

MARCH-2026
PULSE



MONTHLY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
MAGAZINE



for
Defence Exams
**UPSC/CDSE/CAPF/
AFCAT/NDA Exam**
Other Competitive Exams



www.nationaldefenceinstitute.in



Preparing for **AFCAT, CDS, CAPF, NDA** or Defence Exams?



- ✓ Structured Online & Classroom Coaching
- ✓ Daily Current Affairs & Concept Classes
- ✓ Weekly Mock Tests
- ✓ AFSB / SSB Guidance
- ✓ Personal Mentorship

**Serious Aspirants Don't Just Read...
They Prepare With Direction.**


Contact:

☎ **9150981461**

☎ **9150981462**

☎ **9150581465**

Visit: www.nationaldefenceinstitute.in or

 www.ndidefence.com



NDI DEFENCE INSTITUTE

(A DEFENCE EXAM TRAINING CENTRE FOR NDA, CDS, AFCAT, CAPF AC, UPSC, SSB INTERVIEW, SAINIK, RMS, RIMC & SOLDIER)

10/2, Chakrapani Rd, Extn, Maduvinkarai, Guindy, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600032
www.nationaldefenceinstitute.in | Mail Id: info@nationaldefenceinstitute.in | 91509 81461 | 91509 81462

CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

IMPORTANT DAYS:

Date	Day / Celebrated As	Theme (2026)	Significance
1 March	Zero Discrimination Day	People First	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Launched by UNAIDSpromotes equality & inclusion, fights stigma based on gender, caste, HIV status etc.
1 March	World Civil Defence Day	Managing Environmental Risks for a Resilient and Sustainable Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none">By International Civil Defence Organisation (ICDO)awareness on disaster preparedness & emergency response systems
3 March	World Wildlife Day	Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Declared by UN General Assembly (2013)conserve biodiversity & endangered species
4 March	National Safety Day (India)	Industry-specific yearly theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">By National Safety Council (India)promote workplace safety & accident prevention
8 March	International Women's Day	Give To Gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">By United Nationsgender equality, women empowerment, socio-economic rights
12 March	Dandi March Anniversary	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Marks 1930 Salt March by Mahatma Gandhisymbol of civil disobedience against British rule
15 March	World Consumer Rights Day	Safe Products, Confident Consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">By Consumers Internationalprotect consumer rights & awareness
15 March	International Day of Action for Rivers	Protect Rivers, Protect People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">By environmental groups globallyhighlights river conservation & anti-dam movements
16 March	National Vaccination Day (India)	Immunization for All is Humanly Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Marks start of Pulse Polio Programme (1995)immunization awareness
20 March	International Day of Happiness	Caring and Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Declared by UN (2012)focus on well-being, development beyond GDP
20 March	World Sparrow Day		<ul style="list-style-type: none">By Nature Forever Society (India)protect declining house sparrow population



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

21 March	International Day of Forests	Forests and Economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By UN (FAO) forest conservation, climate role
21 March	World Poetry Day		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By UNESCO promote literature & linguistic diversity
22 March	World Water Day	Where water flows, equality grows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By UN sustainable water management & water crisis awareness
23 March	World Meteorological Day	Observing Today, Protecting Tomorrow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By World Meteorological Organization climate & weather awareness
23 March	Shaheed Diwas	Mera Bharat Meri Zimmedari (My Bharat, My Responsibility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honors martyrs like Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev sacrifice for independence
24 March	World Tuberculosis Day	Yes! We Can End TB: Led by Countries, Powered by People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By WHO marks discovery of TB bacteria by Robert Koch awareness to eliminate TB
27 March	World Theatre Day	Theatre and a Culture of Peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By International Theatre Institute (ITI) promote performing arts

APPOINTMENTS:

1. K. V. Ramana Murty Appointed as SEBI Whole-Time Member

- K. V. Ramana Murty** appointed as **Whole-Time Member (WTM)** of Securities and Exchange Board of India.
- Has extensive experience in **financial markets, regulation, and public administration**.
- WTM plays a **key executive role** in policy-making, enforcement, and market regulation.
- Appointment strengthens SEBI's **regulatory oversight amid growing capital markets** in India.

2. Uniqlo Appoints Jasprit Bumrah as Brand Ambassador for India

- Uniqlo signs **Jasprit Bumrah** as its **India brand ambassador**.
- Strategic move to expand **brand visibility in Indian apparel market**.
- Bumrah represents **performance, discipline, and global appeal**, aligning with Uniqlo's brand image.
- Reflects increasing trend of **sports personalities driving fashion branding in India**.

3. Deepak Gupta Takes Charge as CMD of GAIL (India) Limited

- Deepak Gupta** becomes **Chairman & Managing Director (CMD)** of GAIL.
- GAIL is India's **largest natural gas transmission and marketing company**.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- Leadership change crucial for **energy transition, gas infrastructure expansion, and policy execution.**
- Plays a key role in India's push toward a **gas-based economy.**

4. Saba Shawl Becomes First Woman to Head Central Jail Srinagar

- **Saba Shawl** becomes the **first Kashmiri woman** to head Central Jail Srinagar.
- Marks a **significant milestone in gender representation** in security and prison administration.
- Reflects gradual inclusion of women in **sensitive administrative and law enforcement roles.**
- Important from **social justice + governance perspective**

DEFENCE:

1. Operation Urja Suraksha

- Naval mission by Indian Navy to secure India's energy supply routes (sea lanes).
- Focus on oil tanker protection + choke points like Strait of Hormuz.
- Ensures energy security amid geopolitical tensions.
- Reflects India's shift toward blue-water navy responsibilities.

2. Prahar LMGs Inducted into Indian Army

- Indian Army receives first batch of Prahar Light Machine Guns.
- Manufactured by Adani Defence & Aerospace.
- Enhances infantry firepower with lightweight, high-rate firing capability.
- Boost to Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence production.

3. INS Taragiri – New Stealth Frigate

- INS Taragiri is a Project 17A stealth frigate.
- Equipped with advanced radar evasion + guided missile systems.
- Strengthens Indian Navy's surface combat capability.
- Key for Indian Ocean dominance and maritime security.

4. CAPF Bill 2026

- Aims to strengthen IPS control over CAPFs (CRPF, BSF, ITBP, etc.).
- Addresses cadre conflict between IPS and CAPF officers.
- Focus on better command structure & coordination.
- Governance reform in internal security apparatus.

5. IOS Sagar 2026



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- Maritime initiative by Government of India.
- Focus on Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) doctrine.
- Enhances regional cooperation in Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- Combines defence + diplomacy + economic outreach.

6. Sea Dragon 2026 Naval Exercise

- Multilateral anti-submarine warfare exercise.
- India participates along with US, Japan, Australia.
- Enhances interoperability in Indo-Pacific security.
- Focus on submarine detection & maritime surveillance.

7. Pralay vs Zolfaghar Missile

- Pralay (India): Tactical ballistic missile, ~150–500 km range.
- Zolfaghar (Iran): Short-range ballistic missile (~700 km).
- Pralay designed for precision strikes + conventional war scenarios.
- Comparison reflects regional missile capabilities & deterrence balance.

8. Iron Dome vs THAAD vs Bavar-373

- Iron Dome: Short-range interception (rockets).
- THAAD: High-altitude ballistic missile interception.
- Bavar-373: Long-range SAM system.
- Key difference: range + altitude + threat type handled.
- Important for air defence strategy comparison.

9. Exercise Lamitiye 2026

- Joint military exercise involving Indian Army.
- Conducted with Seychelles.
- Focus on counter-insurgency & maritime security cooperation.
- Strengthens India's defence ties in Indian Ocean region.

10. B. P. Singh Appointed DG Naval Armament

- B. P. Singh takes charge as Director General of Naval Armament.
- Responsible for naval weapons systems procurement & maintenance.
- Key role in modernisation of naval firepower systems.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

11. Exercise Vayu Shakti 2026

- Major firepower demonstration by Indian Air Force.
- Conducted near India–Pakistan border.
- Showcases combat readiness, precision strikes, and air superiority.
- Includes fighter jets, missiles, and coordinated operations

12. Shtil Missile

Why in News?

India's Ministry of Defence signed contracts worth **₹5,083 crore** for the procurement of **Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) Mk-III** and **Surface-to-Air Vertical Launch (VL-Shtil) missiles** to strengthen naval defence capabilities.

Key Facts about Shtil Missile

- **Type:** Medium-range **ship-based surface-to-air missile (SAM) system**.
- **Developer:** Russia.
- **Launch System:** **Vertical Launch System (VLS)** deployed on naval warships.
- **Primary Missile:** Uses the **9M317ME missile** with semi-active radar homing guidance.

13. Kheybar Shekan Missile

- **Kheybar Shekan** is an advanced **solid-fuel medium-range ballistic missile developed by Iran**.
- The name means "**breaker of Khayber**", referring to a historical battle.
- It belongs to the **Khorramshahr missile family** and represents a newer generation of Iranian missiles.
- **Range:** About **1,450 km**, capable of striking long-distance targets.
- Uses **solid fuel**, which reduces launch preparation time and improves mobility.
- The missile has a **maneuverable warhead designed to evade missile defence systems**.

14. Exercise LAMITIYE

- **Exercise LAMITIYE** is a **joint military exercise between India and Seychelles**.
- It aims to enhance **interoperability and cooperation between the two armed forces**.
- The exercise focuses on **sub-conventional operations in semi-urban environments and peacekeeping scenarios**.
- It also strengthens **defence cooperation in the Indian Ocean region**.

15. Operation Sankalp

- **Operation Sankalp** is an Indian Navy mission launched in **June 2019** to ensure **safe passage of Indian-flagged vessels**.
- It operates mainly in the **Strait of Hormuz, Persian Gulf, and Gulf of Oman**, regions critical for global oil transport.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- Objective: protect **India's maritime trade and energy supply routes** from threats like conflict and piracy.
- It has involved **deployment of naval warships and escort operations for merchant vessels**.

16. NavIC Navigation System

- **NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation)**, also known as **IRNSS (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System)**, is India's **indigenous satellite navigation system developed by ISRO**.
- It provides **accurate position, navigation, and timing services over India and up to 1500 km beyond its borders**, covering the primary service area.
- NavIC was developed to ensure **strategic autonomy in navigation**, especially after the **denial of GPS access during the 1999 Kargil conflict**.
- The system consists of a constellation of satellites placed in **geostationary and geosynchronous orbits**, supported by ground stations.
- It provides two types of services:
 - **Standard Positioning Service (SPS)** for civilian use
 - **Restricted Service (RS)** for military and strategic applications
- NavIC is India's answer to global navigation systems like **GPS (USA), GLONASS (Russia), Galileo (EU), and BeiDou (China)**.
- It is used in **navigation, disaster management, vehicle tracking, maritime operations, and defence applications**.
- Recent concerns include **failure of atomic clocks in satellites (e.g., IRNSS-1F)**, affecting accuracy and reliability of the system.

NavIC = **India's regional satellite navigation system providing independent, secure positioning and timing services for civilian and military use.**

17. Advanced Short-Range Air-to-Air Missile (ASRAAM)

- A **beyond-visual-range capable short-range air-to-air missile** developed by the UK and integrated into platforms like India's fighter aircraft.
- Uses **infrared homing guidance** and high agility for close-combat superiority.

Enhances India's **air combat capability, quick reaction interception, and dogfight efficiency**

18. Tunguska Air Defence Missile System

- A **self-propelled air defence system** developed by Russia, combining **surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft guns**.
- Designed to counter **low-flying aircraft, helicopters, and drones**.

Provides **short-range, mobile air defence support** for ground forces



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

INDICES:

1. QS World University Rankings 2026 – India's Performance

About Ranking

- Released by: Quacquarelli Symonds
- One of the **most widely used global university ranking systems**
- Covers **1900+ universities across 100+ countries**

Parameters Used

- Academic reputation
- Employer reputation
- Research output (citations)
- International collaboration

These define **global competitiveness of universities**

India's Key Performance (2026)

- India recorded **27 entries in global Top 50 (by subject)** (↑ from 12 in 2024)
- Shows **rapid improvement in global academic standing**

Top Indian Institutions (Highlights)

- **Indian Institute of Technology Delhi** – among top globally (Electrical Engg.)
- **Indian Institute of Technology Bombay** – strong in engineering
- **Indian Institute of Technology Madras** – top in petroleum engineering
- **Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad** – top in management (Rank ~21 globally in subject)

2. National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI)

What is in the news?

Recently, the **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** released the **first National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI)** to assess vegetation along India's highway network.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

What is the National Highways Green Cover Index?

The **NH-GCI** is an environmental monitoring tool used to **measure and evaluate the green cover along national highways** in India.

Key features:

- Developed by **NHAI** in collaboration with the **National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC)** under the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.
- Uses **satellite-based remote sensing technology** to measure vegetation along highways.
- Measures **percentage of land covered with vegetation** within the highway **Right of Way (RoW)** including:
 - Roadside plantations
 - Median plantations
 - Green areas along highway corridors.

Methodology used

The index is calculated using satellite data through the **Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI)**, which measures vegetation density by detecting chlorophyll from satellite imagery.

- High-resolution satellite sensors detect vegetation cover.
- Highways are divided into **1-km segments**.
- Vegetation density is calculated for each segment using NDVI values.

Coverage

- Around **30,000 km of national highways** analysed.
- Covered **24 states**.
- Assessment period: **July–December 2024**.

Key finding

According to the first index report, **Assam recorded the highest green cover along national highways** in the country.

Significance



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

1. **Environmental monitoring** – Tracks vegetation along highways scientifically.
2. **Promotes green highways** and sustainable infrastructure development.
3. Helps **rank states and highway corridors** based on green cover.
4. Enables **better plantation planning and management** along highways.

3. NITI Aayog Launches Second Annual Edition of Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026

Why in News

NITI Aayog released the **second annual edition of the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026**, which evaluates the **fiscal performance and sustainability of Indian states**. The index aims to strengthen fiscal governance and provide comparative insights into how states manage revenue, expenditure, and debt.

What is the Fiscal Health Index (FHI)?

The **Fiscal Health Index (FHI)** is a **composite index developed by NITI Aayog to assess the fiscal health of Indian states**. It provides a data-driven evaluation of state finances and helps policymakers identify strengths and weaknesses in fiscal management.

Key features:

- Evaluates **18 major states** that significantly contribute to India's GDP, population, and public expenditure.
- Uses **audited data from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)**.
- Provides a framework to **compare fiscal performance among states and promote best practices**.

Objectives of the Fiscal Health Index

The index aims to:

1. **Assess fiscal sustainability of states.**
2. Identify **strengths and weaknesses in fiscal management.**
3. Promote **transparency and accountability in public finances.**
4. Assist policymakers in improving **economic resilience and fiscal discipline.**

Key Parameters Used in the Index

The Fiscal Health Index evaluates states using **five major sub-indices**:



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

1. Quality of Expenditure

- Measures efficiency and development orientation of public spending.

2. Revenue Mobilisation

- Assesses states' ability to generate revenue from taxes and other sources.

3. Fiscal Prudence

- Evaluates adherence to fiscal deficit limits and responsible budgeting.

4. Debt Index

- Examines debt burden and debt-to-GSDP ratio.

5. Debt Sustainability

- Assesses long-term ability of states to service and manage debt.

AWARDS:

1. Sheetal Devi – World Archery Para Archer of the Year

- Winner: Sheetal Devi
- Award: World Archery Para Archer of the Year
- Age: 19
- Given by: World Archery Federation
- Special fact: First armless female archer competing at elite level
- Why awarded: Outstanding international performance and medals in para-archery

2. Ramnath Goenka Awards 2026

- Award: Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards
- Organised by: The Indian Express Group
- Purpose: Recognise excellence in journalism across categories (investigative, politics, environment, etc.)
- Coverage: Multiple winners across categories (not a single winner award)
- Importance: One of India's most prestigious journalism awards

Nandamuri Balakrishna – Lifetime Achievement Award

- Winner: Nandamuri Balakrishna
- Award: Lifetime Achievement Award
- Event: International Film Festival Delhi (IFFD) 2026
- Why: Contribution to Telugu cinema over decades



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

William Dalrymple – “The Golden Road”

- Winner: William Dalrymple
- Work: The Golden Road
- Recognition: Global recognition for reframing Asian contribution to world history
- Focus: India’s historical influence on global trade, culture, and knowledge

Sahitya Akademi Award 2025

- Organised by: Sahitya Akademi
- Coverage: Awards in 24 Indian languages
- Purpose: Promote literature and writers in Indian languages
- Important fact: Given annually for outstanding literary works

Animated Film “Chyimi”

- Film: Chyimi
- Award: Best Director
- Event: NYSAF 2026
- Significance: Boost to Indian animation industry on global stage

Oscars 2026 (98th Academy Awards)

Best Picture

- Winner: One Battle After Another

Best Actress

- Winner: Jessie Buckley
- Film: Hamnet

Best Actor

- Winner: Michael B. Jordan
- Film: Sinners

Overall

- Event organised by: Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences
- Known as: World’s most prestigious film awards

Vairamuthu – Jnanpith Award 2025

- Winner: Vairamuthu



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- Award: Jnanpith Award 2025
- Given for: Contribution to Tamil literature and poetry
- Importance: India's highest literary award

BCCI Naman Awards 2026

- Organised by: Board of Control for Cricket in India

Key Winners:

- Best Male Cricketer: Shubman Gill
- Best Female Cricketer: Smriti Mandhana
- Recognises top performers in Indian cricket annually

Amol Palekar – META Lifetime Achievement Award

- Winner: Amol Palekar
- Award: META Lifetime Achievement Award 2026
- Field: Theatre
- Importance: Contribution to Indian theatre and performing arts

T20 World Cup 2026 – Full Awards

- Tournament Winner: India (3rd title).

Individual Awards:

- Player of the Tournament: Sanju Samson (India) - Scored 321 runs, including a 97* against West Indies.
- Top Run Scorer (Golden Bat): Most runs in tournament - Sahibzada Farhan (Pakistan) - 383 runs.
- Top Wicket Taker (Golden Ball): Most wickets - Varun Chakravarty & Jasprit Bumrah (India) - 14 wickets each.

SPORTS:

1. Gurjant Singh Retires from International Hockey

- **Player:** Gurjant Singh
- Announces retirement after ~10 years in international hockey
- Part of India's Olympic medal-winning squad (Tokyo 2020 bronze)
- Known for **attacking play & crucial goals**
- Leaves behind a **strong legacy in Indian men's hockey resurgence**

2. Olympics 2028 – Transgender Participation Rules

- **Authority:** International Olympic Committee



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- New rule introduces **SRY gene testing** for eligibility
- Focus on **biological sex verification** in female category
- Aims to ensure **fair competition**
- Highly **controversial** → gender rights vs sporting fairness debate

3. India Wins 2 Bronze – Asia Cup Archery Stage 1

- India secures **2 bronze medals**
- Event: **Asia Cup Archery Stage 1**
- Shows consistency in **recurve/compound archery disciplines**
- Reinforces India's **strong global archery presence**

4. India's First Indoor Athletics Championships

- Venue: Kalinga Stadium
- India hosts its **first-ever indoor athletics national event**
- Important step toward **year-round training infrastructure**
- Aligns India with **global indoor athletics standards**

5. ICC Player of the Month – Feb 2026 (Men)

- **Winner:** Sahibzada Farhan
- Awarded by: International Cricket Council
- Recognised for **outstanding batting performances**

6. India Open 2026 – Squash

- **Winner:** Anahat Singh
- Defeats **Hana Moataz (Egypt)**
- Score: **3–1**
- Emerging star in **Indian squash circuit**

7. ICC Women's Player of the Month – Feb 2026

- **Winner:** Arundhati Reddy
- Recognised for **all-round performance**
- Shows India's **growing strength in women's cricket**

8. Khelo India Tribal Games 2026



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- Initiative by Government of India
- Focus on **tribal youth participation in sports**
- Combines **sports + cultural preservation**
- Aims at **talent identification from remote areas**

9. India to Host World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028

- India will host for **first time ever**
- Major boost to **global sporting reputation**
- Improves **infrastructure + international exposure**

10. Chandrika Pujari – Gold at World Boxing Futures Cup 2026

- **Winner:** Chandrika Pujari
- India wins **total 5 medals**
- Highlights rising **women's boxing talent in India**

11. India – 208 Medals at World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026

- Total medals: **208 (massive tally)**
- Event hosted in **New Delhi**
- Shows India's **dominance in para-athletics**
- Strong indicator for **Paralympic preparation**

12. Antonelli Wins Chinese Grand Prix (F1)

- **Winner:** Andrea Kimi Antonelli
- Becomes one of the **youngest F1 race winners**
- Major breakthrough moment in **Formula 1**

13. Shailesh Kumar – Gold in Para Athletics Grand Prix

- **Winner:** Shailesh Kumar
- Wins **gold medal**
- Key contributor to India's **overall medal dominance**



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Cushing's Syndrome

What is Cushing's Syndrome?

Cushing's syndrome is a hormonal disorder caused by **prolonged exposure to high levels of the hormone cortisol** in the body. Cortisol is produced by the **adrenal glands** and plays a crucial role in regulating **metabolism, blood pressure, immune response, and the body's stress response**.

When cortisol levels remain excessively high for a long period, it leads to multiple metabolic and physical abnormalities collectively known as Cushing's syndrome.

Causes

Cushing's syndrome can occur due to **external (iatrogenic) or internal causes**:

1. Long-term steroid medication

The **most common cause** is prolonged use of **corticosteroid drugs** prescribed for conditions such as:

- Asthma
- Autoimmune diseases
- Arthritis
- After organ transplantation

These medicines act like cortisol in the body and may raise hormone levels excessively.

2. Excess cortisol production by the body

Sometimes the body produces too much cortisol due to tumors:

- **Pituitary gland tumor** producing excess ACTH (called **Cushing's disease**)
- **Adrenal gland tumors**
- Rare tumors producing ACTH in other organs (ectopic ACTH production)

Signs and Symptoms

The symptoms arise due to long-term cortisol excess and can affect multiple body systems.

Common symptoms include:



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- **Weight gain**, especially around the abdomen and face ("moon face")
- **Fat buildup between shoulders** ("buffalo hump")
- **Thin skin** that bruises easily
- **Purple stretch marks** on abdomen, thighs, breasts, or arms
- **Acne and increased body hair**, especially in women
- **Irregular menstrual cycles** in women
- **Reduced libido and fertility issues** in men
- **High blood pressure and high blood sugar**
- **Bone loss (osteoporosis)** leading to fractures
- **Mood disorders**, including depression and anxiety

Women between **30–50 years of age** are more commonly affected in naturally occurring cases.

Diagnosis

Doctors confirm the condition by measuring cortisol levels through tests such as:

- **24-hour urinary cortisol test**
- **Late-night salivary cortisol test**
- **Dexamethasone suppression test**

Imaging tests like **MRI or CT scans** may be used to detect tumors in the pituitary or adrenal glands.

Treatment

Treatment depends on the underlying cause and aims to **restore normal cortisol levels**.

Major treatment approaches include:

- **Gradual reduction of steroid medication** if drugs are the cause
- **Surgery to remove tumors** in the pituitary or adrenal glands
- **Radiation therapy or medicines** to control cortisol production if surgery is not possible

Early treatment improves recovery chances and reduces complications such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and osteoporosis.

2. Moonshot Project

Why in News?

The **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru**, has launched a **Moonshot Project** aimed at developing advanced technologies to restore brain function.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Key Facts

- **Initiated by:** Indian Institute of Science (IISc).
- **Nature:** A **multidisciplinary research initiative** combining neuroscience, artificial intelligence, and hardware engineering.
- **Funding:** Supported by the **Pratiksha Trust**.

Core Objective

- To develop **brain co-processors** that combine **neuromorphic hardware** with **AI algorithms** to enhance or restore brain functions.
- These devices will **decode neural signals, process them using AI, and send corrective signals back to the brain** through neural stimulation or neurofeedback.

Key Feature

- **Closed-loop AI system:** Continuously interprets brain signals and responds in real time.
- **Implantable and non-invasive devices:** Designed to interact directly with neural circuits.
- Integrates **brain-computer interface technology** with artificial intelligence.

Expected Outcomes

- Restore **sensorimotor functions**, especially **reach and grasp abilities**.
- Enable **cognitive rehabilitation for stroke survivors**.
- Improve recovery for people suffering from **neurological disorders or brain injuries**.

Significance

- Advances **brain-machine interface (BMI) technologies**.
- Opens new possibilities for **neuro-rehabilitation and AI-driven medical devices**.
- Strengthens India's research capability in **neuroscience and AI integration**.

3. Dimethyl Ether (DME)

- **Dimethyl Ether (DME)** is a **clean-burning, non-toxic, and easily liquefiable fuel** used as an alternative to LPG and diesel.
- It can be produced from **coal, natural gas, biomass, or waste**, making it versatile.
- DME produces **low emissions of particulate matter and sulfur**, making it environmentally cleaner than conventional fuels.
- It is being explored in India as a **potential substitute for LPG**, especially during supply shortages.

DME = **clean alternative fuel to LPG/diesel with lower emissions and multiple feedstock sources.**



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

4. NASA Artemis II Mission (2026)

- **Mission:** Artemis II
- **Agency:** NASA
- **Launch date:** April 2026
- **Type:** Crewed lunar flyby (NOT landing)



Key Features

- **First human mission to Moon vicinity after 1972 (Apollo era)**
- **Crew:** 4 astronauts (Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch, Jeremy Hansen)
- **Rocket:** Space Launch System (SLS)
- **Spacecraft:** Orion capsule
- **Duration:** ~10 days

Objectives

- Test **life-support, navigation, communication systems** in deep space
- Validate **crew safety + re-entry systems**
- Prepare for **future Moon landing (Artemis III)** and Mars missions

Importance

- Marks **return of human deep-space missions**
- Part of Artemis program aiming for **permanent Moon base**

5. IIT Guwahati – MXene-Based Technology

- Developed by: IIT Guwahati
- Material used: **MXene (advanced 2D nanomaterial)**

Applications

- **Hydrogen production (clean energy)**
- **Desalination of water**

Key Features

- High **electrical conductivity + surface area**
- Efficient for **energy storage and filtration**

Importance



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- Supports **green hydrogen mission (clean fuel)**
- Helps tackle **water scarcity problem**
- Boosts India's **advanced materials research**

6. New Plant Species Named After Zubeen Garg

- Named after: Zubeen Garg
- Discovery by **Indian scientists**

Key Points

- Newly discovered **plant species in Northeast India**
- Naming honours **cultural contribution of Zubeen Garg**

Importance

- Highlights **biodiversity richness of Northeast India**
- Shows link between **science + cultural recognition**

7. Kolli Hills – First Dark Sky Park of Tamil Nadu

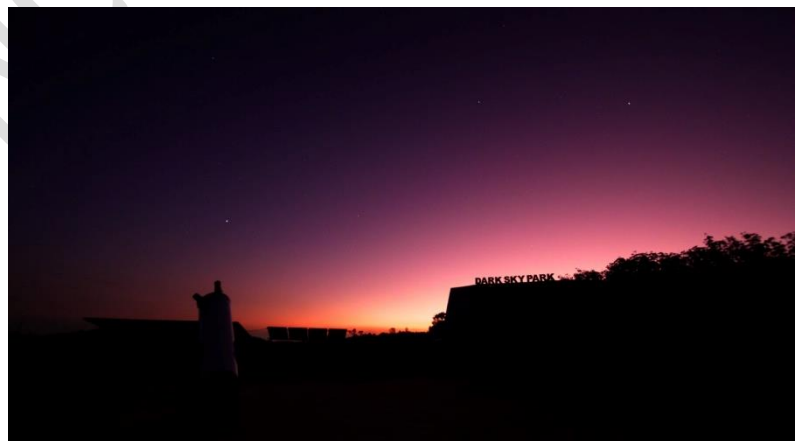
- Location: Kolli Hills
- Status: **First Dark Sky Park in Tamil Nadu**

◆ What is a Dark Sky Park?

- Area with **minimal light pollution**
- Ideal for **astronomy and stargazing**

◆ Importance

- Promotes **astro-tourism**
- Helps in **scientific observation of celestial objects**
- Raises awareness about **light pollution**



NATIONAL:

1.ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE :

Artificial Intelligence is no longer experimental in defence. It is embedded in surveillance systems, drones, cyber tools, logistics optimisation, predictive analytics and increasingly in autonomous weapon platforms. The ethical problem is simple but brutal: once machines are allowed to select



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

and engage targets, we are redefining responsibility for killing. That is not a technical issue — it is a moral and legal one.

Role and Scope of AI in Defence

AI is used in:

- Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) — real-time image and signal analysis.
- Target recognition and decision-support systems.
- Autonomous drones and loitering munitions.
- Electronic and cyber warfare systems.
- Logistics and predictive maintenance.

The operational benefit is speed. AI processes battlefield data faster than humans. But speed compresses decision time. When lethal decisions move from minutes to milliseconds, meaningful human judgment shrinks. That's where the ethical fault line begins.

Core Ethical Challenges

1. Human Oversight and Accountability

If an autonomous weapon commits a wrongful strike, who is responsible?

- The commander who deployed it?
- The programmer who coded it?
- The manufacturer?
- The political leadership?

Machines cannot bear moral responsibility. Humans do. Removing meaningful human control creates an accountability vacuum. "The algorithm decided" is not an acceptable moral defence.

2. Compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

IHL rests on two core principles:

- Distinction — differentiate combatants from civilians.
- Proportionality — avoid excessive civilian harm relative to military gain.

Battlefields are messy. Civilians mix with combatants. Signals are ambiguous. AI models trained on datasets may misclassify objects or fail in unfamiliar environments. Even a small error rate becomes catastrophic at scale. A 1% misidentification rate in automated targeting is not "minor" — it is deadly.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

3. AI Arms Race and Strategic Instability

States fear falling behind. That drives rapid deployment before ethical guardrails mature.

Consequences:

- Lower threshold for war initiation (reduced human casualties on one's own side).
- Escalation risks if autonomous systems interact unpredictably.
- Faster decision cycles increasing chances of miscalculation.

Automation compresses political reflection time. War becomes more algorithmic and less deliberative. That is strategically dangerous.

4. Opacity, Bias and Manipulation

AI systems often function as black boxes. Commanders may not fully understand why a system flagged a target.

Risks include:

- Dataset bias leading to discriminatory outcomes.
- Adversarial attacks manipulating inputs.
- Software vulnerabilities exploited in cyber warfare.
- Overreliance on algorithmic outputs (automation bias).

Blind trust in AI degrades professional military judgment.

Current Governance Efforts

Several international efforts attempt to regulate military AI, including political declarations promoting:

- Meaningful human control over lethal systems.
- Responsible development and testing.
- Compliance with international law.

But most frameworks are non-binding. Enforcement is weak. Major powers have divergent threat perceptions, limiting global consensus.

Strategic and Policy Implications

For countries like India, the challenge is balancing deterrence and ethical restraint. Completely rejecting AI in defence is unrealistic. Adopting it without safeguards is reckless.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Minimum non-negotiables should include:

- Meaningful human control over lethal decisions.
- Clear chain of command responsibility.
- Auditability and explainability standards.
- Independent testing and validation before deployment.
- Integration of legal and ethical review during system design.

Ethical AI in defence is not about moral idealism. It is about strategic stability.

If autonomous systems reduce accountability, increase civilian harm, and accelerate escalation, they undermine the very security they claim to strengthen.

Technology will advance regardless. The real test is whether political leadership imposes discipline before battlefield logic does.

2. Eligible Manufacturer Importers (EMI) Scheme

An **Eligible Manufacturer Importers (EMI) Scheme** — likely part of trade-facilitation or industrial promotion efforts — was highlighted among current affairs topics on visionias. Such schemes generally allow domestic manufacturers to import inputs or capital goods under preferential terms to improve competitiveness.

3. Coconut Promotion Scheme 2026: Boosting High-Value Agriculture

In the **Union Budget 2026–27**, presented on 1 February 2026, the Government of India announced a dedicated **Coconut Promotion Scheme** as part of a broader strategy to strengthen *high-value agriculture*, enhance rural incomes, and improve productivity in plantation and allied sectors. The scheme is designed to support coconut production and competitiveness across India's major coconut-growing states.

Context and Rationale

India is one of the **world's largest producers of coconuts**, with around **30 million people**, including about **10 million farmers**, dependent on coconut cultivation and allied activities for their livelihoods. Coconut and its by-products have wide usage in food, oil, beverages, cosmetics, coir fibre and industrial goods. Yet, productivity remains constrained by *ageing plantations*, low-yielding varieties and fragmented value chains.

Recognising these challenges, the Budget proposed targeted interventions to *enhance production, improve productivity and strengthen market linkages* for coconut producers. The initiative also complements other high-value crop programmes announced alongside coconut - such as those



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

for **cashew, cocoa and sandalwood** - reflecting a shift towards *value addition and export competitiveness* in agriculture.

Objectives of the Scheme

The primary aims of the Coconut Promotion Scheme include:

1. **Rejuvenation of Coconut Plantations:**

Replacing **old, senile and non-productive trees** with improved, high-yielding saplings and varieties suitable for specific agro-climatic conditions. This helps raise plantation productivity and ensures sustainable long-term output.

2. **Enhancing Productivity and Competitiveness:**

By promoting better planting material and modern agronomic practices, the scheme seeks to enhance yield per hectare, improve quality of produce, and increase farm efficiency.

3. **Market Integration and Value Addition:**

The programme encourages *market linkages, processing and value-added production* - such as high-quality virgin coconut oil, coconut water beverages and coir products - to boost economic returns for farmers and processors.

4. **Rural Employment and Livelihood Support:**

Better production and enhanced value chains are expected to generate **direct and indirect employment opportunities** for rural youth and local communities involved in cultivation, processing and marketing.

Implementation Framework

The scheme will be **guided by the Coconut Development Board (CDB)**, a statutory body under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare responsible for integrated development of coconut production and utilization across India. CDB's mandate includes improving productivity, diversifying products and supporting stakeholders across the coconut value chain.

While the official budget documents have outlined the scheme, detailed operational guidelines - including financial outlays, state-specific programmes and target beneficiaries - are expected to be finalised in phased implementation.

Significance

- **Agricultural Policy:** The scheme signals a shift towards *high-value, export-oriented crop strategy* and moves beyond commodity-neutral support to targeted value chain enhancement.
- **Rural Economy and Livelihoods:** It targets productivity issues in a key tropical plantation sector, potentially improving rural incomes and reducing vulnerability to price fluctuations.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- **Economic Development:** Strengthened coconut production and processing can enhance *agri-exports* and value addition, boosting India's global competitiveness.

4. Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC)

The **Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC)** is a **Government of India public sector enterprise** that provides scientific storage and logistics support for agricultural and industrial commodities across the country. It plays a critical role in strengthening **India's food security system and agricultural supply chain management**.

Establishment and Legal Basis

The CWC was **established in 1957** and operates under the **Warehousing Corporations Act, 1962**. It functions under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**.

The Act empowers the corporation to create warehousing infrastructure, support government procurement operations, and coordinate with **State Warehousing Corporations (SWCs)** to expand storage facilities across India.

Objectives

The main objectives of the Central Warehousing Corporation are:

- To provide **scientific storage facilities** for agricultural produce and other commodities.
- To support the **public distribution system (PDS)** and government food security programs.
- To facilitate **efficient logistics and supply chain management** for domestic and international trade.
- To ensure **safe preservation and handling of commodities**, reducing post-harvest losses.

Infrastructure and Operations

CWC operates an extensive warehousing network across India.

- It runs **over 700 warehouses** with a storage capacity of **around 10 million tonnes**.
- Warehouses store **food grains, agricultural produce, fertilizers, seeds, industrial raw materials and finished goods**.
- CWC also provides **custom-bonded warehouses, inland container depots (ICDs), container freight stations (CFSs), and air cargo complexes** to support import-export logistics.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

The corporation offers **scientific storage, pest control, fumigation, handling, and transportation services** for more than **400 types of commodities**.

Key Functions

Major functions of CWC include:

1. **Scientific storage of agricultural produce** such as grains, pulses, and oilseeds.
2. Acting as an **agent of the Government of India** for procurement, storage, and distribution of commodities.
3. Developing **warehousing infrastructure and logistics services**.
4. Facilitating **export-import trade** through container freight stations and inland clearance depots.
5. Supporting **state warehousing corporations** through capital participation and coordination.

Significance

The Central Warehousing Corporation is important for several reasons:

- **Food Security:** It helps maintain buffer stocks and ensures stable food supply under schemes like the Public Distribution System.
- **Reduction of Post-Harvest Losses:** Scientific storage reduces wastage of agricultural produce.
- **Logistics Development:** Warehousing and container facilities improve supply chains and trade efficiency.
- **Agricultural Support:** Farmers benefit from better storage options and improved market access.

Challenges

Despite its importance, the warehousing sector faces challenges such as **inadequate modern infrastructure, manpower shortages, and increasing storage demand due to rising agricultural production**.

The **Central Warehousing Corporation** remains a key institution in India's **agricultural logistics and food security framework**. Strengthening its infrastructure, adopting modern storage technologies, and integrating digital supply chains will be essential for improving India's food management system.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

5. Eligible Manufacturer Importers (EMIs) Scheme

Why in News?

The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** issued detailed guidelines for implementing the **Eligible Manufacturer Importers (EMIs) Scheme** to facilitate trade and support domestic manufacturing.

Key Facts

- **Launched by:** Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).
- **Nature:** **Trust-based customs facilitation scheme** for compliant manufacturers.
- **Legal basis:** Section 47(1) of the **Customs Act, 1962**.
- **Rules:** Governed by the **Deferred Payment of Import Duty Rules, 2016**.

Core Feature

- Allows **eligible manufacturers to clear imported goods without paying customs duty at the time of clearance**.
- The **duty can be paid later on a monthly basis**, improving cash-flow management.

Duration

- **Effective:** 1 April 2026
- **Validity:** Till **31 March 2028**.

Eligibility

Eligible Manufacturer Importers include:

- **Authorised Economic Operators (AEOs)**
- **AEO-T1 entities**, including MSMEs that satisfy compliance conditions.

Participants are expected to **progressively upgrade to AEO-T2 or AEO-T3 status** for enhanced benefits such as faster customs clearance and priority treatment.

Objectives

- Improve **ease of doing business** in India.
- Reduce **working-capital pressure** on manufacturers.
- Strengthen **compliance culture in trade**.
- Promote **domestic manufacturing and integration into global supply chains**.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

AEO Programme (Linked Initiative)

The **Authorised Economic Operator (AEO)** programme is a trade-facilitation initiative aligned with the **World Customs Organization framework** that provides faster customs clearance and reduced inspections for trusted traders.

6. Megalithic Rock-Cut Chambers

Why in News?

A **~2,000-year-old megalithic rock-cut burial chamber** was recently discovered during construction work at **Panayal in Kasaragod district, Kerala**, highlighting the archaeological significance of the region's Iron Age settlements.

Key Facts

- **Definition:** Megalithic rock-cut chambers are **subterranean burial structures carved directly into laterite rock**, used by ancient communities for funerary practices.
- **Period:** Associated with the **Iron Age / Megalithic culture of South India**, roughly **2000–2500 years old**.
- **Geographical Distribution:** Mainly found in **laterite-rich regions of Kerala and coastal Karnataka**.

Structural Features

- **Rock Material:** Typically carved out of **laterite rock**.
- **Circular Underground Chamber:** Used to place human remains or bones.
- **Vertical Shaft:** A narrow shaft leads down to the burial chamber.
- **Stone Slab Entrance:** Opening was usually sealed with a heavy stone slab.
- **Small Aperture:** A small circular hole (sometimes ~5 cm) at the top may have been used for ritual offerings.

Burial Practices

Megalithic communities practiced **secondary burial rituals**:

- Bones of the deceased were placed in chambers.
- Burial goods like **pottery, iron tools, beads, and ornaments** were often included.

These artefacts indicate **belief in an afterlife** and the social status of the buried individual.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Local Names (Kerala)

These structures are known by different local names such as:

- **Muniyara** (Hermit's cell)
- **Pandava Cave**
- **Peeranki Cave**
- **Nidhikuzhi** (Treasure pit)
- **Kalppathayam** (Stone box)

Associated Megalithic Monuments

Rock-cut chambers are often found along with other **megalithic burial structures**, such as:

- **Dolmens**
- **Cairn circles**
- **Umbrella stones (Kudakkallu)**
- **Cap stones (Toppikallu)**

Significance

- Provide evidence of **Iron Age burial traditions in South India**.
- Show advanced **stone-carving skills using iron tools**.
- Help archaeologists understand **social structure, rituals, and belief systems** of ancient societies.

7. Jiyo Parsi Scheme

Why in News?

The **Jiyo Parsi Scheme** has helped in the birth of hundreds of children and is being evaluated for continuation as part of government efforts to address the declining population of the Parsi community in India.

Key Facts

- **Type:** Central Sector Scheme.
- **Launched:** 2013–14.
- **Implemented by:** Ministry of Minority Affairs.
- **Objective:** To reverse the declining trend of the Parsi (Zoroastrian) population in India through scientific interventions and structured support.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Background

- The Parsi population declined from **1,14,000 in 1941 to about 57,264 in 2011**.
- Factors responsible include **late marriages, low fertility rates, migration, and preference for small families**.

Components of the Scheme

1. **Medical Assistance**
 - Financial assistance for **infertility treatment, pregnancy complications, and newborn care**.
2. **Health of Community (HoC)**
 - Financial support for **childcare and care of dependent elderly members** to encourage couples to have children.
3. **Advocacy**
 - **Counselling, outreach programmes, seminars, and awareness campaigns** to encourage family growth in the community.

Eligibility

- Beneficiaries: **Parsi/Zoroastrian couples residing in India**.
- Income criteria:
 - Up to **₹30 lakh annual income** for medical assistance.
 - Up to **₹15 lakh annual income** for childcare and elderly care support.

Implementation Features

- Financial assistance provided through **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)**.
- Implemented with support of **State Governments and Parsi community institutions**.
- Monitoring and verification include **biometric authentication and digital portals**.

Impact

- Over the past few years, **hundreds of Parsi children have been born through the scheme**, helping address demographic decline.

8. Lok Sabha Committee of Privileges

The **Committee of Privileges** in the Lok Sabha is a **parliamentary committee that examines cases of breach of privilege or contempt of the House involving Members of Parliament (MPs) or other individuals**. Its functions are **quasi-judicial**, as it investigates complaints and recommends appropriate action to the House.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Composition

- The **Lok Sabha Committee of Privileges** consists of **15 members**.
- Members are **nominated by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha**.

Role and Functions

- Investigates **breach of parliamentary privileges** of the House or its members.
- Examines whether an action has **obstructed or undermined the authority, dignity, or functioning of Parliament**.
- Conducts inquiry and **submits a report with recommendations** to the Lok Sabha.

Breach of Privilege

A **breach of privilege** occurs when any act **violates or disregards the special rights and immunities of Parliament or its members**, such as obstructing MPs in performing their duties or making defamatory allegations against them in their official capacity.

Procedure

1. An MP raises a **privilege motion** with the consent of the Speaker.
2. The House may take up the matter directly or **refer it to the Committee of Privileges**.
3. The committee investigates the case and **presents its findings to the House**.
4. The Lok Sabha then decides the final action.

Possible Punishments

Based on the committee's recommendations, the House may impose penalties such as:

- **Admonition or reprimand**
- **Suspension or expulsion of an MP**
- **Imprisonment of the offender during the session of the House**

Constitutional Basis

Parliamentary privileges are mainly derived from **Article 105 of the Constitution**, which grants certain rights and immunities to Parliament and its members to ensure the **independent functioning of the legislature**



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

9. Governor and Lieutenant Governor Appointment in India

Why in News?

The **President of India recently announced a reshuffle of Governors and Lieutenant Governors across several states and Union Territories**, bringing attention to the **constitutional process of their appointment and roles in India's federal structure**.

Appointment of Governor in India

Constitutional Provisions

The office of the Governor is governed by **Articles 153–162 of the Constitution of India**.

Key provisions include:

- **Article 153:** There shall be a Governor for each State.
- **Article 155:** The **Governor is appointed by the President of India** through a warrant under the President's hand and seal.
- **Article 156:** The Governor holds office **during the pleasure of the President**, though the normal tenure is **five years**.

Appointment Process

- The Governor is **not elected** by the people or by an electoral college.
- The **President appoints the Governor on the advice of the Union Council of Ministers** (effectively the Central Government).
- By convention, the Governor **should not belong to the state where he or she is appointed**, ensuring neutrality and avoiding local political influence.

Qualifications

To be appointed as Governor:

- The person must be a **citizen of India**.
- Must be **at least 35 years of age**.

Appointment of Lieutenant Governor (LG)

Constitutional Basis

Union Territories are governed under **Part VIII of the Constitution (Articles 239–241)**.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- **Article 239:** Every Union Territory is administered by the **President through an Administrator** appointed by him.
- The designation of the administrator may be **Lieutenant Governor, Administrator, or Chief Commissioner**, depending on the UT.

Appointment Process

- The **Lieutenant Governor is directly appointed by the President** through a warrant.
- Since the President acts on the **aid and advice of the Union Council of Ministers**, the LG is effectively chosen by the **Central Government**.

Tenure

- Like Governors, the LG also **holds office during the pleasure of the President**.

Key Differences Between Governor and Lieutenant Governor

Feature	Governor	Lieutenant Governor
Constitutional Location	Part VI (States)	Part VIII (Union Territories)
Appointment	President of India	President of India
Area of Authority	States	Union Territories
Role	Constitutional head of state government	Administrator representing the President
Powers	Mostly ceremonial but with constitutional discretion	Greater administrative authority in UTs

Issues with the Appointment System

Several debates exist regarding the appointment process:

1. Political Influence

Governors are often **former politicians or bureaucrats aligned with the ruling party at the Centre**, raising concerns about impartiality.

2. Centre-State Conflicts

Disputes often arise between **state governments and Governors**, particularly over:

- Assent to bills
- University appointments



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- Use of discretionary powers

3. Removal at President's Pleasure

Since Governors serve at the **pleasure of the President**, their tenure may be cut short due to political changes at the Centre.

Recommendations for Reform

Various commissions have suggested reforms:

Sarkaria Commission (1988)

- The **Chief Minister should be consulted before appointing a Governor**.
- The Governor should be a **person of eminence and politically neutral**.

Venkatachaliah Commission (2002)

- Appointment should be made by a **committee consisting of the PM, Home Minister, Lok Sabha Speaker, and the concerned Chief Minister**.

Conclusion

The offices of **Governor and Lieutenant Governor play crucial roles in India's federal governance system** as representatives of the Union in states and Union Territories. However, debates over **political neutrality, discretionary powers, and the appointment process** continue to shape discussions on strengthening cooperative federalism.

10. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) — Snippets

About

- The **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)** is the **principal global intergovernmental body dedicated to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment**.

Establishment

- Established in **1946** by a resolution of the **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**.

Parent Organization



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- It functions as a **functional commission of ECOSOC** within the United Nations system.

Mandate

- Promotes **women's political, economic, civil, social, and educational rights** globally.
- Works to **document the realities of women's lives worldwide** and develop global standards for gender equality.

Role

- Monitors implementation of the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)**, the key global agenda for gender equality.
- Promotes **gender mainstreaming in UN policies and programmes**.

Membership

- Consists of **45 UN member states**, elected by ECOSOC based on **equitable geographical distribution**.
- Members serve **four-year terms**.

Meetings

- The CSW meets **annually at the UN Headquarters in New York** to review global progress on gender equality.

11. Essential Commodities Act, 1955

The **Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955** empowers the **Central Government to regulate the production, supply, and distribution of essential commodities** to ensure their availability at fair prices and to prevent hoarding, black marketing, and artificial scarcity.

Objectives of the Act

- Ensure **availability of essential goods to the public**.
- Prevent **hoarding and profiteering**.
- Control **price rise during shortages or crises**.
- Maintain **equitable distribution of essential commodities**.

What Are Essential Commodities?

Essential commodities are goods that are necessary for the **daily life of citizens**.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Under the Act, the government can declare certain items as essential. Some major commodities include:

- Food grains (rice, wheat, pulses)
- Edible oils and oilseeds
- Sugar
- Petroleum and petroleum products
- Fertilizers
- Drugs and medicines

The **Central Government has the authority to add or remove items** from the list depending on market conditions.

Key Provisions of the Act

1. **Regulation of production and supply**
 - The government can control production, supply, and distribution of essential commodities.
2. **Stock limits**
 - Authorities can impose **limits on how much stock traders, wholesalers, or retailers can hold** to prevent hoarding.
3. **Price control**
 - Government can regulate prices to prevent excessive inflation.
4. **Search and seizure powers**
 - Authorities can **inspect, confiscate goods, and penalize offenders** involved in black marketing.
5. **Control orders**
 - The government issues orders under the Act to regulate specific commodities.

Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020

The **2020 amendment** was introduced to reform agricultural markets and encourage private investment in storage and supply chains.

Major Changes

1. **Certain food items removed from the essential list**
 - Cereals
 - Pulses
 - Oilseeds
 - Edible oils
 - Onions



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- Potatoes

These items are regulated only in **extraordinary circumstances**.

2. Stock limits only in exceptional situations

- War
- Famine
- Extraordinary price rise
- Natural calamities

3. Price trigger mechanism

- Stock limits can be imposed if:
 - **50% increase** in price of non-perishable food items
 - **100% increase** in price of perishable items.

4. Exemption for processors and exporters

- Stock limits will not apply to **value chain participants** like food processors and exporters.

Criticism of the Act

- **Discourages private investment** in agricultural storage and supply chains.
- Excessive government control can **distort market mechanisms**.
- Frequent stock limits can **create uncertainty for traders and farmers**.

Importance of the Act

- Protects **consumers from price shocks and exploitation**.
- Helps **stabilize food prices** during shortages.
- Ensures **food security and public welfare**.

12. Stenothoe lowryi

- **Stenothoe lowryi** is a **rare marine amphipod (shrimp-like crustacean)** species.
- Recently discovered in **Indian waters for the first time at Aryjapalli Beach in Ganjam district, Odisha**.
- Previously known only from **Malaysian waters**.
- Belongs to the **family Stenothoidae (order Amphipoda)**.
- Size about **5.5 mm**, with **large claws (gnathopods)** adapted for gripping surfaces.
- Found mainly in **rocky intertidal marine habitats**.

13. Raisen Fort

- **Raisen Fort** is a historic hill fort located in **Raisen district of Madhya Pradesh**.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- The fort stands on a **hill about 800 feet above sea level** and covers a large fortified area.
- It has been ruled by **Rajputs, the Delhi Sultanate, and the Mughals** over different periods.
- The fort complex includes **palaces, temples, reservoirs, and mosques**.
- It is associated with the **Sufi saint Hazrat Peer Fatehullah Shah Baba**, whose shrine is located inside the fort.

14. Anavaran Portal

- **Anavaran Portal** is an AI-based **deforestation monitoring system** developed by the **Forest Survey of India** under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- It started functioning in **January 2024** to detect **forest cover loss using satellite data and machine learning**.
- The system uses **Sentinel-2 satellite imagery** and integrates **Sentinel-1 radar data** to monitor forests even during cloudy or monsoon conditions.
- It sends **location-specific alerts every 15 days to state forest departments** for field verification of deforestation.

15. Removal of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)

Constitutional Provision

The removal of the Chief Election Commissioner is governed by **Article 324(5) of the Constitution of India**. It states that the CEC **cannot be removed from office except in the same manner and on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court**.

This strict procedure is designed to **ensure the independence of the Election Commission** from political interference.

Grounds for Removal

The CEC can be removed only on the following grounds:

1. **Proved misbehaviour**
2. **Incapacity**

These are the **same grounds used for removing a Supreme Court judge**.

Procedure for Removal

The process follows the **same procedure used for the removal of a Supreme Court judge**:

1. **Motion in Parliament**
 - A removal motion must be introduced in **either House of Parliament**.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

2. Investigation of Charges

- The charges of misbehaviour or incapacity are examined under procedures similar to those in the **Judges Inquiry Act, 1968**.

3. Special Majority Required

The motion must be passed in **both Houses of Parliament** with:

- A **majority of the total membership of the House**, and
- **Two-thirds majority of members present and voting**.

4. President's Order

- After Parliament passes the motion, the **President of India formally removes the CEC from office**.

Comparison with Election Commissioners

- **CEC:** Removal process same as a **Supreme Court judge** (very strict).
- **Election Commissioners:** Can be removed by the **President on the recommendation of the CEC**.

This difference gives the **CEC stronger security of tenure**.

Why Such a Difficult Removal Process?

The strict procedure exists to ensure:

- **Independence of the Election Commission**
- Protection from **executive pressure**
- **Free and fair elections** in a democracy.

16. PB-SHABD Platform

- **PB-SHABD (Prasar Bharati – Shared Audio-Visuals for Broadcast and Dissemination)** is a **news-sharing platform launched by Prasar Bharati in March 2024**.
- It provides **logo-free news content** in multiple formats such as **video, audio, text, and photographs** for media organizations.
- The platform aims to act as a **single-point source of verified news content**, especially useful for smaller media outlets lacking extensive reporting networks.
- It offers **hundreds of daily news stories in multiple Indian languages across various categories**.
- PB-SHABD is a **Prasar Bharati news-content sharing platform providing logo-free multimedia news feeds to media organizations**.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

17. Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS)

- **Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) is a railway station redevelopment programme launched by the Ministry of Railways in 2023.**
- It aims to **redevelop about 1,300 railway stations across India in a phased manner.**
- The scheme focuses on transforming stations into **modern transport hubs with improved passenger amenities, better traffic circulation, and enhanced connectivity.**
- Key upgrades include **better waiting areas, improved signage, accessibility features, lifts, escalators, and integration with local transport systems.**

The **Amrit Bharat Station Scheme** is a nationwide initiative to modernise railway stations and improve passenger experience through phased redevelopment.

18. Bascule Bridge

- A **Bascule Bridge** is a **movable bridge that can be raised to allow ships or boats to pass through a waterway.**
- It operates using a **counterweight system that balances the bridge span (leaf),** making it easier to lift and lower.
- The movable span may be **single-leaf or double-leaf,** depending on the design.
- The word "**bascule**" is **derived from French,** meaning a balancing device similar to a seesaw.
- Recently, the Government approved a **₹117.54-crore renovation project for the Bascule Bridge at the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in Kolkata.**

A **bascule bridge (drawbridge)** is a movable bridge that lifts using a counterweight to allow maritime traffic.

19. National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP)

- The **National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP)** is a **centrally sponsored health programme** of the Government of India under the **National Health Mission (NHM).**
- It aims to **detect leprosy early and provide free diagnosis and treatment across public health facilities.**
- The programme focuses on:
 - **Early case detection**
 - **Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) treatment**
 - **Prevention of disability and rehabilitation**
 - **Reducing stigma and discrimination.**



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- It evolved from the **National Leprosy Control Programme launched in 1955** and was later strengthened to achieve elimination goals.

NLEP aims to achieve a **“Leprosy-free India”** through **early detection, free treatment (MDT), and awareness campaigns.**

20. Tephra

- **Tephra** refers to **fragmented volcanic material such as ash, dust, cinders, and rock fragments ejected during a volcanic eruption.**
- The particles vary in size from **fine volcanic ash to large volcanic bombs and blocks.**
- During an eruption, larger tephra fragments usually fall near the volcano while **smaller particles can travel long distances through the atmosphere.**
- Tephra deposits can cause hazards such as **damage to infrastructure, disruption of communication systems, poor visibility, and respiratory problems.**
- Layers of tephra are also used in **tephrochronology**, a geological method to date past volcanic events and archaeological records.
- Tephra is a **general term for all pyroclastic material ejected during volcanic eruptions.**

21. Jhelum River

- The **Jhelum River** is a major river flowing through **north-western India and eastern Pakistan** and is a **tributary of the Indus River system.**
- It **originates from the Verinag spring in the Pir Panjal range of Jammu & Kashmir.**
- The river flows through the **Kashmir Valley and passes through Wular Lake**, one of the largest freshwater lakes in India.
- Historically, it was known as **Vitasta in Sanskrit and Hydaspes in Greek.**
- It eventually **joins the Chenab River in Pakistan**, forming part of the larger Indus river system governed by the **Indus Waters Treaty (1960).**
- The Jhelum is the **westernmost river of the five rivers of Punjab and a key tributary of the Indus River.**

22. Joha Rice

- **Joha rice** is a class of **aromatic rice** traditionally grown in **Assam**, known for its distinctive fragrance and grain quality.
- It is mainly cultivated in the **autumn and winter rice seasons** and includes several local varieties valued for both household consumption and cultural significance in Assam.
- Joha rice has received **Geographical Indication (GI) status**, which legally recognizes its regional identity and uniqueness.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- It is important from an exam point of view because it links **agriculture, GI tags, regional crops, and North-East India**. This is the actual relevance, not just the name.

23. Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme

- Kisan Credit Card (KCC)** is a government-backed credit scheme that provides **timely and affordable short-term loans** to farmers for crop cultivation and related needs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and working capital.
- It was introduced in **1998** on the basis of the **R.V. Gupta Committee** recommendations, and is implemented through **banks, cooperative institutions, and regional rural banks**.
- The scheme now covers not just crop farmers but also **allied activities** like **animal husbandry, dairy, and fisheries**, which is why it matters beyond traditional farming.
- KCC loans are linked with **interest subvention** and prompt-repayment incentives, making institutional credit cheaper than informal borrowing.

24. Xiaokang Villages and India's Border Security

Why in News

India's military leadership has raised concerns over China's construction of **hundreds of "Xiaokang" villages along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)**, especially opposite **Arunachal Pradesh**, as a long-term strategic move.

WHY LAC OFTEN FLARES UP

23 "disputed and sensitive" areas along the unresolved 3,488-km-long LAC witness aggressive patrolling & face-offs between troops from the two sides

FLASHPOINTS INCLUDE:



What are Xiaokang Villages?

- "Xiaokang" means "**moderately prosperous**" in Chinese.
- These are **border villages built by China in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR)** along disputed frontiers with India.
- Around **628 such villages** have been constructed across border regions.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- Officially presented as **rural development projects**, but in reality they serve **strategic and military purposes**.

Key Features of Xiaokang Villages

1. Dual-use infrastructure

- These villages are designed for **both civilian settlement and military use**.
- They can house **PLA personnel and logistics**, enabling rapid mobilisation.

2. Strategic location

- Built in **disputed or sensitive border areas** along the LAC.
- Many are concentrated near **Arunachal Pradesh**, which China claims as "South Tibet."

3. Legal backing

- Supported by China's **Land Border Law (2022)**, which promotes **border defence + development integration**.

25. Nor'westers and Local Winds of India

What are Local Winds?

Local winds are **small-scale winds that blow over a limited area for a short duration**, mainly due to **local temperature and pressure differences**.

They are not part of global circulation but are driven by **unequal heating of land and water or topography (mountains, valleys, plains)**.

Nor'westers (Kalbaisakhi)

What are Nor'westers?

- **Nor'westers** are **violent pre-monsoon thunderstorms** occurring mainly in **eastern and northeastern India**, especially:
 - West Bengal
 - Assam
 - Bihar
 - Jharkhand
- Locally called "**Kalbaisakhi**" (meaning *calamity of the month of Baisakh*).



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Key Features

- Occur during **March–May (pre-monsoon season)**
- Characterised by:
 - **Sudden strong winds**
 - **Heavy rainfall**
 - **Thunderstorms and lightning**
 - **Hailstorms (sometimes)**
- Move generally from **northwest to southeast**, hence the name “Nor’wester”.

Causes

- Intense **heating of land** in eastern India creates **low pressure**.
- Moisture-laden winds from the **Bay of Bengal** interact with **dry continental air**.
- This creates **instability and convection**, leading to thunderstorms.

Impact

Positive:

- Provide **relief from intense summer heat**
- Useful for crops like **jute and paddy**

Negative:

- Can cause **damage to crops, houses, and infrastructure**
- Associated with **lightning-related deaths**

Other Important Local Winds of India

1. Loo

- **Hot, dry wind** blowing in **northwestern India** (Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, UP).
- Occurs in **summer afternoons (May–June)**.
- Causes **heatwaves and dehydration**.

2. Mango Showers

- **Pre-monsoon rainfall** in **Kerala and Karnataka**.
- Helps in **early ripening of mangoes**.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

3. Blossom Showers

- Occur in **Karnataka and Kerala**.
- Important for **coffee plantations**.

4. Land and Sea Breeze

- **Sea breeze**: from sea to land (day)
- **Land breeze**: from land to sea (night)

5. Mountain and Valley Breeze

- **Valley breeze**: upslope during day
- **Mountain breeze**: downslope during night

26. Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA)

- The **Union Cabinet approved the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA)** with an outlay of about **₹33,660 crore** to boost industrial growth.
- The scheme aims to develop around **100 plug-and-play industrial parks** across India over the next **6 years (2026–2032)**.
- These industrial parks will provide **ready-to-use infrastructure (land, utilities, logistics)** to reduce the time and cost of setting up industries.
- The initiative focuses on **cluster-based industrial development**, encouraging **manufacturing growth and job creation**.
- It promotes **cooperative federalism**, with **states and private sector participation** in developing industrial clusters.
- The scheme aligns with **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** by strengthening domestic manufacturing and reducing dependence on imports.
- It also emphasizes **sustainable and green industrial infrastructure**.

BHAVYA = **₹33,660 crore scheme to develop 100 plug-and-play industrial parks to boost manufacturing, ease of doing business, and industrial competitiveness in India.**

27. National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)

Basics

- **Statutory body (2003)** under the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**
- Works under **MoEFCC**
- **Headquarters**: Chennai



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Composition

- **Chairperson + 10 ex-officio members + 5 experts**

Functions

- **Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity**
- Ensures **fair and equitable benefit sharing (ABS)**
- **Mandatory approval** for IPR based on Indian bio-resources

28. Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs (2025)

Nature

- **Central Sector Scheme**

Objective

- Provides **60% credit guarantee** via **NCGTC** for MSME loans

Key Features

- **Loan limit:** Up to **₹100 crore**
- **Focus:** Machinery/equipment financing

Recent Changes

- **Service sector MSMEs** now included
- **Equipment cost requirement reduced** from **75% to 60%**
- **Guarantee tenure: 10 years**
- **Export support provisions** added

29. Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026

The **Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026**, introduced in the Lok Sabha, seeks to amend key provisions of the **Companies Act, 2013** and the **Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) Act, 2008**. The primary objective is to enhance **ease of doing business, simplify compliance, and modernize India's corporate regulatory framework** in line with global standards.

- A major feature of the Bill is the **further decriminalisation of corporate offences**. Several minor and procedural violations are proposed to be shifted from criminal liability to **civil penalties**, reducing fear of prosecution and promoting a trust-based regulatory environment.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- The Bill also introduces **greater flexibility in corporate operations**, including provisions to allow certain companies to undertake **multiple share buybacks annually** (with safeguards), thereby improving capital efficiency and shareholder value.
- Another key reform is the **simplification of fast-track mergers and amalgamations**, especially for startups, small companies, and holding-subsidary structures. This is aimed at reducing procedural delays and encouraging corporate restructuring and consolidation.
- The Bill strengthens regulatory oversight by expanding the powers of the **National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA)**. It broadens the scope of "professional misconduct" and introduces stricter penalties, including fines and debarment of auditors, thereby enhancing accountability in financial reporting.
- Additionally, reforms related to **Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs)** aim to improve flexibility, governance clarity, and attract investments, including enabling structures like LLP-based investment funds.
- Overall, the Bill reflects a shift towards a **"light-touch but effective regulation"**—balancing ease of business with stronger corporate governance. However, concerns remain regarding **excessive delegation of powers to the executive and potential dilution of accountability**.

Thus, the Bill is a significant step in aligning India's corporate laws with evolving economic needs while ensuring regulatory efficiency and transparency.

30. Foreign Contribution Regulation Amendment Bill(2026)

The **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026** has been proposed to strengthen the regulatory framework governing foreign funding of NGOs and to address gaps in the existing law, particularly regarding accountability and asset management.

- The most important provision is the introduction of a **"designated authority"** empowered to take over, manage, or dispose of assets created from foreign funds when an NGO's FCRA registration is suspended, cancelled, or not renewed. Earlier, while the law regulated funds, it lacked clarity on handling assets created from such funds. The proceeds from such assets may be transferred to the **Consolidated Fund of India**, ensuring state control and preventing misuse.
- Another major change is the **expansion of the definition of "key functionary"**. It now includes directors, partners, trustees, karta of HUF, and other persons involved in management. These individuals can be held **personally liable** for violations unless they prove lack of knowledge or due diligence. This significantly increases accountability within NGOs.
- The Bill also mandates that **prior approval of the Central Government** is required before any investigation into FCRA-related violations is initiated by state authorities or enforcement agencies. This centralizes control and ensures uniformity in enforcement, though it may raise concerns regarding federal balance.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- Further, the Bill introduces **fixed timelines for receipt and utilisation of foreign funds**, replacing earlier open-ended provisions. It also provides for **automatic cessation of registration** upon expiry or non-renewal, along with clearer rules for asset handling during suspension.
- Interestingly, the Bill proposes a **reduction in maximum imprisonment** for offences from five years to one year, indicating a shift toward rationalised penalties while maintaining regulatory control.
- The parent law, the **FCRA Act, 2010**, regulates acceptance and use of foreign contributions to ensure they do not affect India's sovereignty, security, or public interest.

Overall, the amendment reflects a move towards **greater state oversight, enhanced accountability, and regulatory clarity**, especially in asset management. However, concerns remain regarding **centralisation of power and potential constraints on civil society organisations**, making the balance between regulation and operational autonomy a key issue going forward.

31. Punjab–Rajasthan Water Dispute

The Punjab–Rajasthan water dispute is a long-standing **inter-state river water conflict** centered on the sharing of waters from the **Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi rivers**. Recently, it resurfaced after Punjab demanded **₹1.44 lakh crore as water dues** from Rajasthan, reviving debates over historical agreements, riparian rights, and growing water scarcity in India.

Historical Background

The dispute originates from a **1920s agreement** between the princely state of Bikaner (present-day Rajasthan) and undivided Punjab under British rule. Under this arrangement, water from the Sutlej River was supplied through canal systems, with royalty payments continuing until around 1960.

A major shift occurred with the **Indus Waters Treaty (1960)**, which gave India control over eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej). After this, water sharing became an **inter-state allocation issue rather than a commercial transaction**, and Rajasthan stopped paying royalty.

Further, the **1981 Tripartite Agreement** between Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan allocated **8.6 million acre-feet (MAF)** of water to Rajasthan—the largest share—despite it being a **non-riparian state**.

Key Issues in the Dispute

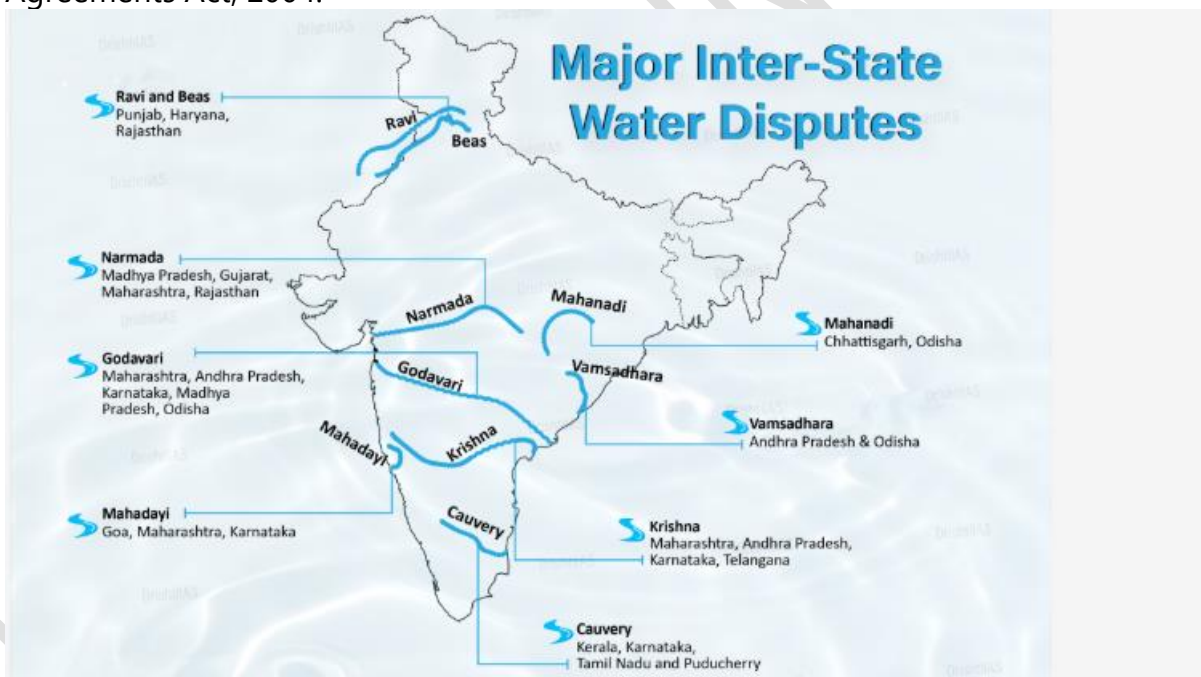


CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- A central issue is the conflict between the **Riparian Principle** and historical agreements. Punjab argues that water rights should belong primarily to states through which rivers flow, while Rajasthan relies on legally binding past allocations.
- Punjab's recent claim is based on the argument that Rajasthan has used about **18,000 cusecs of water since 1960 without payment**, leading to the demand for compensation.
- Another issue is **groundwater depletion in Punjab**, driven by water-intensive crops like paddy. This has intensified demands for re-evaluating water sharing arrangements.

Constitutional and Legal Framework

- Water is primarily a **State subject (Entry 17, State List)**, but **inter-state rivers fall under Union jurisdiction (Entry 56, Union List)**.
- **Article 262** empowers Parliament to adjudicate inter-state water disputes, leading to the enactment of the **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**, which provides for tribunals.
- The Supreme Court has also ruled that **states cannot unilaterally terminate water-sharing agreements**, as seen in the 2016 judgment on the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004.



Reasons for Increasing Water Disputes

- **Declining per capita water availability**, creating a zero-sum competition among states.
- **Water-intensive agriculture**, especially in Punjab, worsening scarcity.
- **Political considerations and regional identity**, which hinder cooperative solutions.
- **Institutional delays**, as tribunals often take decades to deliver awards.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Way Forward

- A shift is needed from **water-sharing to benefit-sharing**, where states cooperate based on economic and ecological advantages rather than rigid allocation.
- Adopting **basin-level management**, improving irrigation efficiency (drip irrigation, crop diversification), and leveraging technologies like **Digital Twins for river basins** can enhance transparency and trust.
- Strengthening **cooperative federalism**, faster dispute resolution mechanisms, and sustainable water use policies are essential for long-term solutions.

The Punjab–Rajasthan dispute reflects the transition from a **resource-sharing issue to a survival challenge** in water-stressed India. Resolving it requires balancing legal agreements, ecological sustainability, and cooperative governance to ensure equitable and efficient water management.

32. Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme

- A flagship **digital immigration management system** under the Ministry of Home Affairs integrating visa issuance, immigration, and foreigner registration.
- Recently extended (2026–2031) with ~₹1800 crore outlay to enhance **national security and ease of travel**.
- Features include **e-visa processing, database integration, biometric tracking, and automated e-gates** for faster clearance.

33. Biopharma Shakti Scheme

- A government initiative to promote India's **biopharmaceutical sector**, focusing on research, innovation, and domestic manufacturing.
- Aims to strengthen **vaccine production, biologics, and drug development ecosystems**.
- Supports India's goal of becoming a **global hub for affordable and advanced biopharmaceuticals**.

34. Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000

- Provides that **intermediaries lose "safe harbour" protection** if they fail to remove unlawful content after being notified by government authorities.
- While Section 79(1) protects platforms from liability for user content, this clause acts as a **conditional liability trigger**.
- Often debated for potential misuse as it may **bypass procedural safeguards under Section 69A (content blocking)**.

35. AT-1 Bonds (Additional Tier-1 Bonds)



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- AT-1 bonds are **perpetual debt instruments issued by banks** to strengthen their capital base under Basel norms.
- They have **no maturity date**, can be **written down or converted into equity during financial stress**, and carry **high risk with higher returns**.
- Issued under RBI regulations; recent concerns relate to **mis-selling and investor awareness**.

36. Waste Foundry Sand (WFS)

- A **byproduct of metal casting industry**, consisting of high-quality silica sand often contaminated with heavy metals and residues.
- Large-scale generation creates **environmental disposal challenges**.
- Its reuse in **road construction and infrastructure** promotes **circular economy, waste reduction, and resource efficiency**.

37. Olive Ridley Turtle Conservation on Hope Island

- **Olive Ridley turtles (Lepidochelys olivacea)** are known for **mass nesting (arribada)** along India's east coast.
- Hope Island (Andhra Pradesh) acts as a **natural barrier protecting Kakinada coast** and provides nesting habitat.
- Conservation efforts include **community participation, habitat protection, and monitoring of nesting sites**.

38. 1st Inter-State Initiative for Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

- A collaborative effort among states to conserve the **Great Indian Bustard (Ardeotis nigriceps)**, a **Critically Endangered species**.
- Focus areas include **habitat protection, reducing power line collisions, and captive breeding programs**.
- Reflects a shift toward **cooperative federalism in wildlife conservation**.

39. IONS (Indian Ocean Naval Symposium)

- IONS is a **voluntary multilateral maritime forum** launched in 2008 to enhance cooperation among navies of the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.
- India has assumed **Chairmanship for 2026–28**, and recently hosted the **IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) 2026 in Kochi** focusing on non-traditional maritime security challenges.
- It includes about **25 member countries**, promoting coordination, interoperability, and secure sea lanes in the Indo-Pacific.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

40. PM E-DRIVE Scheme

- **PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE)** is a **Central Sector scheme (₹10,900 crore)** to accelerate EV adoption and build charging infrastructure.
- Covers **e-2W, e-3W, e-buses, e-trucks, e-ambulances**, and supports domestic EV manufacturing ecosystem.
- Provides **demand incentives, charging infra funding, and testing upgrades**, building on earlier schemes like FAME.

INTERNATIONAL:

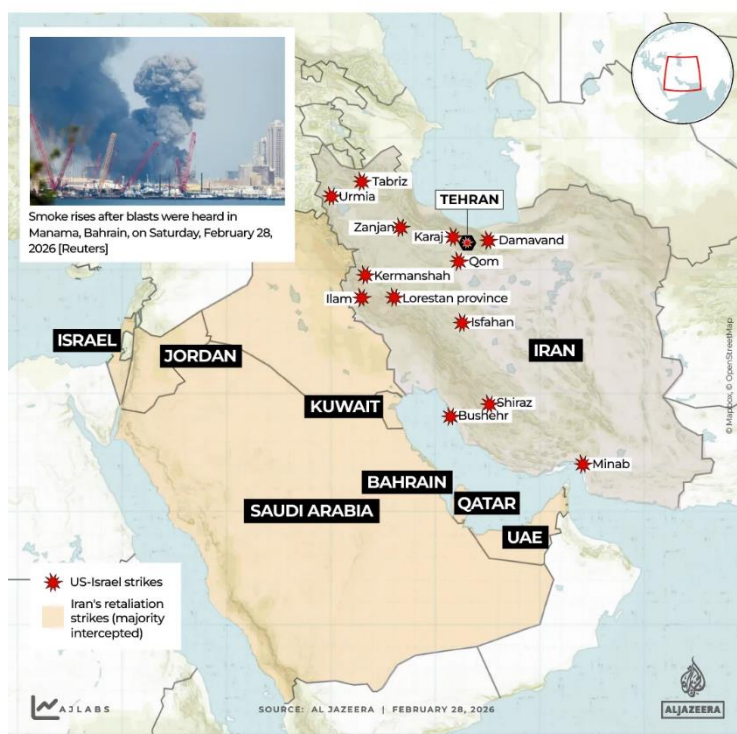
1. U.S. and Israeli Airstrikes on Iran: A Major Escalation in Middle East Geopolitics

In a sharp escalation of tensions in West Asia, the United States and Israel reportedly launched coordinated airstrikes against targets in Iran on 28 February 2026 under a joint military campaign referred to as Operation Epic Fury (Operation Lion's Roar). The episode marks one of the most serious confrontations in the region in decades, with major geopolitical, economic and security consequences.

BY NC-SA

US, Israel and Iran attacks

The United States and Israel launched "major combat operations" against Iran on Saturday morning, bombing multiple locations in Iran. Iran has retaliated with attacks on US bases across the Middle East, most of which have been intercepted.





CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Background and Immediate Trigger

The confrontation stems from longstanding hostility between Iran, the United States and Israel. Key drivers include:

- Iran's nuclear programme and disputes following the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).
- Sanctions and economic pressure on Iran.
- Iran's regional influence through proxy groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas.
- Ballistic missile development and perceived security threats to Israel.

The immediate trigger was the decision to conduct precision strikes on political, military and nuclear-linked infrastructure inside Iran. Reports indicated severe damage to strategic installations and leadership structures, intensifying uncertainty within Iran's political system.

Escalation and Retaliation

Iran responded with ballistic missile launches and drone attacks directed at Israeli targets and U.S. military assets in the Gulf region. The confrontation expanded beyond the immediate parties, with:

- Heightened activity by Hezbollah in Lebanon.
- Mobilisation of Iran-aligned militias in Iraq and Syria.
- Threats to oil facilities and diplomatic establishments.

The Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly one-fifth of global oil supply passes, became a focal point of concern. Increased maritime risk and restricted movement of vessels led to spikes in global energy prices and shipping insurance premiums.

Implications

Geopolitical and Security Risks

- Possibility of regional war involving Lebanon, Iraq and Gulf states.
- Risk of major power involvement or proxy escalation.
- Strain on multilateral institutions such as the United Nations attempting de-escalation.

Economic Fallout

- Oil price volatility and supply insecurity.
- Disruptions to Gulf airspace and maritime routes.
- For India, heavy dependence on West Asian crude means higher import bills, pressure on the current account deficit and inflationary stress.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Diplomatic and Strategic Pressures

- Leadership uncertainty within Iran adds unpredictability.
- Countries face balancing acts between strategic alliances and calls for restraint.
- Prospects for revival of nuclear negotiations or arms control frameworks become more complex.

Analytical Perspective

This episode illustrates how unresolved nuclear disputes, proxy conflicts and great-power rivalry can converge into direct confrontation. The crisis underscores:

- The fragility of deterrence in West Asia.
- The vulnerability of global energy markets to regional instability.
- The limits of sanctions-only strategies without sustained diplomatic engagement.

For India, the conflict is not abstract geopolitics — it directly affects energy security, diaspora safety, maritime trade routes and strategic balancing between the U.S., Israel and Gulf partners.

Escalation in West Asia is rarely contained. Once major powers exchange direct blows, the economic shockwaves travel far beyond the battlefield — and energy-importing economies like India feel it first.

2. Place in News: Major Straits in the Indian Ocean

In the context of heightened geopolitical tensions in West Asia, the **major straits of the Indian Ocean** have re-emerged as critical maritime chokepoints because they **facilitate global trade and energy flows**, especially oil and gas supplies. Iran's threat to target shipping through one such passage - the **Strait of Hormuz** - has brought these narrow waterways into strategic focus.

What Is a Strait?

A *strait* is a naturally formed, narrow passage of water that connects two larger water bodies, such as seas or oceans. They are vital for maritime navigation and global commerce, often acting as *strategic chokepoints* because a large volume of international shipping transits through them.

Major Straits in the Indian Ocean Region

1. Strait of Hormuz

- **Location:** Between **Iran** and **Oman**, linking the **Persian Gulf** with the **Gulf of Oman** and **Arabian Sea**.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- **Strategic Importance:** One of the world's most critical energy chokepoints - a significant percentage of global crude oil and LNG passes through here. Any disruption affects global energy security, including India's fuel imports via West Asia.

2. Bab-el-Mandeb Strait

- **Location:** Between **Yemen** on the Arabian Peninsula and **Djibouti/Eritrea** in the Horn of Africa; connects the **Red Sea** with the **Gulf of Aden** and the **Indian Ocean**.
- **Significance:** It provides access to the **Suez Canal** - the shortest maritime route between Europe and Asia - making it vital for global maritime trade and energy transport.

3. Strait of Malacca

- **Location:** Between the **Malay Peninsula** (Malaysia/Thailand) and the Indonesian island of **Sumatra**; connects the **Andaman Sea** (Indian Ocean) with the **South China Sea** (Pacific Ocean).
- **Strategic Importance:** One of the *busiest shipping lanes in the world*, it carries a large share of global trade, including oil bound for East Asia. Disruption here can severely impact global supply chains and India's maritime trade.

India-centric Straits in the Indian Ocean

While the VisionIAS article highlights the above chokepoints in the broader Indian Ocean context, geographers also emphasise a few **domestic straits** relevant to India's maritime geography:

4. Palk Strait

- **Location:** Between **India (Tamil Nadu)** and **Sri Lanka**, linking the **Bay of Bengal** with the **Gulf of Mannar** in the Indian Ocean. It is shallow and dotted with reef shoals (Adam's Bridge), making it less suitable for large commercial vessels but important for regional navigation and fishing activities.

5. Duncan Passage

- **Location:** Between **Rutland Island** and **Little Andaman** in the Bay of Bengal; links the Bay of Bengal with the **Andaman Sea**, thereby acting as another maritime route within India's maritime boundaries.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Strategic Relevance

- These straits are **critical choke points** for global trade flows and energy security, particularly for oil and liquefied natural gas, making them central to discussions on *geopolitics, maritime security, international trade and energy economics*.
- India's dependency on imported energy and its role in ensuring **secure sea lines of communication (SLOCs)** through these straits gives them direct relevance to questions on *economic security and strategic studies*.

3. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) – Recent Issue

Why in News?

A dispute has emerged between **Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** after reports claimed that **U.S. and Israeli airstrikes targeted Iran's nuclear facilities**, particularly the **Natanz uranium enrichment facility**. Iran alleged that the strikes damaged the facility, while the IAEA stated that **there is currently no indication of damage to nuclear installations** and that radiation levels remain normal.

IAEA's Assessment

The IAEA conducted monitoring and analysis following the reports of attacks. According to the agency:

- There is **no confirmed evidence of damage** to key nuclear sites such as **Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant** or the **Tehran research reactor**.
- **Radiation levels remain normal**, suggesting no nuclear leakage or accident occurred.

This statement aims to reduce panic and prevent escalation related to nuclear safety concerns.

Iran's Claims

Iran has alleged that **airstrikes by the United States and Israel targeted the Natanz uranium enrichment facility**, one of the core sites of its nuclear programme.

However:

- Iran has **not publicly released technical evidence** confirming damage.
- The claims remain contested by international observers.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Strategic Implications of the Dispute

1. Justification for Reduced Cooperation

Iran may use the alleged attacks as justification to **reduce cooperation with IAEA inspections**.

- After previous strikes in **2025**, Iran passed legislation suspending cooperation with IAEA inspectors citing national security concerns.

This could weaken international nuclear monitoring mechanisms.

2. Potential Increase in Uranium Enrichment

Iran may argue that **higher levels of uranium enrichment are necessary for self-defence**, especially if its nuclear infrastructure is perceived to be under threat.

This could intensify global concerns regarding nuclear proliferation.

3. Diplomatic and Geopolitical Effects

The dispute may also have broader geopolitical implications:

- Iran could seek **support from allies such as Russia and China**.
- Claims of attacks could help Tehran **mobilize international sympathy and diplomatic backing**.

Iran–IAEA Tensions

Relations between Iran and the IAEA have been strained for years.

Iranian authorities have accused the agency of **political bias** and alleged that Western countries influence its reports. Some Iranian leaders have even claimed that the IAEA leaked **information about nuclear facilities and scientists** to hostile actors.

These accusations have further eroded trust between Tehran and international nuclear regulators.

About the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

- Established: **1957**
- Headquarters: **Vienna, Austria**
- Mandate: Promote **peaceful use of nuclear energy** and prevent its use for **military purposes**, including nuclear weapons.
- It reports to both the **UN General Assembly and UN Security Council**.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- The agency received the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2005**.

5. Denmark Eliminates Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV and Syphilis

Why in News?

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has certified **Denmark as the first country in the European Union** to eliminate **mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) of HIV and syphilis**, marking a significant public-health milestone.

What is Mother-to-Child Transmission (MTCT)?

Mother-to-child transmission refers to the **spread of infections from an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding**. Without medical intervention, it can lead to:

- Infant HIV infection
- Congenital syphilis
- Stillbirths or neonatal deaths.

WHO Criteria for Elimination

To be certified for eliminating MTCT, countries must meet strict WHO benchmarks:

- **Less than 50 cases per 100,000 live births** of mother-to-child transmission.
- **More than 95% of pregnant women tested and treated** for HIV and syphilis.
- Sustained low infection rates and strong monitoring systems.

Denmark consistently met these targets between **2021 and 2024**, leading to WHO validation.

Factors Behind Denmark's Success

Denmark's achievement is attributed to several health-system strengths:

1. **Universal Health Coverage**
 - Ensures equal access to healthcare services for all pregnant women.
2. **Integrated Antenatal Care**
 - Routine testing for HIV and syphilis during pregnancy.
3. **Early Diagnosis and Treatment**
 - Prompt treatment for infected mothers prevents transmission to newborns.
4. **Robust Data and Monitoring Systems**
 - Strong surveillance helps track infections and maintain elimination status.
5. **Rights-based Public Health Policies**



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- Focus on maternal health services and community engagement.

Global Context

- Denmark joins **over 20 countries and territories worldwide** validated by WHO for eliminating MTCT of HIV, syphilis, or hepatitis B.
- Examples include **Brazil, Botswana, Malaysia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.**

WHO's Triple Elimination Strategy

The WHO promotes elimination of **three infections transmitted from mother to child:**

- HIV
- Syphilis
- Hepatitis B

The strategy focuses on:

- Universal antenatal care
- Integrated infection testing
- Effective treatment protocols
- Strong health systems and community engagement.

Denmark is now working toward adding **hepatitis B elimination** to achieve full "triple elimination."

Significance

- Demonstrates that **strong public health systems and universal healthcare** can eliminate vertical transmission of infectious diseases.
- Provides a **model for other countries** aiming to achieve similar goals under global health targets.

6. Solomon Islands

About

- The **Solomon Islands** is an archipelago located in the **south-western Pacific Ocean.**
- It consists of **two parallel chains of volcanic islands and coral atolls.**

Key Facts

- Comprises **nearly 1,000 islands** (about **6 major islands and 900+ smaller ones**).



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

- Only **147 islands are inhabited**.
- **Capital:** Honiara (located on Guadalcanal Island).
- **Neighbouring countries:**
 - Papua New Guinea (west)
 - Vanuatu (southeast).

Geographical Features

- The islands are **mostly mountainous and heavily forested**, with some coastal plains.
- The region includes **volcanic islands and coral atolls**.

Political System

- Former **British protectorate**; gained independence in **1978**.
- It is a **parliamentary democracy within the Commonwealth**.
- The **British monarch is represented by a Governor-General**.

Population

- Major ethnic groups:
 - **Melanesians (~93%)**
 - Polynesians (~4%)
 - Micronesians (~1.5%).

Language

- **English** is the official language, along with around **120 local languages** and Solomon Islands Pidgin.

7. Kharg Island

- **Kharg Island** is a **small coral island located in the northern Persian Gulf, belonging to Iran**.
- It is the **main oil export terminal of Iran**, handling **around 90% of the country's oil exports**.
- The island has **large oil storage facilities with a capacity of about 28 million barrels**.
- It is notable because it is **one of the few Persian Gulf islands with freshwater resources**, stored in porous limestone formations.



CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

8. Washington Consensus

- The **Washington Consensus** refers to a set of **market-oriented economic reforms** proposed in **1989** by economist **John Williamson** for developing countries facing economic crises.
- It was promoted by institutions like the **IMF, World Bank, and US Treasury**, hence the name "Washington".
- Core policies included **fiscal discipline, trade liberalisation, privatisation, deregulation, tax reforms, and financial liberalisation**.
- It aimed to reduce the role of the state and promote a **free-market economy**.
- It was widely applied in **Latin America and developing countries during the 1980s–90s** through structural adjustment programmes.
- Criticism: led to **inequality, weak growth in some regions, and over-reliance on market fundamentalism**, with calls now for a more balanced state-market approach.

Washington Consensus = **IMF–World Bank backed neoliberal reform package (liberalisation, privatisation, globalisation)** for developing economies.

9. City of Tyre and Litani River

The **Litani River and the city of Tyre** have gained importance in the context of the ongoing **Israel–Hezbollah conflict**, as southern Lebanon has become a strategic and conflict-prone region.

The **Litani River** is the longest river flowing entirely within Lebanon and serves as a crucial water resource for irrigation, hydropower, and domestic use. It originates in the **Beqaa Valley**, flows south parallel to the Syrian border, and finally drains into the **Mediterranean Sea near Tyre**.

Its strategic importance lies in its proximity to the **Blue Line**, the UN-recognized boundary between Israel and Lebanon. Israel considers the region south of the Litani River as a **security buffer zone** against Hezbollah activities such as rocket attacks and cross-border infiltration.

- Following the **2006 Lebanon War**, the **UN Security Council Resolution 1701** mandated that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River must remain free of any armed groups except the Lebanese Armed Forces and the **UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon)**.
- The **city of Tyre (Sour)** is located on the southern coast of Lebanon, just south of the Litani River's mouth. It was one of the most important cities of the **Phoenician civilization (1500–300 BCE)** and a major center of





CURRENT AFFAIRS MAGAZINE - MARCH

Mediterranean trade and navigation.

- Tyre was famous for producing the **Tyrian purple dye**, extracted from marine snails, which became a symbol of royalty and wealth in ancient times. It played a key role in **cultural exchange and maritime trade networks** across the Mediterranean.
- Historically, the city was transformed from an island into a peninsula by **Alexander the Great in 332 BCE**, after which it developed under Greek and Roman rule, leaving behind structures such as **hippodromes, baths, and colonnaded streets**.
- Due to its immense historical and cultural significance, Tyre was designated a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984**.

In the present context, Tyre faces threats from military escalation, highlighting how **geography, history, and geopolitics intersect**, making the Litani River–Tyre region both strategically sensitive and culturally invaluable.

10. Qader Cruise Missile

- The **Qader missile** is an Iranian **long-range anti-ship cruise missile**, capable of striking naval targets with high precision.
- It has a range of ~200–300 km and is designed for **coastal defense and maritime warfare**.
- Plays a key role in Iran's strategy to control **strategic choke points like the Strait of Hormuz**.