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Important Current News for UPSC & UPPSC

14th Mar 2026

TOPICS:-

- 1. National Shipping Board (NSB)**
- 2. Van Allen Probe A**
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- 6. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**
- 7. Other Important News of the day**
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NATIONAL SHIPPING BOARD (NSB)

BS Business Standard

Centre to prepare roadmap to tackle challenges in shipping sector

Shipping minister Sarbananda Sonowal asks officials to prepare a roadmap to resolve industry challenges amid geopolitical tensions and...



Why in News

- The Government of India recently held a high-level interaction with the **National Shipping Board (NSB)** to address challenges in the maritime sector amid global shipping uncertainties.



Institutional and Legal Framework

- The **National Shipping Board** is a permanent statutory body constituted under **Section 4 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958**.
- It was established in **1959** to institutionalise expert consultation in maritime governance.
- The board functions under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**.
- It serves as an advisory body assisting the **Central Government** in shaping India's maritime policy.

Governance Structure and Representation

- The Board consists of a **Chairman and multiple members representing Parliament and maritime stakeholders**.
- **Six members are elected by Parliament**, including **four from Lok Sabha and two from Rajya Sabha**.
- The **Central Government can nominate up to sixteen members** representing shipowners, seafarers, and government interests.
- The **Chairman and members hold office for a tenure of two years**.

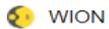
Strategic Role in Maritime Policy

- The Board advises the government on **shipping development, maritime infrastructure, and regulatory reforms**.
- Its recommendations have historically contributed to the development of **India's National Maritime Policy**.
- The institution supports policy alignment with initiatives such as **Sagarmala Programme and maritime logistics modernisation**.

Governance Relevance

- The board strengthens **consultative policymaking in maritime governance**, ensuring representation of industry and labour stakeholders.
- It supports India's ambition of becoming a **global maritime hub and expanding blue economy potential**.

VAN ALLEN PROBE A



Van Allen probe A returns: How solar maximum caused it to crash years ahead of schedule

Van Allen Belt shields Earth from solar radiation. The satellite sent to study this zone is now crashing down way before it was supposed to.



Why in News

- NASA's **Van Allen Probe A satellite**, weighing around **600 kg**, is re-entering Earth's atmosphere after completing its scientific mission.

Mission Background

- The **Van Allen Probes mission** was launched by **NASA on 30 August 2012**.
- The mission used **two identical spacecraft—Van Allen Probe A and Probe B**—to study Earth's radiation belts.
- Originally designed for a **two-year mission**, the spacecraft collected data for **nearly seven years (2012–2019)**.

Scientific Objective

- The mission aimed to study the **Van Allen Radiation Belts**, which are zones of **charged particles trapped by Earth's magnetic field**.
- These belts were named after **American physicist James Van Allen**, who discovered them in **1958**.
- Understanding these belts helps protect **satellites, astronauts, and communication systems from space radiation**.

Operational Mechanism

- Two spacecraft followed **similar orbital paths**, allowing scientists to compare spatial and temporal changes.
- This approach enabled measurement of **particle acceleration, loss mechanisms, and magnetic field dynamics**.

Mission Outcome and Relevance

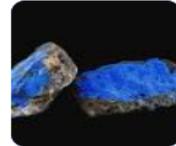
- The probes improved understanding of **space weather, solar storms, and radiation hazards**.
- The mission ended after **fuel depletion prevented the spacecraft from maintaining solar orientation**.

COBALT

 Down To Earth

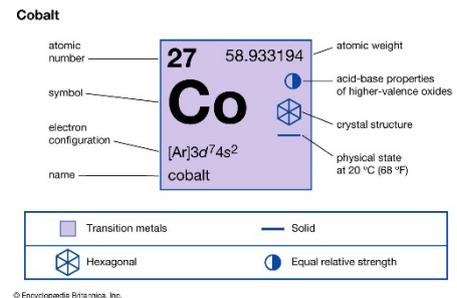
Cobalt mining in Democratic Republic of Congo polluting air and displacing communities: Report

The CMOC Group Limited, the world's largest producer of cobalt, has caused serious environmental and public health damage in the Democratic...



Why in News

- A recent report highlighted **environmental and health damage caused by cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**.



Chemical and Physical Characteristics

- **Cobalt (Co)** is a **hard, lustrous silver-grey transition metal** with **atomic number 27**.
- It is a **ferromagnetic metal** widely used as a strategic alloying element.
- Cobalt is commonly associated with **copper, nickel, and arsenic ores**.

Global Distribution of Resources

- Major reserves are in **Democratic Republic of Congo, Russia, Canada, Philippines, and Cuba**.
- The **DRC accounts for the largest share of global cobalt production**, making it strategically important.

Occurrence in India

- Cobalt deposits occur mainly in **Jharkhand, Odisha, Rajasthan, Nagaland, and Madhya Pradesh**.
- In India, cobalt is generally extracted as a **by-product of copper and nickel mining**.

Industrial and Strategic Applications

- Cobalt is essential in the **superalloy and special alloy industries**, especially for **aerospace and defence sectors**.

- It is widely used in **lithium-ion battery cathodes**, making it crucial for **electric vehicles and electronics**.
- Cobalt compounds are used as pigments such as **cobalt blue in ceramics, glass, and paints**.



Strategic and Policy Significance

- Cobalt is classified as a **critical mineral due to its importance in clean energy technologies**.
- Sustainable supply chains and ethical mining practices are becoming important governance concerns globally.

KURUMBA PAINTING

 The Indian Express

A Padma Shri, a fading art: The untold story of Kurumba artist Krishnan and a 3,000-year-old tradition

When Kurumba artist Krishnan Raghavan was posthumously awarded the Padma Shri, it brought national recognition to an ancient art form from...



Why in News

- The **Kurumba painting tradition** is reportedly facing decline and risk of extinction due to limited practitioners.

Cultural and Historical Origins

- It is a **prehistoric tribal art form estimated to be over 3000 years old**.
- It originates from the **Kurumba tribe inhabiting Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka**.
- Traditionally, the art was created on **rocks and cave walls in the Nilgiri Hills**.

Artistic Materials and Techniques

- The paintings use **natural pigments derived from forest resources**.
- **Yellow and brown colours** come from **Vengai tree resin**, while **green pigments** are extracted from leaves.
- Artists use **twigs, bamboo sticks, and natural fibre brushes** for painting.

Design Elements and Themes

- The art form uses **simple linear motifs with dots, lines, and geometric shapes**.
- Themes depict **tribal life, rituals, festivals, animals, and spiritual beliefs**.
- Surfaces often include **cow dung-coated walls, cloth, fabric, and handmade paper**.

Cultural Significance

- Kurumba art reflects **indigenous ecological knowledge and spiritual connection with nature.**
- Preservation of the art contributes to **safeguarding India's intangible cultural heritage.**

BEAS RIVER

Why in News

- Several fatalities were reported due to drowning incidents in the **Beas River in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh.**



Geographical Identity

- The **Beas River** flows through **Himachal Pradesh and Punjab** in northern India.
- It is one of the **five rivers that gave Punjab its name (“Land of Five Rivers”)**.
- In ancient texts, it was known as **Vipas**, meaning the **“unfettered river.”**

Historical Significance

- The river marked the **easternmost limit of Alexander the Great's invasion of India in 326 BCE.**
- Greek soldiers refused to cross the river, forcing Alexander to halt further eastward expansion.

Course and Hydrology

- The river originates near **Rohtang Pass in the Himalayas at about 13,050 feet elevation.**
- It flows through **Kullu Valley, Mandi, and Kangra Valley** before entering **Punjab.**
- The river joins the **Sutlej River at Harike** in Punjab.
- The total length of the river is approximately **470 km.**

Hydrological and Climatic Influences

- The river basin receives snowfall from **Western Disturbances during winter.**
- Around **70% of annual rainfall occurs during the southwest monsoon (June–September).**

Infrastructure and Tributaries

- Major tributaries include **Parvati, Tirthan, Sainj, Uhal, Banganga, and Chakki.**
- The **Pong Dam (Beas Dam)** is a major **earth-fill embankment dam located in Kangra district.**

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)

Reuters

IAEA says it is trying to broker a new nuclear deal between the US and Iran, TASS reports



The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi said on Friday that the IAEA is trying to arrange a new nuclear...

Why in News

- The **Director General of the IAEA** recently held talks with **Rosatom**, Russia's state nuclear energy corporation, amid rising nuclear non-proliferation concerns.

Origin and Institutional Status

- The **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** is the leading **intergovernmental organisation for nuclear cooperation**.
- Its establishment was inspired by **U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" speech in 1953**.
- The **IAEA Statute was approved in 1956 and entered into force on 29 July 1957**.
- The agency is an **autonomous organisation within the United Nations system**.

Global Significance

- The organisation currently has **around 180 member states**.
- It is widely known as the **"Atoms for Peace and Development" organisation**.
- Its headquarters are in **Vienna, Austria**.

Organisational Structure

- The **General Conference**, comprising all member states, meets annually to set policy directions.
- The **Board of Governors (35 members)** meets multiple times annually to approve safeguards agreements.
- The **Secretariat**, headed by the **Director General**, manages daily operations.

Core Functions and Mandate

- The agency promotes the **peaceful use of nuclear technology for development and scientific research**.
- It establishes **international nuclear safety and security standards**.
- It conducts **inspections and safeguards verification to ensure compliance with nuclear non-proliferation agreements**.

OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS OF THE DAY

**Person in
News**

ARPITA PATRA SUMMITS NEVADO OJOS DEL SALADO

TH The Hindu

IISc professor becomes second Indian woman to summit world's highest volcanic peak

IISc professor Arpita Patra becomes the second Indian woman to summit the world's highest volcanic peak, Nevado Ojos del Salado.



Why in News

- **Arpita Patra**, professor at the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)**, successfully summited **Nevado Ojos del Salado (6,893 m)**, becoming the **second Indian woman** to achieve this feat.

Geographical and Physical Features

- **Nevado Ojos del Salado** is the **highest volcano in the world** and the **tallest mountain in Chile**.
- It is in the **Atacama Desert on the Chile–Argentina border in the Andes Mountains**.
- The summit lies at an altitude of **6,893 metres above sea level**.

Mountaineering Significance

- The expedition involved **extreme cold, strong winds, and high-altitude conditions near 7,000 metres**.
- The final stage includes a **technical rock-climbing section in the last 50 metres before the summit**.
- The climb marks an important milestone in **Indian mountaineering achievements**.

Global Volcanic Peaks Challenge

- Patra has climbed major volcanic peaks including **Mount Kilimanjaro (Africa), Mount Elbrus (Europe), Mount Giluwe (Oceania), and Pico de Orizaba (North America)**.
- **Mount Giluwe (2025)** summit made her the **first Indian woman** to reach that peak.
- **Pico de Orizaba (Mexico)** is the **highest volcano in North America**.

Environ-
ment in
News**CHELONUS (CARINICHELONUS) MAHADEB**

EastMojo

New parasitic wasp species discovered in Assam tea estate

A rare parasitic wasp belonging to a little-known insect group has been recorded from a tea estate in Assam, drawing attention to the rich...

**Why in News**

- A rare parasitic wasp species **Chelonus (Carinichelonus) mahadeb** has been discovered in **Nahortoli Tea Estate, Assam**.

Taxonomic Classification

- It belongs to the genus **Chelonus**, a group of **parasitic wasps known as egg-larval parasitoids**.
- The species is part of the **subgenus Carinichelonus**, which is extremely rare globally.

Ecological Role

- These wasps lay eggs inside the **eggs of host insects, usually moths and butterflies**.
- The developing larvae eventually consume the host organism.
- This behaviour helps **naturally regulate pest populations in agricultural ecosystems**.

Agricultural Significance

- Many host insects are **crop-damaging moth larvae**, making Chelonus species valuable for **biological pest control**.
- Their presence supports **sustainable agriculture and reduced pesticide dependence**.

Scientific Importance

- The species is only the **second new species of this rare subgenus reported from India in recent years**.
- The discovery highlights the **biodiversity richness of northeastern India**.

SPOTTED HYENA

Why in News

- A study has highlighted the ecological role of the **Spotted Hyena** in maintaining urban ecological balance in **Mekelle city, Ethiopia**.



Taxonomy and Identification

- It is the **largest member of the hyena family** and is commonly called the “**laughing hyena**.”
- Though dog-like in appearance, it is evolutionarily closer to **cats, civets, and genets**.

Habitat and Distribution

- The species inhabits **savannas, grasslands, dry woodlands, tropical forests, mountains, and semi-deserts**.
- It is widely distributed across **sub-Saharan Africa**, including **Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa**.

Behavioural and Biological Characteristics

- Spotted hyenas possess **excellent nocturnal vision and are primarily active at night**.
- Their societies follow a **matriarchal clan structure led by an alpha female**.
- Females possess a **unique pseudo-penis and lack an external vaginal opening**, a rare trait among mammals.

Ecological Role

- They function both as **predators and scavengers**, contributing to ecosystem sanitation.
- Their feeding behaviour helps **control prey populations and remove carcasses**, reducing disease spread.

Conservation Status

- According to the **IUCN Red List**, the species is classified as **Least Concern**.

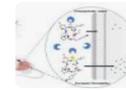
Science and
Technology

PEPTIDES

THE HINDU

As peptide therapy becomes a popular trend, experts call for caution

Globally, peptide therapeutics have been gaining attention in research as well as clinical practice. Studies show that more than 80...



Why in News

- **Peptide-based therapeutics** are gaining global attention in biomedical research and clinical medicine.

Biochemical Structure

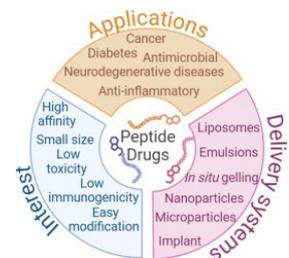
- **Peptides** are short chains of **amino acids linked by peptide bonds**.
- They occur naturally in the human body and participate in several **biological regulatory processes**.

Peptides vs Proteins

- Peptides typically contain **2 to 50 amino acids**, whereas **proteins contain long chains of amino acids**.
- Proteins often form **complex secondary, tertiary, and quaternary structures**, while peptides usually have simpler structures.

Biological Functions

- Some peptides function as **hormones that regulate physiological processes across the body**.
- Others perform **anti-inflammatory, metabolic, and muscle-growth functions**.
- Peptides are increasingly used in **pharmaceutical drugs and therapeutic research**.



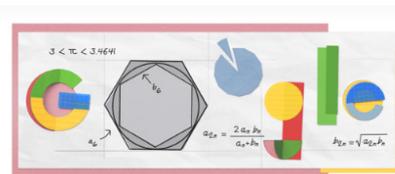
Amino Acids: Building Blocks of Life

- **Amino acids are the fundamental units that combine to form proteins**.
- Humans require **20 amino acids**, of which **nine are essential and must be obtained through diet**.
- The essential amino acids include **histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan, and valine**.

Miscella-
neousPI DAY

Why in News

- **Pi Day** is observed annually on **14 March (3/14)** to celebrate the mathematical constant π (**pi**).



- **International Day of Mathematics (IDM)** is celebrated annually on **14 March** to highlight the role of mathematics in science, technology and everyday life. The theme for **2026** is **“Mathematics and Hope.”**

Key Facts

- π is the **ratio of a circle’s circumference to its diameter** with value **3.14159...**, an **irrational number**.
- The celebration began in **1988 at the Exploratorium, San Francisco**, organised by **Larry Shaw**.
- **Archimedes** approximated π as **22/7**, while the **Kerala School of Mathematics** developed early **infinite series methods**.
- π is fundamental in **geometry, physics, engineering and wave mechanics**.

UTTAR PRADESH IN NEWSFARIDABAD–JEWAR AIRPORT ELEVATED CORRIDOR

 The Indian Express

Faridabad to Jewar Airport in 20 minutes: How upcoming corridor is set to boost connectivity and real estate growth



The Union Cabinet Tuesday approved an elevated road project to connect the upcoming Noida International Airport in Jewar directly with...

Why in News

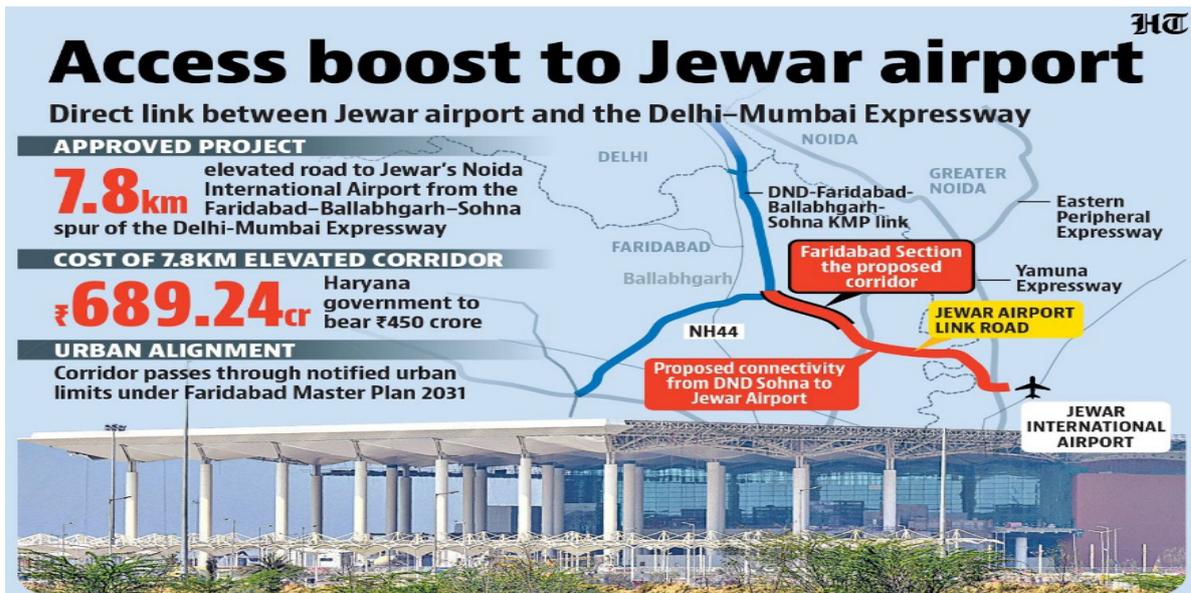
- The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, approved an **11-km elevated corridor** to improve connectivity between **Faridabad and Noida International Airport (Jewar)** in the **National Capital Region (NCR)**.

Project Design and Connectivity

- The project includes an **11-km elevated highway** connecting **Sector-65 Faridabad (Delhi–Mumbai Expressway spur)** with the **Jewar Airport corridor**.
- It forms part of a **31.42-km road connectivity project** linking **Haryana with western Uttar Pradesh**.

Financial and Institutional Framework

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** approved a **revised project cost of ₹3,630.77 crore**.
- The **11-km elevated section costs about ₹689 crore**, with ₹450 crore contributed by the **Haryana Government**.
- The project is implemented by the **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** under **Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM)**.



Strategic and Economic Significance

- Travel time between **Faridabad and Jewar Airport will reduce to about 20–25 minutes**.
- The corridor will connect with the **Yamuna Expressway and Eastern Peripheral Expressway (EPE)**.
- It supports **PM GatiShakti National Master Plan** by integrating road, rail (**Dedicated Freight Corridor**), and air transport networks.