



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Current Affairs Today – March 18, 2026

18 March 2026

SUBJECTS COVERED

ECONOMY

ENVIRONMENT

SCIENCE & TECH

SOCIAL ISSUES

HISTORY & CULTURE

POLITY

REPORTS & SCHEMES

PERSONS & AWARDS

CURATED & WRITTEN BY**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator •

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

Free UPSC & State PCS Resources

ujiyari.com

Current Affairs Today — March 18, 2026

18 March 2026 · 9 min read

▼ On this Page

- 01** ITDC Launches Tribal Homestay Capacity Building...
- 02** Government Withdraws Jan Vishwas Amendment Bill...
- 03** Kalinga Stadium to Host National Para...
- 04** IIT Guwahati Develops Dual-Use MXene Catalyst
- 05** Uttarakhand Introduces e-Swasthya Dham Portal for...
- 06** Bharat Tribes Fest 2026 Inaugurated by...
- 07** Göbekli Tepe — Rewriting the Origins...
- 08** Neanderthal "Factory" Discovery at Neumark-Nord
- 09** Persons in News

WHY IN NEWS

Significant developments across tribal welfare, archaeological science, parliamentary procedure, para-sports, clean energy, healthcare infrastructure, and cultural promotion — each with direct UPSC Prelims and Mains relevance.

ITDC LAUNCHES TRIBAL HOMESTAY CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

The India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), under the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, inaugurated a **Capacity Building Programme for Tribal Homestay Owners** in New Delhi.

Key Details:

Inaugural batch: **40 participants** from Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Gujarat

Training delivered through **IHM Ashok** — ITDC's hospitality education arm

Released: “**Tribal Homestay – Operation and Development Manual 2026**” (translated into Hindi and Gujarati)

Target: Train approximately **1,500 participants** who can act as regional trainers

Addresses shortage of hotel infrastructure in tribal and mountainous regions

Taps rising demand for “less crowded, nature-based, immersive experiences”

UPSC RELEVANCE

ITDC established year, IHM Ashok, Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

MAINS GS-2:

Inter-ministerial collaboration; tribal livelihood schemes.

GS-3:

Sustainable tourism; rural employment.

GOVERNMENT WITHDRAWS JAN VISHWAS AMENDMENT BILL 2025

The Union Government withdrew the **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025** from the Lok Sabha to incorporate recommendations made by a **Select Committee**.

Key Details:

Moved by Union Commerce Minister **Piyush Goyal**; approved by Lok Sabha through voice vote

Purpose of the Bill: Decriminalise minor offences — replace imprisonment with monetary penalties; reduce judicial burden; encourage ease of doing business; foster trust-based governance

Reason for withdrawal: Select Committee suggested modifications; government will reintroduce a revised version

This follows the original **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023**, which amended 42 central Acts to decriminalise 183 provisions

Constitutional context: A Bill can be withdrawn from Parliament only with the approval of the House where it is pending. This is governed by **Rule 110** of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha — not by any constitutional article. (Note: Article 70 deals with discharge of the President’s functions in contingencies.)

UPSC RELEVANCE

Jan Vishwas Act 2023, Select Committee procedure, decriminalisation.

MAINS GS-2:

Parliamentary procedure; ease of doing business reforms.

GS-3:

Business regulations; decriminalisation policy.

KALINGA STADIUM TO HOST NATIONAL PARA ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP

Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar will host the **National Para Athletics Championship** from **March 19–21, 2026**.

Organiser: Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) in collaboration with the Odisha government.

Key Details:

1,460 athletes representing 28 states + BSF and Services Sports Control Board (SSCB)

145 medal events over 3 days

Notable athletes: **Mariyappan Thangavelu** (triple Paralympic medallist), **Sumit Antil** (double Paralympic gold in javelin), **Yogesh Kathuniya**, **Praveen Kumar**, **Preethi Pal**

Serves as selection platform for **Asian Para Games — Aichi-Nagoya, Japan**

Defending champions: **Haryana** (largest contingent); ~40 Odisha athletes (led by **Suchitra Parida**)

UPSC RELEVANCE

Paralympic Committee of India, Kalinga Stadium, Asian Para Games host.

MAINS GS-2:

Inclusive sports policy; disability rights; government support for para-athletes.

IIT GUWAHATI DEVELOPS DUAL-USE MXENE CATALYST

Researchers at **IIT Guwahati**, led by **Prof. P.K. Giri**, developed an advanced MXene-based material capable of both **hydrogen fuel production** and **solar-powered desalination**.

Published in: **Advanced Functional Materials**

Technical Details:

Material: MXene (2D material with high electrical conductivity), engineered into ultra-thin ribbon-like structures

Ruthenium atoms introduced into oxygen-deficient sites — enhances catalytic efficiency

Hydrogen Evolution Reaction (HER): Ultra-low overpotential of just **12 mV** (superior to platinum-based Pt/C catalysts)

Solar desalination: Integrated into a **3D Janus evaporator**; evaporation rate **~3.2 kg/m²/h** under sunlight; operated continuously 5 days without salt accumulation; meets international drinking water standards

UPSC RELEVANCE

MXene, Janus evaporator, IIT Guwahati, HER.

MAINS GS-3:

Clean energy; water security; indigenous R&D and technology.

UTTARAKHAND INTRODUCES E-SWASTHYA DHAM PORTAL FOR CHAR DHAM YATRA

The Uttarakhand government introduced a comprehensive healthcare infrastructure for the upcoming **Char Dham Yatra**, centred on the **e-Swasthya Dham portal** for real-time health monitoring of pilgrims.

Medical Infrastructure:

25 medical relief posts and **33 health screening centres** along pilgrimage routes

177 ambulances including 108-service vehicles, advanced life support (ALS) ambulances, cardiac ambulances

Boat ambulance in Tehri; **helicopter ambulance** managed by AIIMS Rishikesh

Human resources: 16 specialist doctors, 46 medical officers, 85 paramedical staff (15-day rotational roster), 100 health volunteers

Char Dham Sites: Yamunotri · Gangotri · Kedarnath · Badrinath (all in Uttarakhand)

UPSC RELEVANCE

Char Dham locations, AIIMS Rishikesh, e-health portals.

MAINS GS-2:

Healthcare delivery; digital health governance.

GS-3:

Disaster preparedness at pilgrimage sites.

BHARAT TRIBES FEST 2026 INAUGURATED BY TRIFED

Bharat Tribes Fest 2026, organised by **TRIFED** (Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India) with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, was inaugurated on March 18.

Details:

Dates: March 18–30, 2026 | **Venue:** Sunder Nursery, New Delhi

Inaugurated by: Union Minister for Tribal Affairs **Jual Oram**; MoS **Durgadas Uikey**

200+ stalls, 78 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, 300+ master artisans

“Forest-to-Plate” initiative: ~120 participants presenting traditional tribal cuisines

17 live craft demonstrations; 400+ tribal artists (music and dance)

Bharat Tribes Business Conclave (March 19–27): focus on sustainable textiles, tribal food systems, ethical markets

CSR Conclave (March 24): connects corporate entities with tribal entrepreneurs

RISA initiative: Designers collaborating with tribal artisans (Eri silk, Kotpad cotton, Dongria embroidery) for global markets

UPSC RELEVANCE

TRIFED, Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, RISA initiative, Sunder Nursery.

MAINS GS-1:

Tribal culture and art.

GS-2:

Tribal welfare; inclusion.

GS-3:

Tribal economy; forest produce marketing.

GÖBEKLI TEPE — REWRITING THE ORIGINS OF CIVILISATION

Göbekli Tepe (located in present-day **Turkey**) is the world’s oldest known temple complex, dating to approximately **9600 BCE** (~12,000 years ago).

Why in Focus: Archaeological discoveries here challenge the conventional “farming-first” narrative of civilisation.

Key Facts:

Built by **hunter-gatherers**, not settled agricultural communities

Massive circular structures with large **T-shaped limestone pillars** (several tonnes each)

Intricate animal carvings: foxes, lions, birds

No evidence of permanent habitation — used exclusively for **ritual gatherings**

Deliberately buried around **8000 BCE** through a conscious human act; reasons remain unclear

Predates: Stonehenge (~5,000 years old) and Egyptian pyramids (~4,500 years old)

New hypothesis: **Shared beliefs and collective rituals may have preceded and encouraged farming** — not the reverse

UPSC RELEVANCE

Göbekli Tepe location, age, significance.

MAINS GS-1:

Prehistoric human societies; origin of civilisation debate; archaeological evidence for social organisation.

NEANDERTHAL “FACTORY” DISCOVERY AT NEUMARK-NORD

Archaeologists found evidence of a highly organised Neanderthal activity site dating ~**125,000 years** ago at **Neumark-Nord, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany** (near Halle, ~35 km from Leipzig). The study was published in **Science Advances** by researchers from **Leiden University**.

Key Findings:

Thousands of animal bones cracked open for marrow, then **crushed and heated** to obtain bone grease

Deliberate, systematic approach — indicates **planning and advanced cognition**

Repeatedly used location near an ancient lakeshore in Saxony-Anhalt — impression of a dedicated “factory” processing zone

Fat extraction was nutritionally essential — protein alone was insufficient for Neanderthal energy needs

Pushes back known timeline for bone grease rendering by ~100,000 years (previous oldest evidence: ~28,000 years ago)

UPSC RELEVANCE

Neanderthals (400,000–40,000 years ago), Neumark-Nord site.

MAINS GS-1:

Prehistoric human evolution; behavioural modernity; cognitive development.

PERSONS IN NEWS

Jual Oram — Union Minister for Tribal Affairs; inaugurated Bharat Tribes Fest 2026.

Mariyappan Thangavelu — Triple Paralympic medallist in high jump (Gold Rio 2016, Silver Tokyo 2020, Bronze Paris 2024); first Indian para-athlete to win medals at three consecutive Paralympics; competing at National Para Athletics Championship.

Sumit Antil — Double Paralympic gold medallist in javelin throw F64 (Tokyo 2020, Paris 2024); first Indian man to defend a Paralympic title; competing at Bhubaneswar.

Prof. P.K. Giri — IIT Guwahati; led development of dual-use MXene catalyst.

Piyush Goyal — Union Commerce Minister; moved withdrawal of Jan Vishwas Amendment Bill 2025.

UPSC RELEVANCE

ITDC, TRIFED, IHM Ashok, Jan Vishwas Act, MXene, Göbekli Tepe, Neanderthals, Char Dham.

MAINS GS-1:

Prehistory; tribal culture.

GS-2:

Parliamentary procedure; tribal welfare; healthcare delivery.

GS-3:

Clean energy; sustainable tourism; technology R&D.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

ITDC AND TRIBAL TOURISM:

ITDC established: **1966** (under Ministry of Tourism)
 IHM Ashok = ITDC's hospitality training institute
 Inaugural batch size: 40 participants (Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Gujarat)
 Target trainees: ~1,500 (to act as regional multipliers)
 Manual released: "Tribal Homestay – Operation and Development Manual 2026"

JAN VISHWAS ACT:

Original Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act passed: **2023**
 Amended: **42 central Acts**; decriminalised **183 provisions**
 Objective: Replace imprisonment with fines for minor offences; reduce judicial burden
 Jan Vishwas Amendment Bill 2025 withdrawn by Commerce Minister **Piyush Goyal**

NATIONAL PARA ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP 2026:

Venue: **Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar** (March 19–21, 2026)
 Organiser: **Paralympic Committee of India (PCI)**
 Athletes: 1,460 from 28 states + BSF + SSCB
 Medal events: **145**; Defending champions: **Haryana**
 Selection trial for: **Asian Para Games — Aichi-Nagoya, Japan**

MXENE CATALYST — IIT GUWAHATI:

Lead researcher: **Prof. P.K. Giri**, IIT Guwahati
 Journal: **Advanced Functional Materials**
 HER overpotential: **12 mV** (better than Pt/C benchmark)
 Solar desalination evaporation rate: **3.2 kg/m²/h**
 Operated: 5 days continuously without salt fouling
 Key feature: **Ruthenium atoms** in oxygen-deficient MXene sites

CHAR DHAM YATRA HEALTHCARE:

Portal: **e-Swasthya Dham** (real-time pilgrim health monitoring)
 Medical relief posts: **25**; Health screening centres: **33**
 Ambulances: **177** (including ALS and cardiac)
 Helicopter ambulance managed by: **AIIMS Rishikesh**
 Char Dham sites: **Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, Badrinath**

BHARAT TRIBES FEST 2026:

Organiser: **TRIFED** (under Ministry of Tribal Affairs)
 Venue: **Sunder Nursery, New Delhi** (March 18–30, 2026)
 Inaugurated by: **Jual Oram** (Union Minister, Tribal Affairs)
 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras present: **78**; Artisans: **300+**
 RISA initiative: Eri silk, Kotpad cotton, Dongria embroidery → global markets

GÖBEKLI TEPE:

Location: **South-eastern Turkey** (Urfa province)
 Age: ~**9600 BCE** (~12,000 years old)
 Type: World's oldest known **temple complex**
 Builders: **Hunter-gatherers** (pre-agricultural)
 Deliberately buried: ~**8000 BCE**
 Predates: Stonehenge (~3000 BCE), Egyptian pyramids (~2500 BCE)

NEANDERTHAL FACTORY — NEUMARK-NORD:

Location: **Neumark-Nord, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany** (near Halle, ~35 km from Leipzig)
 Age: ~**125,000 years** ago
 Activity: Systematic bone marrow extraction + grease rendering using fire (bones of 172+ mammals including deer, horses, aurochs)
 Published in: **Science Advances** (Leiden University researchers)
 Significance: Pushes back known timeline for bone grease rendering by ~100,000 years (previous oldest evidence: ~28,000 years ago)
 Neanderthals existed: ~**400,000–40,000 years ago**

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Kalinga Stadium is a premier international hockey and multi-sport venue in Bhubaneswar, Odisha; hosted FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2018 and 2023, and FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2022
 TRIFED full form: Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India
 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras: SHG-based centres for value-addition of minor forest produce
 MXenes are 2D transition metal carbides/nitrides with high electrical conductivity
 Minimum thermodynamic potential for water electrolysis: **1.23 V**

Sources: [GKToday](#), [PIB](#), [The Hindu](#)

RELATED EDITORIALS

DOWN TO EARTH

The Climate Action Gap — Why Green Growth Is Still Slipping

20 Mar

MINT

FDI and the Land-Border Rule — India's Calibrated Re-engagement with China-Linked Capital

20 Mar

THE HINDU

Fire and Fury — The Ill-Conceived War on Iran and Its Global Fallout

20 Mar

INDIAN EXPRESS

Energy Security Under Threat — The Ras Laffan Attack and India's Vulnerabilities

20 Mar

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

 [linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

 [Read Full Article on Ujyari](#) →

<https://ujyari.com/daily/2026/03/18/current-affairs-today/>

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujyari.com