

Factly Weekly

Compilation

2026

**For UPSC CSE Prelims
Exam**

**3rd Week
March 2026**

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Captive Generating Plant (CGP)

News: The Government amended Electricity Rules, 2026 to strengthen captive power framework, improve clarity, and support industrial competitiveness and energy transition.

About Captive Generating Plant (CGP)

- A Captive Generating Plant is a power plant set up by persons or companies for generating electricity mainly for their own use.
- **Objective:** The objective is to provide reliable and cost-competitive electricity, reduce dependence on the grid, and support industrial growth and sustainability.
- **Regulatory framework:** It is governed under the Electricity Act, 2003 and the Electricity Rules, 2005, which have been amended through the Electricity (Amendment) Rules, 2026.
- **Ownership criteria:** Minimum 26% aggregate ownership by captive users, including group entities.
- **Consumption criteria:** At least 51% of generated electricity must be consumed by owners, with proportion rules for associations.
- **Recent developments**
 - **Amendments for Clarity and Flexibility:** The Electricity (Amendment) Rules, 2026 clarify ownership definitions by including subsidiaries and group entities, and simplify provisions to reduce ambiguity and disputes.
 - **Amendments in Verification Mechanism:** The Rules introduce a uniform financial year-based verification of captive status and provide for nodal agencies and a grievance redressal mechanism.
 - **Amendments to Improve Ease of Doing Business:** The Rules provide that charges will not be imposed pending verification and align the framework with modern corporate structures and increasing use of non-fossil fuel based captive power.

Aras River

News: The Aras River is strategically located along the borders in the Caucasus and is in focus amid regional geopolitical tensions.

About Aras River



Source: World atlas

- It is a transboundary river in the Caucasus.
 - Caucasus is a region between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea.
- It forms natural boundaries between countries such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, and Turkey.
- It is one of the longest rivers in the Caucasus.
- **Course:** It originates near the city of Erzurum in Turkey.
 - It then flows through the country to meet the Akhuryan River southeast of the Turkish district of Digor.
 - It then flows along the border between Armenia and Turkey, and later along the borders between Iran and Armenia, and Iran and Azerbaijan.
 - Finally, the Aras River enters the Kura River in the Azerbaijan city of Sabirabad and drains into the Caspian Sea.
- **Tributary of:** It is also the largest tributary of the Kura River.
- **Total length:** Its total length is around 1,072 km.
- **Dams on river:** The most important Dam on the river is the Aras Dam.
 - It was built in the 20th century by Iran and the Soviet Union.
- The UNESCO World Heritage site Saint Stepanos Monastery is located near the Aras river.
- Two historical bridges called the Khodaafarin Bridges are also located along the Aras River.

Nor'westers

News: A Nor'wester storm in Mayurbhanj caused deaths, injuries, damaged houses, uprooted trees, and disrupted electricity across several districts.

About Nor'westers

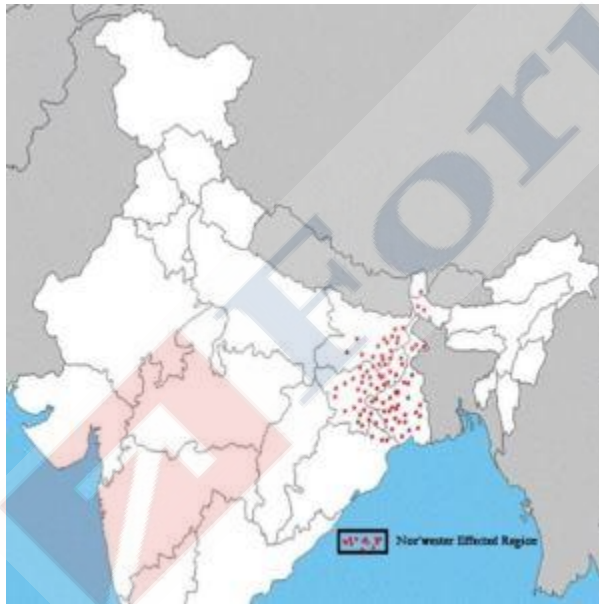


Figure 1. Source – ResearchGate

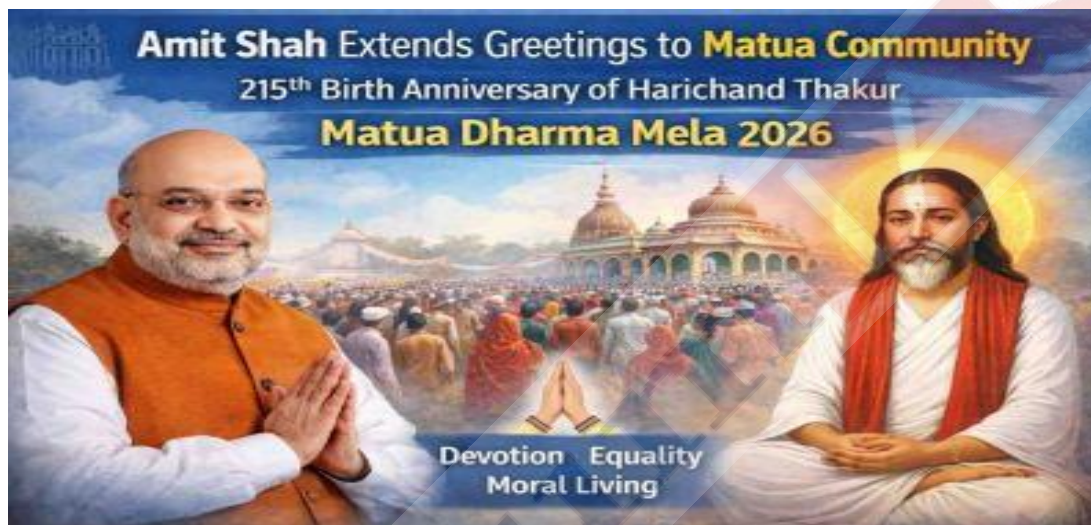
- Nor'westers are local winds that affect eastern and northeastern India during summer and cause severe thunderstorms with strong weather activity.
 - **Origin:** These storms originate over the Chhotanagpur Plateau between Bihar and Jharkhand and move southeastwards towards Odisha, West Bengal, and Assam.
 - **Formation:** Formation occurs when warm, moist southerly low-level winds from the Bay of Bengal meet cool, dry westerly or northwesterly upper-level winds, creating favourable conditions for the development of Nor'westers.
 - **Duration:** They generally occur from April until the onset of the monsoon, though March events are also observed.
 - **Intensity:** They bring gale-speed winds often exceeding 100 km/h along with heavy rainfall and hailstorms.
- **Different names**
 - In Bengal, it is locally known as “Kalbaishaki” meaning, calamity in the month of Baisakh (the first month in the Bengal calendar).
 - In Assam, they are known as Bordoisila or Bardoli Chheerha.

- **Impacts**
 - They provide rainfall for dry soils and help crops like jute, paddy, vegetables, and fruits.
 - They cause uprooting of trees, damage to crops, waterlogging, and destruction of property due to strong winds and hailstorms.

Purna Brahma Shree Shree Harichand Thakur and Matua Community

News: Union Home Minister extended greetings to Matua community on Matua Dharma Mela marking 215th birth anniversary of Harichand Thakur.

About Purna Brahma Shree Shree Harichand Thakur



Source – Digital Herald

- **Shree Shree Harichand Thakur was a social reformer and founder of the Matua sect.**
- **Birth :** He was born in Safaladanga village in Gopalgunj in a Vaishnavite Namashudra peasant family of Bengal Presidency.
- **Teachings**
 - **Principle of devotion:** He taught that devotion to God, faith in mankind and love for living beings are essential.
 - **Simple path to salvation:** He said one can attain God through devotion while living a family life without renunciation.
 - **Core values:** His Matua religion was based on Truth, Love, and Sanity.
- **Social reforms**
 - **Equality and dignity:** He promoted equality and asked followers to treat all people with dignity.
 - **Organisation of oppressed:** He established Matua Mahasangha to unite and organize marginalized communities under his religious doctrine..
 - **Rejection of caste oppression:** His movement challenged discrimination faced by lower-caste people.
- **Matua Dharma Mela:** It is a sacred occasion celebrated to mark his birth anniversary and promote his teachings.
- **Belief among followers:** Followers considered him as Param Brahma and an incarnation of Vishnu or Krishna.

- **Twelve instructions:** He gave twelve moral instructions such as always speaking the truth, respecting women as mothers, loving all living beings, avoiding discrimination, controlling desires, being honest, performing duties with devotion, and praying to God regularly.

About Matua Community

- **Social base:** It mainly belongs to the Namashudra Scheduled Caste group.
- **Migration history:** Many migrated to India during partition and after 1971 due to religious persecution.
- **Present Status:** The Matua community forms the second largest Scheduled Caste population in West Bengal, constituting 17.4% of the total SC population, and has been demanding the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019.

Model Code of Conduct

News: The Election Commission of India has directed authorities to ensure strict enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during the ongoing general elections and by elections in States/Union Territories.

About Model Code of Conduct (MCC)

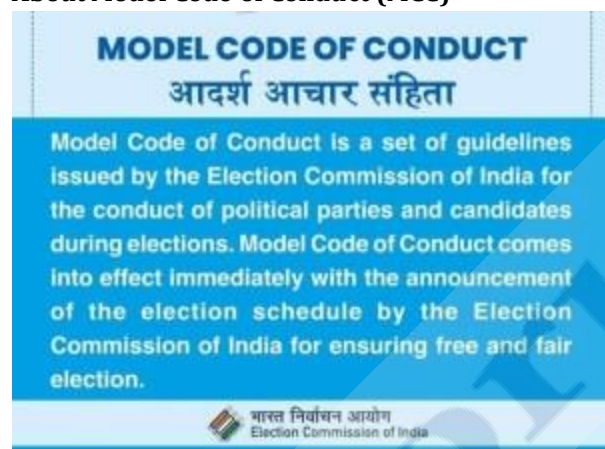


Figure 2. Source: ECI

- **About:** It is a set of guidelines published by the Election Commission of India (ECI) for political parties and candidates to set standards of conduct during the election campaign and polling.
 - It explains how parties can register complaints with the poll panel's observers in case of dispute.
 - It also instructs political leaders in power on how they should conduct themselves.
 - In 2019, a new addition regarding election manifestos was added, instructing parties not to issue promises which were 'repugnant to the ideals of the Constitution'.
- **When it comes into force and ends:** It comes into force immediately when the election commission released the voting schedule.
 - It ends with the commencement of the election when the results are announced.
- **Applicability:** It is applicable to all elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
 - It is also applicable to State Legislative Council elections from Local Bodies and from Graduates' and Teachers' Constituencies.
 - It is enforced throughout India in case of General elections, and the State up for polls in case of Legislative Assembly elections.
- **Who comes under MCC:** All organisations, committees, and corporations funded by the state or central government come under MCC.
- **Enforcement:** The poll panel issues guidelines to the government to shift out all officers, including police, who are posted in their home district and have completed/completing three out of four years in that district, to ensure no interference.
 - **Implemented by:** It is implemented by newly appointed officials, and nodal EC officers monitor compliance.

- **Enforceability:** It is not a statutory document and not enforceable by any laws passed by the Parliament.
 - Some offences are listed as 'electoral offences' and 'corrupt practices' under the Indian Penal Code (now known as Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita) and the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Dasosaurus tocontinensis

News: Brazilian scientists identified a new giant dinosaur species with links to Spain, supporting past land connections among South America, Africa and Europe.

About Dasosaurus Tocantinensis



Figure 3. *Dasosaurus tocontinensis* gen. et sp. nov. (CPHINAM VT 1600) Diagrammatic reconstruction with scaled bone elements in anatomical position. Preserved bone portions in white and reconstructed parts in light blue. Human silhouette = 1.80 m. Scale bar = 1 m.

Source - Planeta

- **Dasosaurus tocontinensis** is a newly identified species of giant, long-necked herbivorous dinosaur discovered in Brazil.
- **Location:** Fossils were unearthed in the Maranhão region of northeastern Brazil, near the Tocantins River, which gives the species its name.
- **Classification:** It is a member of the Somphospondyli, a group of long-necked, long-tailed sauropods that were precursors to the even larger titanosaurs.
- **Size:** Estimated to be approximately 20 meters (66 feet) long, based on a 1.5-meter-long femur (thigh bone).
- **European connection:** Analysis shows it is the closest known relative of *Garumbatitan morellensis*, a dinosaur found in Spain.
 - This suggests this lineage originated in Europe and migrated to South America via North Africa roughly 130 million years ago, providing evidence for ancient land bridges.

Japanese Chum Salmon

News: Research showed that marine conditions in the North Pacific have significantly reduced suitable habitat for Japanese chum salmon over the past 25 years.

About Japanese Chum Salmon



Source: asahi

- Japanese chum salmon is a migratory fish species of Chum salmon. They are commonly known as “shirozake” in Japan.
- **Distribution:** They are the most widely distributed of all the Pacific salmon.
 - They are found throughout the North Pacific Ocean and range from the Arctic coast of Canada and northern coastal regions of North America and Asia.
- **Appearance:** They are recognized by their silvery sides and faint vertical stripes.
- They are anadromous and do not reside in fresh water for an extended period.
 - Anadromous fishes are those that spawn in fresh water, migrate to the ocean to forage and mature, and return to fresh water to spawn and begin the cycle again.
- **Threats:** The main threats to their survival includes ocean warming, reduced zooplankton and marine heatwaves which create stressful and unfavorable conditions.
- **Their poleward shift**
 - They are moving northward expanding into higher-latitude waters toward the Chukchi Sea as they lose suitable habitats along the southern edge of the North Pacific and the Gulf of Alaska.
 - This “poleward shift” suggests that climate change is impacting the marine environment on which they rely on for survival.

Nagoya Protocol

News: India submitted its First National Report on Nagoya Protocol implementation to CBD Secretariat on 27 February 2026, covering progress from 2017–2025.

About Nagoya Protocol

Nagoya Protocol



Source - CBD

- The Nagoya Protocol is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity for access and benefit sharing (ABS).
- **Adoption:** It was adopted on 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan.
- **In force:** It entered into force on 12 October 2014.
- **Goal:** It aims to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.
- **It covers**
 - **Genetic resources:** It applies to genetic resources covered under the Convention on Biological Diversity.
 - **Traditional knowledge:** It includes traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.
 - **Benefits from utilization:** It covers benefits arising from research and commercial use of these resources.
- **Key Principles**
 - **Access :** It requires Prior Informed Consent from the provider before accessing biological resources.
 - **Benefit Sharing :** Benefits must be shared fairly based on Mutually Agreed Terms.
 - **Compliance:** It ensures that resources are used according to agreed conditions.
- **India's Status:** India ratified the Nagoya Protocol in 2012.
- **Implementation in India**
 - India implements it through the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
 - It follows a three-tier structure: National Biodiversity Authority, State Biodiversity Boards/UT Biodiversity Councils, and Biodiversity Management Committees.

About Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- **Nature:** It is the most comprehensive binding international agreement in the field of nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.
- **Adoption:** It was opened for signing at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.
- **Objectives:** It focuses on conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.

Tribes Art Fest 2026

News: Tribes Art Fest 2026 was held in New Delhi, showcasing over 1,000 artworks by 75 tribal artists from more than 30 traditions.

About Tribes Art Fest 2026



Source – TH

- A national cultural event showcasing diverse tribal art traditions and promoting indigenous cultural heritage.
- **Organised by:** It is organised by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, in collaboration with the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) and FICCI.
- **Duration:** Held from 3rd to 13th March 2026 at Travancore Palace, New Delhi.
- **Aim:** The festival aims to provide a platform for tribal art traditions to reach new audiences, gain recognition, and support artists through market linkages.
 - It also promotes indigenous cultural heritage by encouraging learning, mentorship, and interaction with contemporary spaces.
- **Key Tribal Arts Displayed**
 - **Warli Painting (Maharashtra)**
 - **Community and theme:** Warli painting is practised by the Warli tribe and it reflects a deep connection with nature.
 - **Origin:** It has roots possibly dating to the 10th century AD or even the Neolithic era.
 - **Material and medium:** Warli artists use white pigment made from rice paste on clay hut walls.
 - **Artistic style:** It uses simple geometric shapes like circles, triangles, and squares.
 - **Cultural depiction:** Warli painting depicts farming, hunting, rituals, and Tarpa dance as part of community life.
 - **Rabha and Tamang Masks (Assam, North Bengal, Himalayan region)**
 - **Community and tradition:** Mask-making is practised by the Rabha tribe and Tamang communities as part of cultural traditions.
 - **Material and design:** These masks are made using wood, bamboo, gourd, or clay and are painted in vivid colours.
 - **Symbolism:** The masks represent gods, spirits, animals, and mythological figures.
 - **Cultural role:** The masks are closely linked with ritual dance and folk theatre practices.
 - **Spiritual meaning:** Performers wear these masks to embody deities and connect the human and divine worlds.

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- **Gond Painting (Madhya Pradesh)**
 - **Community origin:** Gond painting originates from the Gond community of central India.
 - **Material use:** Gond artists use natural pigments made from clay, stones, flowers, and herbs.
 - **Artistic technique:** Gond painting is known for intricate patterns of dots and lines filling each shape, giving compositions a rhythmic, almost musical quality.
 - **Themes:** Gond paintings represent animals, birds, trees, folklore, and community memory.
 - **Recognition:** Gond painting has received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag for its unique identity.
- **Bhil Painting (Madhya Pradesh)**
 - **Community:** Bhil painting is practised by the Bhil community.
 - **Historical importance:** Bhil painting is considered among the oldest art traditions in India.
 - **Artistic technique:** Bhil paintings are created using thousands of tiny dots, each one representing a seed, a grain, or a pulse of nature's rhythm.
 - **Themes:** Bhil paintings depict animals, deities, forests, and scenes from daily life.
 - **Cultural meaning:** Bhil painting reflects a deep connection with nature and traditional lifestyle.

Exercise Sea Dragon 2026

News: India is participating in the United States Navy-led multinational anti-submarine warfare (ASW) exercise 'Sea Dragon 2026' being held near Guam.

About Exercise Sea Dragon 2026



Figure 3. Source: BS

- **About:** Exercise Sea Dragon 2026 is a multinational anti-submarine warfare (ASW) exercise conducted annually to strengthen maritime security and cooperation among allied nations in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Hosted by:** It is hosted by U.S.A Navy's 7th Fleet.
- **Location:** The exercise is being conducted at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam.
- **Aim:** It aims to strengthen cooperation among allied maritime forces and enhance anti-submarine warfare capabilities across the Indo-Pacific region
- **Focus:** It focused on improving ASW tactics, interoperability, and multinational coordination in the Indo-Pacific region.

- **First edition:** The exercise was originally a bilateral naval drill between U.S.A and Australia in 2019. India joined the exercise in 2021.
- It is part of a broader series of cooperative defence activities conducted among Indo-Pacific partners to improve maritime security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Participating nations:** The participating nation includes U.S.A, India, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.
 - Indian Navy is participating with its P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft.
- **Features**
 - During the exercise, participating crews will engage in ASW operations, including detecting and tracking both simulated and live submarine targets.
 - The drills are designed to test speed, accuracy and coordinated mission execution in high-end maritime scenarios.

Small Hydro Power Development Scheme

News: The Union Cabinet approved the Small Hydro Power Development Scheme for 2026-27 to 2030-31 with ₹2,584.60 crore outlay.

About Small Hydro Power Development Scheme



Figure 4. Source – PIB

capped at ₹20 crore per project.

- **Key features**
 - **DPR Pipeline:** Allocation of ₹30 crore to support government agencies in preparing Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for about 200 future projects.
 - **Employment Generation:** Expected to create 51 lakh person-days of employment during construction, plus long-term roles in operations and maintenance.

- It is a scheme to install about 1,500 MW small hydro power capacity across India.
- **Nodal Ministry:** It is under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), unlike larger projects under the Ministry of Power.
- **Total Outlay:** The total financial outlay of the scheme is ₹2,584.60 crore.
- **Capacity Range:** Supports Small Hydro Power projects with capacities between 1 MW and 25 MW.
- **Duration:** The scheme will be implemented from FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31.
- **Central Financial Assistance (CFA)**
 - **North East & Border Incentives:** Assistance of ₹3.6 crore per MW or 30% of project cost, capped at ₹30 crore per project.
 - **General State Support:** Assistance of ₹2.4 crore per MW or 20% of project cost,

- **Indigenous sourcing:** Mandates 100% sourcing of plant and machinery from domestic manufacturers to boost the local industrial base.
- **Significance:** The scheme promotes clean, stable, and decentralised energy while supporting rural development, reducing transmission losses, and boosting employment in remote regions.

Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA)

News: The Union Cabinet has approved the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA) for developing 100 plug-and-play industrial parks across the country.

About Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA)



Figure 5. Source: DD News

- It is a scheme for developing 100 plug-and-play industrial parks across the country.
 - **Aim:** It aims to develop world-class industrial infrastructure, unlocking manufacturing potential of the country.
 - It has been developed under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) framework.
 - **Implementation:** It will be implemented in partnership with states and private sector players.
- **Financial Outlay:** Rs.33,660 crore
 - **Beneficiaries:** The scheme will benefit:
 - **Primary beneficiaries:** Manufacturing units, MSMEs, startups, and global investors seeking ready-to-use industrial infrastructure
 - **Secondary beneficiaries:** Workers, logistics providers, service sector enterprises, and local communities
 - **Features:**
 - It focuses on deregulation and ease of doing business, with streamlined approvals, effective single-window systems, and investor-friendly reforms led by states.
 - Under the scheme, industrial parks ranging from 100 to 1000 acres will be taken up for development.
 - The industrial parks design are aligned with the PM GatiShakti Principles and green energy and sustainable resource use with integrated underground utility corridors.
 - **Project selection method:** Project selection will be undertaken through a challenge mode.
 - **Financial support of up to Rs. One crore per acre will be provided for:**
 - Core infrastructure such as internal roads, underground utilities, drainage, common treatment facilities, ICT and administrative systems
 - Value-added infrastructure such as ready-built factory sheds, built-to-suit units, testing labs, warehouse
 - Social infrastructure such as worker housing and support amenities
 - It also extends support for external infrastructure providing up to 25% of the project cost, ensuring seamless connectivity and integration with existing networks.

Hindon River

News: A five-day research survey found zero dissolved oxygen levels at several locations, making the Hindon river uninhabitable for aquatic life.

About Hindon River



Figure 6. Source – SANDRP

- **Origin:** It originates in the Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh, in the Siwalik Hills at about 800 m elevation.
- **Nature:** The river is entirely rain-fed, with higher flow during the monsoon season.
- **Length:** The total length of the river is about 400 km.
- **Course:** It flows through the industrial belt of Western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana before reaching Noida.
- **Major tributaries:** The Kali (West) River and Krishna River are its main tributaries.
- **Tributary of:** It merges with the Yamuna River near Noida.
- **Historical Significance:** Archaeologists have found traces of the Harappan civilization along its banks, including sites dating back to around 2500 BC.
- **Pollution Issues:** The Hindon River suffers from significant pollution due to urban, agricultural, and industrial waste being discharged into its waters without adequate treatment.
 - This has made it one of the most polluted stretches in the Ganga basin.
- **Critical Status:** In 2015, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) assessed the pollution levels of the Hindon River and declared it a 'dead river'.
 - It was found to be 'unfit' for bathing in several sections due to extreme pollution levels.

Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR initiative

News: Indian Navy has commenced the second edition of the Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR initiative from 16th March 2026.

About Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR initiative



Source – ETV Bharat

- It is a unique operational engagement programme which enables naval personnel from friendly foreign countries to train and sail together aboard Indian naval ships to foster interoperability and deeper professional understanding.
- It is part of India's broader vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) and aligns with the expanded framework of MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security Across the Regions).
- **Aim:** It aims to strengthen professional linkages among participating nations, encourage the exchange of best practices, and build a shared understanding of regional maritime challenges.
- **Participants:** It includes participation from 16 Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) member nations across the Indian Ocean Region.
- **Note:** The Indian Navy assumed the chair of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in Feb 2026.
- **Edition:** It is the second edition of IOS SAGAR initiative. The first edition of this initiative was launched on April 5, 2025.
- **Activities:**
 - Naval personnel from partner nations will receive professional training at Indian naval establishments in Kochi, focusing on naval operations, seamanship, and maritime security.
 - They will also embark on an Indian Naval ship for joint deployment at sea and participating in operational activities with Indian Navy personnel.
 - It will also include maritime engagements and port visits for interaction with regional navies and maritime agencies.
- **Significance:** It underscores India's growing role as a key maritime partner and its continued focus on fostering a secure, stable and cooperative maritime environment in the Indian Ocean Region.

"e-CHARAK" mobile application

News: National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) has recently launched "e-CHARAK" mobile application designed to facilitate trade and information exchange in the medicinal plants sector.

About "e-CHARAK" mobile application



Source: Ministry of Ayush

- e-CHARAK is a mobile application and web portal for the promotion and marketing of medicinal plants/herbs.
- **Objective:** It is to provide a platform for the trade of medicinal plants & easy market access.
- **Launched by:** It has been jointly developed by the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of Ayush and Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N).
- **Accessed by:** It could be accessed either through an internet browser or the mobile app.
- **Features:**
 - It is a platform to enable information exchange between various stakeholders mainly farmers involved in the medicinal plants sector across the country.
 - Users can register on the platform to access its services, including posting items for sale or purchase, and managing their listings.
 - It supports different local languages.
 - It also provides a fortnightly market price of 100 MPs from 25 herbal markets across India.
 - It would create vivid transparent, workable trade linkages among the producers & purchasers.

Dimethyl Ether (DME) Technology

News: The West Asia crisis increased LPG prices and import dependence, highlighting the need for indigenous alternatives like DME technology developed by CSIR-NCL.

About Dimethyl Ether (DME) Technology



Source – Swarajya

- **Dimethyl Ether (DME)** is a synthetically produced, clean-burning alternative fuel that can replace both diesel and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).
- In India, Dimethyl Ether (DME) is a key component of the Methanol Economy program led by NITI Aayog, aimed at reducing crude oil imports and greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Production method:** It is primarily produced through two main routes –
 - indirect synthesis (dehydrating methanol)
 - direct synthesis (from syngas), with specialized catalyst technology being crucial for optimizing efficiency in both methods
- **Key characteristics and properties**
 - **Chemical nature:** The simplest ether (CH_3OCH_3) is a colourless, non-toxic, and highly flammable gas at ambient conditions.
 - **Physical handling:** Like LPG, it can be liquefied under moderate pressure (approx. 10 bar), making it easy to store and transport in cylinders.
 - **Ignition quality:** It has a very high cetane number (55-60), indicating excellent ignition quality for compression ignition (diesel) engines.
 - **Environmental impact:** DME burns without producing soot or smoke.
 - It significantly reduces emissions of particulate matter (PM), nitrogen oxides (NOx), and sulphur oxides (SOx).
- **Production in India**
 - **Feedstock Versatility:** DME can be produced from domestic resources like coal, biomass, municipal solid waste, and even captured carbon dioxide.
 - **Technology Development:** CSIR-NCL has developed a patented catalyst and process to convert methanol to DME.
 - **Applications:**

- **LPG Alternative:** Can be blended with LPG for household cooking without requiring major infrastructure changes.
 - For example, The “Aditi Urja Sanch” burner unit, developed by CSIR-NCL, is specifically designed to handle DME-LPG blends efficiently.
- **Diesel Alternative:** High cetane number makes it suitable for heavy-duty vehicles and tractor engines, providing low emission alternatives. For example, IIT Kanpur developed India’s first 100% DME-fuelled tractor.

UNIGME Report 2025

News: The UNIGME Report 2025 was recently released, highlighting global and India-specific progress in reducing child mortality rates.

About UNIGME Report 2025

- It is a global report that tracks levels and trends in child mortality.
- **Released by:** It is released by the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME), led by UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, and UN DESA.
- **Title:** The report is titled “Levels and Trends in Child Mortality 2025.”
- **Key Findings (Global Trend)**
 - **Global Burden of Deaths**
 - Global under-five deaths were about 9 million in 2024, including 2.3 million newborn deaths.
 - Around 1 million children, adolescents, and youth aged 5–24 years died in 2024.
 - **Trend in Mortality Reduction**
 - Under-five deaths have declined by more than half since 2000.
 - The pace of reduction has slowed by more than 60% since 2015.
 - **Regional distribution:** Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 58% of global under-five deaths in 2024.
 - **Causes of Death:** Major causes include preterm birth complications, infections, pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria, and malnutrition.
 - **Malnutrition Impact**
 - Malnutrition caused about 5% of deaths among children aged 1–59 months in 2024.
 - Countries with the highest direct malnutrition deaths are Pakistan, Somalia, and Sudan.
- **Key Findings Related to India**
 - **Decline in Mortality Rates**
 - Under-five mortality declined from 127 in 1990 to 26.6 in 2024, showing a 79% reduction.
 - Infant mortality reduced to 23.3, and neonatal mortality declined to 17 in 2024.
 - **Drivers of Improvement:** Progress is driven by programmes such as Janani Suraksha Yojana, Universal Immunisation Programme, and Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses (IMNCI).
 - **Regional Contribution:** India has played a key role in reducing child mortality in South Asia through targeted public health interventions.

Defence India Start-up Challenge (DISC-14) and ADITI Challenge under iDEX Framework

News: Raksha Mantri launched DISC-14 and ADITI 4.0 challenges during National Defence Industries Conclave 2026 to promote defence innovation and indigenous capabilities.

About Defence India Start-up Challenge (DISC-14)



Figure 7. Source – IDSA

- Defence India Start-up Challenge is a flagship programme supporting startups, MSMEs, and innovators in defence and security.
- Inception: It was launched on August 4, 2018 by the Ministry of Defence in partnership with the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).
- Current edition: The 14th edition (DISC-14) was launched in 2026.
- Operates under: It operates under the iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) framework.
- Objective: It aims to achieve self-reliance by promoting

innovation in defence and aerospace and reducing dependence on imports.

- Key Highlights of DISC-14
 - Scale of Innovation: DISC-14 includes 82 problem statements from Defence Forces, Indian Coast Guard, and Defence Space Agency.
 - Focus Areas: It promotes development of functional prototypes and commercialization across various defence domains.

About ADITI Challenge under iDEX Framework

- ADITI is a sub-scheme under iDEX that promotes critical and strategic defence technologies.
- Inception: It was launched on March 4, 2024 by Defence Minister during DefConnect 2024.
- Current edition: The 4th edition (ADITI 4.0) was launched in 2026.
- Aim: It aims to develop advanced technologies, reduce dependence on foreign OEMs, and strengthen national security.
- Monitored by: It is monitored by the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) Board chaired by Secretary (Defence Production) through partner incubators.
- Key Features of the ADITI Scheme
 - Substantial Funding: It provides grants up to 50 % of Product Development Budget, with a maximum limit of Rs 25 crore.
 - Total Budget: The scheme has an outlay of Rs. 750 crore for three years from 2023-2026.
 - Focus Areas: It includes satellite communication, cyber technologies, autonomous systems, nuclear technologies, semiconductors, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and underwater surveillance.
 - Technology Watch Tool: It is a mechanism to identify gaps between the needs of modern armed forces and available technologies. It helps in tracking progress of technologies,

supports policy formation, and ensures that there is no duplication of efforts through technology foresight workshops.

VB-G Ram G Youth Digital Campaign

News: Ministry of Rural Development has launched nationwide 'VB-G Ram G Youth Digital Campaign' to encourage participation of rural youth in development activities.

About VB-G Ram G Youth Digital Campaign



Figure 8. Source: DIC

- It is a campaign to make youth active partners in nation-building through a digital platform to showcase progress and innovation in their villages.
- Launched by: Ministry of Rural Development
- It has been launched in collaboration with the 'MY Bharat' portal.
- Aim: It aims to encourage participation of rural youth in development activities.
- Beneficiaries: All interested youth between the ages of 15 and 29 years can register online through the 'MY Bharat' or 'MyGov' portals.
- Participants can present stories of development work, grassroots-level changes, and local innovations through videos and creative designs.
- Competitions: Several competitions have been organized under the campaign
 - Video Challenge (Reel Competition): Participants are required to create a short video of 30 to 60 seconds highlighting development work or livelihood-related activities in their village and upload it to the 'MY Bharat' portal.
 - Logo Design competition: Participants are required to design a creative logo that reflects the objectives of the campaign. The winner will receive a cash prize of ₹50,000 along with recognition.
 - Online Quiz: Participants can earn a digital certificate by answering 20 questions based on 'Viksit Bharat - G Ram G Act. 2025' and various government welfare schemes.
- Parameters for winner selection: The winners will be selected on the basis of several parameters, including relevance to the theme, creativity, originality, technical quality, overall impact and adherence to the prescribed guidelines.
- It seeks to channel the energy and creativity of young people towards rural development, employment generation, and local livelihood initiatives.

'RELIEF' Scheme

News: The Commerce and Industry Ministry launched 'RELIEF' Scheme to ease pressure on exporters facing trade disruption due to the ongoing war in West Asia.

About 'RELIEF' Scheme



Figure 9. Source: Economic Times

- Resilience & Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation (RELIEF) scheme is time-bound and targeted measure to support Indian exporters facing disruptions due to the evolving geopolitical situation in West Asia.

- It was initiated under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM).

- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Commerce and Industry

- Financial outlay: Rs. 497 crore

- Aim: It aimed at mitigating the impact of rising logistics costs, higher insurance premiums, and war-related risks affecting export consignments moving to or through

the Gulf region.

- Coverage: The scheme will cover shipments destined for countries including United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, Israel and Yemen.
 - It covers full container, partial container and refrigerated cargo excluding back-to-town cargo cases.
- Nodal implementing agency: Under the RELIEF framework, Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India has been designated as the nodal implementing agency.
 - It will be responsible for verification, claim processing, disbursement, and monitoring.
- It will include automatic extension of export obligations, logistical support, and potential financial measures to manage shipping delays
- It will be implemented with a dashboard-based monitoring system to track claims and fund utilization in real time.
- Components: The scheme comprises three key components:
 - Enhanced insurance coverage: Exporters with existing ECGC insurance will receive up to 100% risk coverage for eligible consignments shipped between February 14 and March 15, 2026, without additional cost.
 - Support for upcoming shipments: Exporters planning shipments between March 16 and June 15, 2026, can avail up to 95% risk coverage with government support, helping sustain trade flows.
 - Relief for MSMEs: Small exporters without ECGC cover during the disruption period will be eligible for partial reimbursement of up to 50% of increased freight and insurance costs, subject to a ceiling of ₹50 lakh per exporter.
- Review: The EPM Steering Committee will periodically review the scheme and make adjustments based on evolving geopolitical conditions.

Nd-Fe-B (Neodymium-Iron-Boron) Rare Earth Permanent Magnets

News: A pilot plant for Nd-Fe-B rare earth permanent magnets has been established at ARCI, Hyderabad to strengthen self-reliant manufacturing ecosystem.

About Nd-Fe-B (Neodymium-Iron-Boron) Rare Earth Permanent Magnets



Figure 10. Source – The Business Research

- Nd-Fe-B magnets are the strongest permanent magnets that can maintain high magnetic force without external power.
- Made up of: These magnets are made from Neodymium, Iron, and Boron as core elements.
 - They also include Cobalt, Dysprosium, and Praseodymium in varying amounts.
 - Neodymium provides high magnetic strength, iron provides magnetization, and boron stabilizes the structure.
- Types
 - Sintered NdFeB magnets are widely used and have the largest output.
 - Bonded NdFeB magnets are low cost, light, and have good shape flexibility.
- Hot-pressed NdFeB magnets achieve similar magnetic properties without heavy rare earth elements.
- Key features
 - Extreme magnetic strength: These magnets have very strong magnetic force even in small size.
 - High coercivity: These magnets resist demagnetization effectively after being magnetized.
 - Temperature sensitivity: Their performance can reduce at high temperatures unless modified.
 - Corrosion susceptibility: These magnets require protective coating due to high iron content.
- Applications
 - Electric mobility: These magnets are used in high-efficiency motors for electric vehicles.
 - Renewable energy: These magnets are used in generators of wind turbines.
 - Electronics: These magnets are used in mobile phones, hard drives, and earphones.
 - Advanced manufacturing and medical technology: These magnets are used in robotics, automation, and MRI machines.

National Dental Commission

News: The National Dental Commission (NDC) has been constituted recently to improve the quality of dental education and align it with global standards.

About National Dental Commission



Figure 11. Source: DD News

- It is a statutory and apex body responsible for regulating dental education, professional conduct, and institutional standards across the country.
- **Constitution:** It has been constituted under National Dental Commission (NDC) Act, 2026.
- It will replace the Dental Council of India (DCI).
- It will introduce essential and regulatory reforms in dental education and enhance access to affordable oral healthcare across the country.
- **Members:** It includes the chairperson

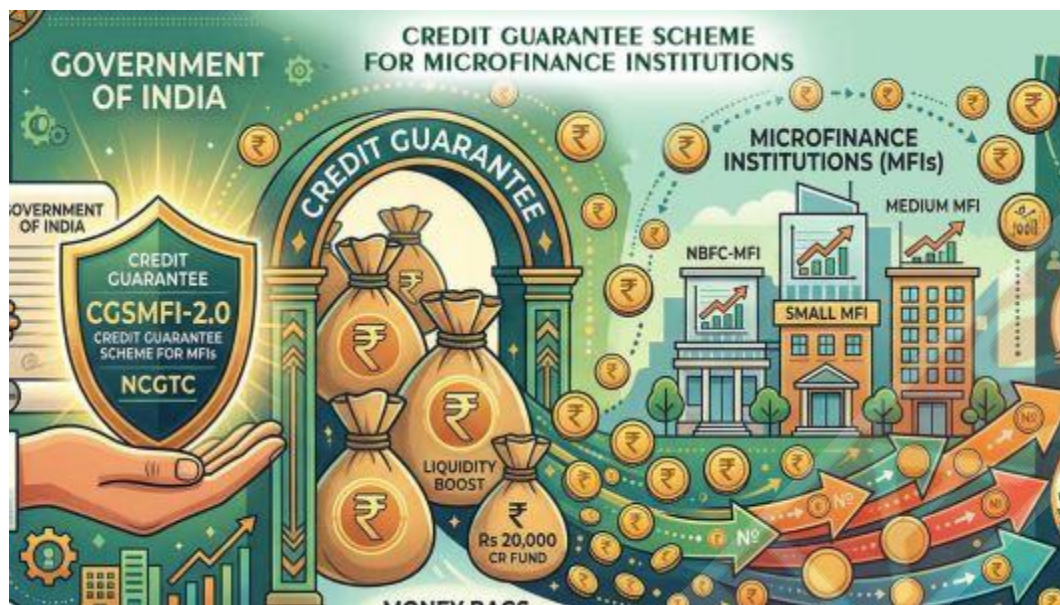
and a part-time member.

- **Autonomous Board:** Three autonomous bodies have been constituted to support the functioning of the Commission:
 - Undergraduate and Postgraduate Dental Education Board to oversee dental education.
 - Dental Assessment and Rating Board to regulate accreditation and institutional assessment.
 - Ethics and Dental Registration Board to govern professional conduct and registration of dentists.
- **Function:** Key functions of the National Dental Commission include:
 - It will frame regulations to implement the provisions of the NDC Act, 2026.
 - It will conduct rating and assessment of dental institutions
 - It will evaluate human resources and promote dental research
 - It will also frame guidelines for fee regulation in private dental colleges
 - It will establish standards for community dental care, education, research, and professional ethics.

Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions-2.0 (CGSMFI-2.0)

News: The Government of India has introduced CGSMFI-2.0 to increase credit flow to microfinance institutions and support small borrowers.

About Credit Guarantee Scheme for Microfinance Institutions-2.0 (CGSMFI-2.0)



Source – KNN India

- **CGSMFI-2.0** is a credit guarantee scheme that provides cover to banks against losses on loans given to MFIs for small borrowers.
- **Launched in:** The scheme was launched in March 2026.
- **Nodal department:** The scheme is under the Department of Financial Services.
- **Managed by:** The scheme is managed by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC).
- **Aim:** The scheme aims to strengthen lending to MFIs and ensure continuous credit flow to small borrowers, supporting financial inclusion.
- **Key Features**
 - **Eligibility:** The scheme covers existing or new small borrowers within the regulatory definition of microfinance as prescribed by RBI.
 - **Guarantee coverage:** The scheme provides 80% coverage for small, 75% for medium, and 70% for large MFIs on defaulted amount.
 - **Interest rate cap:** Loans to MFIs are capped at EBLR or MCLR plus 2%, and lending to borrowers is capped below recent average rates.
 - **Low guarantee fee:** A fee of 0.50% per annum is charged on sanctioned amount in the first year and on outstanding amount thereafter.
 - **Defined limit and duration:** The scheme is valid till 30 June 2026 or until ₹20,000 crore of loans are guaranteed.

Income Tax Rules, 2026

News: The government has notified the Income Tax Rules, 2026, marking a major overhaul of procedural and compliance systems under direct taxation.

About Income Tax Rules 2026



Figure 12. Source: ET

- Income Tax Rules 2026 have been introduced to implement provisions of the Income-tax Act, 2025.
- Effective from: It will come into effect from April 1, 2026.
- Aim: The aim is to enhance transparency, digitization, and standardization.
- Focus: The focus is on stronger data reporting, clearer cross-border taxation, and improved regulatory frameworks to reduce disputes and strengthen enforcement.
- Key features:
 - Compliance Framework: The new rules introduce updated definitions, revised compliance structures, and new reporting mechanisms.
 - Dividend Declaration: Dividend declaration provisions have been tightened. Companies must maintain share registers, hold general meetings, and pay dividends only within India.
 - Stock Exchange Compliance: Stock exchanges must maintain audit trails for seven years, prevent deletion of transaction records, and submit monthly reports on modified transactions.
 - Capital Gains Classification: Clear guidelines have been introduced for debenture conversions, income disclosure schemes relating to assets, and cross-border restructuring to bring clarity in capital gains classification.
 - For converted securities such as shares or debentures, the holding period will now include the time during which the original instrument such as bonds or deposit certificates which was held before conversion.
 - House Rent Allowance (HRA): Enhanced tax benefits have been provided for salaried individuals claiming HRA.
 - Under the new rules, Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune, Ahmedabad, and Bengaluru will qualify for a higher exemption limit of 50 per cent of salary, while all other locations will continue at 40 per cent.
 - Disclosure of the landlord-tenant relationship has been made mandatory to claim deductions.
 - Employer-Provided Accommodation: Exemptions for employer-provided accommodation will be determined based on city population, salary level, and ownership or lease status of accommodation.
 - Zero Coupon Bond Framework: A new approval framework has been introduced requiring applications three months before issuance, investment-grade ratings from two agencies, and defined fund utilization timelines to strengthen regulatory oversight.
 - Cross-Border Taxation Powers: Additional powers have been given to tax authorities.
 - In cases of non-resident income attrition, income may be estimated using percentage-based methods, global profit ratios, or other reasonable methods.
 - Digital and Remote Business Taxation: The threshold for significant economic presence has been fixed at ₹2 crore transactions or 3 lakh users.

- Valuation and Fair Market Value Rules: Standardized formula-based valuation and fair market value rules apply to listed and unlisted shares, foreign entities, and partnership interests.
- Offshore Transactions Linked to Indian Assets: A formula has been prescribed to calculate income linked to Indian assets in offshore deals to reduce ambiguity.
- Expense Exemptions: A simplified capped approach has been introduced for exemptions under expenses. It includes direct expenses and one percent of investment value.

Veerangana Rani Avantibai Lodhi

News: Union Home Minister Amit Shah paid tribute to Veerangana Rani Avantibai Lodhi on her martyrdom day, highlighting her courage and sacrifice.

About Veerangana Rani Avantibai Lodhi

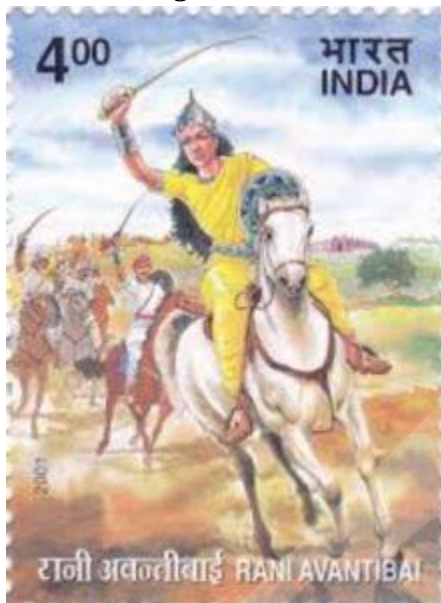


Figure 13. Source – Indain Post

- **Birth:** Rani Avantibai Lodhi was born on August 16, 1831, in Mankehni village in present-day Madhya Pradesh.
- **Early life:** She was married to Vikramaditya Singh Lodhi, son of Raja Laxman Singh of Ramgarh.
 - After the death of Laxman Singh, she assumed control of Ramgarh state.
- **Role in 1857 Revolt:** She emerged as a prominent leader during the Revolt of 1857 and actively fought against British rule.
- **Cause of rebellion:** She strongly opposed Lord Dalhousie's Doctrine of Lapse, which sought to annex Ramgarh.
- **Military leadership:** She was skilled in sword-fighting and horse-riding. She successfully expelled British administrators from Ramgarh.
- **Key battle:** She led her forces in the Battle of Kheri in 1857, where British troops were defeated.
- **Martyrdom:** In March 1858, she sacrificed her life on the battlefield and chose martyrdom instead of surrender.
- **Commemoration:** The Government of India issued a postal stamp in her honor in 1988, and many memorials stand in her name in Madhya Pradesh.

Guru Hargobind Sahib

News: Union Home Minister paid tributes to Guru Hargobind Sahib on the occasion of his Jyoti-Jyot Diwas, remembering his contributions to strengthening Sikhism and promoting the protection of humanity.

About Guru Hargobind Sahib



Source: DD News

- **Guru Hargobind Sahib was the Sixth Guru of the Sikhs.**
- **Born:** He was born on 9 June 1595 at a village Guru Ki Wadali near Amritsar.
 - He was born to Guru Arjan Dev ji, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs.
- **He succeeded Guru Arjan Sahib in 1606, at the age of eleven years.**
- **He took the title of Sachcha Padshah (True Emperor).**
- **Battles fought:** He fought five battles with Mughal forces (Jahangir and Shah Jahan) and remained victorious.
 - **Important battles** – Rohilla (1621), Amritsar (1634), Mehraj and Lahira, Kartarpur (1635) and Palahi near Phagwara.
- **Philosophy:**
 - **Guru Sahib wore two swords:** Piri (spiritual power) and Miri (temporal/military power).
 - **He inspired Sikhs to become Saint-Soldiers** (spiritually strong and physically brave) and encouraged them to take military training and learn martial arts.
- **Administration:** He maintained a force of about 700 cavalry and 60 artillerymen and a group of Pathan soldiers was led by Painda Khan.
 - **Martial songs (Vars)** were sung daily by Dhadd players in the court of Guru Sahib to inspire bravery.
 - **He established Akal Takht Sahib (1609)** in front of Harmandir Sahib as the centre of Sikh authority.
 - **At Akal Takht, he delivered sermons, resolved disputes, and promoted martial activities.**
 - **He built a protective wall around Amritsar and constructed Lohgarh Fort for defence.**
 - **He was imprisoned by Jahangir at Gwalior Fort (1609–1612).**
 - **Religious leaders like Mian Mir helped secure his release.**
 - **Guru Sahib requested the release of 52 imprisoned princes along with himself.**
 - **After their release, he was honoured with the title Bandi Chhor Baba.**

- His return to Amritsar was celebrated on Diwali, now observed as Bandi Chhor Diwas by Sikhs.
- Legacy: He passed away in 1644 at Kiratpur Sahib.
 - Death anniversary of Sikh Gurus is observed as Jyoti-Jyot Diwas.
 - Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, his son become Ninth Sikh Guru in 1664.

Smog-Eating Photocatalytic Coatings

News: Delhi government and IIT Madras began a six-month study on “smog-eating” photocatalytic coatings to test reduction of NO₂ and volatile organic compounds (VOC) pollutants.

About Smog-Eating Photocatalytic Coatings

ROAD TO CLEANER AIR?

What Is Photocatalytic Coating
"Smog-eating" photocatalytic coatings are applied on roads, concrete and tiles to reduce nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and harmful hydrocarbons
These coatings utilise a photocatalyst, predominantly titanium dioxide (TiO₂), which breaks down pollutants—mainly nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and some volatile organic compounds (VOCs)—when exposed to sunlight

DELHI IS MULLING ITS USE, BUT IT'S NOT FIRST TO DO SO

The Netherlands Field trials with TiO ₂ -treated paving blocks in part of Hengelo city showed substantial NO _x reductions in test stretches		Italy Tests were conducted on building facades and pavements in Milan		Denmark A study was conducted on photocatalytic-treated asphalt roads in Copenhagen for urban NO _x removal	
Mexico A hospital building facade was made with tiles coated with titanium dioxide		US Pavements with titanium dioxide coatings exist on some stretches			

JURY IS OUT ON ITS EFFICACY

- > Street environments with variable wind, dust deposition, traffic, shading and humidity reduce effectiveness
- > Photocatalysis targets gaseous pollutants; evidence of particulate matter reduction is weak
- > Photocatalytic activity declines over time

Source – ToI

- It is a coating using titanium dioxide that neutralizes harmful gases like nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
- Mechanism
 - Photocatalytic activity uses light energy to break down harmful substances and organic waste into less toxic or harmless matter.
 - When exposed to sunlight, titanium dioxide acts as a catalyst and generates surface electrons.
 - These electrons react with pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and volatile organic compounds and dismantle them.
 - This process helps in making air and water cleaner.

- Technology used: Titanium dioxide is used as it is low-cost, chemically stable and compatible with construction materials.
- Targeted pollutants: It targets nitrogen dioxide and volatile organic compounds and prevents secondary particulate matter and ground-level ozone formation.
- Applications: It is applied on roads, pavements, buildings, and tiles, where it works as a passive air-cleaning system.
- Limitation: Its efficiency reduces due to low sunlight, dust accumulation, and wind conditions, and it may cause nitrate runoff leading to eutrophication in water bodies like Yamuna.

AI Skilling Initiative, MyWAVES, Advanced EPG & In-built Satellite Tuner in Television Sets

News: Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw recently launched three new initiatives, AI Skilling Initiative, MyWAVES, Advanced EPG & In-built Satellite Tuner in Television Sets to promote the “orange economy”.

About AI Skilling Initiative, MyWAVES, Advanced EPG & In-built Satellite Tuner in Television Sets

Source: AIR

- Aim: The initiatives aimed at promoting the ‘Orange Economy’, strengthening public broadcasting, and building an AI skilled workforce in the media and entertainment sector.
- Nodal Ministry for initiatives: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

About AI Skilling Initiative

- Launched by: It has been launched by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in partnership with Google and YouTube.
- Implementing agency: It is being implemented through the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT).
- Aim: It aims to strengthen AI capabilities in areas such as animation, visual effects, gaming, comics (AVGC) and media technology.
- Features: It will support creators, media professionals, students and developers in building future-ready skills and contribute to India’s emergence as a global hub for digital content and innovation.
- The AI skilling programme will be conducted in two phases:
 - Phase I: It will start from March 23 to June 30 2026.
 - It focuses on foundational AI learning at scale through Google Career Certificates and Google Cloud Generative AI learning paths.
 - Courses offered: Participants will undergo courses such as AI Essentials, Prompting Essentials, Introduction to Generative AI and Generative AI Leader Path.
 - Successful completion of this phase will be mandatory for progression to the next stage.
 - Phase II: It will start from July to December 2026.
 - The second phase will involve advanced, hands-on and project-based specialisation for the creative industry.
 - Curriculum: It includes modules on the art of storytelling, YouTube best practices, and advanced training using AI tools.
- Coverage: The training will be conducted in major cities across the country.
- Target: Under the initiative, about 15,000 youth will be trained without levying any fee.

About MyWAVES

- It is a citizen creator platform on WAVES OTT that along with Doordarshan's Creators' Corner initiative, enables creators to create, upload, and share content, strengthening India's digital ecosystem.
- Features: It is designed as a structured platform for user-generated content (UGC) that will support participation in national digital initiatives.
 - It will support multiple formats (short videos, vertical videos and episodic content) and offer a multilingual interface across Indian languages.
 - It will also serve as a platform for emerging creators and storytellers from across the country.

About Advanced EPG & In-built Satellite Tuner in Television Sets

- The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has introduced TVs with in-built satellite tuners to make television viewing easier.
- Features: Viewers can watch DD Free Dish channels without a separate set-top box. This helps reduce extra costs, wiring, and multiple remote controls.
 - The new advanced programme guide will allow users to easily browse channels and programme schedules in one place through a simple and intuitive interface.

Switch Auction by RBI

News: The RBI conducted a switch auction where the government bought back ₹6,309 crore of G-Secs and issued ₹6,431.797 crore of bonds.

About Switch Auction by RBI



Figure 14. Source – CNBC

- A Switch Auction (or Conversion Auction) is a debt management tool used by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on behalf of the Government of India to manage its repayment burden by replacing short-term debt with long-term debt.
- Objective: The objective is to ease redemption pressure, smoothen maturity profile and manage repayment obligations more effectively.
- Mechanism
 - Swap: The government repurchases "source" securities (bonds nearing maturity) and simultaneously issues new "destination" securities (longer-dated bonds) of equivalent market value.
 - No new debt: This process changes the timing of repayments without increasing the government's overall borrowing target or requiring immediate cash outgo.
- Significance: It helps the government manage debt efficiently by spreading repayments over a longer period while maintaining borrowing plans.

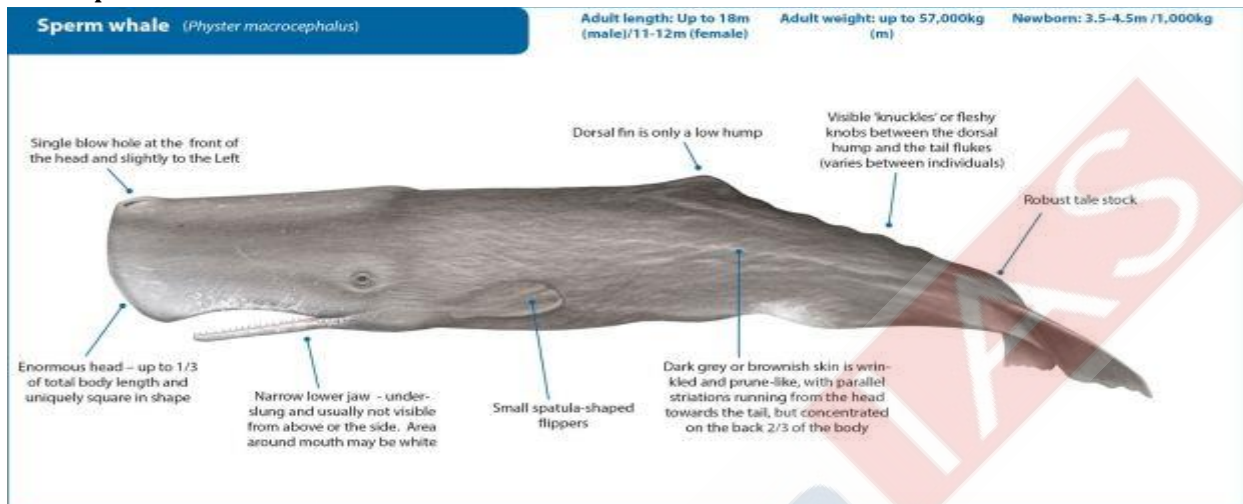
About Government Securities (G-Secs)

- Government securities are low-risk debt instruments issued by the government that offer fixed returns and are backed by a sovereign guarantee.

Sperm Whales

News: Sperm whales have been caught headbutting on camera for the first time, confirming behaviour described by 19th century whaling ships.

About Sperm Whales



Source – IWC

- Sperm whales are the largest toothed whales, easily recognized by their enormous square head and narrow lower jaw.
- **Scientific Name:** The scientific name of sperm whale is *Physeter macrocephalus*.
- **Naming:** They are named after spermaceti, a waxy substance found in their heads.
- **Habitat:** They live in deep marine waters, generally at depths greater than 1000 m.
- **Distribution:** They have one of the widest global distributions and are found in all deep oceans from equator to polar regions.
- **Characteristics**
 - **Body colour:** The whale is dark blue-grey or brownish with white patches on the belly.
 - **Body structure:** It has small paddle-like flippers and rounded humps on its back.
 - **Size:** It has the largest head and brain of any animal.
 - **Lifespan:** It can live up to 60 – 70 years.
 - **Spermaceti organ:** The spermaceti is an oil sac that helps whales focus sound.
 - **Communication:** They communicate using clicks called codas, where each coda has a distinct purpose.
 - **Ambergris:** Ambergris is a waxy substance formed in the intestines around undigested matter and is used in perfumes.
- **Threats**
 - Fishing activities
 - Marine pollution
- **Conservation status**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
 - **CITES:** Appendix I of CITES
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
 - **International Whaling Commission (IWC):** It is protected by the IWC under a global moratorium on commercial whaling.