, biotech, pharma), Prelims (Progeria, LMNA gene, Zydus Lifesciences, ZyCoV-D)

NEW MOLTEN LIQUID PLANET CLASS — JAMES WEBB DISCOVERY

Scientists using the **James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)** identified a new third class of exoplanets — **permanently molten liquid planets** — distinct from rocky planets and water-rich planets. Findings were published in *Nature Astronomy*.

The primary example: L 98-59 d

Located **~35 light-years** from Earth

~1.6 times larger and heavier than Earth

Surface temperature: **~1,900°C** — maintains a global magma ocean

Dense atmosphere of **hydrogen sulphide (H₂S)**

Nearby planetary gravitational interactions generate massive waves across its lava surface

Significance: Many exoplanets previously classified as potentially habitable “water worlds” may actually be molten planets. These worlds serve as natural laboratories for understanding **early Earth’s conditions** (~4.5 billion years ago, when Earth was similarly molten).

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Science & Tech — space science, JWST), Prelims (JWST, L 98-59 d, exoplanet classification, Nature Astronomy)

SEA DRAGON 2026 — INDIAN NAVY IN ANTI-SUBMARINE EXERCISE

The **Indian Navy** deployed a **Boeing P-8I Neptune** maritime patrol aircraft in **Exercise Sea Dragon 2026**, a US-led annual **Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW)** exercise held at **Andersen Air Force Base, Guam**.

Key details:

Participating nations: **India, United States, Australia, Japan, New Zealand**

Duration: Two-week high-intensity exercise

Focus: Detection, tracking, and neutralisation of submarine threats — from simulated scenarios to live submarine tracking

About P-8I Neptune:

India's primary long-range maritime patrol and ASW aircraft (purchased from Boeing, USA)

Features: Advanced sonar buoys, MAD (Magnetic Anomaly Detector), Harpoon anti-ship missiles, torpedoes

India currently operates **12 P-8Is** with **6 more approved** (DAC clearance, February 2026) — total fleet to rise to 18

Strategic context: Andersen AFB in Guam is a major US military hub in the Western Pacific. The exercise aligns with India's **Indo-Pacific strategy** and Quad (India-US-Australia-Japan) cooperative security frameworks.

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Defence — ASW, P-8I), GS2 (IR — Quad, Indo-Pacific strategy), Prelims (Sea Dragon, P-8I Neptune, Guam, Andersen AFB)

CSIR-NCL SCALES UP DIMETHYL ETHER FUEL TECHNOLOGY

The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research – National Chemical Laboratory (CSIR-NCL)**, Pune, is scaling up **Dimethyl Ether (DME)** fuel technology to an **industrial-scale demonstration plant** in partnership with a processing engineering company.

What is DME (CH₃OCH₃)?

Synthetic fuel that can substitute diesel in compression-ignition engines

Feedstock: Natural gas, coal, biomass, or even CO₂ (waste materials) — multiple domestic options

High cetane number — better ignition quality than diesel

Clean combustion: Near-zero soot, low NO_x, SO_x, and particulate matter

Colourless gas at atmospheric conditions; liquefied for transport/storage

Significance for India:

Reduces dependence on petroleum diesel (India imports ~85% of crude)

Domestic biomass feedstock potential reduces import bill

Applicable to heavy transport and agriculture — major diesel consumers

Aligns with **National Biofuel Policy 2018** and India's net zero by 2070 target

About CSIR-NCL: Established 1950; Pune, Maharashtra; one of India's premier chemical research institutes under CSIR. The Prime Minister is the ex-officio President of CSIR.

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Energy — alternative fuels, green chemistry, biofuels), Prelims (DME, CSIR-NCL, cetane number, National Biofuel Policy 2018)

INDIA EASES FDI NORMS — FIRMS WITH UP TO 10% CHINESE STAKE

The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** notified a relaxation in FDI rules, allowing overseas companies with **≤10% Chinese shareholding** to invest in India through the **automatic route** — without prior government approval.

Background — Press Note 3 of 2020: In April 2020, India tightened FDI norms for all countries sharing a **land border** with India (China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Afghanistan), requiring mandatory government approval. The aim was to prevent **opportunistic takeovers** of Indian companies distressed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

What changed:

Global private equity and venture capital funds with **minor Chinese LP holdings (≤10%)** can now invest via automatic route

Beneficial ownership defined per **Section 2(1)(fa) of the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002**: controlling ownership = entitlement to >10% of shares, capital, or profits

Entities directly incorporated in **China, Hong Kong**, or land-bordering countries remain excluded from the automatic route

Key data:

China's total FDI equity inflows to India (April 2000 – December 2025): **USD 2.51 billion** — a small share of India's total FDI

Previous problem: Global PE/VC funds with even minor Chinese LP exposure were blocked from investing in Indian startups

UPSC Relevance: GS3 (Economy — FDI policy, DPIIT, Press Note 3), GS2 (IR — India-China economic relations), Prelims (Press Note 3/2020, PMLA Section 2(1)(fa), DPIIT, land-bordering countries)

UPSC RELEVANCE

Sahitya Akademi (winners, 8th Schedule, prize amount), NavIC/IRNSS-1F (atomic clock, satellite type), World Bank UP Clean Air Program (amount, IBRD), *Henckelia monophylla* (BSI, Arunachal, 189 years), Megamalai WLS (ZSI, Tamil Nadu, Western Ghats), Lower Kopili HEP (120 MW, Assam, Brahmaputra), SC suo motu cognizance (Chambal gharial), *Vela carli* crab (gynandromorphy, Silent Valley NP, Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve), Strait of Hormuz (force majeure, Section 56 Contract Act 1872, ~20% global oil), *Butis bargabhimae* (Butidae, Rupnarayan River, Tamluk), Petroglyphs Manchirevula (vs petrographs, Edakkal, Bhimbetka), Progeria/Progerinin (LMNA gene, ZyduS Lifesciences, ZyCoV-D), L 98-59 d molten planet (JWST, Nature Astronomy, 35 light-years), Sea Dragon 2026 (P-8I Neptune, Guam, Andersen AFB, ASW), CSIR-NCL DME (cetane number, feedstock, Biofuel Policy 2018), FDI Chinese stake (Press Note 3/2020, PMLA 2(1)(fa), DPIIT).

MAINS GS3:

Energy security and Hormuz chokepoint; alternative fuels (DME) and India's energy transition; biodiversity documentation and conservation.

MAINS GS2:

India-China economic relations and FDI norms; Indo-Pacific maritime security and ASW cooperation.

MAINS GS1:

Literary awards and 8th Schedule languages; prehistoric rock art traditions in India.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
SAHITYA AKADEMI:

Established: March 12, 1954; autonomous body under Ministry of Culture

Registered as a society under Societies Registration Act, 1860

Awards in: 24 languages (22 Scheduled + English + Rajasthani)

Prize: ₹1 lakh cash + copper plaque + shawl

Genre breakdown: 8 poetry, 4 novels, 6 short stories, 2 essays, 1 literary criticism, 1 autobiography, 2 memoirs

2025 English winner: Navtej Sarna — *Crimson Spring*

2025 Hindi winner: Mamta Kalia — *Jeete Jee Allahabad* (Memoir)

2025 Tamil winner: Sa. Tamilselvan — *Thamiz Sirukathaiyin Thadangal* (Literary Criticism)

Ceremony date: March 31, 2026, New Delhi

NAVIC / IRNSS-1F:

NavIC = Navigation with Indian Constellation

Original constellation: 7 satellites (3 GEO + 4 GSO); additional satellites launched since

Coverage: India + up to 1,500 km beyond borders

IRNSS-1F atomic clock failure: March 13, 2026; satellite completed 10-year design life (launched March 2016)

Only 3 satellites operational for navigation as of March 2026: IRNSS-1B, IRNSS-1I, NVS-01

Minimum 4 satellites needed for accurate positioning — system below operational threshold

WORLD BANK UP CLEAN AIR PROGRAM:

Amount: USD 299.66 million (~\$300 million), IBRD loan

Signed: March 16, 2026 (Haryana agreement signed March 13, 2026)

Air quality monitors: 200 new stations (UPPCB)

Clean cooking beneficiaries: 3.9 million households

Brick kilns transitioning: 700+

Part of USD 600 million package (UP + Haryana combined)

VELA CARLI CRAB / GYNANDROMORPHY:

Gynandromorphy: organism with both male and female anatomical traits; first in Gecarcinucidae family

Location: Silent Valley National Park, Palakkad, Kerala

Silent Valley: Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO WHS 2012); watered by Kunthipuzha River

Famous residents: Lion-tailed macaque (IUCN: Endangered), Nilgiri langur, tigers, elephants

STRAIT OF HORMUZ / FORCE MAJEURE:

Oil transit: ~20 million barrels/day (~20% of global traded oil)

Width: ~54 km; navigable channel ~3 km each way

Borders: Iran (north), Oman and UAE (south)

Force majeure (India): Section 56, Indian Contract Act 1872 (doctrine of frustration)

BUTIS BARGABHIMAE:

Family: Butidae (gudgeon gobies)

Location: Rupnarayan River, Tamluk, West Bengal (Hooghly / Ganga delta tributary)

Named after: Deity Bargabhima, Tamruk (ancient Tamralipta — maritime trade hub)

PETROGLYPHS — MANCHIREVULA, TELANGANA:

Petroglyphs: carved rock images (pecking, incising, abrading) — NOT painted

Petrographs: painted rock art (e.g., Bhimbetka)

India's key petroglyph sites: Edakkal Caves, Kerala; Bhimbetka, MP (UNESCO WHS)

PROGERININ / PROGERIA:

Progeria (Hutchinson-Gilford syndrome): LMNA gene mutation → Progerin protein

Aging rate: 7-8x faster; death typically by early teens (cardiovascular disease)

Developer: Sentyln Therapeutics (Zydu Lifesciences subsidiary) + PRG S&T, South Korea

Zydu Lifesciences: HQ Ahmedabad; ZyCoV-D = world's first DNA-based COVID vaccine

L 98-59 D / MOLTEN LIQUID PLANET:

Distance: ~35 light-years from Earth

Size: ~1.6x Earth; temperature ~1,900°C; global magma ocean

Atmosphere: hydrogen sulphide (H₂S)

Discovered via: James Webb Space Telescope; published in Nature Astronomy

SEA DRAGON 2026:

Type: Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercise

Led by: United States; held at Andersen AFB, Guam

Participants: India, USA, Australia, Japan, New Zealand

India's asset: P-8I Neptune (maritime patrol aircraft; 12 in service, 6 more approved Feb 2026)

CSIR-NCL / DIMETHYL ETHER (DME):

DME formula: CH₃OCH₃; synthetic diesel alternative

High cetane number; near-zero soot, NO_x, SO_x

Feedstock: natural gas, coal, biomass, CO₂

CSIR-NCL: established 1950; Pune; PM is ex-officio President of CSIR

FDI CHINESE STAKE RELAXATION:

Policy: DPIIT notification; relaxes Press Note 3 of 2020

Threshold: overseas firms with up to 10% Chinese shareholding may use automatic route

Excluded: entities incorporated in China, Hong Kong, or land-bordering countries

Beneficial ownership: Section 2(1)(fa) PMLA 2002

China's FDI equity to India (2000-Dec 2025): USD 2.51 billion

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Henckelia monophylla: family Gesneriaceae; rediscovered in Arunachal Pradesh after 189 years (last collected 1837); single-leaf plant

Megamalai WLS: Theni district, Tamil Nadu; Western Ghats; 9 new species documented by ZSI

Lower Kopili HEP: 120 MW; Assam; Kopili River = tributary of Brahmaputra

Assembly Elections 2026: 4 states + 1 UT; voting April 9; results May 4; ~17.4 crore voters

Land-bordering countries with India: China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Afghanistan

Sources: [GKToday](#), [Sahitya Akademi](#), [World Bank](#), [PIB](#), [DPIIT](#), [ISRO](#)

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