Sanskriti IAS

DAILY
CURRENT AFFAIRS

Important Current News for UPSC & UPPSC

10th Mar 2026

TOPICS:-

1. Raisen Fort
2. Kheybar Shekan Missile
3. Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)
4. BharatNet Project
5. ASMITA Initiative
6. Other Important News of the day
7. Uttar Pradesh in News

RAISEN FORT

Why in News

➤ Police in **Raisen district, Madhya Pradesh** arrested four youths after a video showing **cannon firing from the ASI-protected Raisen Fort** surfaced on social media.

Historical Evolution of the Fort

➤ **Raisen Fort**, built in the **11th century**, is located on a **sandstone hill in Raisen town about 40 km from Bhopal**.

➤ The fort witnessed rule by **local Hindu chieftains**, followed by the **Sultans of Mandu** during the medieval period.

➤ During the **Mughal Empire under Emperor Akbar,** Raisen served as a **Sarkar headquarters in the Ujjain Subah**.

➤ Around **1760**, the fort was occupied by **Nawab Fiaz Mohammad Khan of Bhopal**, who was later recognised by **Mughal Emperor Alamgir II as Faujdar of Raisen**.

Architectural and Spatial Features

➤ The fort covers nearly **800 acres**, making it among the **largest hill forts of Central India**.

➤ It has a **massive stone wall with nine gateways**, representing typical **medieval Indian hilltop military architecture**.

➤ The complex contains four important palaces—**Badal Mahal, Rohini Mahal, Itradaan Mahal, and Hawa Mahal**.

➤ A large courtyard and a central **water pool system** enhance both aesthetics and defensive utility.

Cultural and Religious Syncretism

➤ The fort houses a **temple dedicated to Lord Shiva**, reflecting the region's early Hindu heritage.

➤ It also contains a shrine of **Hazrat Peer Fatehullah Shah Baba**, symbolising **Hindu–Islamic cultural coexistence**.

➤ This dual heritage illustrates **syncretic religious traditions prevalent in medieval Central India**.

Water Management and Archaeological Importance

➢ The fort possessed an advanced **water conservation system with more than 40 wells**, ensuring long-term sustainability during sieges.

➢ Numerous **rock shelters with prehistoric paintings** are present within the fort complex.

➢ The monument is protected by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** under the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**.

KHEYBAR SHEKAN MISSILE

F. Firstpost

What is the Kheibar Shekan missile Iran claims to have used to hit Netanyahu's office?

The IRGC said Kheibar Shekan missiles targeted Netanyahu's office and Israel's air force command on March 2, 2026. The solid-fuel MRBM has a...

Why in News

➢ Iran's **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)** claimed it used **Kheybar Shekan missiles** to target Israeli military infrastructure.

Missile Classification and Development

➢ **Kheybar Shekan** is a **long-range solid-fuel ballistic missile developed by Iran**.

➢ The missile belongs to the **fourth generation of the Khorramshahr missile family**.

➢ Its name means **"breaker of Khayber," referring to the historical Battle of Khayber in Arab history**.

Technical Specifications

➢ It is powered by a **locally developed 'Arond' engine integrated into the fuel tank** to reduce overall length.

➢ The missile uses **solid fuel propulsion**, enabling faster launch readiness and easier storage.

Operational and Strategic Capabilities

➢ It can be launched from a **mobile platform**, allowing flexible deployment and survivability.

➢ The missile becomes **launch-ready within about 15 minutes**, improving battlefield responsiveness.

➢ Its flight path includes **three phases: takeoff, mid-course guidance using rear engines, and precision terminal descent**.

➢ Its speed reportedly reaches **Mach 12 (about 19,500 km/h in the atmosphere)**.

NARCOTICS CONTROL BUREAU (NCB)

News On AIR

News On AIR | March 8, 2026 10:04 PM

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has dismantled a pan-India drug distribution network operating under the name Team Kalki.

Why in News

➢ The **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** dismantled a **pan-India drug distribution network known as "Team Kalki."**

Institutional Framework

➢ **NCB** is the **nodal drug law enforcement and intelligence agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs**.

➢ It was established on **14 November 1985 under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act)**.

➢ The **headquarters is located in New Delhi**.

Core Enforcement Functions

➢ The bureau coordinates **drug law enforcement among central and state agencies**.

➢ It assists states in **strengthening anti-narcotics operations and intelligence gathering**.

➢ NCB analyses **drug seizure data, trafficking trends, and criminal modus operandi**.

➢ It prepares **National Drug Enforcement Statistics** to guide policy decisions.

> **Operational Structure**
>
> ➢ The bureau operates through **zonal offices across India** for field enforcement.
>
> ➢ These offices work closely with **Customs, State Police, and other enforcement agencies** to control drug trafficking networks.

International and Inter-Agency Cooperation

➢ NCB maintains liaison with international bodies such as **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), INTERPOL, and the World Customs Organization**.

➢ It acts as the **national contact point for international intelligence exchange on narcotics trafficking**.

BHARATNET PROJECT

Why in News

➢ The government reported that the **BharatNet project has expanded optical fibre connectivity to over 2.15 lakh Gram Panchayats** across India.

Bharat Net to Bridge Digital Divide in Rural and Remote Areas

Digital Infrastructure Vision

➢ **BharatNet** is a flagship initiative to provide **broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats in India**.

➢ It aims to ensure **unrestricted access to broadband infrastructure for telecom service providers**.

➢ The project enables services such as **e-health, e-education, digital governance, and rural digital commerce**.

BharatNet: Key Achievements and Milestones

1 Network Expansion
2,14,283 Gram Panchayats with optical fiber. The network spans more than 6.9 lakh kilometers. Globally, the largest rural broadband project.

2 Affordable Internet
Broadband services in rural areas starting at Rs. 99/month. Estimated monthly internet data usage is 1,37,967 TB.

3 Public Wi-Fi Hotspots
1,04,574 Wi-Fi hotspots installed in villages.

4 Fiber to the Home (FTTH) Connections
11,60,367 FTTH connections commissioned.

As on 20.12.2024

Institutional and Financial Framework

➢ The project is implemented by **Bharat Broadband Network Limited (BBNL)**, a **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)**.

➢ Funding is provided through the **Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN)**, which replaced the **Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)**.

➢ The initiative supports the government's **Digital India mission for inclusive digital connectivity**.

Phased Implementation Strategy

➢ **Phase I** connected about **1 lakh Gram Panchayats using existing optical fibre infrastructure by December 2017**.

➢ **Phase II** expanded coverage to **1.5 lakh additional Gram Panchayats using optical fibre, radio, and satellite technologies**.

➢ **Phase III** aims to **future-proof networks by integrating 5G technologies and improving last-mile connectivity**.

Governance and Development Impact

➢ Rural broadband access strengthens **digital governance, financial inclusion, and access to online public services**.

➢ It supports initiatives such as **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), e-governance platforms, and rural entrepreneurship**.

➢ Improved connectivity contributes to **reducing the rural–urban digital divide and enhancing socio-economic development**.

ASMITA INITIATIVE

PIB

ASMITA League Organised in Chandigarh to Celebrate International Women's Day

To celebrate International Women's Day, the ASMITA League was successfully organised by MY Bharat Chandigarh and the Sports Authority of...

Why in News

➢ The government launched a **nationwide athletics league at 250 locations under the ASMITA programme** to promote women's participation in sports.

Programme Overview

➢ **ASMITA (Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women Through Action)** was launched in **2021**.

➢ It operates under the **Khelo India programme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**.

➢ The initiative focuses on **increasing women's participation in competitive sports through leagues and tournaments**.

Institutional Implementation

➢ The **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** supports **National Sports Federations** in organising women's leagues.

➢ Competitions are conducted across **multiple age groups at zonal and national levels**.

➢ The programme forms part of the broader **Khelo Bharat Niti aimed at sports-based nation-building**.

Participation and Coverage

➢ The ASMITA league has witnessed participation of **around 3 lakh women athletes**.

➢ Competitions have been organised across **33 sporting disciplines and more than 2600 leagues** nationwide.

➢ The initiative serves as a **platform for identifying emerging female sporting talent in India**.

Social and Governance Significance

➢ The programme promotes **gender equality and empowerment through sports participation**.

- It contributes to **grassroots sports development and talent identification**.
- Such initiatives align with **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality and SDG 3 on Health and Well-being**.

OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS OF THE DAY

Places in News	KHARG ISLAND
	Why in News
	- The **United States** has reportedly considered seizing **Kharg Island of Iran** to disrupt the country's oil revenues.
	Geographical Setting
	- **Kharg Island** is a **coral island located in the northern Persian Gulf**, about **30 km from the Iranian mainland**.
	- The island covers approximately **25 sq km**, with a **length of 8 km and width of 4.5 km**.
	- Its highest point, **Mount Didehban**, rises to **87 metres above sea level**.
	- The island is geologically composed of **porous limestone**, allowing accumulation of **freshwater reserves**, a rare feature in the Persian Gulf.
	Energy Infrastructure and Economic Role
	- Discovery of **offshore oil fields in the early 1960s** transformed Kharg into a major petroleum hub.
	- The island is connected through **pipelines to underwater oil fields and Khuzistan province**.
	- By the **early 1970s**, Kharg became **Iran's largest oil-loading terminal**.
	- It currently handles **around 90% of Iran's crude oil exports**, making it central to the country's economy.
	Logistics and Storage Capacity
	- Kharg Island has an **oil storage capacity of about 28 million barrels**.
	- Its infrastructure can load **eight to nine supertankers simultaneously**, including **VLCCs and ULCCs**.
	- The facility has a **loading capacity of nearly 7 million barrels per day,** enabling large-scale export operations.

	Strategic and Geopolitical Significance
	➤ The island lies close to the **Strait of Hormuz**, through which about **one-fifth of global oil trade passes**.
	➤ During the **Iran–Iraq War (1980–1988)**, Kharg Island was repeatedly bombed due to its energy importance.
	➤ Its location makes it a **critical node in global energy geopolitics and maritime security dynamics in West Asia**.
Space	# PROBA-3 MISSION
	Why in News
	➤ The **European Space Agency (ESA)** recently lost contact with one of the two spacecraft involved in the **Proba-3 mission**.
	Mission Objective and Innovation

> ➤ **Proba-3** is **ESA's first mission dedicated to precision formation flying in space**.

> ➤ The mission aims to create an **artificial solar eclipse using two coordinated satellites**.

> ➤ This configuration allows scientists to **observe the Sun's corona, which is normally hidden by the Sun's bright disk**.

Mission Architecture

> ➤ The mission consists of **two spacecraft: a Coronagraph satellite and an Occulter satellite shaped like a solar disk**.

> ➤ The satellites fly in **precise formation approximately 150 metres apart**.

> ➤ The Occulter blocks the Sun's direct light while the **Coronagraph observes the faint solar corona**.

Scientific Research Objectives

> ➤ The mission will image the **solar corona in visible, ultraviolet, and polarised light**.

> ➤ It aims to improve understanding of **coronal mass ejections (CMEs)** that can disrupt satellites and power grids on Earth.

> ➤ The mission will also measure **total solar irradiance**, tracking variations in the Sun's energy output.

Space Science Significance

> ➤ Precision formation flying represents a **major technological advancement in satellite coordination and autonomous navigation**.

> ➤ Improved understanding of solar activity helps strengthen **space weather forecasting and satellite protection systems**.

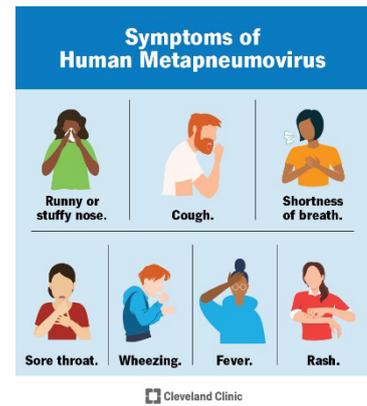| Health	

HUMAN METAPNEUMOVIRUS (HMPV)

Why in News

> ➤ A surge of **Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) infections** has been reported across the **West Coast of the United States**.

Virological Classification

➢ **It** is a **respiratory virus belonging to the Pneumoviridae family**.

➢ It is closely related to the **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)**, which also causes respiratory infections.

➢ Studies estimate that **10–12% of respiratory illnesses in children** are caused by HMPV.

Transmission Dynamics

➢ The virus spreads mainly through **respiratory droplets released during coughing and sneezing**.

➢ Infection can occur through **direct personal contact such as hand-shakes or touching contaminated surfaces**.

➢ Transmission also occurs when individuals **touch infected surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth**.

Clinical Symptoms and High-Risk Groups

➢ Common symptoms include **cough, fever, nasal congestion, and shortness of breath**.

➢ Severe cases may progress to **bronchitis or pneumonia**.

➢ High-risk groups include **young children, elderly individuals, and immunocompromised persons**.

Treatment and Public Health Response

➢ There is currently **no vaccine or specific antiviral treatment for HMPV**.

➢ Treatment focuses on **symptom management and prevention of complications**.

➢ Public health measures emphasise **respiratory hygiene, early diagnosis, and surveillance of respiratory infections**.

Science and Technology	**WHITE PHOSPHORUS**

CNN

Human rights group says Israeli military using white phosphorus munitions

The Israeli military is accused of using white phosphorus munitions in a residential area of southern Lebanon over the weekend.

Why in News

➢ **Human Rights Watch** recently accused **Israel** of using **white phosphorus in southern Lebanon**, raising humanitarian concerns.

Chemical Nature and Properties

➢ **It** is a **white to yellow waxy solid with a garlic-like odour**.

➢ It **ignites spontaneously in air at temperatures above 30°C**.

➢ The substance burns until **fully oxidised or deprived of oxygen**.

Military Applications

➢ Militaries use white phosphorus to **illuminate battlefields and create smokescreens** during combat operations.

➢ It is also used in **grenades and artillery shells as an incendiary weapon**.

➢ These properties make it effective in **concealment and signalling during warfare**.

Industrial and Commercial Uses

➢ White phosphorus is widely used in the **production of phosphoric acid and phosphate compounds**.

➢ Phosphates are key inputs for **fertilisers, detergents, and chemical manufacturing industries**.

➢ The compound has also been used historically in **fireworks and rodenticides**.

Humanitarian and Health Concerns

➢ Exposure to white phosphorus causes **severe chemical burns that may penetrate skin and bone**.

➢ Burning phosphorus releases **phosphoric acid and phosphine gas**, damaging the **eyes and respiratory system**.

➢ Its use in populated areas raises concerns under **International Humanitarian Law and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)**.
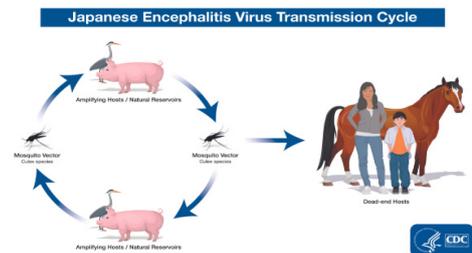
UTTAR PRADESH IN NEWS

ACUTE ENCEPHALITIS SYNDROME (AES) & JAPANESE ENCEPHALITIS (JE) CONTROL IN UTTAR PRADESH

Why in News

➢ **Uttar Pradesh** recorded a major decline in **Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES)** and **Japanese Encephalitis (JE)** cases, falling from **5,400 cases and 650 deaths in 2017 to zero deaths in 2024**.

Disease Background

➢ **AES** refers to a group of infections causing **acute inflammation of the brain**, leading to fever, seizures, and neurological damage.

➢ **Japanese Encephalitis (JE)** is a **mosquito-borne viral disease caused by the Japanese Encephalitis virus (Flaviviridae family)**.

➢ The disease historically affected **eastern Uttar Pradesh districts such as Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, and Deoria**, mainly impacting children.

Public Health Interventions

➢ Expansion of health infrastructure including **AIIMS Gorakhpur (2019)** and strengthening of **BRD Medical College** as an encephalitis treatment centre.

➢ Establishment of **Encephalitis Treatment Centres (ETCs)** at **PHCs and CHCs**, supported by **24×7 ambulance services**.

➢ **Mass JE vaccination campaigns** and strengthened surveillance under **ICMR and Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP)**.

Addressing Social Determinants

➢ **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** improved sanitation and reduced contamination risks.

➢ **Jal Jeevan Mission** expanded **piped drinking water supply** in rural areas.

➢ **Poshan Abhiyan** targeted **child malnutrition**, a key vulnerability factor for encephalitis.

Outcome and Governance Lessons

➢ **AES cases reduced to 116 and JE cases to 5 in 2024**, with **zero deaths reported**.

➢ The success highlights **mission-mode governance, Centre–State coordination, and integrated public health interventions**.