



Sanskriti IAS



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Important Current News for UPSC & UPPSC

17th Mar 2026

TOPICS:-

- 1. Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Project**
- 2. NMDC Limited**
- 3. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**
- 4. Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary**
- 5. Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)**
- 6. Great Indian Bustard (GIB)**
- 7. Henckelia monophyla**
- 8. SATHEE Portal**
- 9. Nagoya Protocol – India's First National Report (NR1)**
- 10. Smart Village Initiative – Kusunpur (Odisha)**
- 11. Other Important News of the day**

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LOWER KOPILI HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT

 The Sentinel - of this Land, for its People

120-MW Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Project inaugurated in Dima Hasao

In a landmark development for Assam's hill district of Dima Hasao, Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the 120 MW Lower...



Why in News

- The **Prime Minister** inaugurated the **120 MW Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Project** in Assam.

Geographical and Hydrological Context

- The project is located on the **Kopili River**, a major tributary of the **Brahmaputra River system**.
- The river originates in the **Meghalaya Plateau** and flows through **Karbi Anglong and Nagaon districts**.
- It has a total length of **256 km**, including an interstate stretch between **Meghalaya and Assam**.

Project Features & Institutional Linkages

- It is a **run-of-the-river project**, minimizing large-scale displacement and reservoir formation.
- It is developed by **Assam Power Generation Corporation Limited (APGCL)**.
- It is funded by the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** under the **Assam Power Sector Investment Program**.

Strategic and Economic Significance

- It enhances **renewable energy capacity** in Northeast India, aiding energy security.
- It supports **regional development in autonomous council areas** like **Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao**.
- It aligns with India's commitments under **Paris Climate Agreement** for clean energy transition.

Challenges & Way Forward

- Hydropower projects in Northeast face **ecological sensitivity and seismic risks**.
- There is a need for **sustainable river basin management and community participation**.

NMDC LIMITED

PIB

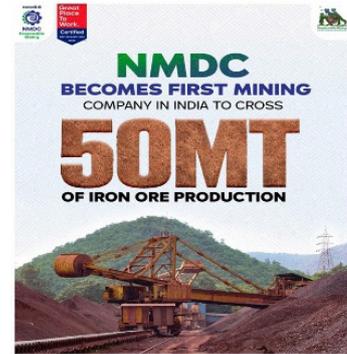
NMDC Scripts History as India's First Mining Company to Reach 50 Million Tonnes of Iron Ore Production

NMDC Limited, India's largest iron ore producer and a Navratna CPSE under the Ministry of Steel, has scripted history by becoming the first...



Why in News

- **NMDC Limited** became the first Indian mining company to produce **50 million tonnes of iron ore** in one financial year.



Institutional Framework & Governance

- It is a **Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)** under the **Ministry of Steel**.
- It was established in **1958** and categorized as a **Navratna PSU in 2008**.
- Its headquarters is in **Hyderabad, Telangana**.

Operational and Resource Profile

- It is India's **largest iron ore producer and exporter**, operating major mines in **Chhattisgarh and Karnataka**.
- It explores minerals like **copper, limestone, diamond, gypsum, and graphite**.
- It operates India's only mechanized diamond mine at **Panna (Madhya Pradesh)**.

Economic and Strategic Relevance

- It plays a key role in **raw material security for steel industry**, crucial for infrastructure growth.
- It contributes significantly to **government revenue and export earnings**.
- It supports the **Make in India initiative** through domestic mineral supply.

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

Down To Earth

Waste prevention central to UNEP's latest report on safe disposal of unused medicines

Prevention at source, better prescribing practices and stronger disposal systems recommended to address the problem.



Why in News

- A UNEP report highlighted risks from **improper disposal of unused medicines**.

Institutional Structure & Global Governance

- UNEP was established in **1972** following a **UN General Assembly resolution**.
- Headquarters is located in **Nairobi, Kenya**.
- The **United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)** is the highest decision-making body.
- The **Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR)** acts as an advisory body.

Core Functions & Mandate

- UNEP coordinates global responses to **environmental challenges and sustainability issues**.
- It supports treaties like **CBD, CITES, and Minamata Convention**.
- It publishes reports like **Global Environment Outlook and Emissions Gap Report**.
- It provides **technical and financial support to developing countries**.

Environmental Governance Significance

- It strengthens **multilateral environmental governance frameworks**.
- It promotes **sustainable development goals (SDGs)**, especially **SDG 13 (Climate Action)**.
- The recent report highlights growing concerns of **pharmaceutical pollution**.

MEGAMALAI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

 The Times of India

Researchers discover **9 new species** at Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary in southern Western Ghats

Chennai: From a jumping spider to a damselfly and unique snails, nine species were recently discovered during a faunal survey by Zoological...



Why in News

- A faunal survey by **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** discovered **nine new species** in the sanctuary.

Geographical and Ecological Profile

- It is located in **Tamil Nadu** and acts as a buffer to **Periyar Tiger Reserve (Kerala)**.
- It features ecosystems ranging from **scrub forests to evergreen forests and shola grasslands**.

Biodiversity and Species Richness

- It hosts species like **elephants, tigers, Nilgiri tahr, lion-tailed macaque.**
- It contains endemic species like the **wood snake.**
- Flora includes **Syzygium, Memecylon, and Symplocos species.**

Conservation Significance

- It is part of the **Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot**, known for high endemism.
- Discovery of new species reflects **incomplete biodiversity documentation** in India.

CENTRAL ADOPTION RESOURCE AUTHORITY (CARA)



CARA organises its Third Regional Consultative Workshop for Central Zone in Bhopal

The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), under Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, successfully organised...



Why in News

- CARA issued guidelines to **strengthen adoption procedures and safeguard children's identity.**

Legal and Institutional Framework

- It is a **statutory body under Ministry of Women & Child Development.**
- It derives authority from **Section 68 of Juvenile Justice Act, 2015.**
- It functions as the **Central Authority under Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption, 1993.**



Core Functions & Governance Role

- It regulates **in-country and inter-country adoptions.**
- It coordinates with agencies like **SARA, SAA, AFAA, CWC, and DCPU.**
- It frames regulations and ensures **child protection standards.**

Social Justice and Rights Dimension

- It safeguards rights of children under **Article 21 (Right to Life with dignity).**
- It promotes **transparency and accountability in adoption systems.**

GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD (GIB)

News On AIR

Project Great Indian Bustard Captive Breeding Programme enters 4th year with Two New Chicks

Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav, today informed that Project Great Indian Bustard (GIB) has entered the...

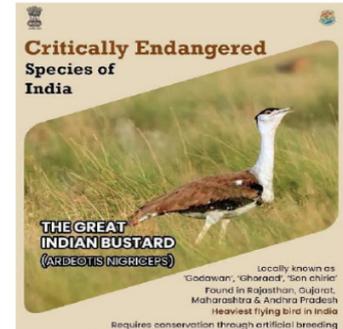


Why in News

- The **captive breeding programme** under **Project GIB** has entered its fourth year.

Ecological and Biological Features

- It is a large bird endemic to the **Indian subcontinent**, mainly found in **Thar Desert (Rajasthan)**.
- It is among the **heaviest flying birds**, resembling an ostrich in posture.
- It inhabits **grasslands and scrub ecosystems**, which are rapidly declining.



Conservation Status & Legal Protection

- **IUCN Status: Critically Endangered.**
- Listed under **CITES Appendix I** and **Schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.**

Threats and Conservation Strategy

- Major threats include **habitat loss, power line collisions, and human disturbances.**
- Conservation involves **captive breeding, habitat restoration, and underground power lines.**

HENCKELIA MONOPHYLLA

Mint

Lost for nearly two centuries, this rare plant species has been rediscovered in Arunachal Pradesh

The plants produce axillary inflorescences bearing one or several tubular or funnel-shaped flowers, often with delicate colouration.



Why in News

- A rare plant **Henckelia monophylla** was rediscovered after **189 years** in Arunachal Pradesh.

Taxonomy and Historical Context

- It belongs to family **Gesneriaceae**.
- First collected in **1836** by **William Griffith** in **Mishmi Hills**.

Ecological Characteristics

- It is a **perennial herb** found in **moist forest habitats**.
- It has **ovate leaves and tubular flowers**, aiding reproduction through capsules.

Institutional Role & Conservation

- Rediscovery was done by **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)**, established in **1890**.
- Highlights importance of **floristic surveys and biodiversity documentation** in Northeast India.

SATHEE PORTAL



NDTV

<https://www.ndtv.com> › Education › exams

Ministry Of Education's Free "SATHEE" App Helps Students ...

2 days ago — The app includes mock tests, assessments, detailed study material and previous years' question papers to help students evaluate their ... [Read more](#)

Why in News

- The **Ministry of Education (MoE)** operationalised **SATHEE Portal** with **IIT Kanpur** to democratise exam preparation.

Governance and Educational Reforms

- SATHEE stands for **Self-Assessment, Test and Help for Entrance Exams**, aligning with **NEP 2020** vision.
- It provides **free coaching support**, reducing dependence on private coaching ecosystems.
- It contributes to **SDG 4 (Quality Education)** by ensuring inclusive and equitable learning access.



Technological and Pedagogical Features

- It uses **Artificial Intelligence-based analytics** to personalise learning pathways.
- It offers **live doubt clearing (10 AM–6 PM)** and interactive “Solve with Me” sessions.
- It includes **crash courses (e.g., JEE 40-day module)** for targeted preparation.

Coverage and Inclusivity Dimensions

- Initially for **JEE and NEET**, now expanded to **CUET, SSC, IBPS, ICAR, CLAT, RRB**.
- Content is curated by experts from **IITs, IISc, AIIMS**, ensuring academic credibility.
- It supports **multilingual learning (English, Hindi, 12 regional languages)**.

NAGOYA PROTOCOL – INDIA’S FIRST NATIONAL REPORT (NR1)

 ThePrint

Over 2.76 lakh biodiversity panels set up in India: Nagoya Protocol progress report by Centre

New Delhi, Mar 16 (PTI) Over 2.76 lakh Biodiversity Management Committees have been established across the country, strengthening community...



Why in News

- India submitted its **First National Report (NR1)** on **Nagoya Protocol (ABS)** implementation.

Legal and Institutional Framework

- Governed by **Biological Diversity Act, 2002, Rules 2024, and ABS Regulations 2025**.
- Three-tier system: **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), State Biodiversity Boards, Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs)**.
- Over **2,76,653 BMCs** established, ensuring decentralised governance.

Implementation Performance (2017–2025)

- Total **12,830 ABS approvals** issued across national and state levels.
- Covers **research, IPR, commercial utilisation, bio-survey, technology transfer**.
- Issued **3,556 International Certificates of Compliance**, over **60% global share**.

Economic and Community Impact

- Generated **₹216.31 crore**, with **₹139.69 crore** shared with local communities.
- Supports **farmers, traditional knowledge holders, and indigenous groups**.

Global Leadership and Way Forward

- Strengthens India’s role under **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**.
- Requires enhanced **capacity building and benefit-sharing transparency**.

SMART VILLAGE INITIATIVE – KUSUNPUR (ODISHA)

TOI The Times of India

Kusunpur all set to become Odisha’s first smart village

Kendrapada: With modern technologies for daily life and agriculture, Odisha is all set to get its first “smart village” in Kusunpur under...

Why in News

- **Kusunpur village (Kendrapada, Odisha)** selected as first **CSIR-led Smart Village**.

Institutional and Policy Framework

- Led by **CSIR under Ministry of Science and Technology**.
- Aligns with **Viksit Bharat@2047 vision** for rural transformation.

Technological Interventions

- Introduction of **scientific paddy storage systems** to reduce post-harvest losses.
- Deployment of **renewable energy, clean cooking fuel, and safe water technologies**.

Infrastructure and Disaster Resilience

- **CSIR-CBRI** developing **climate-resilient infrastructure** (schools, toilets, cyclone shelters).
- Focus on **agrivoltaics and sustainable village planning**.

Livelihood and Skill Development

- Training in **leather products (CLRI)** and **ethnic textile production**.
- Promotes **rural entrepreneurship and self-reliance**.

Strategic Significance

- Model for **technology-driven rural development and climate resilience**, especially in **cyclone-prone coastal regions**.

OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS OF THE DAY

Person in News	<h2 style="color: blue; text-decoration: underline;">OSCAR ACHIEVEMENT – ALEXANDRE SINGH</h2>
	<p>Why in News</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Indian-origin filmmaker Alexandre Singh won Best Live-Action Short Film at the 98th Academy Awards.

Background and Artistic Profile

- Born in **France (Indian father, French mother)**, raised in UK, based in USA.
- Studied at **University of Oxford**, known for blending **visual art with cinema**.



Film and Narrative Significance

- Film: **“Two People Exchanging Saliva” (36 minutes)**.
- It presents a **dystopian society where intimacy is criminalised**, reflecting social control themes.
- Co-directed with **Natalie Musteata**.

Unique Recognition and Global Impact

- Shared award with **“The Singers”**, marking the **7th tie in Oscar history**.
- Highlights growing global recognition of **Indian-origin creative talent**.

Cultural Significance

- Strengthens India’s **soft power and cultural diplomacy** through cinema.

Environ-
ment in
News

DRAWIDA VAZHANIA

Why in News

- A new earthworm species **Drawida vazhania** was discovered in **Peechi–Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala)**.

Taxonomic Classification & Scientific Significance

- It belongs to genus **Drawida** under family **Moniligastridae**, largely confined to **South, Southeast, and East Asia**.
- It is part of the **Barwelli species group**, indicating evolutionary specialization within regional soil fauna.
- The discovery increases **India’s Drawida species count to 83** and **Western Ghats count to 55**, highlighting biodiversity richness.

Morphological Distinctiveness

- It has a **small body size**, typical of soil-adapted annelids in tropical ecosystems.
- It is uniquely identified by a **grooved male genital field**, distinguishing it from related species.
- Additional traits include **kidney-shaped prostate**, **C-shaped prostatic capsule**, and **sessile atrium**.



Defence

EXERCISE SEA DRAGON 2026

THE Hindu

Indian Navy joins U.S.-led drill 'Sea Dragon' in Guam

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



Why in News

- Indian Navy participated in **Exercise Sea Dragon 2026**, a **US-led ASW drill in Guam**.

Operational Features and Scope

- Focus on **Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW)** operations in Indo-Pacific.
- Includes platforms like **P-8A Poseidon** and **India's P-8I aircraft**.
- Progresses from **simulation to live submarine tracking exercises**.

India's Role and Capabilities

- India deployed **Boeing P-8I aircraft**, equipped with advanced sensors and weapons.
- Enhances **maritime surveillance and underwater threat detection capability**.

Multilateral Cooperation

- Participating countries: **USA, India, Australia, Japan, New Zealand**.
- Reflects **collective security and interoperability in Indo-Pacific**.

	<p>Strategic Importance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthens India’s maritime security role amid Indo-Pacific tensions. ➤ Supports free, open, and rules-based maritime order (FOIP). ➤ Enhances preparedness against increasing submarine deployment in region.
<p>Science and Technology</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>DIMETHYL ETHER (DME)</u></p> <p>Why in News</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CSIR–National Chemical Laboratory (CSIR-NCL) is scaling up Dimethyl Ether technology. <p>Chemical Properties & Technical Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chemical formula is CH₃OCH₃, and it has a high cetane number. ➤ It is a clean-burning fuel with low emissions of NO_x, SO_x, and particulate matter. ➤ It exists as a colorless gas under atmospheric conditions. <p>Economic and Environmental Relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is a potential alternative to diesel in compression ignition engines. ➤ It supports India’s clean energy transition and emission reduction targets. ➤ It can be used in transport and agricultural sectors.