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27 March 2026

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Current Affairs Today — March 27, 2026

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INDIA UPDATES NDC TARGETS FOR 2035 — 47% EMISSIONS INTENSITY CUT, 60%

NON-FOSSIL POWER

The Union Cabinet approved India's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for the period 2031-2035, to be communicated to the UNFCCC, raising the country's climate ambition ahead of the Paris Agreement's five-year review cycle.

Key Targets Under NDC 3.0

TARGET	NDC 2030 (PREVIOUS)	NDC 2035 (UPDATED)
Emissions intensity reduction (from 2005 levels)	45%	47%
Installed power from non-fossil sources	50%	60%
Carbon sink through forest/tree cover	2.5-3.0 billion tonnes CO ₂ eq	3.5-4.0 billion tonnes CO₂ eq
Net-zero target year	2070	2070 (unchanged)

Current Progress

India achieved 52.57% non-fossil fuel installed capacity by February 2026 — surpassing the earlier 50% target five years ahead of schedule. The country has already created a carbon sink of 2.29 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (as of 2021 data).

UPSC Angle

NDC submissions are binding under the Paris Agreement (2015). Each party must submit progressively ambitious NDCs every five years. India's NDC 3.0 covers the 2031-2035 period and was approved just ahead of the 2026 deadline for submissions to the UNFCCC.

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
INDIA'S NDC 3.0:

Approved by Union Cabinet on 25 March 2026

Emissions intensity target: 47% reduction from 2005 levels by 2035

Non-fossil capacity target: 60% of installed power by 2035

Carbon sink target: 3.5-4.0 billion tonnes CO₂ eq by 2035

Net-zero target: 2070

India's current non-fossil capacity: 52.57% (Feb 2026)

Paris Agreement adopted: 12 December 2015; entered into force: 4 November 2016

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992, Rio Earth Summit)

LOK SABHA PASSES FINANCE BILL 2026 WITH 32 AMENDMENTS

The Lok Sabha passed the Finance Bill 2026 by voice vote on 25 March, approving 32 government-proposed amendments while rejecting all Opposition amendments. The Rajya Sabha took up the bill for discussion on 27 March.

Key Highlights of Union Budget 2026-27

PARAMETER	AMOUNT
Total expenditure	Rs 53.47 lakh crore (7.7% increase YoY)
Capital expenditure	Rs 12.2 lakh crore
Fiscal deficit target	4.4% of GDP
New income tax regime	No tax up to Rs 12 lakh annual income

UPSC Angle

Under Article 110, the Finance Bill is a **Money Bill** — the Rajya Sabha can only recommend amendments (within 14 days) but cannot reject it. Once the Rajya Sabha returns the bill, the Union Budget is considered passed by Parliament.

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
FINANCE BILL 2026:

Passed by Lok Sabha: 25 March 2026 (voice vote)

Rajya Sabha discussion: 27 March 2026

Total amendments accepted: 32 (all government-proposed)

Union Budget 2026-27 total expenditure: Rs 53.47 lakh crore

Capital expenditure: Rs 12.2 lakh crore

Article 110: Definition of Money Bill

Article 109: Special procedure for Money Bills (RS has 14 days to return)

Finance Minister: Nirmala Sitharaman

MODIFIED UDAN SCHEME APPROVED — RS 28,840 CRORE FOR 2026-2036

The Union Cabinet approved the Regional Connectivity Scheme - Modified UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) for a 10-year period (FY 2026-27 to FY 2035-36) with a total outlay of Rs 28,840 crore.

Key Components

COMPONENT	DETAILS	OUTLAY
Development of 100 airports	From existing unserved airstrips	Rs 12,159 crore (8 years)
200 modern helipads	Across Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities	Rs 3,661 crore
VGF (Viability Gap Funding)	For airline operators on unviable routes	Rs 10,043 crore (10 years)
Aircraft procurement	2 HAL Dhruv helicopters (Pawan Hans) + 2 HAL Dornier (Alliance Air)	Part of total outlay

Performance of Original UDAN (2016-2026)

Over nine years, 663 routes operationalised across 95 airports/heliports/water aerodromes, with 3.41 lakh+ flights carrying 162.47 lakh passengers (as of 28 February 2026). However, nearly 50% of routes have closed, prompting the modified scheme.

UPSC Angle

UDAN was launched in 2016 under the National Civil Aviation Policy. It is a demand-side intervention using VGF to make air travel affordable for the common citizen. The Modified UDAN addresses the high route closure rate by focusing on infrastructure development alongside route subsidies.

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MODIFIED UDAN SCHEME:

Cabinet approval: 25 March 2026

Duration: FY 2026-27 to FY 2035-36 (10 years)

Total outlay: Rs 28,840 crore

100 airports to be developed from unserved airstrips

200 modern helipads across India

VGF allocation: Rs 10,043 crore

Original UDAN launched: 2016

Routes operationalised (original scheme): 663 across 95 airports

Passengers carried: 162.47 lakh

Ministry: Ministry of Civil Aviation

HAL Dhruv: Indigenous Advanced Light Helicopter

HAL Dornier 228: Indigenous light transport aircraft

INDIAN RAILWAYS APPROVES RS 1,236 CRORE FOR KAVACH EXPANSION AND FIBRE NETWORK

Indian Railways approved three infrastructure projects worth Rs 1,236 crore to upgrade its communication backbone and expand the indigenous Kavach automatic train protection system.

Project Breakdown

PROJECT	COVERAGE	COST (RS CRORE)
Central Railway Fibre Network	All 5 divisions (Solapur, Nagpur, Pune, Bhusawal, Mumbai)	623.63
Southern Railway Kavach 4.0	Jolarpettai-Erode (180 Rkm) + Chennai Beach-Tambaram-Chengalpattu (60 km) + Shoranur-Mangalore	310.18
Western Railway Fibre Network	Rajkot Division (1,064 km) + Bhavnagar Division (589 km) = 1,653 km	302.26

About Kavach

Kavach is India's indigenous Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system developed by the Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO). It prevents collisions by automatically applying brakes if two trains approach each other on the same track or if a signal is passed at danger.

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KAVACH SYSTEM:

Full form: Kavach = "armour" (Hindi)

Developed by: RDSO (Research Design and Standards Organisation)

Technology: SIL-4 (Safety Integrity Level 4) – highest safety level

Latest version: Kavach 4.0

Function: Automatic braking to prevent collisions, overspeeding, signal passing at danger

Current deployment: Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Howrah corridors (phased)

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Rs 1,236 crore total across 3 projects

Central Railway fibre: Rs 623.63 crore; 5 divisions

Southern Railway Kavach: Rs 310.18 crore; Jolarpettai-Erode + Chennai suburban

Western Railway fibre: Rs 302.26 crore; 1,653 km in Gujarat

RDSO HQ: Lucknow

EAM JAISHANKAR ATTENDS G7 FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN FRANCE

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited Abbaye des-Vaux-de-Cernay, France, on 26-27 March 2026 to attend the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Partner Countries, at the invitation of French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot.

Key Discussions

The meeting deliberated on the ongoing war in Ukraine, reconstruction efforts, maritime security, and reforms in global governance. Non-G7 partners including India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, and Ukraine participated.

India's Significance at G7

India holds the BRICS presidency in 2026, making its participation strategically important for France, which holds the G7 presidency. On the sidelines, Jaishankar held bilateral talks with his Canadian counterpart Anita Anand on the West Asia crisis.

UPSC Angle

India is not a G7 member but is regularly invited as a partner country. The G7 comprises Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK, and USA (plus the EU as non-enumerated member). France holds the G7 presidency in 2026.

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G7 FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING 2026:

Venue: Abbaye des-Vaux-de-Cernay, France

Date: 26-27 March 2026

G7 Presidency 2026: France

G7 Members: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK, USA + EU

India's status: Partner country (not a G7 member)

India holds BRICS presidency in 2026

Previous G7 presidency: Canada (2025)

G7 Summit 2026: Evian-les-Bains, France (June 2026)

INDIA SUPPORTS BANGLADESH ON 1971 GENOCIDE JUSTICE

India extended support to Bangladesh's pursuit of justice over the genocide carried out by Pakistan during "Operation Searchlight" in March 1971, as Bangladesh marked Genocide Day on 25 March.

Background

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated: "We support Bangladesh in its desire for justice." Pakistan's "Operation Searchlight" on 25 March 1971 was a pre-planned military crackdown that killed millions of civilians and forced millions to flee to India. Pakistan continues to deny the genocide, calling the events "complex" and "open to different interpretations."

UPSC Angle

The 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War led to the creation of Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) on 16 December 1971. India played a decisive role under PM Indira Gandhi. The Simla Agreement (1972) between India and Pakistan followed the war.

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

1971 BANGLADESH GENOCIDE:

Operation Searchlight: 25 March 1971 (Pakistan military crackdown on East Pakistan)

Bangladesh Liberation War: March-December 1971

India's role: Decisive military intervention (December 3-16, 1971)

Bangladesh Independence Day: 26 March (declared independence after Operation Searchlight)

Instrument of Surrender signed: 16 December 1971 (Dhaka)

Bangladesh PM: Tarique Rahman

Simla Agreement: 2 July 1972 (India-Pakistan, post-war)

SHAURYA DRONE SQUADRONS ENHANCE INDIAN ARMY'S ARMoured WARFARE

The Indian Army has begun inducting specialised Shaurya drone sub-units within armoured regiments, marking a doctrinal shift integrating drone warfare with conventional armour.

Composition and Deployment

Each Shaurya Squadron comprises 20-25 trained personnel operating a mix of surveillance drones, attack drones, swarm systems, FPV (First Person View) drones, and loitering munitions. Six squadrons have been activated across five Army commands, with plans to eventually equip all 67 armoured regiments.

Recent Demonstration

During a 13-day integrated mechanised manoeuvre exercise by the 31 Armoured Division at the Babina Field Firing Ranges near Jhansi in March, the Shaurya Squadrons showcased their combat capabilities.

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

SHAURYA SQUADRONS:

Inducting agency: Indian Army's Armoured Corps

Composition: 20-25 personnel per squadron

Equipment: Surveillance drones, attack drones, swarm systems, FPV drones, loitering munitions

Current deployment: 6 squadrons across 5 Army commands

Target: All 67 armoured regiments

Demonstration: 31 Armoured Division exercise at Babina, near Jhansi

Concept: Combine tank firepower with drone ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance) and precision strike

RBI PAYMENTS VISION 2028 TARGETS SAFER DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

The Reserve Bank of India unveiled the draft "Payments Vision 2028," a three-year roadmap to transform India's digital payments ecosystem, after the inaugural meeting of the Payments Regulatory Board (PRB) chaired by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra.

Key Features

The Payments Vision 2028 aims to provide a robust, independent regulatory structure for UPI, NEFT, and emerging cross-border payment links. The Payments Regulatory Board reviewed domestic and global payment systems, discussed its functions, and analysed findings from the RBI's digital payments survey.

UPSC Angle

The Payments Regulatory Board was established under the RBI Act (as amended in 2007). It replaces the earlier Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems. The PRB is chaired by the RBI Governor with six members.

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
RBI PAYMENTS VISION 2028:

Announced: January 2026 (draft reviewed by PRB)

Duration: 3-year roadmap

Chaired by: RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra

Previous vision: Payments Vision 2025

PRB: Payments Regulatory Board (statutory body under RBI Act)

RBI established: 1935 (RBI Act, 1934); nationalised: 1949

UPI transactions (FY 2025-26): Over 20 billion per month

RBI HQ: Mumbai

PRISM-SG PORTAL LAUNCHED TO FAST-TRACK BRIDGE APPROVALS

Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari (Road Transport and Highways) and Ashwini Vaishnaw (Railways) jointly launched the PRISM-SG portal to digitise and accelerate approval processes for Road Over Bridges (ROBs) where highways and railways intersect.

Key Benefits

PARAMETER	BEFORE PRISM-SG	AFTER PRISM-SG
Approval timeline	~12 months	3-4 months
Process	Manual, paper-based	End-to-end digital
Inspections	Physical coordination between agencies	Online scheduling, photo/report upload

Full Form

PRISM-SG = Portal for Rail-Road Inspection & Stages Management - Steel Girders. The portal covers Quality Assurance Plans (QAP), Welding Procedure Specification Sheets (WPSS), and fabrication stage inspections.

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

PRISM-SG PORTAL:

Launched: 25 March 2026, New Delhi

Launched by: Nitin Gadkari + Ashwini Vaishnaw

Full form: Portal for Rail-Road Inspection & Stages Management - Steel Girders

Purpose: Digitise ROB (Road Over Bridge) approval process

Timeline reduction: 12 months → 3-4 months (75% reduction)

Features: QAP, WPSS, online inspections, real-time tracking

Ministry: Ministry of Road Transport & Highways + Ministry of Railways

MODIFIED TV RATING POLICY 2026 NOTIFIED FOR TRANSPARENCY

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting notified the Television Rating Policy 2026, replacing the 2014 guidelines, to strengthen transparency, accountability, and credibility of television audience measurement in India.

Key Provisions

- At least **50% independent directors** on TV rating agency boards (no ties to broadcasters/advertisers)
- **Dual audit system:** Quarterly internal + annual external audits
- **Expanded sample size:** 80,000 metered homes (within 18 months for new agencies, 6 months for existing)
- **Net worth requirement reduced:** Rs 20 crore → Rs 5 crore (lower entry barrier)
- **Landing page viewership excluded** from measurement data
- Compliance with **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023**

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
TV RATING POLICY 2026:

Notified: 27 March 2026

Ministry: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Replaces: Guidelines for TV Rating Agencies in India (16 January 2014)

50% independent directors mandatory on rating agency boards

Sample size: 80,000 metered homes

Net worth: Reduced from Rs 20 crore to Rs 5 crore

Landing page viewership excluded from TRP measurement

DPDP Act, 2023 compliance mandatory

Current primary TV rating agency: Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC)

JAPAN LAUNCHES WORLD'S FIRST FREIGHT-ONLY BULLET TRAIN

East Japan Railway (JR East) launched the world's first dedicated freight-only Shinkansen bullet train on 23 March, transporting goods from Morioka (Iwate Prefecture) to Tokyo on the Tohoku Shinkansen line.

Key Details

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Operator	JR East (East Japan Railway)
Route	Morioka to Tokyo (Tohoku Shinkansen)
Distance	~500 km
Travel time	3 hours 15 minutes
Train	7-car E3 series (converted from Yamagata Shinkansen passenger train)
Capacity	~1,000 containers per trip; max 17.4 tonnes
Cargo types	Food, medical equipment, machine parts
Loading	Autonomously operated carts

UPSC Angle

Japan's innovation addresses the "2024 Problem" — a severe truck driver shortage caused by new labour regulations limiting overtime for long-haul drivers. India faces similar logistics challenges; the National Logistics Policy (2022) aims to reduce logistics costs from ~13% to ~8% of GDP.

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

JAPAN'S FREIGHT SHINKANSEN:

Launched: 23 March 2026

Operator: JR East (East Japan Railway Company)

Train: E3 series converted from Yamagata Shinkansen

Route: Morioka-Tokyo (Tohoku Shinkansen), ~500 km

Capacity: 17.4 tonnes; ~1,000 containers

Japan's Shinkansen network: ~3,000 km

Japan's first Shinkansen: Tokaido Shinkansen (Tokyo-Osaka, 1964)

India's bullet train project: Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR), under construction

CHINA DEPLOYS J-6 DRONE FLEET NEAR TAIWAN STRAIT

A report by the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies revealed that China has stationed over 200 modified J-6 fighter jets converted into unmanned attack drones at six air bases near the Taiwan Strait — five in Fujian Province and one in Guangdong Province.

Key Details

The J-6 is a Chinese-built version of the Soviet MiG-19, which first flew with the PLA Air Force in the 1960s. The drone variant, designated **J-6W**, is designed to function as expendable strike platforms that can saturate enemy air defence systems. Analyst J. Michael Dahm estimates over 500 J-6s have been converted to drones total.

UPSC Angle

The Taiwan Strait is a 180-km-wide waterway separating Taiwan from mainland China. China considers Taiwan a breakaway province under its "One China Policy." India follows a One China Policy but does not have formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
CHINA'S J-6 DRONE FLEET:

Report by: Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies

Deployed: 200+ J-6W drones at 6 air bases

Locations: 5 in Fujian Province, 1 in Guangdong Province

J-6: Chinese copy of Soviet MiG-19 (1960s era)

Drone variant: J-6W (unmanned, expendable strike platform)

Total converted: 500+ estimated

Taiwan Strait width: ~180 km

China's One China Policy: Claims sovereignty over Taiwan

NEW COCKROACH SPECIES DISCOVERED IN DECCAN PENINSULA

*Researchers from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) discovered a new cockroach species, *Neoloboptera peninsularis*, in the Nathachiwadi area of Pune, Maharashtra, marking the first use of DNA barcoding technology for cockroach identification in India.*

Key Details

The species was identified using integrative **taxonomy**: morphological analysis, genitalic study, DNA barcoding, and phylogenetic assessment. It is the third known species of the genus *Neoloboptera* in India (after *N. indica* in 1865 and *N. chakrabortyi* in 1995). The discovery increases India's documented cockroach species count to **190** (3.8% of global diversity).

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA
NEOLOBOPTERA PENINSULARIS:

Discovered by: ZSI (Pune and Chennai centres) + Ramkrishna More College, Pune

Location: Nathachiwadi, Pune, Maharashtra (Deccan Peninsula)

Method: Integrative taxonomy (morphology + DNA barcoding + phylogenetics)

First DNA-based cockroach identification in India

Genus Neoloboptera: 3 species known in India

Total cockroach species in India: 190 (3.8% of global diversity)

ZSI established: 1916; HQ: Kolkata

Ministry: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

NEPAL'S SUSHILA KARKI STEPS DOWN AS BALEN SHAH TAKES OVER

Nepal's interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki stepped down on 27 March 2026 after completing her six-month interim tenure, paving the way for newly elected PM Balendra Shah (popularly known as Balen Shah) to take the oath of office.

Background

Karki was appointed interim PM in September 2025 following the Gen Z-led anti-corruption protests that forced PM K.P. Sharma Oli to resign. Nepal held general elections on 5 March 2026 under her leadership. Karki was the first woman to serve as PM of Nepal.

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

NEPAL POLITICAL TRANSITION:

Sushila Karki: First woman PM of Nepal; served Sep 2025 - Mar 2026

New PM: Balendra Shah (Balen Shah); took oath 27 March 2026

Nepal general elections: 5 March 2026

Previous PM: K.P. Sharma Oli (resigned after Gen Z protests, 2025)

Nepal Constitution: 2015 (replaced interim constitution of 2007)

Nepal: Federal democratic republic since 2008 (monarchy abolished)

Capital: Kathmandu

PERSONS IN NEWS

Nandamuri Balakrishna — Veteran Telugu actor honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the International Film Festival of Delhi (IFFD) 2026. He is also a sitting MLA from Hindupur, Andhra Pradesh, and son of legendary actor-politician N.T. Rama Rao (founder of Telugu Desam Party).

UPSC RELEVANCE

NDC 3.0 targets (47% emissions intensity, 60% non-fossil capacity, 3.5-4.0 BT carbon sink by 2035), Finance Bill as Money Bill (Art. 110), UDAN scheme outlay (Rs 28,840 crore), Kavach 4.0 (RDSO), PRISM-SG portal, TV Rating Policy 2026 key provisions, G7 members and presidency, J-6W drone designation, Neoloboptera peninsularis (ZSI), Nepal's first woman PM.

MAINS GS-2:

India at G7 — partner country status; India-Bangladesh 1971 genocide justice; Nepal's political transition.

MAINS GS-3:

NDC and climate commitments; regional aviation (UDAN); railway safety (Kavach); drone warfare (Shaurya Squadrons); digital payments regulation.

FACTS CORNER – KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

KEY NUMBERS:

NDC 3.0: 47% emissions intensity cut, 60% non-fossil capacity, 3.5-4.0 BT CO₂ carbon sink by 2035

Finance Bill 2026: 32 amendments; total expenditure Rs 53.47 lakh crore

Modified UDAN: Rs 28,840 crore; 100 airports + 200 helipads

Kavach expansion: Rs 1,236 crore across 3 projects

Shaurya Squadrons: 6 activated; 20-25 personnel each; 67 regiments target

TV Rating Policy: 80,000 metered homes; 50% independent directors

Japan freight Shinkansen: 500 km; 17.4 tonnes; E3 series

China J-6W drones: 200+ deployed; 6 bases near Taiwan Strait

India cockroach species: 190 total (new: *Neoloboptera peninsularis*)

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Payments Vision 2028: 3-year RBI roadmap; PRB chaired by Governor Malhotra

PRISM-SG: ROB approval time cut from 12 months to 3-4 months

Balen Shah: New PM of Nepal; Sushila Karki was first woman PM

IFFD 2026 Lifetime Achievement: Nandamuri Balakrishna

India's non-fossil capacity (Feb 2026): 52.57%

UDAN original: 663 routes, 95 airports, 162.47 lakh passengers (9 years)

Sources: [PIB](#), [GKToday](#), [The Hindu](#), [Business Standard](#), [Down to Earth](#), [DD News](#)

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