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**DAILY
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

Important Current News for UPSC & UPPSC

23rd Mar 2026

TOPICS:-

- 1. Sarhul Festival**
- 2. PRARAMBH 2026**
- 3. Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme (MCGS-MSME)**
- 4. Credit Guarantee Scheme for MFIs-2.0**
- 5. World Water Day**
- 6. Blue Voice Mobile Application**
- 7. Other Important News of the day**
- 8. Uttar Pradesh in News**

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SARHUL FESTIVAL

 News On AIR

President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President C P Radhakrishnan extend Sarhul greetings

President Droupadi Murmu and Vice President C P Radhakrishnan today extended greetings to the countrymen on the occasion of the Sarhul...



Why in News

- The **President of India** extended greetings on the occasion of **Sarhul festival**.

Cultural-Ecological Significance

- Sarhul literally means “**worship of the Sal tree**”, reflecting deep-rooted **nature worship traditions**.
- It symbolises the **union of Sun and Earth**, representing ecological balance and fertility.
- The **Sal tree (Shorea robusta)** is revered as the abode of **Sarna deity (Sama Maa)**.

Ritual Structure and Social Organisation

- The **pahan (priest)** symbolises the Sun and his wife the Earth, indicating agrarian cosmology.
- Rituals are performed at **Sarna Sthal (sacred groves)**, highlighting community forest conservation.
- The festival includes sacrifices, prayers for prosperity, and cultural performances.

Geographical Spread and Tribal Linkages

- Celebrated mainly in **Jharkhand**, and parts of **Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh**.
- Associated with tribes like **Oraon, Munda, Santal, Ho, Khadia**, with local variations.

Agrarian and Sustainability Dimensions

- Agricultural activities like **ploughing and sowing begin only after Sarhul rituals**.
- Reinforces **sustainable use of forest resources** and seasonal agricultural cycles.

PRARAMBH 2026

PIB

Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman launches 'PRARAMBH 2026' — Income Tax Department's nationwide awareness campaign on...

The Union Finance Minister also unveils a new user-friendly Income Tax Website 2.0. FM Smt. Sitharaman calls for empathetic,...



Governance Implications

- Enhances **tax compliance and financial literacy** among citizens.
- Strengthens **digital governance and ease of doing business** ecosystem.

Why in News

- The **Union Finance Minister** launched **PRARAMBH 2026** initiative.

About PRARAMBH

- PRARAMBH stands for **Policy Reform and Responsible Action for Mission Viksit Bharat**.
- It is a nationwide awareness campaign for the **Income Tax Act, 2025** effective from **1 April 2026**.
- Falls under the jurisdiction of the **Ministry of Finance**.

Administrative Innovations

- Introduction of **AI-based chatbot 'Kar Saathi'** for taxpayer assistance.
- Launch of **Income Tax Website 2.0** for improved usability and service delivery.
- Use of **multi-channel outreach** including print, digital, TV, and social media.

Citizen-Centric Approach

- Provides **tutorial videos, FAQs, brochures, MyGov quizzes** for public engagement.
- Multilingual outreach in **10 regional languages** enhances inclusivity and accessibility.

MUTUAL CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME (MCGS-MSME)

News On AIR

Government Revises Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme to Support MSME Manufacturers, Exporters

The Government has modified the Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme (MCGS) to support Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Manufacturers...



Why in News

- The scheme was modified in line with **Budget 2025–26** to support **MSMEs**.

Institutional and Financial Architecture

- Provides **60% credit guarantee** through **National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd (NCGTC)**.

- Covers loans up to **₹100 crore** for MSMEs purchasing machinery/equipment.

Policy Reforms and Features

- Expanded to include **service sector MSMEs**.
- Minimum project cost requirement reduced from **75% to 60%**.
- Guarantee validity fixed at **10 years**, improving predictability.

Export Promotion Linkages

- Exporters must have **25% export turnover in last 3 years**.
- Loan cap for exporters fixed at **₹20 crore with 2% contribution**.

Economic Significance

- Enhances **credit flow and capital investment in MSMEs**.
- Supports **Make in India and export competitiveness**.

CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME FOR MFIS-2.0

TOI The Times of India

Govt clears Rs 20,000 crore credit guarantee scheme for MFIs; funding access in focus

India Business News: The government has approved a limited-period Rs 20000-crore credit guarantee scheme aimed at easing fund flow...



Why in News

- Government launched **CGSMFI-2.0** to boost microfinance sector.

Institutional Framework

- Implemented via **NCGTC** to provide guarantees to **Banks/FIs**.
- Covers lending to **NBFC-MFIs and MFIs** for onward lending.

Financial Design and Coverage

- Guarantee coverage: **80% (small), 75% (medium), 70% (large MFIs)**.
- Guarantee fee fixed at **0.50% per annum**.
- Scheme valid till **30 June 2026 or ₹20,000 crore limit**.

Socio-Economic Impact

- Targets **36 lakh small borrowers**, improving financial inclusion.
- Supports **priority sector lending and rural credit penetration**.



WORLD WATER DAY

 Down To Earth

On World Water Day 2026, know about the Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran and their aqua-centric faith

With no flowing water now, the Mandaeans cannot practice their baptisms and other rituals. The global and regional water crisis in West Asia...



Why in News

- The Prime Minister conveyed greetings on **World Water Day (March 22)**.



Institutional and Historical Context

- Declared by the **United Nations in 1993** following **Rio Earth Summit (1992)**.
- Focuses on achieving **Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)**.

Theme and Social Dimensions (2026)

- Theme: **“Water and Gender”**, highlighting role of women in water management.
- Emphasises **gender equity in access to water resources**.

Governance and Environmental Relevance

- Addresses challenges of **water scarcity, pollution, sanitation gaps**.
- Links with Indian schemes like **Jal Jeevan Mission and AMRUT**.

BLUE VOICE MOBILE APPLICATION

 News On AIR

Pondicherry University launches ‘Blue Voice’ app for coastal fishers

Pondicherry University has launched a mobile application titled ‘Blue Voice’ aimed at enhancing safety and disaster preparedness among...



Why in News

- **Pondicherry University** launched **‘Blue Voice’ mobile application** for coastal safety.

Technological Intervention in Disaster Management

- Provides **real-time, location-specific weather updates** for fishing communities.
- Designed to simplify **complex meteorological data into user-friendly formats**.

Addressing Communication Gaps

- Overcomes **language barriers and low digital literacy issues** in coastal regions.
- Enables fishers to take **informed decisions before venturing into sea**.

Participatory Governance Model

- Integrates **traditional fisher knowledge with scientific weather data**.
- Strengthens **community-based decision making and local resilience**.

Coastal Resilience and Policy Relevance

- Enhances **disaster preparedness and risk reduction in coastal zones**.
- Aligns with **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and SDG 13 (Climate Action)**.

OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS OF THE DAY

Art and Culture

PETH FESTIVAL OF GODDESS KELBAI (GOA)

 The Times of India

Mulgao Kelbai Peth festival to be held today

Bicholim: The "Peth" festival of goddess Kelbai from the village Mulgao, Bicholim, will be held at midnight on March 23.



Why in News

- Traditional **Peth festival** observed at **Mulgao, Bicholim (Goa)**.

Cultural and Religious Significance

- Dedicated to **Goddess Kelbai**, reflecting **local folk traditions**.
- Celebrated on **Chaitra Shuddha Panchami (Hindu lunar calendar)**.

Ritual Practices and Symbolism

- Goddess carried in 'Peth' (**wooden ceremonial structure**) to **Mayem village**.
- Symbolises **annual reunion with sister deity (Maya Kelbai Panchayatan)**.

Community Participation

- Ritual led by 'Mode' (**trance carrier**) and supported by local communities.
- Practice of '**Kaul**' used for seeking divine guidance.

Cultural Continuity and Social Relevance

- Highlights **continuity of indigenous traditions and community cohesion**.
- Promotes **intangible cultural heritage preservation in Goa**.

**Environ-
ment**

MANGROVES

 Down To Earth

'Disappointed', says Debi Goenka, as apex court gives go-ahead to cut mangroves for key road project in north Mumbai

Supreme Court allows mangrove cutting for Mumbai road project, Goenka disappointed.



Why in News

- The **Supreme Court** upheld the removal of mangroves for the **Versova-Bhayandar coastal road**.

Ecological Characteristics

- Mangroves are **halophytic (salt-tolerant)** vegetation found in **intertidal coastal zones**.
- They possess **pneumatophores (aerial roots)** for respiration in waterlogged soils.
- Exhibit **vivipary**, where seeds germinate on the parent plant.



Geographical Distribution in India

- Found in **Sundarbans (West Bengal), Godavari, Krishna, Mahanadi deltas, Bhitarkanika, Pichavaram, Gulf of Kutch, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands**.

Strategic Environmental Importance

- Act as **carbon sinks**, contributing to **climate change mitigation**.
- Provide **coastal protection** against cyclones and storm surges.
- Serve as **biodiversity hotspots** supporting marine and terrestrial species.
- Legal and Conservation Dimensions
- Protected under **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2011 (amended)**.
- Judicial scrutiny reflects tension between **development vs environmental sustainability**.

ACTINIDIA INDICA



EastMojo
<https://eastmojo.com> > Arunachal Pradesh

New wild kiwi species discovered in Arunachal

2 days ago — According to the researchers, *Actinidia indica* stands out for its large, showy flowers measuring 4–6 cm across, rounded and slightly hairy ... [Read more](#)

Why in News

- **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** discovered a new wild kiwi species.

Taxonomy and Habitat

- Named ***Actinidia indica***, belonging to family **Actinidiaceae**.
- Found near **Ziro Valley (Arunachal Pradesh)** at ~1,725 m elevation.



Botanical Characteristics

- It is a **perennial climbing shrub (2–4 m height)**.
- Features **hairy branches, ovate leaves, creamy-white flowers**.
- Produces **olive-green fruits with reticulate lenticel pattern**.

Ecological Importance

- Found in **transition zones between temperate and subtropical forests**.
- Enhances **India's biodiversity and genetic resource base**.

Scientific Significance

- Increases global ***Actinidia* species count to 56**.
- Highlights importance of **Eastern Himalayas as biodiversity hotspot**.

Reports/Indices

GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX 2026



News On AIR
<https://www.newsonair.gov.in> > pakistan-ranks-first-on-...

Pakistan ranks first on Global Terrorism Index with 6% rise ...

1 day ago — According to the **Global Terrorism Index 2026**, published by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), deaths from terrorism in Pakistan are ... [Read more](#)

Why in News

- The **Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2026** was released.

Institutional Framework and Methodology

- Published by **Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)**, Sydney.
- Covers **163 countries (99.7% global population)**.
- Uses a scale of **0 (no impact) to 10 (highest impact)**.

Key Global Trends

- Terrorism-related deaths declined by **28%**, incidents by **22%**.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa** remains the global epicentre of terrorism.
- **Pakistan ranked 1st**, while **India ranked 13th**.

Security Dynamics and Actors

- Major terror groups include **ISIS, JNIM, TTP, Al-Shabaab**.
- Indicates shifting focus from Middle East to **Africa-centric terrorism networks**.

Strategic Implications for India

- Highlights need for **counter-terror cooperation and intelligence sharing**.
- Reinforces importance of **internal security frameworks and border management**.

Defence

INS TARAGIRI (F41)



INDIAN NAVY SET TO COMMISSION ITS LATEST STEALTH FRIGATE 'TARAGIRI'

In a ceremony that marks a defining moment for India's maritime sovereignty, the Indian Navy is preparing to commission its latest stealth...



Why in News

- **Indian Navy** to commission **INS Taragiri** on **3 April 2026**. **Technological Capabilities**
- Equipped with **BrahMos SSM, MRSAM, MF-STAR radar, SRGM (76 mm)**.
- Supports **multi-dimensional warfare: surface, air, and anti-submarine**.



About INS Taragiri

- Part of **Project 17A (Nilgiri-class stealth frigates)**.
- Built by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilding Ltd (MDL)**; designed by **Warship Design Bureau (WDB)**.

Propulsion and Systems

- Uses **CODOG (Combined Diesel or Gas)** propulsion system.
- Integrated with **Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS)**.

Strategic Importance

- Enhances **maritime security and blue-water capability in Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.
- Boosts **Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence manufacturing**.

UTTAR PRADESH IN NEWS

RAILWAY BRIDGE MODERNISATION IN UTTAR PRADESH

 The Indian Express

Railways renovates 73-year-old bridge in Uttar Pradesh; to enhance train speed, cut travel time

Indian Railways renovates a 73-year-old bridge in Uttar Pradesh to enhance train speed and reduce travel time. Check project details and...



Why in News

- The **Ministry of Railways** upgraded a **73-year-old bridge (Bridge No. 131)** in **Uttar Pradesh**.

Technical Upgrade

- Located on **Chunar–Chopan section (NCR, Prayagraj Division)**.
- Replaced old girders with **Pre-Stressed Concrete (PSC) slabs** for durability and low maintenance.
- Configuration changed from **5 spans to 6 spans**.

Standards and Capacity Enhancement

- Upgraded from **BGML (1926)** to **RBG Loading–1976 standards** under **IRS Bridge Rules**.
- Enables **higher axle load, faster train speeds, and increased freight capacity**.

Economic Significance

- Key route for coal transport from **NCL, Singrauli** to **North Indian power plants**.
- Improves **logistics efficiency and reduces travel time**.