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Current Affairs Today — March 31, 2026

31 March 2026

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Current Affairs Today — March 31, 2026

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WHY IN NEWS

March 31, 2026 closes India's financial year with landmark developments: a new NDC climate commitment, three naval vessel deliveries by GRSE, WTO MC14's e-commerce moratorium failure, new waste management rules, a Supreme Court right-to-die ruling, Andhra Pradesh declared Naxal-free, and a historic Great Indian Bustard conservation breakthrough.

INDIA'S UPDATED NDC — 60% NON-FOSSIL POWER BY 2035

The Union Cabinet approved India's updated **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)** under the Paris Agreement, committing to 60% of installed electric capacity from non-fossil sources by 2035 — up from the 50% by 2030 target in the 2022 NDC. The emissions intensity of GDP will be reduced by 47% from 2005 levels, and the carbon sink target raised to 3.5–4 billion tonnes CO₂ equivalent.

Key NDC 2026 Targets

INDICATOR	2022 NDC (BY 2030)	2026 NDC (BY 2035)
Non-fossil capacity	50%	60%
Emissions intensity reduction	45%	47%
Carbon sink	2.5–3 Bn tonnes	3.5–4 Bn tonnes

UPSC Angle

The NDC ratchet mechanism under Article 4 of the Paris Agreement requires progressively ambitious contributions every 5 years. India's per capita CO₂ (~2.4 tonnes) is far below the USA (14.9) and China (7.7), reinforcing its CBDR stance. GS3 (Environment + Economy), GS2 (IR).

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

INDIA NDC 2026:

- 60% non-fossil installed capacity by 2035
- 47% emissions intensity reduction vs 2005
- Carbon sink: 3.5–4 billion tonnes CO₂ equivalent

ENERGY STATISTICS INDIA 2026 (NSO, 33RD EDITION):

- Total RE potential: 47,04,043 MW (solar: ~71%)
- RE electricity generated FY 2024-25: 4,16,823 GWh
- T&D losses: 17% (down from 22% in 2015-16)
- India CO₂ growth: 0.7% in 2025 — slowest in 20 years

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

- Paris Agreement: adopted Dec 12, 2015; India ratified Oct 2, 2016
- NDC ratchet: Article 4, every 5 years
- Top 6 RE states: Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh (hold ~70% national RE potential)

GRSE DELIVERS THREE NAVAL VESSELS — TOTAL WARSHIPS: 118

Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, simultaneously delivered three frontline naval platforms: **INS Dunagiri** (5th Nilgiri-class stealth frigate, Project 17A), **INS Sanshodhak** (4th survey vessel), and **INS Agray** (anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft). Total GRSE warship tally now stands at 118 (80 for Indian Navy).

INS Dunagiri Specifications

- Class: Nilgiri-class (Project 17A); 2nd GRSE-built under P17A
- Length: 149 m; Displacement: 6,670 tonnes
- Propulsion: CODAG (Combined Diesel and Gas)
- Primary weapon: BrahMos supersonic cruise missile
- Project 17A: 7 frigates total — MDL (4) + GRSE (3)

UPSC Angle

Project 17A represents India's stealth frigate programme. BrahMos is India-Russia JV. INS Agray has ~88% indigenous content — showcasing Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence. GS3 (Defence Industrial Base), GS2 (Internal Security + Maritime).

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

GRSE:

Total warships: 118 (80 for Indian Navy)

Location: Kolkata; Ministry of Defence PSU

INS DUNAGIRI:

Class: Nilgiri-class stealth frigate (P17A)

Length: 149 m; Displacement: 6,670 tonnes

Propulsion: CODAG

Weapon: BrahMos (Mach 2.8–3, range ~300 km export/500+ km domestic)

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

INS Agray: ASW Shallow Water Craft; ~88% indigenous

INS Vikrant (Indigenous Aircraft Carrier): Built by Cochin Shipyard; commissioned 2022

India shipbuilding market share: ~0.06%; target: Top 5 by 2047

WTO MC14 YAOUNDÉ — E-COMMERCE MORATORIUM LAPSES

The 14th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) at Yaoundé, Cameroon, concluded without renewing the e-commerce customs duties moratorium (in place since 1998). India and South Africa also successfully blocked the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) agreement, arguing it falls outside WTO's mandate.

Key Outcomes

ISSUE	RESULT
E-commerce moratorium	Not renewed – lapsed
Investment Facilitation (IFD)	Blocked by India + South Africa
Fisheries subsidies	Partial extension of MC12 deal
LDC support package	Agreed
WTO Appellate Body	Still non-functional (no progress)

UPSC Angle

India’s “policy space” argument against the moratorium: developing nations forgo \$10–14 billion/year in customs revenue. India’s Equalisation Levy (6% digital ad tax, 2016) would face legal pressure if moratorium were extended. GS2 (IR + International Organisations), GS3 (Economy + Trade).

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

WTO MC14:

Venue: Yaoundé, Cameroon (2nd MC in Africa)

DG: Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (1st African, 1st woman; since 2021)

E-commerce moratorium: Established MC2 Geneva 1998; lapsed at MC14

IFD blocked by: India + South Africa (mandate argument)

WTO members: 164; HQ: Geneva

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

WTO Appellate Body non-functional since December 2019 (USA blocked appointments)

MPIA: Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement — India is NOT a member

India’s Equalisation Levy: 6% on digital advertising (2016); 2% e-commerce (2020, withdrawn 2024)

SWM RULES 2026 — FOUR-WAY SEGREGATION MANDATE

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notified Solid Waste Management Rules 2026 (effective April 1, 2026), replacing the 2016 framework. The rules mandate four-way waste segregation (wet, dry, sanitary, special care), raise the RDF mandate from 5% to 15% over six years, and introduce a centralised

digital compliance portal under the Polluter Pays Principle.

Bulk Waste Generator (BWG) Threshold

Entities generating >100 kg waste/day OR consuming >40,000 litres water/day OR owning >20,000 sq.m. area are classified as BWGs — required to have on-site treatment infrastructure.

UPSC Angle

Legal basis: Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Solid waste management is a function of Urban Local Bodies under the 12th Schedule (74th Amendment). RDF use in cement kilns links waste management to emissions reduction. GS3 (Environment), GS2 (Governance + ULBs).

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

SWM RULES 2026:

Notified by: MoEFCC; Effective: April 1, 2026

Replaces: SWM Rules 2016

Legal basis: Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

Four streams: Wet, Dry, Sanitary, Special care

BWG threshold: >100 kg/day OR >40,000 L water/day OR >20,000 sq.m.

RDF mandate: 5% → 15% (6 years)

INDIA MSW DATA:

Total generated: ~1,62,000 MT/day (CPCB 2024)

Processing rate: ~60%; Legacy dump sites: 3,150+

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

12th Schedule (74th Amendment, 1992): Lists solid waste management as ULB function

Swachh Bharat Mission Urban Phase 2: 2021–2026

SUPREME COURT — CANH WITHDRAWAL ALLOWED (RIGHT TO DIE WITH DIGNITY)

In *Harish Rana v. Union of India (2026)*, the Supreme Court allowed withdrawal of Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration (CANH) for a patient in Persistent Vegetative State (PVS) for ~13 years — the first such ruling in India. The Court reaffirmed that the right to die with dignity is part of **Article 21**, building on *Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)*.

Evolution of Right-to-Die Law

CASE	YEAR	HOLDING
Aruna Shanbaug	2011	Passive euthanasia first recognised
Common Cause	2018	Advance directives legalised; right to die = Article 21
Common Cause (Review)	2023	Simplified advance directive execution
Harish Rana	2026	CANH withdrawal permitted for first time

UPSC Angle

Active euthanasia remains illegal in India; only passive euthanasia (withdrawing artificial life support) is permitted. PVS is irreversible after 12 months (traumatic) or 3 months (non-traumatic). Article 21 now explicitly covers the right to a dignified death. GS2 (Polity + Judiciary), GS4 (Ethics).

FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

HARISH RANA V. UNION OF INDIA (2026):

Patient: ~31-32 years, PVS for ~13 years

Ruling: CANH withdrawal permitted (first time in India)

Basis: Article 21

KEY CASES:

Aruna Shanbaug (2011): 42 years in PVS; KEM Hospital, Mumbai; first passive euthanasia ruling

Common Cause (2018): 5-judge bench; advance directives (living wills) legalised

Gian Kaur v. Punjab (1996): 5-judge bench ruled Article 21 does NOT include right to die (overridden by 2018 ruling)

CANH: NASOGASTRIC TUBE, PEG, IV NUTRITION/FLUIDS — CLASSIFIED AS MEDICAL INTERVENTION, NOT BASIC CARE

ANDHRA PRADESH DECLARED NAXAL-FREE

Andhra Pradesh was declared Naxal-free on March 30–31, 2026, meeting the Union Government's nationwide LWE elimination deadline. Key CPI (Maoist) Central Committee member Chelluri Narayana Rao (alias Suresh) surrendered, marking the collapse of the Andhra-Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee (AOBSZC) — AP's last active Maoist unit.

LWE Decline — National Snapshot

- Affected districts: 120+ (2010) → < 25 (2026)
- Violence incidents: ~89% reduction since 2010
- 18 Maoists recently neutralised in AP; 120+ weapons recovered

UPSC Angle

CPI (Maoist) formed in 2004 (PWG + MCCI merger). Origin: Naxalbari Uprising, 1967. SAMADHAN strategy (MHA) + Greyhounds (AP elite force) are key to success. Classified under UAPA. GS3 (Internal Security + LWE).

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

AP NAXAL-FREE:

Declared: March 30–31, 2026 (meeting March 31 Union deadline)

Key surrender: Chelluri Narayana Rao (alias Suresh), CPI(M) CC member

Last unit: AOBZC (Andhra-Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee)

NAXAL MOVEMENT:

Naxalbari Uprising: 1967, Darjeeling, West Bengal (Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal)

CPI (Maoist) formed: 2004 — merger of PWG + MCCI

Red Corridor: Nepal → Bihar → Jharkhand → Chhattisgarh → Odisha → AP

GREYHOUNDS: AP ANTI-NAXAL ELITE FORCE; RAISED 1989; MODEL FOR COBRA (CHHATTISGARH)

SAMADHAN (MHA): SMART LEADERSHIP + AGGRESSIVE STRATEGY + MOTIVATION + ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE + DASHBOARD KPIS + HARNESSING TECH + ACTION PLAN + NO COMPLACENCY

GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD — FIRST SUCCESSFUL HATCH IN NEARLY A DECADE

A GIB chick was hatched in Gujarat's Kutch region on March 26, 2026, via an inter-state egg transfer (770 km in ~19 hours) from Rajasthan's captive breeding centre — the first successful GIB hatching in nearly a decade, using the "Jumpstart Approach." Gujarat had only 3 female GIBs and no males before this intervention.

UPSC Angle

GIB (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) is Critically Endangered (IUCN), Schedule I (WPA), CITES Appendix I, Rajasthan's state bird. Biggest threat: overhead power lines (forward-facing narrow vision). CMS COP15 (Brazil, 2026) added GIB to Appendix I. Project GIB launched 2016 by WII + MoEFCC + State Forest Depts. GS3 (Environment + Biodiversity).

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

GIB 2026 HATCHING:

Technique: Jumpstart Approach (inter-state egg transfer)

Route: Rajasthan → Kutch, Gujarat (770 km, ~19 hours)

Gujarat population before: 3 females, 0 males

Global GIB population: < 150 individuals

PROJECT GIB:

Launched: 2016

Captive breeding centres: Sam + Ramdevra (Jaisalmer district, Rajasthan)

Captive population: ~73 birds (Rajasthan)

Partners: WII, MoEFCC, State Forest Departments (Rajasthan + Gujarat), Abu Dhabi programme

CMS COP15 (BRAZIL, 2026): 40 NEW SPECIES ADDED; GIB ADDED TO APPENDIX I INDIA HOSTED CMS COP13: GANDHINAGAR, JANUARY 2020 CMS (BONN CONVENTION): ESTABLISHED 1979; ADMINISTERED BY UNEP

CMS COP15 — 40 SPECIES ADDED TO PROTECTED LISTS

The 15th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS/Bonn Convention) concluded in Brazil with 40 new species added to protected Appendices. About 49% of migratory species globally face population decline; 24% face extinction risk. Key species added include: Cheetah, Striped hyena, Snowy owl, Giant otter, Great hammerhead shark.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

CMS COP15:

Venue: Brazil, March 2026

New species added: 40 (including GIB, Cheetah)

Species at high extinction risk: 188 (103 birds, 26 fish, 28 terrestrial mammals, 23 aquatic mammals)

49% of migratory species declining; 24% face extinction

CMS (BONN CONVENTION):

Established: 1979, Bonn, Germany

Administered by: UNEP

Appendix I: Strictly protected; Appendix II: Cooperative agreements

India hosted CMS COP13: Gandhinagar, 2020

IRDAI IMPLEMENTS IND AS FRAMEWORK FOR INSURERS (APRIL 1, 2026)

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) introduced Ind AS (Indian Accounting Standards)-based financial reporting for all insurers from April 1, 2026, replacing Indian GAAP under the Insurance Act, 1938. Two-year parallel reporting required. Key standards: Ind AS 109 (Financial Instruments), Ind AS 117 (Insurance Contracts). Converging with IFRS globally.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

IRDAI IND AS (APRIL 1, 2026):

Applies to: Life, General, Health, Reinsurers

Replaces: Indian GAAP under Insurance Act, 1938

Key standards: Ind AS 109, Ind AS 117

Two-year parallel reporting required

Converges with: IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards)

IRDAI established: 1999 (IRDAI Act, 1999); HQ: Hyderabad

BHAVASAGARA CENTRE — NATIONAL REPOSITORY FOR DEEP-SEA FAUNA

MoEFCC designated the Bhavasagara Referral Centre at the Centre for Marine Living Resources & Ecology (CMLRE), Kochi, as India's National Repository for Deep-Sea Fauna under the [Biological Diversity Act, 2002](#). The centre houses 3,500+ taxonomically identified, geo-referenced voucher specimens and is authorised to preserve DNA sequences of newly discovered deep-sea species.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

BHAVASAGARA NATIONAL REPOSITORY:

- Location: CMLRE, Kochi, Kerala
- CMLRE established: 1998 (Ministry of Earth Sciences)
- Legal basis: Biological Diversity Act, 2002
- Specimens: 3,500+ taxonomically identified, geo-referenced
- Aligns with: UN Decade of Ocean Science (2021–2030)

PM E-DRIVE SCHEME — EV SUBSIDIES EXTENDED TO JULY 2026

The Union Government extended PM E-DRIVE (Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement) subsidies for electric two-wheelers through July 31, 2026. The scheme covers purchase incentives for electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers, buses, and ambulances.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

PM E-DRIVE SCHEME:

- Full name: PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement
- E2W subsidy extended: Through July 31, 2026
- Replaces: FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles) — FAME I (2015), FAME II (2019–2024)
- Nodal ministry: Ministry of Heavy Industries

PERSONS IN NEWS

Chelluri Narayana Rao (alias Suresh) — Senior CPI (Maoist) Central Committee member who surrendered in Andhra Pradesh on March 30–31, 2026, symbolising the collapse of the AOBSZC and AP’s Naxal-free declaration.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala — WTO Director-General who presided over MC14 at Yaoundé; first African and first woman to head the WTO (since 2021).

UPSC RELEVANCE

All facts in individual Facts Corner boxes above.

MAINS GS-3:

NDC 2026 targets; SWM Rules 2026; LWE decline and SAMADHAN; GIB conservation.

MAINS GS-2:

WTO MC14 and India’s trade policy; Supreme Court right-to-die ruling; AP Naxal-free and internal security.

MAINS GS-4:

Ethical dimensions of right to die with dignity.

★ FACTS CORNER — COMBINED REVISION

KEY NUMBERS FOR MARCH 31, 2026:

India NDC 2035: 60% non-fossil capacity; 47% emissions intensity cut; 3.5–4 Bn tonne sink

GRSE total warships: 118; INS Dunagiri displacement: 6,670 tonnes

WTO members: 164; E-commerce moratorium: since 1998, lapsed at MC14

India MSW: ~1,62,000 MT/day; SWM 2026: 4-way segregation; RDF 5%→15%

GIB global population: < 150; Gujarat GIBs before hatch: 3 females, 0 males

LWE districts: 120+ (2010) → < 25 (2026); ~89% violence reduction

CMS COP15: 40 new species added; 49% migratory species declining

CMLRE Bhavasagara specimens: 3,500+

KEY DATES:

Naxalbari Uprising: 1967

CPI (Maoist) formed: 2004

Paris Agreement: December 12, 2015

Aruna Shanbaug case: 2011; Common Cause (2018, 2023)

Project GIB: 2016; CMS Bonn Convention: 1979

WTO: January 1, 1995 (replaced GATT 1947)

Sources: [GKToday](#), [PIB](#), [MoEFCC](#), [Indian Navy](#)

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**Andhra Pradesh Declared Naxal-Free —
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