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Important Current News for UPSC & UPPSC

4th Mar 2026

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2. Tamil Nadu Establishes First Dark Sky Park
3. Finland President Alexander Stubb's Visit to India
4. Kosi River
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NIELIT TO ESTABLISH INDIA'S FIRST DEDICATED QUANTUM & AI UNIVERSITY

PIB

NIELIT to Establish India's First Dedicated Quantum & AI University Campus in Amaravati

"The NIELIT Quantum-AI University at Amaravati Quantum Valley will anchor India's next wave of deep-tech talent by converging quantum science,...

Why in News

- **NIELIT**, under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, signed an **MoU with the Government of Andhra Pradesh** to establish India's first **Quantum & AI University** in **Amaravati** on **20 February 2026** during the **India AI Impact Summit**.

Institutional Framework and Academic Structure

- The **Amaravati campus** will function as a national centre for **quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and deep-tech research**.
- It will offer **UG, PG, and PhD programmes** in **quantum algorithms, AI & machine learning, quantum communication, cybersecurity, and high-performance computing**.
- The university will establish **advanced research laboratories and industry-linked Centres of Excellence (CoEs)**.
- The campus will support **deep-tech incubation, start-ups, and global research collaborations**.

Strategic Significance for India's Technology Ecosystem

- The initiative complements the **National Quantum Mission (2023)** focusing on **quantum computing, sensing, communication, and materials**.
- It also supports India's **Artificial Intelligence strategy promoted by MeitY and NITI Aayog**.
- The institution will help build **skilled human resources in frontier technologies and advanced research**.

TAMIL NADU ESTABLISHES FIRST DARK SKY PARK

The Hindu

Tamil Nadu launches its first Dark Sky Park in Kolli Hills for stargazing

The Tamil Nadu government on Thursday announced the launch of the State's first Dark Sky Park at the Ariyur Shola Reserve Forest in Kolli...

Why in News

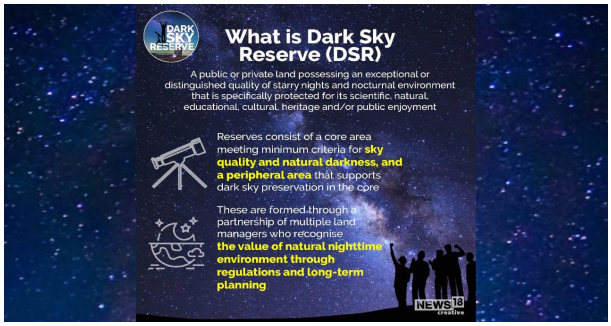
- **Tamil Nadu** inaugurated its first **Dark Sky Park** at **Ariyur Shola Reserve Forest in Kolli Hills, Namakkal district**, to promote **astro-tourism and scientific awareness**.

Geographical Setting and Infrastructure

Hanle Dark Sky Reserve

- The Hanle Dark Sky Reserve (HDSR) in Ladakh is India's first and only International Dark Sky Reserve, established in December 2022. Located in the Changthang region at 4,500 meters altitude, it is centred around the Indian Astronomical Observatory. It protects the area from light pollution, promoting Astro-tourism and wildlife preservation.

- **Kolli Hills** was selected due to **high altitude, dense forests, and minimal light pollution**.
- A **1.5-km radius zone** around the park remains free from artificial lighting.
- The project was developed at a cost of **₹1 crore**.
- The park includes **three advanced telescopes and solar-powered infrastructure**.



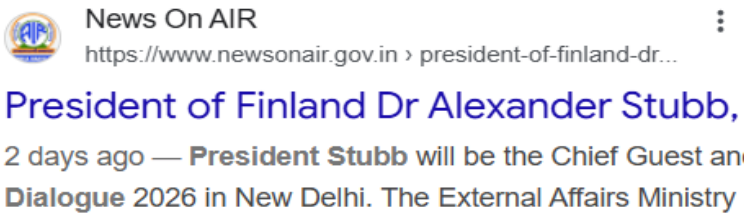
Environmental Governance and Safety Framework

- A **watchtower located about 20 metres from the site** provides night-time monitoring.
- **CCTV cameras** ensure continuous surveillance.
- **Eco-Development Committee members** assist in visitor management.
- Visitors can stay at **Agaya Gangai eco-huts** near the park.

Conservation and Sustainable Tourism Significance

- **Dark Sky Parks** are designated areas with minimal light pollution for astronomical observation.
- The initiative integrates **conservation, eco-tourism, and community livelihood opportunities**.
- It also promotes **scientific literacy and environmental awareness among visitors**.

FINLAND PRESIDENT ALEXANDER STUBB'S VISIT TO INDIA



Why in News

- **Finland's President Alexander Stubb** is visiting **India from 4–7 March 2026** and will be **Chief Guest at the 11th Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi**.

Diplomatic Engagements and Bilateral Meetings

- He will hold bilateral talks with **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** to review **India–Finland relations**.
- Discussions will focus on **trade, clean technologies, digital innovation, education, and emerging technologies**.
- A **high-level delegation of ministers, officials, and business leaders** will accompany him.

About the Raisina Dialogue

- The **Raisina Dialogue** is India's **flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics**.
- It is **hosted annually in New Delhi** since **2016**.
- The event is organised by the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** in partnership with the **Observer Research Foundation (ORF)**.

Strategic and Multilateral Cooperation

- India and Finland share commitments to **democracy and a rules-based international order**.
- Finland is a member of the **European Union and NATO**, making it important for India's **Nordic engagement**.
- The visit follows **Finnish PM Petteri Orpo's participation in the India AI Impact Summit (February 2026)**.

Economic and Academic Outreach

- After New Delhi, the President will visit **Mumbai** for meetings with **Maharashtra's Governor and Chief Minister**.
- He will interact with **business leaders and address students at the University of Mumbai**.
- **India and Finland established diplomatic relations in 1949**.

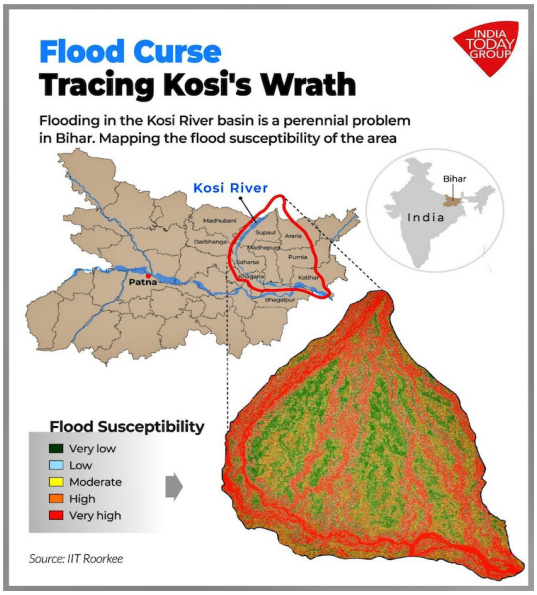
KOSI RIVER

India Today

This Indian river of 'sorrow' has shifted over 100 km in 200 years

The Kosi River, known as the 'Sorrow of Bihar', frequently causes devastating floods due to its shifting course and heavy sediment flow.

Why in News



- Over the past two centuries, this **trans-boundary river** has shifted westward by more than **100 kilometres**, intensifying flood vulnerability in north Bihar.

Geographical Profile and Basin Characteristics

- The river flows through **China, Nepal, and India**, making it an important Himalayan transboundary system.
- It is a major tributary of the **Ganga River**, joining it **south of Purnea in Bihar** after a course of about 724 km.
- The total drainage basin covers approximately **74,500 sq km**, of which around 11,070 sq km lies in India.

Hydrological Dynamics and Course Pattern

- It is formed by the confluence of **Sun Kosi, Arun Kosi, and Tamur Kosi**, originating in the Himalayan region.
- The river cuts through the **Siwalik Hills** at the narrow **Chatra Gorge** before entering the Indo-Gangetic plains.
- Heavy sediment load during monsoon leads to frequent channel shifting and embankment breaches.
- The westward migration over 250 years has caused large-scale displacement and recurring floods, earning it the title "**Sorrow of Bihar**."

Agricultural and Socio-economic Significance

- Sandy alluvial soils in the basin support extensive **cultivation of maize** and other crops.
- Floods deposit fertile silt but simultaneously damage infrastructure and livelihoods.
- Effective basin management requires coordinated India–Nepal cooperation under transboundary water governance frameworks.

KARBI ANGLONG GINGER

Deccan Chronicle

Assam Starts Exporting GI-Tagged Karbi Anglong Ginger To London

it was for the first time that GI-tagged Karbi Anglong Ginger has been exported from Assam to the UK market.

Why in News

- **Assam exported its first trial consignment of 1.2 metric tonnes of GI-tagged Karbi Anglong Ginger to London**, marking a milestone in agricultural exports.

Geographical Origin and Cultivation

- **It** is cultivated in the **Karbi Anglong district of Assam**, particularly in the **Singhasan Hills**.
- Farmers mainly use **traditional Jhum (shifting cultivation) and Tila cultivation methods**.
- The region's climate and soil conditions contribute to the ginger's **distinct flavour and quality**.

Product Characteristics and Quality Attributes

- The variety is known for its **strong aroma, high pungency, and earthy flavour**.
- It contains **high essential oil content**, increasing its culinary and medicinal value.
- The crop is largely produced through **organic and traditional farming practices**.
- It possesses **medicinal properties**, commonly used for digestive and anti-inflammatory treatments.

Geographical Indication and Export Significance

- The product has received a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, certifying its origin and unique characteristics.
- GI recognition improves **market value, branding, and price realisation for farmers**.
- Export promotion supports India's policy of **diversifying agricultural exports through region-specific products**.

OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS OF THE DAY

Person in News

SABA SHAWL APPOINTED SUPERINTENDENT OF CENTRAL JAIL SRINAGAR

Why in News

- **Saba Shawl** has been appointed **Superintendent of Central Jail Srinagar**, becoming the **first Kashmiri woman** to head the high-security facility.

Administrative Background

- She belongs to **Peerbagh, Srinagar**, and holds a **Master's degree in Social Work**.

Professional Experience

- Served as **Staff Officer to the Director General of Prisons, J&K**.
- At **Prisons Headquarters**, she handled **training management and departmental planning**.

Governance Significance

- The appointment reflects growing **women's representation in uniformed and correctional services**.
- **Central Jail Srinagar** is a **high-security prison**, requiring strong administrative oversight.

Places in News

SCOTLAND

Why in News

- **Scotland** became the first **United Kingdom nation** to legalise **water cremation (alkaline hydrolysis)** after approval by the **Scottish Parliament**.

Scientific Process and Mechanism

- The body is placed in **a sealed chamber containing water and potassium hydroxide**.
- The chamber is heated to around **150°C for about 90 minutes**.
- **Soft tissues dissolve**, leaving bones that are **dried and processed into ashes in a cremulator**.

Environmental Advantages

- Hydrolysis produces **lower carbon emissions and uses less energy** than flame cremation.
- It avoids release of **carbon dioxide and mercury from dental fillings**.
- Traditional burial can cause **land-use pressure and soil contamination**.

Global Adoption

- The process is legal in **28 U.S. states**.
- It is also used in **Canada, Ireland, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand**.

Environment

RUDDY SHELDUCK

Why in News

- Residents of **Mudh village in Ladakh** have been protecting the **Ruddy Shelduck** by safely guiding fledglings to the **Indus River during breeding season**.

Taxonomy and Distribution

- The **Ruddy Shelduck (Tadorna ferruginea)**, also known as the **Brahminy duck**, is a migratory waterfowl species.
- It occurs across **Europe, Central Asia, and parts of Africa**, while **wintering in South Asia**.
- In India, **Ladakh is its only known breeding site**.

Habitat and Ecological Range

- The species inhabits **rivers, lakes, marshes, ponds, deltas, and artificial reservoirs**.
- It can survive from **sea level to altitudes of about 4,800 metres**.
- In Ladakh, breeding occurs in **high-altitude wetlands during June–August** before broods move to the **Indus River**.

Biological and Physical Characteristics

- The bird has **orange-brown plumage with a creamy white head**.
- **Male birds develop a dark neck ring during the breeding season**.
- The wings show **white coverts and black flight feathers during flight**.
- It can be **sedentary, migratory, or semi-nomadic depending on climatic conditions**.

Reproductive and Social Behaviour

- Ruddy Shelducks are typically **monogamous and maintain long-term pair bonds**.
- Nests are often built in **tree hollows, rock crevices, fox dens, or building structures**.
- Adults may **cooperatively guard multiple broods** in breeding areas.

Conservation and Cultural Significance

- The species is listed as **Least Concern by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**.
- It contributes to **wetland biodiversity and ecosystem stability in fragile Himalayan habitats**.
- In **Buddhist culture**, the bird symbolises **marital fidelity and harmony**, encouraging community protection.

Science & Technology

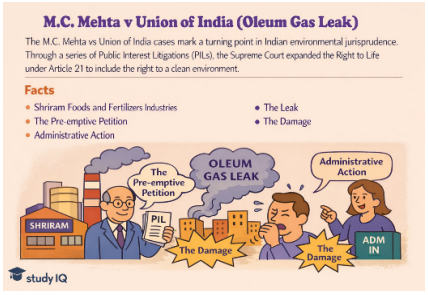
OLEUM GAS

ANI News

Maharashtra: Oleum gas leak in Palghar causes panic, workers evacuated

Panic gripped the entire Tarapur MIDC area in Palghar district on Monday after an Oleum gas leak was reported at the Bhageria Chemical...

Why in News



- A major **oleum gas leak at Bhageria Industries Ltd in Boisar, Maharashtra**, led to the evacuation of **over 2,000 residents including about 1,600 students**.

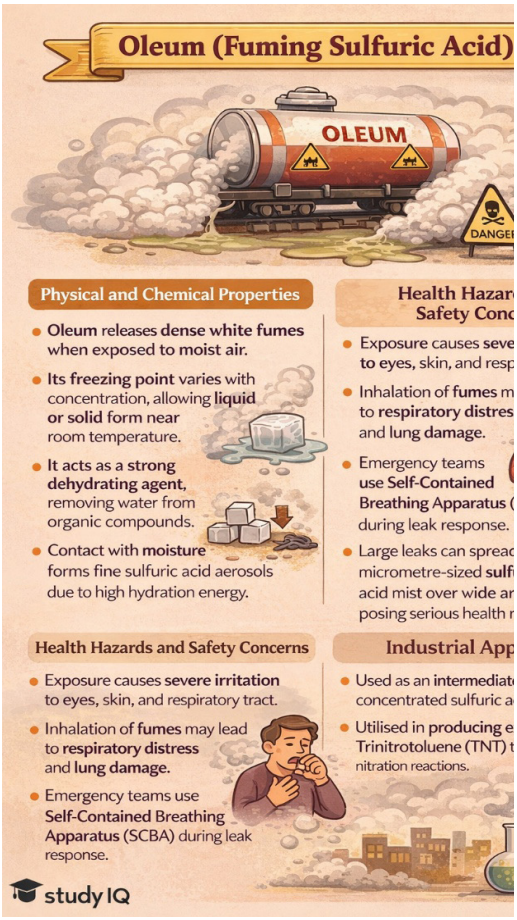
Chemical Identity and Composition

- **Oleum**, also called **fuming sulfuric acid**, is a highly corrosive mixture of **sulfur trioxide (SO_3) dissolved in concentrated sulfuric acid (H_2SO_4)**.

- Its chemical representation is $H_2SO_4 \cdot xSO_3$, where **x = 1 forms disulfuric acid ($H_2S_2O_7$), also called pyrosulfuric acid**.
- When exposed to moist air, it releases **dense white fumes of sulfuric acid mist**.

Industrial Production Process

- Oleum is produced through the **Contact Process**, the standard industrial method for sulfuric acid production.
- **Sulfur is burned to produce sulfur dioxide (SO_2)** as the first stage.
- **SO_2 is oxidised to sulfur trioxide (SO_3)** using catalysts such as **vanadium pentoxide**.
- **SO_3 is absorbed in concentrated sulfuric acid**, forming oleum instead of dissolving directly in water to avoid acid mist formation.



- The compound is transported in **rail tank cars as a safer method of moving sulfuric acid derivatives**.

UTTAR PRADESH IN NEWS

UTTAR PRADESH RECEIVES OVER 84% OF OUT-OF-STATE MPLADS FUNDS

Why in News

- Recent data show **over 84% of out-of-State funds under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)** were allocated to **Uttar Pradesh**, raising concerns about regional equity.


The Hindu

Uttar Pradesh receives over 84% of all out-of-State MPLADS money

Explore the latest data on Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) utilization. This analysis highlights how the ₹50...

Scheme Architecture and Operational Mechanism

- **MPLADS** allows MPs to recommend local development works implemented by **district authorities**.
- **Rajya Sabha and nominated MPs** may recommend projects outside their home State.
- The scheme is administered by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** to create **durable community assets**.

Patterns of Fund Allocation and Regional Concentration

- Only **21 MPs out of 530 analysed** accounted for the entire out-of-State spending.
- **Uttar Pradesh** already accounts for **26% of completed MPLADS works** and **about 20% of utilised funds**.
- Despite this, **84% of out-of-State MPLADS funds** were directed to the State.
- Economically weaker regions such as **Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir** received very limited allocations.

Governance and Constitutional Concerns

- MPLADS raises concerns regarding the **Doctrine of Separation of Powers**, as legislators influence executive spending.
- Critics argue it blurs the line between **legislative oversight and executive functions**.
- Concentrated allocations challenge principles of **balanced regional development and cooperative federalism**.

Transparency and Monitoring Mechanisms

- The **e-SAKSHI portal (April 2023)** enables digital monitoring of MPLADS projects.
- However, allocation trends indicate **political priorities may influence project selection**.
- Stronger guidelines and monitoring can improve **equitable distribution of public funds**.