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A Weekly Current Affairs Initiative

**KAS, FDA/SDA/PDO/ GROUP C,
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ಕನ್ನಡ & English

By- Nandan Sir

March 3rd Week 2026

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- **Orunodoi Scheme**
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WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS
MARCH 3RD Week 2026

SHINE App for Women Employees
Syllabus: GS1/Women Empowerment



In News

- Recently, the **Indian Railways** launched the **SHINE app** on **International Women's Day** to enhance safety and empowerment at work.

Sexual Harassment Incident Notification for Empowerment (SHINE) App

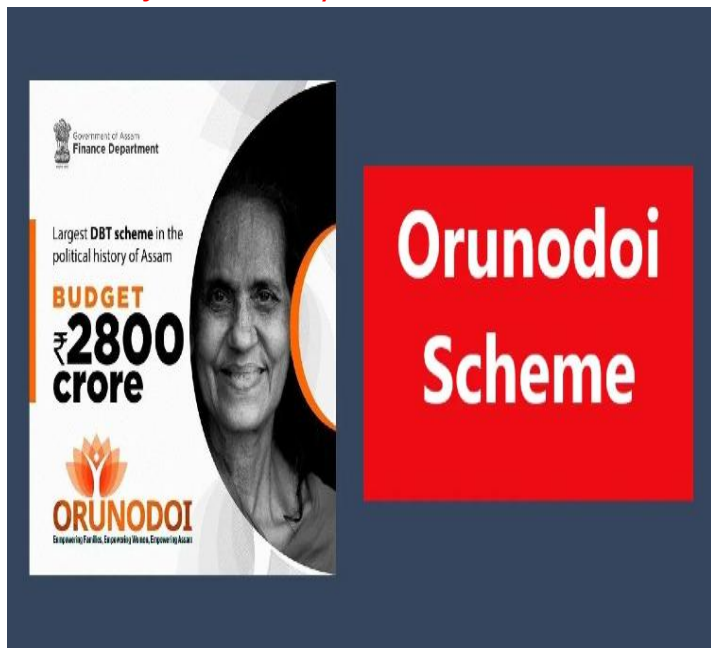
- It is **mobile app** for women employees to lodge complaints about sexual harassment in the workplace.
- It is **designed to maintain confidentiality** and ensure complaints are addressed quickly by the **Internal Complaints Committee**, in line with Visakha guidelines (1997) and government instructions.
- Complaints can be filed through the Human Resources Management System (HRMS) and the Employee Self Service portal.

Additional Informatin- Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (PoSH)

- Sexual harassment defined** - Sexual harassment includes “any one or more” of the following “unwelcome acts or behaviour” committed directly or by implication: Physical contact and advances, a **demand or request for sexual favours**, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography, any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.
- Obligation** - Every employer is required to constitute an **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** at each office or branch with **10 or more employees**.
- Complaint Committees** - ICC has powers similar to those of a civil court in respect of summoning and examining any person on oath and requiring the discovery and production of documents.
- Time** - The complaint must be made “**within three months from the date of the incident**”.
- Conciliation** - The ICC may (at the request of the aggrieved woman) allow the matter to be settled through conciliation (but no monetary settlement allowed)
- Punishment** - **Non-compliance with the provisions of the Act shall be punishable with a fine of up to Rs 50,000.**

Orunodoi Scheme

Syllabus: GS2/Welfare schemes



News

- The Assam Chief Minister announced plans to transfer ₹9,000 to approximately 40 lakh beneficiary families under the Orunodoi scheme through direct benefit transfer (DBT).

Orunodoi scheme

- **Orunodoi' or Arunodoi Scheme** is a new scheme of the **Government of Assam** launched in 2020.
- **Objective** - It envisages **women empowerment, poverty alleviation and socio-economic inclusion of financially vulnerable women** of the state through **sustained financial assistance on a monthly basis**, so that they are assured of minimum monthly cash flow.

Benefits

- The Assam government's Orunodoi 3.0 Scheme **provides financial support of ₹1,250 per month to women from low-income families via Direct Benefit Transfer.**

- The amount covers various essential expenses: ₹400 for medicines, ₹200 for a 50% subsidy on 4 kg of pulses, ₹80 for a 50% sugar subsidy, ₹150 for fruits and vegetables, ₹150 for other essential needs, ₹170 for COVID-19-related expenses, and ₹250 for a subsidy on 50 units of electricity.

International Energy Agency (IEA)

Syllabus: GS2/IR; GS3/Economy



Context

- **India is not going to join the International Energy Agency (IEA) initiative to release strategic oil reserves** as part of an effort to cool oil prices.
- **India is the world's third-largest oil-importing and consuming nation**, and has **5.33 million tonnes of underground strategic reserves**. But they are only 80% filled currently.
- **India is not a full member of IEA and does not have an obligation to follow the mandate of the international body.**

India's Oil Imports

- **India imports nearly 88% of its crude oil requirements from around 41 countries.**
- **Roughly half of those supplies in February passed through the Strait of Hormuz.**

International Energy Agency (IEA)

- **Established: In 1974.**
- **Founding members** - Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom, and the United States.
- **Reason:** It was created when **major oil-exporting countries drastically reduced oil supplies, causing severe economic disruptions** in industrialized nations.
- **Mandate:** IEA's original mandate was to **ensure that oil supplies were kept stable**, and potential disruptions in future were anticipated and prevented through timely action.
- **Members:** The membership was kept **open only for OECD countries.**
- There are now **33 full members with Colombia being inducted as 33rd members recently.**
- **Associate Members:** In 2015, IEA opened the doors for **non-OECD countries to become associate members.**
- Note - The associate members participate in the policy discussions and activities, but do not have decision-making rights.
- **India became an associate member in 2017. There are 13 associate members right now.**

Additional information - Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD)

- It is an intergovernmental organisation that **promotes economic development, policy coordination, and global cooperation.**
- Motto: "Better Policies for Better Lives."
- **Established in 1961**, succeeding the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC).
- **Headquarters: Paris, France.**

- **Membership: 38 member countries** (mainly developed economies). India is not a member.

Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) Syllabus: GS3/ Economy



News

- **India's chairmanship of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS)** offers a strategic opportunity to India to **strengthen the global diamond governance.**

Conflict Diamonds

- 'Conflict diamonds', also known as **blood diamonds**, are the **rough diamonds mined and used by rebel movements or their allies to finance armed conflicts aimed at undermining legitimate governments.**
- The term was introduced in the 1990s when international attention turned to the **role of diamonds in financing violence in African countries like Angola, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Liberia, etc.**
- These diamonds entered the global market through informal and illegal trade networks, making it difficult to trace their origin.

Kimberley Process

- The Kimberley Process is a **multilateral, voluntary certification mechanism aimed**

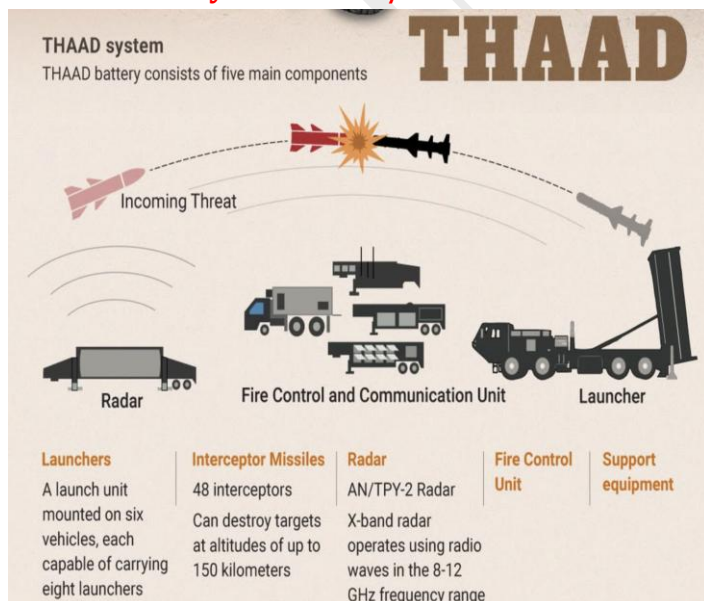
at preventing the trade of conflict diamonds.

- It represents over **99% of global rough diamond trade.**
- Every shipment of rough diamonds between participating countries **must carry a Kimberley Process Certificate.**
- The certificate **guarantees that the diamonds are conflict-free.**
- **Trade with non-participants is prohibited.**

India's Diamond Industry

- **India is the world's largest diamond cutting and polishing hub.**
- It is a **major importer of rough diamonds & top exporter of cut and polished diamonds** (\$13.3 billion in 2024-25).
- It is the **second-largest diamond market after the United States.**
- **Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) is the nodal agency for implementing Kimberley Process Certificate.** It works under the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) Syllabus: GS3/Defence



Context

- Iran has reportedly struck a key radar associated with the **Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defence system** used by the United States and Israel in West Asia.

Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)

- It is an **advanced missile defence system developed by the United States**
- **Purpose - to counter short-medium-and limited intermediate-range ballistic missiles.**
- THAAD can engage ballistic missile threats at **ranges of around 150-200 km.**
- The United Arab Emirates became the first foreign buyer in 2011, followed later by Saudi Arabia.
- **Note - India has opted for the S-400 Triumf air defence system from Russia instead of acquiring THAAD from the United States.**

Anavaran-Deforestation Alert System Syllabus: GS3/ Environment



Context

- **The Forest Survey of India (FSI) has reportedly halted the fortnightly alerts generated by its AI-based Anavaran-Deforestation Alert System, which**

monitored forest cover loss in near-real time.

Anavaran-Deforestation Alert System

- It is an AI-enabled deforestation monitoring platform developed by the Forest Survey of India.
- It uses satellite imagery and machine learning algorithms to detect forest cover loss and send alerts to state forest departments every 15 days.
- **Significance-** to strengthen real-time forest monitoring.

India's First Passive Euthanasia Case Health



Context

- The Supreme Court practically applied the principles of passive euthanasia for the first time by permitting the withdrawal of clinically-assisted nutrition and hydration (CANH) to 32-year-old Harish Rana.
- **Note - Karnataka is the second State after Kerala to implement the directive.**

Supreme Court Ruling

- **Common Cause vs. Union of India & Anr. (2018) case** - It recognised

right to die with dignity as a fundamental right under Article 21 and upheld legal validity of passive euthanasia.

- **Definition of Euthanasia** - It is an act of deliberately ending a person's life to relieve suffering from painful and incurable disease or disorder.

Passive euthanasia v/s Active euthanasia

- **Passive euthanasia** - It is withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment for terminally ill patients undergoing prolonged medical treatment with no hope of recovery and do not have decision-making capacity.
- **Active euthanasia** - It is the intentional act of killing a terminally ill patient on voluntary request. It is illegal in India.

Uniform Civil Code Polity and Governance

Context

- The Supreme Court of India reiterated its support for a Uniform Civil Code, observing that a common civil law framework would help address complexities arising from multiple personal laws governing marriage, divorce, and succession across communities.

Supreme Court's Observations

- The petition before the court challenges provisions of the **Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937**, arguing that it discriminates against Muslim women in matters such as inheritance.
- The Court stated that striking down personal law provisions may create a legal vacuum regarding inheritance rules.
- It emphasised that a **Uniform Civil Code would provide a clearer and more comprehensive solution to ensure**

equality in personal laws, which requires legislative action, not only judicial decisions.

Uniform Civil Code

- **Article 44** of the **Directive Principles of the State Policy (DPSP)** states that it is the duty of the State to secure **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** for the citizens throughout the country.
- It mainly aims to **replace Personal Laws** based on the scriptures and customs of each major religious community in India with a **common set of rules governing every citizen**.

“Uniform” in UCC signifies

- Uniformity of laws **between communities**.
- Uniformity of laws **within communities** ensuring equalities between the rights of men and women.

Efforts Towards UCC in India

- **Special Marriage Act, 1954**: The **Special Marriage Act of 1954** provides for **civil marriage for any citizen irrespective of religion**, thus, permitting any Indian to have their marriage outside the boundaries of any religious personal law.
- **Shah Bano Case 1985**: In this case, **Shah Bano** was refused her claim for maintenance. The **Supreme Court** ruled in her favour under **Section 125 of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)**, which applied to all citizens the order for maintenance of wives, children and parents.
 - The Supreme Court further recommended that the long pending **Uniform Civil Code should be finally enacted**.

- The **Supreme Court** also called on the government to implement the UCC in the **1995 Sarla Mudgal judgement** as well as in the **Paulo Coutinho vs Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira case (2019)**.

Arguments in Favour of UCC

- **Accommodating the Aspirations of the Youth**: As the world transitions into the digital age, the **social attitude and aspiration of the young population** is shaping by **universal and global principles of equality, humanity and modernity**.
 - Thus, the **enactment of Uniform Civil Code will help in utilising their full potential** towards nation building.
- **Support National Integration**: The **Constitution guarantees all citizens equal treatment in courts of law whether it is criminal laws or other civil laws (except Personal Laws)**.
 - Thus, the implementation of Uniform Civil Code will grant an equal set of personal laws to all, resulting in the **end of politicization of issues of the discrimination or concessions** or on the **other hand exceptional benefits appreciated by a specific community on the basis of their specific religious personal laws**.
- **The Rise Above the Patriarchal Mindset**: The existing personal laws of most religions are based upon the **upper-class patriarchal notions of the society**. Thus, the codification and implementation of the Uniform Civil Code will **destroy the sanctity of the patriarchal orthodox**.
 - Thus, the Uniform Civil Code will **promote gender equality** and will bring both **men and women at par**.
- **Convenient for Judicial Process**: There exist many personal laws, including **Hindu**

Code, Sharia Law, etc. The presence of so many laws leads to **confusion, complexity, and inconsistencies** in the adjudication of personal matters, sometimes resulting in **delayed or incomplete justice.**

- UCC will help the judiciary deliver justice efficiently and within a **reasonable timeframe.**

Arguments Against UCC

- **21st Law Commission Report :** The **Law Commission of India** has opined that a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is neither necessary nor desirable to reconcile conflicts in personal/family laws.
 - It stated that **many countries are now moving towards recognition of difference**, and the mere existence of difference **does not imply discrimination, but is indicative of a robust democracy.**
 - Therefore, the **Commission has suggested amendments to existing family laws** to tackle discrimination and inequality in personal laws, rather than do away with differences between them altogether.
- **Against Cultural Diversity India:** Practical difficulties due to **diversity in India**, it is difficult to come up with a uniform set of rules for personal issues like marriage due to the tremendous diverse culture in India across the **religions, sects, castes, states, etc.**
- **Encroachment on Religious Freedom:** **Articles 25 to 28 of Indian Constitution** provide the **Right to Freedom of Religion.** The Uniform Civil Code is viewed as a **threat to religious freedom (Article 25)** by many communities, especially the minority communities.
 - According to them, the **Uniform Civil Code will neglect their traditions**

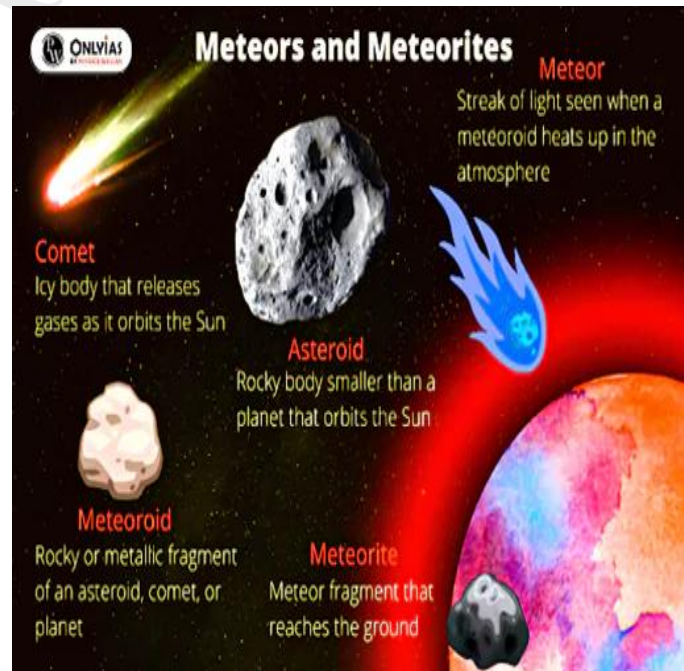
and impose rules which will be mainly influenced by the **majority religious communities.**

- **Against the Indigenous Rights of Tribes:** The **Naga Community** has claimed that the implementation of UCC would bring about clear trouble for their **culture and dignity.**
 - It can potentially cause **social disorder**, as the **personal and social life of the tribes are quite distinct from the rest of the people in the country.**

Conclusion

- The **goal of a UCC should ideally be reached in a piecemeal manner through a brick-by-brick approach** rather than an omnibus approach. A **just code is far more important than a uniform code.**

Asteroid 2024 YR4 Science and Tech



Context

- **NASA has confirmed that asteroid 2024 YR4 poses no collision risk to the Moon in 2032, based on observations from the James Webb Space Telescope.**

- **2024 YR4 is classified as a Near-Earth Asteroid (NEA)**, indicating its orbit brings it close to Earth's orbital path.

Asteroid vs. Meteoroid vs. Meteorite:

- **Asteroid:** Small rocky body orbiting the Sun.
- **Meteoroid:** Smaller particle from an asteroid or comet orbiting the Sun.
- **Meteor:** A meteoroid that enters Earth's atmosphere, creating a streak of light (shooting star).
- **Meteorite:** A meteor that survives its passage through the atmosphere and lands on Earth's surface

Additional information - Global Asteroid Missions

- **DART Mission (NASA, 2022):** The first planetary defense test aimed at changing an asteroid's trajectory by crashing a probe into it, specifically targeting the binary asteroid Didymos.
- **OSIRIS-REx (NASA, 2016-2023):** Sample return mission to asteroid Bennu, providing insights into the solar system's formation.
- **Hayabusa2 (JAXA, 2014-2020):** Successfully collected samples from asteroid Ryugu, including essential ingredients for life.
- **Lucy Mission (NASA, 2021-Present):** A 12-year journey to study multiple Jupiter Trojan asteroids.
- **Hera Mission (ESA, 2024 Launch):** Will study the impact crater produced by DART to analyze its deflection success.
- **Tianwen-2 (China, 2025 Planned):** A mission to sample the near-Earth asteroid Kamo'oalewa

SIPRI Report on Arms Defence



Context

- The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Arms Transfers Database (1950–2025) was updated recently.

Major Highlights

- The five largest suppliers of major arms in 2021–25 - the United States, France, Russia, Germany and China.
- Top five importers are Ukraine, India, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Pakistan accounted for 35% of global imports.
- India accounted for 8.2% of total global arms imports between 2021 and 2025, making it the second-largest importer of major weapons systems.
- The largest share of Indian arms imports came from Russia, at 40% a significantly smaller share than in 2016–20 (51%) and almost half that in 2011–15 (70%).

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI)

- It is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- It was established in 1966 in Stockholm (Sweden).

International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF 2026)

Syllabus: GS3/Agriculture



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE
WOMAN FARMER
 2026

Context

- The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has declared 2026 the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF 2026).
- Workforce shift: Rural men are moving to non-farm jobs leading to women replacing them in agriculture.

Government Initiatives for Women in Agriculture

- **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP):** Under National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), supports women farmers in sustainable agriculture, livestock, and NTFP (non-timber forest produce).
- **Joint Land Titles:** States encouraged to issue land pattas in joint names of husband and wife.
- **Priority Sector Lending (PSL):** Mandates credit flow to women farmers.
- **Rural women SHGs & FPOs:** Supported through NABARD and DAY-NRLM.

Paid Menstrual Leave May Hurt Women's Careers: SC
Health & Society

Context

- The Supreme Court expressed apprehensions that a law making paid leave during menstrual pain compulsory may damage the careers of young women and deprive them of equal opportunities.

Menstrual Leave

- Menstrual leave refers to paid or unpaid leave granted to women during menstruation when they experience health issues such as:
- **Dysmenorrhea:** painful menstrual cramps
- **Endometriosis:** a disorder where tissue similar to uterine lining grows outside the uterus

Highlights of the SC Judgement

- Such a move could create a **psychological barrier among women that they are inferior to men as they can't work** when they are menstruating.
- The Court encouraged **"voluntary" initiatives** in this regard by States like Odisha, Karnataka and Kerala, which gives leave to students in State-run universities and institutions up to 60 days' leave annually for menstrual pain.

Arguments in Favour of Paid Menstrual Leave

- **Promotes Gender-Sensitive Workplaces:** Recognises biological realities of women and promotes inclusivity and empathy in the workplace.
- **Aligns with Constitutional Principles:** Supports Article 42 of the Constitution of India, which directs the state to ensure just and humane conditions of work.
- **Improves Productivity and Well-being:** Allows women to rest during periods of pain or discomfort, leading to better overall performance and morale.

- **Health and Human Rights Perspective:** Upholds women's right to health, dignity, and bodily autonomy.
- **De-stigmatising Menstruation:** Recognising menstrual health in workplace policy can help break social taboos & promote gender equality.
- **Global Alignment:** Reflects global best practices, countries like **Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Taiwan, and Spain** have similar policies.

Arguments Against

- **Risk of Workplace Discrimination:** Employers may become reluctant to hire or promote women, viewing them as less productive or more costly.
- **Informal Sector Dominance:** Nearly **88% of India's workforce is in the informal sector**, where formal leave policies are largely absent.
- **Implementation Challenges in the Private Sector:** Ensuring compliance and monitoring across diverse industries could be difficult.

Existing Menstrual Leave Policies in India

- **India does not have a national law on menstrual leave**, but some states have introduced policies.
- **Bihar was the first state to introduce menstrual leave (1992)** for government employees.
- **Some companies have introduced voluntary menstrual leave policies** like Zomato, Swiggy.

Additional Information - Karnataka Menstrual Leave Policy-2025

- Women in the state of Karnataka will be entitled to up to **12 menstrual leaves annually**.

- This development marks a significant step in recognising menstrual health at a workplace and rights issue.
- The **Dr. Sapna S committee** was appointed by the Karnataka government to study and recommend menstrual leave policy
- **Significance** - It aims to create a more inclusive and stigma-free workplace and is considered a landmark decision in India, as it covers both government and private sectors comprehensively.

Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 Society

News-

- **The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026** was introduced in the Lok Sabha by the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment.

Major Highlights of the Bill

- **The Bill aims to amend the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.**
- **Definition of Transgender Person:** It seeks to narrow the definition of "transgender person" and clarifies that persons with different sexual orientations or self-perceived sexual identities **will not fall within the definition of transgender persons** under the Act.
- **Changes To Recognition Of Gender Identity:** The District Magistrate will issue a certificate of identity after examining the recommendation of a designated medical board headed by a Chief Medical Officer or Deputy Chief Medical Officer.

Additional Information - LGBTQIA+

- **LGBTQIA+** is an umbrella term for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,

queer, intersex, and asexual persons, with '+' representing other identities that are not specifically included in these letters.

India's Position on LGBTQIA+ Rights

- As per census 2011, there were 4.87 lakhs persons in India who opted for "other" in gender category.
- **Decriminalisation:** Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018) decriminalised consensual homosexual acts (Section 377 partially struck down).
- **Transgender Rights:** NALSA v. Union of India (2014) recognised the right to self-identify gender.
- It recognises transgender as the "third gender" upholding their fundamental rights.
- **Constitutional Provisions:** Article 14 - Right to equality, Article 15 - No discrimination on grounds of sex and Article 21 - Right to life and personal liberty.
- **Legislation:** The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 provides legal recognition of transgender identity.

Challenges Faced by the Transgenders

- **Societal Issues:** Trans persons face deep-rooted societal prejudices, leading to ostracisation from families and communities.
- **Lack of Access to Education:** High school dropout rates due to bullying, harassment, and gender-based violence.
- **Barriers in Employment:** Trans persons face widespread discrimination in hiring and the workplace. Often forced into informal, unsafe, and exploitative sectors, like begging or sex work, due to lack of opportunities.
- **Healthcare Exclusion:** They face lack of gender-affirmative healthcare,

discrimination by medical staff, and unavailability of hormonal and surgical services in public hospitals.

- **High mental health burden due to social rejection and isolation.**
- **Violence and Abuse:** Prone to verbal, physical, and sexual violence both in public and private spaces.
- **Political Underrepresentation:** Low political visibility and representation in mainstream parties and institutions.
- **Lack of policy-making** participation hinders the articulation of their needs.

Government Initiatives

- **National Portal for Transgender Persons** - launched in 2020, enables online applications for identity certificates and access to benefits.
- **SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) Scheme**, introduced in 2022, provides livelihood, skill training, and shelter support through Garima Greh centres and Ayushman Bharat TG Plus health coverage.
- **National Council for Transgender Persons:** It serves as a statutory body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to safeguard and promote the rights of transgender persons in India.

International Solar Alliance Environment

News

- **Recently, the Government highlighted the growing global momentum behind solar energy and ISA's role in advancing the clean energy transition.**

International Solar Alliance

- **Started** - The ISA, is an Indian initiative that was **launched by the Prime Minister of**

India and the President of France on 30th November 2015 in Paris.

- **Solar powered countries** - It is an initiative with 124 solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the tropic of Cancer and the tropic of Capricorn.
- **Objective** - To collectively address key common challenges to the **scaling up of solar energy in ISA member countries.**
- **Headquarter** - **National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) campus, Gurugram.**
- **Members:** As of March 2026, the International Solar Alliance (ISA) **has expanded to include 125 member and signatory countries.** Of these, approximately **107 countries have officially ratified the ISA Framework Agreement to become full members.**

Nominations for Padma Awards-2027 Begins

Miscellaneous



Padma
Vibhushan

Padma Bhushan

Padma S

News

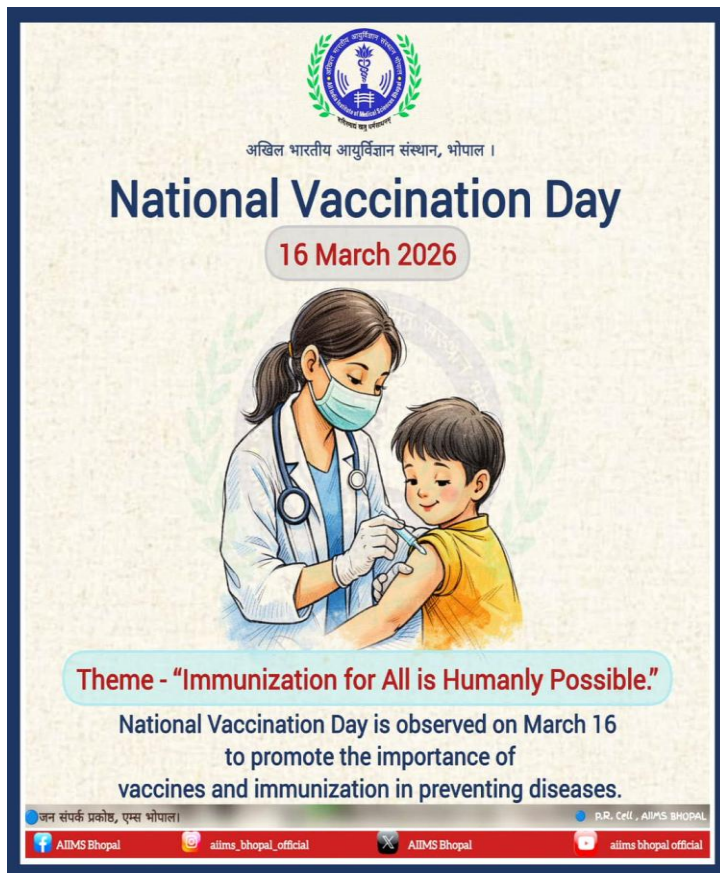
- The Centre has opened nominations and recommendations for the Padma Awards 2027, one of the country's highest civilian honours.

Padma Awards

- The Padma Awards are among **India's highest civilian honours instituted in 1954.**

- They are presented in three categories: **Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.**
1. 'Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for **exceptional and distinguished service;**
 2. 'Padma Bhushan' for **distinguished service of high order** and
 3. 'Padma Shri' for **distinguished service** in any field.
- The awards recognise "work of distinction" and are given for **exceptional achievements** or service across a wide range of fields, including **art, literature and education, sports, medicine, social work, science and engineering, public affairs, civil service, trade and industry.**
 - **All individuals are eligible for the awards regardless of race, occupation, position or gender.**
 - **Note** - However, **government servants, including employees of public sector undertakings, are generally not eligible, except for doctors and scientists.**
 - The government is committed to transform Padma Awards into "People's Padma", encouraging citizens to nominate deserving individuals.
 - **Self-nominations are also allowed.**
 - The nominations must include detailed information about the nominee's distinguished achievements in their respective fields
 - nominations will be accepted only through the **online Rashtriya Puraskar Portal.**
 - The awards are **announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year.**
 - These Awards are conferred by the **President of India** at ceremonial functions which are held at RashtrapatiBhawan usually around March/ April every year.

National Vaccination Day Health



Context

- India marked National Vaccination Day (March 16) to highlight achievements in immunisation.
- The day is observed to commemorate the first dose of the Oral Polio Vaccine administered in 1995 under the Pulse Polio Programme.

Government Initiatives

- The **Universal Immunisation Programme**: Launched in 1985 and implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, it aims to provide free vaccines to children and pregnant women against various diseases.
- **Mission Indradhanush**: It was launched in December 2014 by the Government of India to reach children and pregnant women who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated.

Recent Initiatives (2026)

- **HPV Vaccination Campaign**: Targets ~1.15 crore girls (14 years) for cervical cancer prevention.
- **Indigenous Td Vaccine**: Manufactured at CRI, Kasauli; ~55 lakh doses planned for supply.

Digital Initiatives:

- **eVIN**: Real-time vaccine stock and temperature tracking;
- **U-Win**: Digital vaccination registry and tracking platform;
- **CoWIN**: Enabled administration of 220+ crore COVID vaccine doses.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) International



Context

- US President Donald Trump has warned of leaving the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) after its allies declined to assist in securing the Strait of Hormuz.

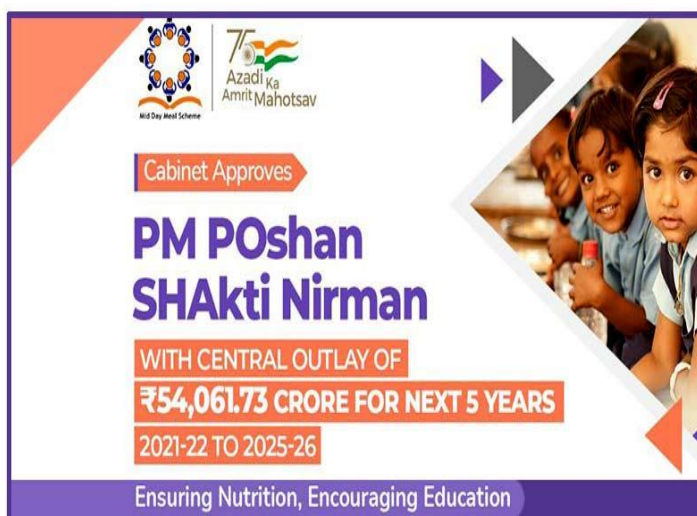
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

- NATO, also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance.
- **Headquarters**: Brussels, Belgium
- **Background**: It was established by 12 countries from Europe and North America with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty (also known as Washington

Treaty) in 1949 in Washington, D.C to provide collective security against the Soviet Union attack in the aftermath of World War II.

- **Collective Defense:** According to **Article 5, NATO works on the principle of collective defense**, where an attack on any NATO member is considered an attack on all NATO members. So far, **Article 5 has been invoked once - in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001.**
- **Members:** It comprises **32 member states.** Sweden became the 32nd member.

PM POSHAN Scheme Schemes



News

- A Parliamentary Standing Committee has recommended the inclusion of breakfast in the **PM POSHAN Scheme & extension of coverage up to Class 12.**

PM-POSHAN

- Earlier known as **Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)** and renamed as **PM POSHAN (Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman) in 2021.**
- It operates under the **Ministry of Education** and is approved for the period **2021-22 to 2025-26.**

- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** (jointly funded by Centre and States) **providing one hot cooked meal to students in government and aided schools up to Class 8.**
- It aims to address **hunger (lack of adequate food intake) and educational outcomes (attendance, retention, learning) simultaneously.**

World Happiness Report 2026 Economy

Context

- The **World Happiness Report 2026** highlights that **heavy social media use is adversely affecting the well-being of young people** across many countries.

World Happiness Report 2026

- The annual report is **published by the University of Oxford's Wellbeing Research Centre in partnership with Gallup, and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.**

Six factors for evaluation of happiness ranking:

1. GDP per capita,
 2. Life expectancy,
 3. Social support,
 4. Freedom to make life choices,
 5. Generosity,
 6. Perceptions of corruption.
- **Top 3: Finland (1st, since 2018), Iceland (2nd), and Denmark (3rd).**
 - **Bottom 3: Malawi (145th), Sierra Leone (146th), and Afghanistan (147th).**
 - **India: Ranked 116th (improved from 118th in 2025).**

Fiscal Health Index 2026

Syllabus: GS2/Polity and Governance

Context

- **NITI Aayog has released the second annual edition of Fiscal Health Index (FHI 2026).**

Fiscal Health Index

- **Mandate** - It assesses the fiscal health of states in India.
- **Parameters** - Quality of Expenditure, Revenue Mobilisation, Fiscal Prudence, Debt Index, and Debt Sustainability.
- Data for the index is sourced from the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

Key Highlights of FHI 2026

Overall State Rankings:

- **Odisha remains the top-performing state**, further improving its fiscal score.
- **Goa and Jharkhand** also feature among the Achiever states.
- **Gujarat and Maharashtra** continue to remain in the top five.
- Haryana shows a notable improvement by gaining three ranks.

States Showing Recovery:

- **Bihar, Karnataka, and Telangana** demonstrate moderate improvement in fiscal performance.

Low-Performing States:

- **Punjab, West Bengal, and Kerala** continue to remain at the bottom of the rankings, reflecting persistent fiscal stress.

NE and Himalayan States:

- Evaluated separately for the first time, **Arunachal Pradesh tops as Achiever (strong revenue growth)**, followed by **Uttarakhand**;

Removal of the Chief Election Commissioner

Syllabus: GS2/ Polity

Context

- Opposition parties are considering an impeachment motion against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.

Article 324 of Constitution

- **Article 324** of the Constitution states that the **Election Commission will comprise the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and such number of Election Commissioners (ECs)**, as the President may decide.
- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** is responsible for managing the preparation of electoral rolls and **conducting elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice-President.**
- The Constitution specifies that the **President will appoint the CEC and ECs, subject to the provisions of an Act of Parliament.**

Constitutional Provisions for Removal of the CEC

- **Article 324(5)** of the Constitution of India provides that the **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) can be removed in the same manner and on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.**
- A motion seeking the removal of the CEC may be introduced in either House of **Parliament** and must specify the grounds for seeking removal.

The motion must be supported by:

1. At least **100 members of the Lok Sabha**, or
2. At least **50 members of the Rajya Sabha.**
3. Once the motion is admitted, the **Speaker of the Lok Sabha or the Chairman of the**

Rajya Sabha constitutes an inquiry committee to investigate the allegations.

4. If the committee finds the charges proven, the motion is taken up for voting in Parliament.
5. Both Houses must then pass the motion with a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. After both Houses approve the motion, the President issues the final order for removal.

Autonomous District Councils in Meghalaya **Syllabus: GS2/ Polity and Governance**

Context

- The election to the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC) in Meghalaya has been postponed due to ongoing violence and disturbances in the West Garo Hills district.

About

- **The Sixth Schedule (Articles 244(2) and 275(1)) of Constitution provides autonomous administrative arrangements for tribal areas in certain northeastern states like Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.**
- **Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) in Meghalaya are special local self-governing institutions created under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India to protect the political, cultural, and economic rights of tribal communities.**
- **These councils enjoy legislative, executive, judicial, and financial powers.**

Objectives

1. Protect tribal land and customs.
2. Provide self-governance to indigenous communities.
3. Prevent exploitation by external groups.

CITES

Syllabus: GS3/Environment



Context

- Recently, the **Supreme Court of India has dismissed a petition alleging violation of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) parameters.**

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

- **Objective** - It is a **legally binding agreement aimed at ensuring that international trade in wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.**
- It does not ban trade completely, but regulates it through a system of permits and classifications.
- **Signed: 1973 (Washington Convention)**
- **Entered into force: 1975**
- **Administered by: UNEP (Secretariat in Geneva)**
- **Parties: 180+ countries; India is a member**
- **Nature: Binding on countries, but implementation via national laws;**
- **Institutional Structure: Conference of Parties (CoP): Highest decision-making body (meets every 2-3 years)**
- **Secretariat: Geneva**

Three Appendices

- **Appendix I:** Species threatened with extinction; Trade allowed only in exceptional cases;
- **Example:** Tiger, Elephant (certain populations), Rhino
- **Appendix II:** Species not immediately threatened, but may become so; controlled trade allowed.
- **Example:** Many timber species, marine species (e.g., sharks)
- **Appendix III:** Species protected in at least one country; other countries help regulate trade.

India & CITES

- **India is a signatory since 1976; Implemented via Wildlife Protection Act, 1972;**
- **Key Authorities:** MoEFCC (Management Authority); Wildlife Institute of India (Scientific Authority).

Nilgiri Tahrs

Syllabus: GS3/Species in News



Context

- **The Chokramudi hills near Munnar in Idukki (Kerala) have now transformed**

into a thriving natural habitat for the Nilgiri tahr.

Nilgiri Tahr

- **Description:** A stocky mountain goat (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*) with short, yellowish-brown fur, and the **state animal of Tamil Nadu.**
- **Habitat and Distribution:** Endemic to a 400 km stretch of the Western Ghats, primarily across Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- **Diet:** A herbivore feeding on over 120 species of grasses, herbs, and shrubs.
- **Threats:** Key threats include **habitat loss (deforestation, plantations, hydroelectric projects), competition with domestic livestock, and hunting.**
- **Conservation Status:** Listed as **Endangered (IUCN Red List)** and protected under **Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.**
- **Note - The Nilgiri tahr is the state animal of Tamil Nadu, and Eravikulam National Park hosts the largest surviving population and highest density of the species.**

Inquiry and Prosecution Wing of Lokpal
Syllabus: GS2/ Polity

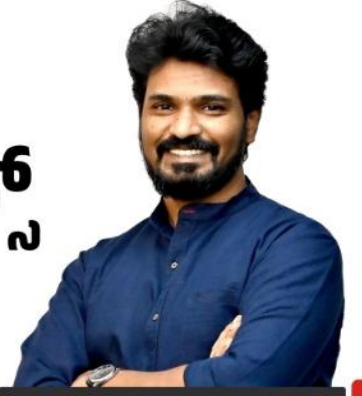
In News

- A Parliamentary Standing Committee has sought details on the operationalisation of inquiry and prosecution wings provision in the **Lokpal and Lokayukta Act 2013, highlighting delays even after a decade of enactment.**

Lokpal

- **Status & Mandate:** Statutory anti-corruption body (**Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013**). It became functional in 2019. Mandated to inquire into corruption allegations against public functionaries.

- **Structure:** Consists of a Chairperson (former CJI, former SC Judge, or eminent person) and eight Members (four Judicial). At least 50% of Members must be from SC/ST/OBC/Minorities/women.
- **Appointment & Term:** Appointed by the President based on the recommendation of a selection committee chaired by the Prime Minister. The term is 5 years or until 70 years of age.
- **Jurisdiction:** Covers current or former PM, Union Ministers, MPs, and Union Government officials (Groups A, B, C, D). Also includes heads and members of bodies funded by Union/State or receiving foreign contributions over ₹10 lakh.
- **Powers:** It has powers to superintendence over and to give direction to the CBI. Can refer complaints against Central government servants to the CVC.
- **PM Exemptions:** Cannot inquire into allegations against the PM regarding international relations, security, public order, atomic energy, or space. Initiation of a PM inquiry requires consideration by the full Lokpal bench and approval by at least 2/3rds of the members.



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