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Current Affairs Today — March 28, 2026

28 March 2026

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Current Affairs Today — March 28, 2026

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PM MODI INAUGURATES NOIDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (JEWAR) — PHASE 1 OPENS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Phase 1 of the Noida International Airport (NIA) at Jewar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh on 28 March 2026, making it the Delhi-NCR region second international airport after Indira Gandhi International Airport.

Project Overview

The Noida International Airport is a greenfield project developed under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model by Yamuna International Airport Private Limited (YIAPL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Zurich Airport International AG, in collaboration with the Government of Uttar Pradesh and the Government of India. The 40-year concession agreement commenced on 1 October 2021.

Phase 1 Specifications

PARAMETER	DETAILS
Total cost (Phase 1)	Rs 11,200 crore (~\$1.2 billion)
Initial passenger capacity	12 million passengers per annum (MPPA)
Runway	3,900 metres (can handle wide-body aircraft)
IATA Code	DXN
ICAO Code	VIDN
Terminal design inspiration	Rivers Yamuna, Ganga, and Hindon (sweeping roof canopy)
Interior design	Traditional red stone and jali (lattice) work
Launch airlines	IndiGo (launch carrier), Akasa Air, Air India Express
Flight operations expected	Within 45-60 days of inauguration

Master Plan and Future Expansion

PHASE	TARGET YEAR	RUNWAYS	CAPACITY (MPPA)
Phase 1	2026	1	12
Full build-out	2050	Up to 5	70

Sustainability Features

The Noida International Airport is designed to be India first net-zero emissions airport. It is the country first large-scale infrastructure project to use Limestone Calcined Clay Cement (LC3), a breakthrough lower-carbon construction material. The airport incorporates renewable energy partnerships and low-carbon construction materials throughout.

Connectivity and Economic Impact

The airport is located along the Yamuna Expressway in Jewar tehsil. It will serve western Uttar Pradesh, parts of Rajasthan, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh — a catchment area of over 200 million people. The project is expected to generate significant employment and boost real estate, logistics, and tourism in the region.

UPSC Angle

Greenfield airports are developed from scratch on new land (as opposed to brownfield airports that expand existing facilities). The PPP model used here involves the private concessionaire (YIAPL/Zurich Airport International AG) building, operating, and maintaining the airport, while the government provides land and regulatory clearances. The concession model is governed by NITI Aayog PPP guidelines.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

NOIDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT — CORE DATA:

Location: Jewar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh

IATA Code: DXN; ICAO Code: VIDN

Inaugurated: 28 March 2026 by PM Modi

Phase 1 cost: Rs 11,200 crore

Phase 1 capacity: 12 MPPA (scalable to 70 MPPA by 2050)

Runway: 3,900 metres (ILS-equipped, all-weather operations)

Operator: Yamuna International Airport Pvt Ltd (YIAPL), subsidiary of Zurich Airport International AG

Model: Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

Concession period: 40 years (from 1 October 2021)

Net-zero emissions target airport

First large-scale project in India to use LC3 (Limestone Calcined Clay Cement)

Launch carriers: IndiGo, Akasa Air, Air India Express

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Delhi NCR other airport: Indira Gandhi International Airport (DEL)

India total operational airports: 157 (as of 2025)

Airports Authority of India (AAI): established 1995 under AAI Act 1994

UDAN scheme (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik): launched 2017 for regional connectivity

Zurich Airport International AG: Swiss company, also operates Zurich Airport in Switzerland

CAPF (GENERAL ADMINISTRATION) BILL 2026 INTRODUCED IN RAJYA SABHA

Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai introduced the Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 in the Rajya Sabha on 25 March 2026, amid strong opposition from INDIA bloc MPs who argued the Bill undermines a Supreme Court judgment.

What the Bill Covers

The Bill is the first-ever unified legislation for the five major Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) — Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). Together, these forces comprise over 10 lakh (1 million) personnel.

Key Provisions

RANK LEVEL	IPS DEPUTATION QUOTA (PROPOSED)
Inspector General (IG)	50% posts reserved for IPS
Additional Director General (ADG)	Minimum 67% posts reserved for IPS
Special Director General (SDG)	100% posts — IPS only
Director General (DG)	100% posts — IPS only

The Bill aims to replace the existing patchwork of separate rules, executive instructions, and ad-hoc practices with a single statutory framework covering recruitment, promotions, cadre review, service conditions, disciplinary procedures, welfare measures, postings, transfers, and grievance redressal.

The Supreme Court Controversy

On 23 May 2025, the Supreme Court delivered a landmark verdict granting Organised Group A Service (OGAS) status to CAPF cadre officers and directed the government to progressively reduce IPS deputation in the forces up to the rank of Inspector General within two years. Critics argue that the CAPF Bill 2026 seeks to achieve through legislation what the government was denied by the court — the preservation of IPS dominance in senior CAPF ranks.

UPSC Angle

The debate touches on key constitutional principles: separation of powers (legislature vs judiciary), Article 312 (All-India Services), and the tension between IPS (an All-India Service under Article 312) and CAPF cadre officers (Group A Central Services). The Bill also raises questions about parliamentary competence — whether Parliament can legislate to override a Supreme Court directive.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

CAPF BILL 2026:

Introduced in Rajya Sabha: 25 March 2026

Introduced by: MoS Home Nityanand Rai

Union Cabinet approval: 10 March 2026

Five CAPFs covered: CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, SSB

Total CAPF personnel: Over 10 lakh (1 million)

Supreme Court OGAS verdict: 23 May 2025

IPS deputation at IG level: 50% (proposed)

IPS deputation at ADG level: 67% minimum (proposed)

IPS deputation at SDG/DG level: 100% (proposed)

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

CRPF: Largest CAPF; raised 27 July 1939 as Crown Representative Police; HQ: New Delhi

BSF: Raised 1 December 1965; guards India-Pakistan and India-Bangladesh borders

CISF: Raised 10 March 1969; guards critical infrastructure (airports, metro, nuclear plants)

ITBP: Raised 24 October 1962; guards India-China border (LAC)

SSB: Raised 1963 as Special Service Bureau; guards India-Nepal and India-Bhutan borders

IPS: All-India Service under Article 312 of the Constitution

Article 312: Parliament can create All-India Services if Rajya Sabha passes a resolution by 2/3 majority

NAYARA ENERGY HIKES FUEL PRICES — PETROL UP RS 5.30/L, DIESEL UP RS 3/L

Nayara Energy, India largest private fuel retailer, raised petrol prices by up to Rs 5.30 per litre and diesel by Rs 3 per litre on 26 March 2026, becoming the first company to hike prices after crude oil surged past \$106/barrel due to the ongoing West Asia (Hormuz) crisis.

Price Impact

FUEL	PRICE BEFORE (BHOPAL EXAMPLE)	PRICE AFTER	INCREASE
Petrol	Rs 106.74/L	Rs 111.74/L	Rs 5.00/L
Diesel	Rs 91.86/L	Rs 94.86/L	Rs 3.00/L

Note: Actual increase varies by state due to differing VAT rates; petrol increase ranges up to Rs 5.30/L in some states.

Why Nayara Moved First

State-run oil marketing companies (OMCs) — Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL) — have not yet matched the hike. Private retailers like Nayara, which do not receive government subsidies, are more exposed to international crude price movements. The ongoing disruption in the Strait of Hormuz has pushed Brent crude above \$106/barrel — a jump of over 50% since the West Asia conflict escalated on 28 February 2026.

About Nayara Energy

PARAMETER	DETAILS
Full name	Nayara Energy Limited (formerly Essar Oil)
Ownership	Rosneft (Russia) — 49.13%; Kesani Enterprises (Trafigura + UCP consortium) — remaining
Refinery	Vadinar, Gujarat — 20 MTPA capacity (India second-largest single-location refinery)
Retail outlets	Over 6,600 fuel stations across India (largest private network)
Acquisition	Rosneft-Trafigura consortium acquired Essar Oil in August 2017 for \$12.9 billion

UPSC Angle

India imports 85-88% of its crude oil requirement, making it highly vulnerable to global supply disruptions. The Strait of Hormuz handles approximately 20 million barrels of crude oil per day (~20% of global traded oil). India fuel pricing is governed by a deregulated but politically sensitive system — OMCs technically have pricing freedom but often hold prices steady before elections or during crises.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

NAYARA ENERGY FUEL PRICE HIKE:

Date of hike: 26 March 2026

Petrol increase: Up to Rs 5.30/L; Diesel increase: Rs 3/L

Trigger: Brent crude above \$106/barrel (50%+ jump since 28 Feb 2026)

Nayara retail outlets: 6,600+ (largest private fuel network in India)

Vadinar Refinery capacity: 20 MMTPA (405,000 barrels/day)

Nayara ownership: Rosneft (49.13%), Trafigura-UCP consortium

State OMCs (IOCL, BPCL, HPCL) have not matched the hike yet

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

India crude import dependence: 85-88%

India Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) capacity: ~5.33 million metric tonnes

SPR locations: Visakhapatnam, Mangaluru, Padur (all underground rock caverns)

Strait of Hormuz: ~33 km wide; handles ~20 million barrels/day of crude

India top crude suppliers: Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Russia, UAE, Kuwait

Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB): regulates downstream sector

MATSYA 6000 DEEP-SEA SUBMERSIBLE COMPLETES WET TESTS IN BAY OF BENGAL

India first crewed deep-sea submersible, Matsya 6000, successfully completed wet tests in the Bay of Bengal off Chennai, marking a major milestone in the Samudrayaan mission under the Deep Ocean Mission.

Test Details

The submersible was lowered to a depth of 10 metres in the Bay of Bengal and underwent eight submersions — half of them crewed — with a three-member crew occupying the 2.1-metre diameter titanium alloy sphere for up to three hours per dive. Engineers evaluated structural integrity, electrical systems, life-support systems, and maneuvering capabilities.

Matsya 6000 Specifications

PARAMETER	DETAILS
Type	Crewed deep-submergence vehicle
Crew capacity	3 persons
Target depth	6,000 metres
Hull material	Ti6Al4V titanium alloy
Hull diameter	2.1 metres
Hull wall thickness	80 mm
Pressure tolerance	Exceeds 720 bar
Operational endurance	12 hours (continuous at 6,000 m)
Emergency endurance	96 hours
Developer	National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai
Ministry	Ministry of Earth Sciences

Samudrayaan and Deep Ocean Mission

The Samudrayaan mission is a flagship programme under India Deep Ocean Mission (DOM), launched in 2021. The total Deep Ocean Mission budget is Rs 4,077 crore over five years. Matsya 6000 aims to explore the Central Indian Ocean for polymetallic nodules (manganese, nickel, cobalt, copper) and study deep-sea biodiversity.

Next Steps

The National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) plans to conduct the first 500-metre dive by May 2026, followed by progressively deeper dives leading to the full 6,000-metre mission.

UPSC Angle

India holds an exploration contract with the International Seabed Authority (ISA) for polymetallic nodules in the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB), covering 75,000 sq km. Only five countries — the US, Russia, France, Japan, and China — have previously operated crewed submersibles at such depths. Success would make India the sixth nation with this capability.

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MATSYA 6000 — CORE DATA:

Target depth: 6,000 metres

Crew: 3 persons

Hull: Ti6Al4V titanium alloy, 2.1 m diameter, 80 mm thick

Operational endurance: 12 hours; emergency: 96 hours

Developer: NIOT, Chennai (under Ministry of Earth Sciences)

Mission: Samudrayaan (part of Deep Ocean Mission)

Deep Ocean Mission budget: Rs 4,077 crore (5 years)

Wet tests: 8 submersions (4 crewed) in Bay of Bengal

Next milestone: 500-metre dive by May 2026

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

International Seabed Authority (ISA): HQ Kingston, Jamaica; established 1994 under UNCLOS

India ISA contract: 75,000 sq km in Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) for polymetallic nodules

Countries with crewed deep-sea submersibles: US, Russia, France, Japan, China

UNCLOS (UN Convention on the Law of the Sea): adopted 1982, entered into force 1994

Deep Ocean Mission components: deep-sea mining, ocean climate change advisory, underwater vehicles, marine biodiversity

MADHAVPUR GHED FAIR 2026 BEGINS IN GUJARAT — CELEBRATES RUKMINI-KRISHNA LEGEND

The five-day Madhavpur Ghed Fair commenced on 27 March 2026 at Madhavpur village near Porbandar, Gujarat, bringing together cultural performers from Gujarat and nine Northeastern states under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative.

About the Fair

The Madhavpur Ghed Fair is held annually starting on the day of Ram Navami at Madhavpur Ghed, a coastal village near Porbandar in Gujarat. According to legend, Lord Krishna married Rukmini, the daughter of King Bhishmaka of Vidarbha (some traditions say Arunachal Pradesh), at this very site after she eloped with him.

2026 Edition Highlights

PARAMETER	DETAILS
Dates	27-31 March 2026
Location	Madhavpur Ghed, Porbandar district, Gujarat
Cultural artists	Over 1,600 artists from 9 states
Participating states	Gujarat, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura, Nagaland
Central initiative	Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

Northeast Connection

The Mishmi (Idu Mishmi) tribe of Arunachal Pradesh traces its ancestry to King Bhishmaka and through him to Rukmini. This cultural link between Gujarat and the Northeast is celebrated at the fair through folk dance of the Idu Mishmi tribe, Rukmini-Haran folk theatre from Assam, Khullong Ishei songs from Manipur, and dance-dramas based on Rukmini-Krishna legends from multiple Northeastern states.

UPSC Angle

The Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative was launched on 31 October 2015 (Rashtriya Ekta Diwas — birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel) to promote inter-state cultural exchange and national integration. Madhavpur Ghed Fair exemplifies how mythology and shared cultural heritage can bridge geographical distances between India western and northeastern frontiers.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

MADHAVPUR GHED FAIR:

Location: Madhavpur Ghed, Porbandar district, Gujarat

Duration: 5 days, starting on Ram Navami

2026 dates: 27-31 March 2026

Legend: Marriage of Lord Krishna and Rukmini

Northeast link: Idu Mishmi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh traces ancestry to King Bhishmaka (Rukmini father)

Artists in 2026: Over 1,600 from 9 states

Central initiative: Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat: Launched 31 October 2015 (Rashtriya Ekta Diwas)

Porbandar: Birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi (2 October 1869)

Idu Mishmi tribe: Found in Dibang Valley and Lower Dibang Valley districts of Arunachal Pradesh

GI-tagged handicrafts of Arunachal Pradesh: Arunachal Orange, Adi Kekir (textile)

Other major Gujarat fairs: Rann Utsav (Kutch), Tarnetar Fair (Surendranagar), Modhera Dance Festival

INDIA GROWTH DATA CONTROVERSY — GDP BASE YEAR REVISION SPARKS DEBATE

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released a new GDP series on 27 February 2026 shifting the base year from 2011-12 to 2022-23, which revised real GDP growth upward to 7.6% for FY 2025-26 but simultaneously reduced nominal GDP by approximately 3.3% — from Rs 357 lakh crore to Rs 345.47 lakh crore.

The Central Paradox

INDICATOR	OLD SERIES (BASE 2011-12)	NEW SERIES (BASE 2022-23)	CHANGE
Real GDP growth (FY26)	7.4%	7.6%	+0.2 pp upward
Nominal GDP (FY26)	Rs 357 lakh crore	Rs 345.47 lakh crore	-3.3% (~Rs 12 lakh crore lower)
Fiscal deficit (FY26)	4.36% of GDP	4.51% of GDP	+0.15 pp (higher due to lower GDP base)

Key Methodological Changes

The new series introduces “double deflation” for calculating real Gross Value Added (GVA), which adjusts both inputs and outputs separately using their respective price indices. It also includes improved estimates of Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) and better synchronisation between production-side and expenditure-side estimates through Supply-Use Table (SUT) integration.

International Scrutiny

In November 2025, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) assigned India a “C” rating for its national accounts coverage, explicitly citing concerns over outdated base year data. A Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE) working paper published in 2026 estimated that India annual GDP growth may have been overestimated by approximately 1.5 to 2 percentage points over the past 20 years.

Historical Context

The 2015 base year revision (from 2004-05 to 2011-12) was similarly controversial. Manufacturing growth under the new series was recorded at 7.4% annually (2011-2019), compared to just 3.8% recorded by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for the same period — a gap of 3.6 percentage points that was never satisfactorily explained.

UPSC Angle

GDP base year revision is a routine statistical exercise undertaken approximately every 10 years to reflect structural changes in the economy. The base year represents the reference point against which prices and output are compared. The controversy highlights the tension between statistical methodology and political economy — growth figures influence sovereign credit ratings, foreign investment flows, and electoral narratives.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

INDIA GDP BASE YEAR REVISION 2026:

New base year: 2022-23 (previously 2011-12)

Released by MoSPI on 27 February 2026

Real GDP growth FY26 (new series): 7.6%

Nominal GDP FY26 (new series): Rs 345.47 lakh crore (down from Rs 357 lakh crore)

Fiscal deficit impact: rose from 4.36% to 4.51% of GDP

Key methodology: Double deflation for GVA; SUT integration

IMF rating for India national accounts: “C” (November 2025)

PIIE estimate: India growth overestimated by 1.5-2 pp over 20 years

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

MoSPI: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation; HQ: New Delhi

Central Statistics Office (CSO): Now National Statistical Office (NSO) — merged with NSSO in 2019

GDP calculation methods: Production (GVA), Expenditure, Income

Previous base year revisions: 1993-94 to 2004-05 to 2011-12 to 2022-23

India GDP (nominal, 2025-26): 5th largest economy globally

Finance Minister: Nirmala Sitharaman; Chief Statistician of India heads NSO

UNDERGROUND WATER RESERVOIR DISCOVERED 700 KM BELOW EARTH SURFACE — 3X OCEAN VOLUME

A study by geophysicist Steven Jacobsen of Northwestern University and seismologist Brandon Schmandt of the University of New Mexico confirmed the existence of a massive underground water reservoir trapped within the mineral ringwoodite at approximately 700 km below the Earth surface, holding water equivalent to roughly three times the volume of all surface oceans.

Key Findings

PARAMETER	DETAILS
Mineral	Ringwoodite (high-pressure form of olivine)
Depth	525-660 km (mantle transition zone)
Water volume	~3 times the volume of all surface oceans
Water form	Not liquid, ice, or vapour — hydroxyl radical (OH) trapped in crystal structure
Conditions	Pressure exceeding 250 miles of rock; temperature above 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit
Discovery method	2,000+ seismographs across the US; 500+ earthquakes analysed
Published in	Journal Science (2014, renewed interest in 2026)

How Ringwoodite Holds Water

Ringwoodite has a special crystal structure (spinel-type) that attracts hydrogen and traps water within its molecular framework. If just 1% of the weight of mantle rock in the transition zone is H₂O, it would equal nearly three times the amount of water in all surface oceans. The water exists as hydroxyl radicals (OH) bound into the mineral crystal structure — a “fourth form” of water beyond liquid, ice, and vapour.

Physical Evidence

A piece of ringwoodite was found inside a diamond brought up from a depth of approximately 660 km by a volcano in Brazil. This tiny sample — the only natural ringwoodite specimen from Earth interior — contained a surprising amount of water bound in solid form.

Significance for Earth Science

The discovery challenges the prevailing “cometary delivery” theory that Earth water was brought by comets during the Late Heavy Bombardment period. Instead, it suggests water may have gradually seeped out from the Earth interior over millions of years. This has profound implications for understanding the global water cycle and the origin of Earth oceans.

UPSC Angle

Earth interior is divided into crust (0-70 km), mantle (70-2,900 km), and core (2,900-6,371 km). The transition zone (410-660 km) lies between the upper and lower mantle and is where olivine transforms into ringwoodite under extreme pressure. Understanding deep-Earth water reservoirs is critical for models of plate tectonics, volcanism, and the long-term water cycle.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

RINGWOODITE WATER RESERVOIR:

Mineral: Ringwoodite (spinel-structured high-pressure polymorph of olivine)

Location: 525-660 km depth (mantle transition zone)

Water volume: ~3 times all surface oceans combined

Water form: Hydroxyl radicals (OH) trapped in crystal lattice

Discovery: Steven Jacobsen (Northwestern University) and Brandon Schmandt (University of New Mexico)

Published: Journal Science (2014)

Method: 2,000 seismographs, 500+ earthquakes

Physical evidence: Ringwoodite found in diamond from Brazilian volcano

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Earth layers: Crust (0-70 km), Mantle (70-2,900 km), Core (2,900-6,371 km)

Transition zone: 410-660 km depth

Olivine: Most abundant mineral in upper mantle; transforms to wadsleyite (410 km) then ringwoodite (525 km)

Late Heavy Bombardment: ~4.1-3.8 billion years ago, period of intense asteroid/comet impacts

Total surface water on Earth: ~1.335 billion cubic km

EARTH HOUR 2026 — 20TH ANNIVERSARY OBSERVED ON MARCH 28

Earth Hour 2026 is being observed on Saturday, 28 March 2026 from 8:30 PM to 9:30 PM local time across the world, marking the 20th anniversary of this global environmental movement organised by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Key Details

PARAMETER	DETAILS
Date	28 March 2026 (last Saturday of March)
Time	8:30 PM to 9:30 PM local time
Theme	“Give an Hour for Earth” / “The Biggest Hour for Earth”
Organiser	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
Anniversary	20th (started in 2007)
Participation	190+ countries and territories
Symbolic action	Switching off non-essential lights for one hour

History of Earth Hour

Earth Hour began on 31 March 2007 in Sydney, Australia, when 2.2 million people switched off their lights for one hour to demonstrate concern about climate change. The concept was developed by WWF Australia and advertising agency Leo Burnett Sydney, originally under the working title “The Big Flick.” By the second year (2008), 50 million people in 35 countries participated, with landmarks like the Golden Gate Bridge and the Colosseum going dark.

2026 Focus

The 20th anniversary edition emphasises moving beyond the symbolic lights-off gesture to taking concrete actions for nature and climate during the hour. WWF highlights the interconnection between climate change and biodiversity loss — nature and climate together form the planetary life-support system providing clean air, fresh water, and food security.

UPSC Angle

Earth Hour is a soft-power environmental awareness campaign with no binding legal obligations. It is distinct from legally binding climate frameworks such as the [Paris Agreement \(2015\)](#), [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework \(2022\)](#), and the UNFCCC process. However, it plays a significant role in building public consciousness and political will for environmental action.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA**EARTH HOUR:**

First observed: 31 March 2007, Sydney, Australia

Organiser: World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

WWF founded: 1961; HQ: Gland, Switzerland

2026 theme: “Give an Hour for Earth” / “The Biggest Hour for Earth”

20th anniversary in 2026

Time: 8:30 PM to 9:30 PM local time

Participation: 190+ countries

Concept origin: WWF Australia + Leo Burnett Sydney agency

Original name: “The Big Flick”

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

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

Kunming-Montreal GBF: Adopted December 2022; 30x30 target (protect 30% of land/sea by 2030)

UNFCCC: Adopted 1992 at Rio Earth Summit; 198 parties

India NDC 3.0 (2035 target): 47% emissions intensity reduction; 60% non-fossil power

International Day for Biological Diversity: 22 May

World Environment Day: 5 June (UNEP)

COMBINED FACTS CORNER — CROSS-CUTTING REVISION

FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

INFRASTRUCTURE AND AIRPORTS:

Noida International Airport (DXN): Inaugurated 28 March 2026; Rs 11,200 crore Phase 1; 12 MPPA

Operator: Yamuna International Airport Pvt Ltd (Zurich Airport International AG subsidiary)

40-year concession from October 2021; net-zero emissions target

India operational airports: 157 (2025); AAI established 1995

SECURITY AND DEFENCE:

CAPF Bill 2026: Introduced in Rajya Sabha 25 March 2026 by MoS Nityanand Rai

Covers 5 forces: CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, SSB (total 10 lakh+ personnel)

IPS deputation: 50% at IG, 67% at ADG, 100% at SDG/DG levels

SC verdict (23 May 2025): Granted OGAS status to CAPF cadre officers

ENERGY AND OIL:

Nayara Energy: Petrol up Rs 5.30/L, diesel up Rs 3/L (26 March 2026)

Brent crude: Above \$106/barrel; Strait of Hormuz: ~20 million barrels/day

Nayara: 6,600+ retail outlets; Vadinar refinery 20 MMTPA

India crude import dependence: 85-88%

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

Matsya 6000: India first crewed deep-sea submersible; 6,000 m target depth

Ti6Al4V titanium hull; 3 crew; 12-hour endurance; 96-hour emergency

Deep Ocean Mission: Rs 4,077 crore; Samudrayaan programme

Next: 500 m dive by May 2026

CULTURE AND HERITAGE:

Madhavpur Ghed Fair: 27-31 March 2026; Porbandar, Gujarat

Rukmini-Krishna marriage legend; Idu Mishmi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh

1,600+ artists from 9 states; Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative

ECONOMY AND STATISTICS:

GDP base year revised: 2011-12 to 2022-23 (released 27 February 2026)

Real GDP growth FY26: 7.6%; Nominal GDP: Rs 345.47 lakh crore (down ~3.3%)

Double deflation methodology; IMF “C” rating (November 2025)

EARTH SCIENCE:

Ringwoodite: Mineral at 525-660 km depth; holds water = 3x all surface oceans

Discovery: Jacobsen and Schmandt; published in Science (2014)

Water as hydroxyl radicals (OH) in crystal structure

ENVIRONMENT:

Earth Hour 2026: 28 March, 8:30 PM; 20th anniversary; WWF

Theme: “Give an Hour for Earth”

Started 2007 in Sydney; 190+ countries participate

UPSC RELEVANCE

Noida International Airport features (DXN code, PPP model, YIAPL), CAPF forces (CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, SSB founding years), Nayara Energy ownership and Vadinar refinery, Matsya 6000 specifications and Samudrayaan, Ringwoodite and mantle transition zone, Earth Hour origin (2007, Sydney), GDP base year revision methodology.

MAINS GS-2:

CAPF Bill 2026 vs SC judgment — parliamentary sovereignty vs judicial review; IPS deputation in CAPFs; infrastructure development (airports) under PPP.

MAINS GS-3:

Deep Ocean Mission and strategic mineral exploration; India energy security and crude import dependence; GDP measurement methodology and statistical credibility; environmental awareness campaigns.

MAINS GS-1:

Madhavpur Ghed Fair — cultural integration between western and northeastern India; tribal heritage.

Sources: [PIB](#), [DD News](#), [Business Standard](#), [The Hindu](#), [Indian Express](#), [BusinessToday](#), [Vajiram and Ravi](#), [WWF](#), [Northwestern University](#)

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