

UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM**WEEKLY ROUNDUP**

Weekly Roundup — Week 13 (Mar 22–27, 2026)

27 March 2026

SUBJECTS COVERED

POLITY

ECONOMY

ENVIRONMENT

SCIENCE & TECH

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SECURITY & DEFENCE

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

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WEEK OVERVIEW

A week dominated by the West Asia oil crisis, landmark legislation, and climate commitments. **Gujarat passed its Uniform Civil Code Bill** — becoming only the second state after Uttarakhand. The **Transgender Persons Amendment Bill** sparked constitutional debate over self-identification vs medical certification. **India's updated NDC 3.0** raised climate targets to 47% emissions intensity cut and 60% non-fossil capacity by 2035. The **Iran-triggered Strait of Hormuz crisis** deepened India's energy vulnerability — Goldman Sachs cut GDP to 5.9%, the Philippines declared a national energy emergency, and India faced \$1 billion in extra oil costs. **Kavach 4.0 expansion** and **Modified UDAN** signalled infrastructure modernisation, while the **Khelo India Tribal Games** and **International Year of the Woman Farmer** advanced social inclusion agendas.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Gujarat Passes Uniform Civil Code Bill — Second State After Uttarakhand

The Gujarat Legislative Assembly passed the **Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2026** on March 26 after a **7.5-hour debate**, making Gujarat the **second Indian state after Uttarakhand** to enact a UCC. The Bill mandates **marriage registration within 60 days** of solemnisation (penalty: up to Rs 10,000), requires **registration of live-in relationships**, provides **uniform divorce grounds** applicable to all communities, and ensures **equal inheritance rights** for daughters and sons regardless of religion.

Article 44 of the Constitution (DPSP) directs the State to secure a UCC. Uttarakhand passed its UCC in February 2024 (effective January 27, 2025), while the **Goa Civil Code** — inherited from Portuguese rule since 1961 — remains India’s closest existing UCC model. Key judicial milestones include the **Shah Bano Case (1985)**, **Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India (1995)**, and **Jose Paulo Coutinho v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira (2019)**.

Women’s Reservation Act — Early Delimitation Proposal Using 2011 Census

The Union Government proposed conducting **early delimitation based on 2011 Census data** to implement the **Women’s Reservation Act (106th Constitutional Amendment, 2023)** before the **2029 general elections**. Under this proposal, **Lok Sabha seats would increase from 543 to approximately 816**, with **~273 seats (33%) reserved for women**. No existing constituencies would be eliminated — the proposal adds new seats. A **lottery system** would determine which constituencies are reserved for women.

The 106th Amendment was passed in September 2023 in the new Parliament building, providing 33% reservation in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies (but **not** Rajya Sabha or Legislative Councils). Southern states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka — which successfully implemented family planning — fear losing **proportional representation** in a population-based expansion. Amendments to **Article 81** (Lok Sabha composition) and **Article 170** (State Assembly composition) are needed.

Transgender Persons Amendment Bill 2026 — Medical Certification Replaces Self-ID

Parliament passed the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026**, narrowing the definition of transgender persons by **excluding self-perceived identities** and introducing **mandatory medical board certification**. The revised definition now specifically lists socio-cultural identities — **kinner, hijra, aravani, jogta, eunuch** — and persons with **intersex variations**. The **District Magistrate** will issue identity certificates only after examining a **designated medical board’s recommendation**, replacing the earlier self-declaration process.

A new offence was introduced: kidnapping or forcing someone to assume a transgender identity carries **10 years to life imprisonment + Rs 2 lakh fine**. The amendment drew criticism for potentially violating the **NALSA v. Union of India (2014)** Supreme Court judgment, which upheld the right to self-identification. Activist **Kalki Subramaniam** resigned from the National Council for Transgender Persons in protest. Congress MP **Priyanka Gandhi Vadra** questioned why the Bill was not referred to a Parliamentary Standing Committee.

Corporate Laws Amendment Bill 2026 — Referred to 31-Member JPC

The Union Finance Minister introduced the **Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill 2026** in Lok Sabha, amending the **Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008** and **Companies Act, 2013**. The Bill was referred to a **31-member Joint Parliamentary Committee** (21 Lok Sabha + 10 Rajya Sabha). Key provisions

include: **decriminalisation of minor offences** (criminal to monetary penalties), **CSR threshold raised** from Rs 5 crore to Rs 10 crore net profit, **virtual AGMs/EGMs** allowed (with one physical AGM every 3 years), and **enhanced NFRA powers**. Concerns were raised about excessive delegation to executive bodies and potential CSR dilution.

National Dental Commission Replaces DCI — Healthcare Regulation Reform

The Government constituted the **National Dental Commission (NDC)** on March 19, 2026, replacing the decades-old **Dental Council of India**. The **Dentists Act, 1948** stands repealed. The NDC comprises three boards: **UG/PG Dental Education Board**, **Dental Assessment and Rating Board**, and **Ethics and Dental Registration Board**. **Dr. Sanjay Tewari** was appointed Chairperson. India has **~310 dental colleges** (largest in the world) producing **~26,000 graduates annually**, yet the dentist-to-population ratio remains **1:10,000** (WHO recommendation: 1:7,500). The reform mirrors the replacement of MCI by the **National Medical Commission (NMC)** in 2020.

ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT

Goldman Sachs Cuts India GDP Forecast to 5.9% — Oil Shock Impact

Goldman Sachs lowered India's **CY2026 GDP growth forecast to 5.9%** — the second downgrade in a month — from 7.0% (pre-war) to 6.5% (March 13) to 5.9% (March 24). The downgrade follows **Brent crude rising to \$105/barrel** (expected \$115 in April), the Indian rupee weakening **4% against the US dollar** in 2026, and projected **Current Account Deficit widening to 2.0% of GDP**. Goldman Sachs anticipates a **50 basis points repo rate hike** from the current 5.25%. India imports **85-88% of crude oil** and its **Strategic Petroleum Reserve** is only **64% filled** (3.37 MT of 5.33 MT capacity at Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru, and Padur).

Iran Rejects Peace Plan — India Faces \$1 Billion Extra Oil Import Costs

Iran rejected a **15-point peace plan** sent by the US through Pakistan as the conflict entered Day 26. The plan demanded Iran hand over enriched uranium stockpiles and permanently ban enrichment in exchange for sanctions relief. Iran issued **five counter-conditions** including war reparations, **sovereignty** over the Strait of Hormuz, and pre-conditional sanctions lifting. The war has cut **global oil shipments from West Asia by 43%**, adding an estimated **\$1 billion in extra costs** for India's ~21 million barrels imported in March. Saudi Arabia is compensating by routing supply through its **Yanbu terminal on the Red Sea**, bypassing the Strait of Hormuz. Indian refiners are seeking a shift from West Asian to European crude benchmarks.

Modified UDAN Scheme — Rs 28,840 Crore for Regional Aviation

The Union Cabinet approved the **Modified UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik)** scheme with **Rs 28,840 crore** for a **10-year period (FY2026-36)**. Key components: **100 airports** developed from unserved airstrips (Rs 12,159 crore), **200 modern helipads** across Tier-2/3 cities (Rs 3,661 crore), **VGF (Viability Gap Funding)** of Rs 10,043 crore for airline operators, and procurement of **2 HAL Dhruv helicopters** (Pawan Hans) and **2 HAL Dornier** (Alliance Air). The original UDAN (launched 2016) operationalised **663 routes across 95 airports**, carrying **162.47 lakh passengers** in 9 years, but nearly **50% of routes closed**, prompting the overhaul.

India's Bioeconomy Crosses \$195 Billion — 18% Growth

The **India BioEconomy Report (IBER) 2026** by the Department of Biotechnology revealed India's bioeconomy surged **18% to \$195.3 billion in 2025**, contributing **4.8% of GDP**. The bioeconomy has grown **20-fold in a decade** (from \$10 billion in 2014). **BioIndustrial** leads at \$90.2 billion (46.2%), followed by **BioPharma** at \$64.5 billion (33.0%), **BioServices** at \$26.0 billion, and **BioAgri** at \$14.6 billion. India now has **11,855 biotech startups** (1,780 added in 2025 alone) and is the **3rd largest biotech destination** in Asia-Pacific. Target: **\$300 billion by 2030**.

Biopharma SHAKTI — Rs 10,000 Crore Biologics Hub Strategy

The Union Budget 2026-27 announced **Biopharma SHAKTI** (Strategy for Healthcare Advancement through Knowledge, Technology, and Innovation) with **Rs 10,000 crore** to boost India's biologics and biosimilars production. Key components: **3 new NIPERs** and **7 existing upgraded**, a network of **1,000+ accredited clinical trial sites**, strengthened **CDSCO** with a dedicated scientific review cadre, and a shift toward **non-animal testing models**. India ranks **3rd globally in pharma production by volume** but holds only **3.2% of the global biosimilars market** despite having **95+ approved biosimilars** domestically.

National DMF Summit 2026 — Mining-Area Development

The Ministry of Mines organised the **National DMF Summit 2026** (March 23-24, New Delhi), inaugurated by Union Minister **G. Kishan Reddy**. The **District Mineral Foundation (DMF)**, established under **Section 9B of the MMDR Amendment Act, 2015**, has accrued **over Rs 40,000 crore** across **306 DMF districts**. Contribution rates: **10% of royalty** (post-2015 leases) and **30%** (pre-2015 leases). The **PMKKKY** framework mandates **70% minimum on high-priority sectors** (drinking water, health, education, environment) and 30% on physical infrastructure. The summit focused on strengthening fund utilisation in **Aspirational District Programme (ADP)** and **Aspirational Block Programme (ABP)** areas.

Reform Express — Indian Railways Adds Five New Reforms

Union Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw** announced five new reforms under the “**Reform Express**” initiative, bringing 2026 reforms to nine. **Cargo reforms:** stainless steel container-based salt transportation with hydraulic side-discharge; flexible wagon designs for automobile routes. **Construction quality:** fixed bid security at 2% of project cost, mandatory bid capacity assessment. **Passenger convenience:** cancellation timelines extended to 72/24/8 hours before departure; counter tickets cancellable from any station; automatic e-ticket refunds; class upgrade up to 30 minutes before departure; digital boarding station change.

Kavach 4.0 Expansion — Rs 1,236 Crore for Railway Safety

Indian Railways approved **three infrastructure projects worth Rs 1,236 crore:** **Central Railway Fibre Network** across all 5 divisions (Rs 623.63 crore), **Southern Railway Kavach 4.0** on Jolarpettai-Erode (180 Rkm) + Chennai Beach-Tambaram-Chengalpattu (60 km) + Shoranur-Mangalore (Rs 310.18 crore), and **Western Railway Fibre Network** covering 1,653 km in Rajkot and Bhavnagar divisions (Rs 302.26 crore). Kavach is India’s indigenous **SIL-4 certified Automatic Train Protection** system developed by **RDSO, Lucknow**, preventing collisions by automatically applying brakes.

Finance Bill 2026 — Lok Sabha Passes with 32 Amendments

The Lok Sabha passed the **Finance Bill 2026** by voice vote on March 25, approving **32 government-proposed amendments**. Union Budget 2026-27 highlights: **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**, and **no tax up to Rs 12 lakh** annual income under the new regime. Under **Article 110**, the Finance Bill is a Money Bill — the Rajya Sabha can only recommend amendments within 14 days.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

India’s NDC 3.0 — 47% Emissions Intensity Cut, 60% Non-Fossil Power by 2035

The Union Cabinet approved India’s **updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0)** for 2031-2035: **47% emissions intensity reduction** from 2005 levels (up from 45%), **60% non-fossil fuel installed capacity** (up from 50%), and **carbon sink of 3.5-4.0 billion tonnes CO₂ equivalent** (up from 2.5-3.0 BT). The **net-zero target remains 2070**. India has already achieved **52.57% non-fossil fuel installed capacity** by February 2026 — surpassing the earlier 50% target five years ahead of schedule. NDC submissions are binding under the **Paris Agreement (2015)**, with progressively ambitious targets due every five years.

World Water Day 2026 — Theme: Water and Gender

World Water Day 2026, observed on March 22, carried the theme “**Water and Gender**” with the slogan “**Where water flows, equality grows**”. Women and girls spend an estimated **250 million hours daily** fetching water globally. Professor **Kaveh Madani** (Iran), Director of **UNU-INWEH**, was named the **2026 Stockholm Water Prize** laureate — the **youngest recipient** (age 44) and the first UN official to receive the honour. He introduced the concept of “**water bankruptcy**”. India remains **40% water-stressed** for clean potable water, with per capita water availability at ~1,486 cubic metres/year (approaching the 1,700 m³ water-stressed threshold).

Bura Chapori Sanctuary Expansion — Assam Conservation Corridor

The Assam government proposed creating **Burhachapori No. 5 Reserved Forest — 224.325 hectares** adjacent to Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary in Sonitpur district — under Section 5 of the Assam Forest Regulation, 1891. The expansion will enhance **habitat connectivity** between Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary (**44.06 sq km**, south bank of Brahmaputra) and **Orang National Park** (“Mini Kaziranga”). The sanctuary is home to the **Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros**, tiger, Bengal Florican (Critically Endangered), and wild buffalo. The reservation is a **compensatory afforestation** measure under the **Van Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan Rules, 2023**, compensating for forest land diverted by NHIDCL, NHAI, ONGC, and Oil India projects.

Prosopis Juliflora — Madras HC Orders Eradication in Tamil Nadu

The Madras High Court issued **34 directions** for the eradication of invasive species **Prosopis juliflora** (seemai karuvelam) from Tamil Nadu. The species, native to Central and South America, was introduced in India in **1959** for drought-resistant fuelwood but became one of India’s most aggressive invasive species. Its deep taproots (up to **50 metres**) deplete groundwater, it displaces native flora by forming dense monocultures, and it has invaded critical wetlands including **Pulicat Lake** and **Kaliveli wetland**. The court directed that property owners willing to plant native saplings be provided them free of cost.

Monarch Butterfly Population Surges 64% — Largest Recovery Since 2018

Mexico’s **Semarnat**, **Conanp**, and **WWF Mexico** announced a **64% increase** in eastern monarch butterfly population during the 2025-2026 season — forest area occupied rose from **1.79 to 2.93 hectares**, the **largest recovery since 2018**. Forest degradation fell **32%**. The species migrates up to **4,800 km** from southern Canada to the **Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve** (UNESCO World Heritage Site, Michoacan, Mexico). However, the population remains **down 80-90% from the 1990s peak** of ~18 hectares. The monarch is **IUCN Endangered** (listed 2022). Milkweed (*Asclepias*) is the sole food plant for caterpillars.

Hudsonian Godwit and CMS — 42 Migratory Species for Enhanced Protection

At the **CMS meeting in Brazil** (March 2026), the **Hudsonian Godwit** and 42 other migratory species were proposed for enhanced international protection. The Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*) migrates ~**30,000 km annually** (Arctic to Patagonia) and has suffered a **95% population decline** over four decades. The **CMS/Bonn Convention** (1979, entered into force 1983) has 133 parties; India ratified in 1983. The **State of the World's Migratory Species report** found **49% of CMS-listed species** show population decline. India launched the **Central Asian Flyway Action Plan** at CMS COP13 (Gandhinagar, 2020).

New Mangrove Crab *Chhapgarus ngankeeae* Discovered in Goa

Zoologist **Sameer Kumar Pati** of the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** identified a new marine crab species, *Chhapgarus ngankeeae*, from Goa's mangrove ecosystems. The ~**1.6 cm** crab (family Varunidae) was discovered by re-examining preserved specimens misidentified as *Chhapgarus intermedius*. Named after the late **Dr Ngan Kee Ng** of the National University of Singapore. India's mangrove cover stands at **4,992 sq km** (ISFR 2023), with the Sundarbans (4,200+ sq km) being the largest.

Photocatalytic Smog-Eating Coatings — Delhi-IIT Madras Partnership

Delhi signed an MoU with **IIT Madras** for a **six-month pilot study** on photocatalytic "smog-eating" surfaces. **Titanium Dioxide (TiO₂)** coatings activate under sunlight and convert **NO₂ and VOCs** into less harmful compounds. The study has two phases: **lab testing** (IIT Madras smog chamber) and **field trials** (Delhi high-traffic corridors). Application methods include mixing TiO₂ into concrete/asphalt, surface coatings on infrastructure, and rooftop/streetlight panels. Delhi's AQI regularly exceeds 300 (Hazardous) during winter.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

India's First NdFeB Rare Earth Magnet Pilot Plant at ARCI

ARCI (International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials), Hyderabad, inaugurated India's first pilot plant for **Neodymium-Iron-Boron (NdFeB) sintered rare earth permanent magnets** on March 20. The facility uses **Dr. Masato Sagawa's New Pressless Process (NPLP)**. NdFeB magnets are essential for **EVs, wind turbines, defence systems, MRI machines, and electronics**. **China controls ~90%** of global rare earth magnet manufacturing. India has **6-7% of global rare earth reserves** (among the top 5) but imports nearly all magnets. The Cabinet approved **Rs 7,280 crore** for **6,000 MTPA** manufacturing capacity under DST and Department of Heavy Industry.

Sahiwal Cattle IVF Breakthrough — Indigenous Breed Conservation

ICAR-IVRI, Izatnagar, Bareilly achieved a landmark with the birth of **five healthy Sahiwal calves** using OPU-IVF-ET (Ovum Pick-Up, In Vitro Fertilisation, Embryo Transfer) technology from February 28, 2026. The programme targets **Sahiwal, Tharparkar, and Murrah buffalo** breeds. Average oocyte recovery: **13.14 per session**; blastocyst production rate: **over 47%** — comparable to leading global labs. India has **~303 million cattle** (world's largest bovine population). Sahiwal cattle are valued for heat tolerance, disease resistance, and **A2 milk** production. OPU-IVF-ET enables multiple calves from a single elite cow, accelerating genetic improvement without crossbreeding. Related schemes: **Rashtriya Gokul Mission** (2014).

GARBH-INi — India's Largest AI-Driven Pregnancy Cohort

The **GARBH-INi** (Group for Advanced Research on Birth outcomes — an interdisciplinary INitiative) programme is enrolling **~12,000 women** to tackle India's preterm birth crisis using AI diagnostics. Led by **THSTI (Translational Health Science and Technology Institute), Faridabad** under DBT, the initiative has built a repository of **1.6 million biospecimens** and **1 million ultrasound images** — South Asia's largest pregnancy cohort. India accounts for **3.6 million preterm births** out of 27 million annual births — the **highest globally in absolute numbers**. Outcomes include AI-based pregnancy dating and microbiome-based preterm birth predictors.

Helium Supply Crisis Threatens Semiconductor Ambitions

Iran's attack on Qatar's **Ras Laffan LNG hub** (March 2) disrupted **~33% of global helium supply**, threatening India's semiconductor manufacturing plans. Helium is critical for **MRI cooling, semiconductor CVD processes, leak detection, and EUV lithography**. India has **no domestic helium production** and is entirely import-dependent. Hospital MRI costs are rising. India's semiconductor fabs — **Tata Electronics (Dholera, Gujarat)** and **HCL (Greater Noida)** — face potential delays. The **India Semiconductor Mission** (2021) has a budget of **Rs 76,000 crore**.

Biopharma SHAKTI and India's Bioeconomy Milestones

India's bioeconomy reached **\$195.3 billion** (18% growth) while the Budget announced **Biopharma SHAKTI** (Rs 10,000 crore) to strengthen biologics capacity. India supplies **~20% of global generics** ("Pharmacy of the World") but holds only **3.2% of the biosimilars market** despite 95+ domestic approvals. The strategy creates **3 new NIPERs, 1,000+ clinical trial sites**, and strengthens CDSCO. Combined with the **11,855 biotech startups** ecosystem, India aims to become a global biomanufacturing hub.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

EAM Jaishankar Attends G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting in France

External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** attended the **G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting** at Abbaye des Vaux-de-Cernay, France (March 26-27), at the invitation of French FM **Jean-Noel Barrot**. India was one of five partner countries (alongside South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, and Ukraine) invited by the **French G7 Presidency**. Discussions covered the Iran war, Hormuz maritime safety, oil price stabilisation, and Ukraine reconstruction. Jaishankar raised **Global South concerns** on energy, fertiliser, and food security, and stressed **UNSC reforms**. He held **bilateral** talks with Canadian FM **Anita Anand**. The **G7 Summit 2026** is scheduled for **Evian, France (June 15-17)**. India holds the **BRICS presidency in 2026**.

India-China Border Trade via Lipulekh Pass to Resume After Six Years

Border trade through **Lipulekh Pass** (elevation ~5,334 m, Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand) is set to resume in 2026 after a **six-year hiatus**, following clearances from MEA, MHA, and Ministry of Commerce. Trade was suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19 and the Ladakh border standoff. **Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri** wrote to Uttarakhand Chief Secretary requesting restoration. Trade operates **June to September** with traditional goods (wool, pashmina, salt from China; rice, flour, jaggery from India). Lipulekh is one of **three designated India-China border trade points** (alongside Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh and Nathu La in Sikkim). Nepal disputes the area, claiming it as part of the **Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura** trijunction territory.

Philippines Declares National Energy Emergency – Hormuz Fallout

The Philippines became the **first country to declare a national energy emergency** (Executive Order No. 110, March 24) over the Strait of Hormuz disruption. Fuel supply: gasoline 53 days, diesel 46 days, jet fuel 39 days, **LPG just 24 days**. Pump prices surged ~**200%**. The Philippines imports **90-98% of its oil** from the Gulf region. The conflict triggered the **largest documented GPS jamming event in maritime history** – **1,650+ vessels** affected, **30+ jamming clusters** across six Gulf countries. Maritime traffic through the Strait fell to **near-zero** on some days.

South Sudan Conflict Escalation – 280,000 Displaced

UN High Commissioner **Volker Turk** urged an immediate ceasefire as hostilities between the **SSPDF** and opposition forces escalated. Over **280,000 displaced** since December 2025; **160+ civilians killed** in 17 days. On March 1, **139 civilians were killed** in Abiemnom by Bul Nuer fighters. The military ordered closure of the **UNMISS** temporary base in Akobo – restricting humanitarian access. South Sudan (independent July 9, 2011 – world's youngest country) has been plagued by ethnic violence since 2013. The **R-ARCSS (2018)** peace agreement has effectively collapsed. India contributes ~**2,400 peacekeepers** to UNMISS.

India Supports Bangladesh on 1971 Genocide Justice

India extended support to Bangladesh's pursuit of justice over the genocide during Pakistan's "**Operation Searchlight**" on **March 25, 1971**. MEA spokesperson **Randhir Jaiswal** stated: "We support Bangladesh in its desire for justice." Bangladesh marked **Genocide Day** on March 25. The 1971 Liberation War (March-December) led to Bangladesh's creation on **December 16, 1971**. The **Simla Agreement** (July 2, 1972) between India and Pakistan followed the war. Nepal saw a political transition with **Sushila Karki** (first woman PM) stepping down for newly elected PM **Balen Shah** on March 27.

SECURITY & DEFENCE

Shaurya Drone Squadrons — Army Integrates Drone Warfare with Armour

The Indian Army began inducting **Shaurya Squadrons** — dedicated drone sub-units within armoured regiments — marking a doctrinal shift. Each squadron comprises **20-25 personnel** operating **surveillance drones, attack drones, swarm systems, FPV (First Person View) drones, and loitering munitions**. **Six squadrons activated across five Army commands**, with plans for all **67 armoured regiments**. During a 13-day exercise by the **31 Armoured Division** at **Babina Field Firing Ranges** (Jhansi), Shaurya Squadrons demonstrated combined tank-drone combat capabilities, compressing the sensor-to-shooter loop from minutes to seconds.

DRDO Tests ADC-150 Air-Droppable Container; INS Taragiri Commissioning Announced

DRDO and the Indian Navy successfully tested the **ADC-150 air-droppable container** (payload: up to **150 kg**) from a **Boeing P-8I Neptune** aircraft off Goa coast. Developed by **NSTL, Visakhapatnam** with parachute system from **ADRDE, Agra**. The system enhances naval logistics for resupplying warships without returning to port. Separately, the Navy announced **INS Taragiri (F41)** — the 4th **Nilgiri-class (Project 17A)** stealth frigate — will be commissioned **April 3, 2026**. Built by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), Mumbai**, the 6,670-tonne frigate carries **BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles** and has **75%+ indigenous content**.

Exercise Sea Dragon 2026 — Multinational Anti-Submarine Warfare Drill

The US-led **Exercise Sea Dragon 2026** commenced near **Guam** on March 16, with India deploying its **P-8I Neptune** maritime patrol aircraft alongside the US, Australia, Japan, and New Zealand. The two-week exercise focused on **detecting and tracking hostile submarines**, with **200+ cumulative flight hours**. The drill strengthens interoperability among **Quad-adjacent nations** amid China's expanding submarine fleet (~60 submarines). **INS Taragiri** commissioning on April 3 further bolsters India's naval capability.

SOCIAL ISSUES

International Year of the Woman Farmer 2026 — GCWAS Conference

The UN designated **2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF)**. India hosted the **Global Conference on Women in Agri-Food Systems (GCWAS-2026)** in New Delhi. Key data: **80% of economically active rural women** work in agriculture; **48% are self-employed farmers**; only **13.87% hold operational land** (Agriculture Census 2015-16). Government schemes include **Namo Drone Didi** (15,000 drones to women SHGs, 80% subsidy), **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)**, **Krishi Sakhi** (70,000 women para-extension workers), and **ICAR-CIWA** (Central Institute for Women in Agriculture, Bhubaneswar). Challenges: lack of land ownership, limited institutional credit, extension services targeting male farmers.

Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 — First National Sporting Platform for Tribal Athletes

The first-ever **Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) 2026** began on March 25 in **Chhattisgarh** across Raipur, Jagdalpur, and Sarguja (running to April 6). Over **2,300 athletes** and **6,000+ total participants** compete in **seven medal sports** (Athletics, Football, Hockey, Weightlifting, Archery, Swimming, Wrestling) and **two demonstration sports** (Mallakhamb, Kabaddi). Mascot: **“Morveer”** (Chhattisgarhi for “our brave one”). Organised by Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, SAI, and IOA. Sports Minister **Dr Mansukh Mandaviya** inaugurated the event. Chhattisgarh’s tribal population is **~30.6%** of the state’s population.

World Tuberculosis Day — India’s 100-Day Intensified Campaign

On **World TB Day (March 24)**, the President launched a **100-day intensified campaign** combining **AI diagnostics** with community participation. India has achieved a **21% reduction in TB incidence** since 2015 (double the global rate) and a **25% decrease in TB deaths**. Over **20 crore people screened**, **32 lakh cases detected**, and **3,000+ AI-powered X-ray units** deployed. Key schemes: **Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana** (Rs 500/month nutritional support), **Ni-kshay Mitras** (community adoption), and **TruNat/CBNAAT** molecular testing. India targets **TB elimination by 2025** (five years ahead of UN SDG 2030 target). TB incidence: **~27 lakh cases annually** — highest globally.

HISTORY, ART & CULTURE

Chapchar Kut 2026 — Mizoram’s Spring Festival

Mizoram’s traditional spring festival **Chapchar Kut** was celebrated with the theme **“Zo Nun Ze Mawi - Inremna”** (The Beauty of Zo Culture: Harmony). The festival marks the completion of **jhum cutting** (slash-and-burn clearing) and the arrival of spring. Chief Minister **Lalduhoma** (Zoram People’s Movement) presided

over the celebrations in Aizawl. Mizoram became a full state on **February 20, 1987** (53rd Amendment). Other Mizo festivals: Mim Kut (maize harvest), Pawl Kut (post-harvest).

Guru Angad Dev Ji – Jyoti Jyot Diwas

Tributes were paid to **Guru Angad Dev Ji** (1504-1552), the **second Sikh Guru**, on his Jyoti Jyot Diwas. Born as **Lehna** in Harike (now Sarai Naga), near Muktsar, Punjab, he was chosen as successor by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Key contributions: **standardised the Gurmukhi script** for Punjabi, established schools at **Khadur Sahib**, strengthened the **Langar** institution, and promoted **Mall Akhara** (wrestling). He served as Guru from **1539 to 1552**.

Ram Navami 2026 – March 26

Ram Navami, celebrating the birth of Lord Rama (7th avatar of Vishnu), was observed on March 26. **Chaitra Shukla Navami** (9th day of bright half of Chaitra month). Madhyahna moment at 12:27 PM. The festival marks the culmination of **Chaitra Navratri**. The Ramayana, attributed to sage **Valmiki**, contains ~24,000 shlokas in 7 Kandas. **Ram Mandir Pran Pratishtha** was held on January 22, 2024 in Ayodhya.

REPORTS, INDICES & SCHEMES

Corruption Perceptions Index 2025 – India Ranks 91st

Transparency International's CPI 2025 ranked India at **91st out of 182 countries** (score: **39/100**), up from 96th in 2024 (score: 38). The **global average dropped to 42/100** – the lowest in a decade. India's improvement is attributed to **Digital Public Infrastructure** and e-governance. However, India was listed among countries "**dangerous for journalists reporting on corruption**". Top 3: Denmark, Finland, New Zealand. India's anti-corruption framework includes the **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988** and the **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013**.

RTI Rejection Rate Drops to 3.26%

The rejection rate of **RTI applications** declined from **7.21% in 2013-14** to **3.26% in 2024-25**. India processes **~60-70 lakh RTI applications annually**. The RTI Act (2005) replaced the Freedom of Information Act, 2002. Key provisions: Section 6 (any citizen can file, Rs 10 fee), Section 7 (30-day response; 48 hours for life/liberty), Section 8 (exemptions), Section 19 (appeal to CIC/SIC). The **CIC** is implementing third-party audits under Section 4 (proactive disclosure).

Telangana's Indiramma Family Life Insurance Scheme

Telangana announced the **Indiramma Family Life Insurance Scheme** in Budget 2026-27 — **Rs 5 lakh life insurance** for **~1.15 crore families** irrespective of income. Budget: **Rs 4,000 crore**. Launch: **June 2, 2026** (Telangana Formation Day). Described as India's **first universal family life insurance scheme**.
 Telangana Budget total outlay: **Rs 3,24,234 crore**, presented by Dy CM **Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka**. For comparison: **PMJJBY** provides Rs 2 lakh at Rs 436/year; **PMSBY** provides Rs 2 lakh accidental cover at Rs 20/year.

KEY POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

LEGISLATION/POLICY	STATUS	KEY PROVISION
Gujarat UCC Bill, 2026	Passed by Gujarat Assembly (Mar 26)	Uniform civil code for all residents; 2nd state after Uttarakhand
Transgender Persons Amendment Bill, 2026	Passed by Parliament	Medical board certification replaces self-declaration
Corporate Laws Amendment Bill, 2026	Referred to 31-member JPC	CSR threshold Rs 5 Cr → Rs 10 Cr; decriminalisation of minor offences
Finance Bill 2026	Passed by Lok Sabha (Mar 25)	Rs 53.47 lakh crore total expenditure; no tax up to Rs 12 lakh
Modified UDAN	Cabinet approved (Mar 25)	Rs 28,840 crore; 100 airports + 200 helipads; 10 years
NDC 3.0	Cabinet approved (Mar 25)	47% emissions intensity cut; 60% non-fossil capacity by 2035
Kavach 4.0 Expansion	Railways approved (Mar 27)	Rs 1,236 crore; Southern Railway ATP + Central/Western fibre
TV Rating Policy 2026	Notified (Mar 27)	50% independent directors; 80,000 metered homes; DPDP compliance

★ FACTS CORNER — WEEK 13 KNOWLEDGEPEDIA (MAR 22–27, 2026)

GUJARAT UCC BILL, 2026:

Passed: March 26, 2026 after 7.5-hour debate

Gujarat: 2nd state with UCC (Uttarakhand was 1st, February 2024)

Article 44: DPSP directing State to secure UCC; Goa has existing civil code since 1961

Marriage registration: Mandatory within 60 days; penalty up to Rs 10,000

INDIA NDC 3.0:

Emissions intensity: 47% cut from 2005 levels by 2035; non-fossil capacity: 60%

Carbon sink: 3.5-4.0 BT CO₂ eq; net-zero: 2070

Current achievement: 52.57% non-fossil installed capacity (Feb 2026)

Paris Agreement: Adopted COP21 (Dec 2015); five-year ratchet cycle

OIL CRISIS AND ENERGY SECURITY:

Goldman Sachs GDP forecast: 7.0% → 6.5% → 5.9% (two downgrades in March)

India's crude import dependence: 85-88%; SPR: 3.37 MT / 5.33 MT (64%)

SPR locations: Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru, Padur

Extra oil cost for India in March: ~\$1 billion

Strait of Hormuz: ~33 km wide; ~20 million barrels/day; GNSS jamming: 1,650+ vessels affected

Philippines: First national energy emergency; oil import dependence 90-98% from Gulf

TRANSGENDER PERSONS AMENDMENT BILL, 2026:

Passed by Parliament; medical board replaces self-declaration for ID certificates

NALSA v. Union of India (2014): SC upheld right to self-identification

New offence: Forcing transgender identity — 10 years to life + Rs 2 lakh fine

WOMEN'S RESERVATION ACT (106TH AMENDMENT):

Passed September 2023; 33% reservation in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies

Proposed early delimitation using 2011 Census; Lok Sabha 543 → ~816 seats

Does not apply to Rajya Sabha or Legislative Councils

NDFEB RARE EARTH MAGNETS:

ARCI Hyderabad: India's first pilot plant; Dr. Masato Sagawa's NPLP process

China controls ~90% of global rare earth magnet production

India: 6-7% of global reserves (among top 5); Rs 7,280 crore scheme for 6,000 MTPA

IREL (Indian Rare Earths Limited): PSU under Department of Atomic Energy

MODIFIED UDAN:

Rs 28,840 crore; 10 years (FY2026-36); 100 airports + 200 helipads

VGf: Rs 10,043 crore; original UDAN (2016): 663 routes, 95 airports, 162.47 lakh passengers

~50% of original routes closed; modified scheme focuses on infrastructure + route subsidies

KAVACH 4.0:

Indigenous ATP system; SIL-4 certified; RDSO, Lucknow

Rs 1,236 crore: Southern Railway (Rs 310 Cr) + Central Railway fibre (Rs 624 Cr) + Western Railway fibre (Rs 302 Cr)

Prevents collisions by automatic braking; version 4.0 approved July 2024

BIOECONOMY AND BIOPHARMA:

India's bioeconomy 2025: \$195.3 billion (18% growth, 4.8% GDP); target \$300B by 2030

Biotech startups: 11,855 cumulative; BioIndustrial: \$90.2B; BioPharma: \$64.5B

Biopharma SHAKTI: Rs 10,000 crore; 3 new NIPERs; 1,000+ clinical trial sites

India's biosimilar market share: 3.2%; approved biosimilars: 95+

SHAURYA DRONE SQUADRONS:

6 squadrons activated across 5 Army commands; 20-25 personnel each

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

Target: All 67 armoured regiments; demonstrated at Babina, Jhansi

INS TARAGIRI (F41):

4th Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) stealth frigate; displacement 6,670 tonnes

Builder: MDL Mumbai; BrahMos missiles; 75%+ indigenous content

Commissioning: April 3, 2026; 7 ships total (4 MDL + 3 GRSE)

BURA CHAPORI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY:

Area: 44.06 sq km; south bank of Brahmaputra, Sonitpur/Nagaon district, Assam

Key species: Indian One-Horned Rhino, Tiger, Bengal Florican (Critically Endangered)

Expansion: Burhachapori No. 5 Reserved Forest (224.325 ha); CAMPA compliance

Adjacent to Orang National Park (“Mini Kaziranga”)

WORLD WATER DAY 2026:

Theme: “Water and Gender”; observed March 22 since 1993

Stockholm Water Prize 2026: Kaveh Madani (age 44, youngest laureate)

India: 40% water-stressed; per capita availability ~1,486 m³/year

KHELO INDIA TRIBAL GAMES:

1st edition; Chhattisgarh (Raipur, Jagdalpur, Sarguja); March 25 - April 6

2,300+ athletes; 7 medal sports + 2 demo; mascot “Morveer”

Chhattisgarh tribal population: ~30.6%

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

National Dental Commission: Replaced DCI; 3 boards; 310 dental colleges in India

Prosopis juliflora: Invasive species; introduced India 1959; taproots up to 50 m; Madras HC issued 34 directions

Monarch butterfly: IUCN Endangered (2022); 64% recovery but 80-90% below 1990s peak

Hudsonian Godwit: 95% decline; CMS Bonn Convention; India ratified 1983

Chhapgarus ngankeae: New crab species, Goa mangroves, ZSI discovery

Sahiwal cattle IVF: ICAR-IVRI; 5 calves via OPU-IVF-ET; 47% blastocyst rate

GARBH-INi: THSTI Faridabad; 12,000 women; 1.6 million biospecimens; 3.6M preterm births/year

Helium crisis: Qatar Ras Laffan hub attacked; 33% global supply disrupted; India has no domestic helium

CPI 2025: India rank 91 (score 39/100); global average 42/100 (lowest in decade)

RTI rejection rate: 7.21% (2013-14) → 3.26% (2024-25)

Telangana Indiramma scheme: Rs 5 lakh life insurance, 1.15 crore families, Rs 4,000 crore

Finance Bill 2026: Rs 53.47 lakh crore total expenditure; Article 110 Money Bill

TV Rating Policy 2026: 80,000 metered homes; 50% independent directors

Japan freight Shinkansen: World’s first; Morioka-Tokyo, 500 km, E3 series

Argentina: 2nd country (after US) to withdraw from WHO

Nepal: Sushila Karki (1st woman PM) steps down; Balen Shah takes over Mar 27

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



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