

Daily
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
CHRONICLE

 Wednesday, March 18, 2026

NEWS CREDIT

PIB/ PTI/ News On Air/ The Hindu/ IANS/
Business Standard/ Times Of India/ Deccan
Herald/ Hindustan Times/ BBC News/
Aljazeera/ Mirror.Uk/ Times Now/ Economic
Times/ Financial Express/ Indian Express...

NEWS COVERED

Business News, financial news, economy
news, company news, politics news, India
news, breaking news, Indian economy,
International News, Sports News, and
many more topics...

English



Top Stories of The Day

- *Maharashtra Assembly Passes Freedom of Religion Bill 2026 to Curb Forced and Fraudulent Conversions*
- *IndiGo Partners with Adani Airports to Offer BluChip Rewards on Duty-Free Purchases*
- *Sahitya Akademi Announces 2025 Awards Honouring 24 Authors Across Indian Languages*
- *15th-Century Gajapati Era Inscription Discovered at Lakshmi Narasimha Temple in Guntur*
- *Supreme Court Mandates Prior Approval for Delay in State DGP Appointments via UPSC*
- *India Secures Five Medals Including One Gold at World Boxing Futures Cup 2026 in Bangkok*
- *22-Year-Old Surya Midha Becomes Youngest Self-Made Billionaire, Surpassing Mark Zuckerberg*
- *India Creates Record with 208 Medals at World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026 in New Delhi*
- *Gujarat Achieves Milestone with First Private Sounding Rocket Launch from Dholera*
- *SATHEE App Enhances Free Digital Preparation for Competitive Exams like JEE and NEET*

Maharashtra Assembly Passes Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026



- The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly passed the Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026 on 16 March 2026 to regulate religious conversions in the state.

Key Points for Exams

- The bill aims to prevent unlawful religious conversions.
- It targets conversions done through force, fraud, inducement, or marriage.
- The bill will now be sent to the Legislative Council for approval.

Key Provisions

Punishment:

- Imprisonment up to 7–10 years along with a fine.

Prior Notice:

- Individuals must give a 60-day prior notice to authorities before conversion.

Post-Declaration:

- Declaration must be submitted within 21 days after conversion.

Burden of Proof:

- Lies on the accused person to prove that conversion was not illegal.

Nature of Offence:

- Cognisable and non-bailable offence.
- Marriage-related Conversion:
- Conversion done for the purpose of marriage is also punishable.

Political Response

- Supported by: Ruling alliance (Mahayuti) and some other parties.
- Opposed by: Congress, NCP (SP), Samajwadi Party, CPI(M) — termed it unconstitutional and biased.

Additional Useful Facts

Similar anti-conversion laws exist in several Indian states such as:

- Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh.
- These laws are often debated in the context of Article 25 of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees freedom of religion.
- Such laws have also faced judicial scrutiny in courts over concerns of misuse.

IndiGo Partners with Adani Airports for BluChip Rewards on Duty-Free Shopping



- IndiGo has partnered with Adani Airport Holdings Limited to allow passengers to earn loyalty rewards (BluChips) on duty-free purchases at airports managed by Adani Group.

Key Points:

- The partnership enables earning of BluChip loyalty points on duty-free shopping.
- It integrates airline loyalty programs with airport retail services.
- Applicable across Adani-managed airports in India.

Key Features / Provisions

- Reward Structure: 5 BluChips for every ₹100 spent on duty-free products.
- Pre-booking: Passengers can browse, reserve, and pay online before departure.
- Collection System: Products can be collected at airport duty-free stores.
- Credit Timeline: Rewards credited within 24–48 hours after purchase.

Coverage (Airports Included)

- Currently available at: Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Thiruvananthapuram, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Lucknow
- Future Expansion: Guwahati (LGBI Airport) & Navi Mumbai International Airport

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025 Announced: Navtej Sarna, Mamta Kalia Among Winners



- The Sahitya Akademi announced the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025, honouring

24 writers across 24 Indian languages for their outstanding literary works.

Key Points

- Awards given annually in 24 recognised Indian languages.
- Navtej Sarna (English) awarded for novel Crimson Spring.
- Mamta Kalia (Hindi) awarded for memoir Jeete Jee Allahabad.
- Total 24 authors selected across categories and languages.

Categories Covered

- 8 Poetry collections
- 4 Novels
- 6 Short story collections
- 2 Essay works
- 1 Literary criticism
- 1 Autobiography
- 2 Memoirs

Award Details

- Engraved copper plaque
- Shawl
- ₹1 lakh cash prize

Other Notable Winners

- N. Prabhakaran (Malayalam) – Maayaamanushyar (Novel)
- Works from languages like Bengali, Gujarati, Bodo, Punjabi, Sindhi, etc., also awarded

Sahitya Akademi:

- Established in 1954
- India's National Academy of Letters
- First Awards (1955):
- Hindi: Makhn Lal Chaturvedi
- English: R. K. Narayan
- Considered second highest literary honour in India after the Jnanpith Award

- Selection Process: Jury recommendation + approval by Akademi authorities

Medieval Gajapati Inscription Discovered on Stone Pillar in Guntur



- A 15th-century inscription linked to the Gajapati rulers of Odisha has been discovered on a stone pillar at the Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.

Key Points:

- The inscription is engraved on both sides of a stone pillar in the temple's mandapa.
- It is written in Telugu and dates back to the 15th century CE.
- Mentions Kumaraguru Mahapatra, an official under Gajapati king Purushottama Deva.
- Indicates administrative and cultural influence of Gajapati rulers in Andhra region.

Historical Significance

- Shows political and cultural links between Odisha (Kalinga) and Andhra Pradesh during the medieval period.
- Reflects Hari-Hara tradition (combined worship of Shiva and Vishnu).
- Mentions temple donations, rituals, and resource management (e.g., cows for पूजा services).

- Suggests that temple structures and idols were relocated from Kondaveedu Fort during invasions.

Related Findings

- A similar Odia inscription at Kondaveedu records land donation to a temple by a royal officer.
- The Guntur inscription was likely originally associated with Kondaveedu temple and later relocated.

About Gajapati Empire (Extra Facts)

- Period: c. 1434–1541 CE
- Founder: Kapilendra Deva (Suryavamsa dynasty)
- Important ruler: Purushottama Deva, Prataparudra Deva
- Extent: From Ganga (north) to Kaveri (south) at its peak
- Capital: Initially Cuttack
- Known for patronage of temples, art, and Odia culture

UPSC's New Rule: Supreme Court Approval Mandatory for Delay in Appointment of State DGPs



- The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), in line with directions of the Supreme Court of India, has introduced stricter rules for the appointment of State Director Generals of Police (DGPs) to ensure timely and transparent selection.

- SC approval mandatory for delay: State governments must obtain prior permission from the Supreme Court if there is any delay in sending the list of eligible officers to UPSC.
- Advance timeline rule: States must send proposals at least 3 months before the retirement of the incumbent DGP.
- No “Acting DGP” concept: Appointment of acting/temporary DGPs is not allowed.
- UPSC cannot ignore delays: UPSC has no authority to condone major delays without SC approval.

Key Provisions / Guidelines

- Panel System: UPSC prepares a panel of 3 senior IPS officers for selection.
- Exceptional Cases for Delay (Allowed):
 - Death of incumbent DGP
 - Resignation
 - Premature removal
 - (Only in such cases, delay may be considered)
- Without SC nod: UPSC cannot proceed with empanelment if delay occurs.

Background

- Based on the landmark Prakash Singh vs Union of India (2006) judgment.
- DGP tenure: Minimum 2-year fixed tenure recommended by SC.

Why This Rule Was Introduced?

Many states were:

- Delaying submission of proposals
- Appointing acting DGPs to bypass rules
- This led to non-compliance with Supreme Court guidelines.

India Wins Five Medals at World Boxing Futures Cup 2026



- India delivered a strong performance at the World Boxing Futures Cup 2026 held in Bangkok (Thailand), securing a total of five medals in youth boxing categories.
- India finished with 5 medals: 1 Gold, 3 Silver, 1 Bronze
- Chandrika Pujari won the only gold medal for India.
- Three Indian boxers finished with silver medals after reaching the finals in their respective categories.
- Gunjan (48kg) went down to her opponent from England by a 5-0 decision, while Joyshree Devi (54kg) fought hard but lost 4-1 to a boxer from the United States.
- In the men's 50kg category, L. Ambekar Meetei also settled for silver after losing his final bout to Ukraine.
- Earlier in the tournament, Radhamani Longjam (57kg) had secured a bronze medal.
- The event featured youth (U-19) boxers competing in Olympic weight categories.

World Boxing Futures Cup:

- Organized for junior/youth boxers to prepare for elite competitions
- Boxing Governance: In India, managed by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI)

Boxing Federation of India:

- headquarter: Gurugram, Haryana.
- President: Ajay Singh
- Secretary: Pramod Kumar

22-Year-Old Surya Midha Surpasses Mark Zuckerberg's Record in Forbes List



- A 22-year-old entrepreneur, Surya Midha, has become one of the youngest self-made billionaires in the world, surpassing the record earlier held by Mark Zuckerberg.
- Surya Midha became a self-made billionaire at age 22.
- He co-founded Mercor, an AI-based hiring platform.
- Along with co-founders Adarsh Hiremath and Brendan Foody, he became the youngest self-made billionaires globally.
- They broke the earlier record of Mark Zuckerberg, who became a billionaire at 23 years.

Key Facts About the Achievement

- Net worth: Approx. \$2.2 billion (Surya Midha)
- Company valuation: Around \$10 billion
- Year of milestone: 2025 (entered Forbes Billionaires list)
- Sector: Artificial Intelligence (AI) & recruitment technology

About Mercor

- Founded in 2023 by three young entrepreneurs
- Provides AI-driven recruitment and talent matching services
- Works with AI labs and companies to train models

- Headquartered in San Francisco, USA

Background & Additional Facts:

- Surya Midha is of Indian origin (parents from Delhi).
- He studied at Georgetown University but dropped out to focus on the startup.
- The founders are part of the Thiel Fellowship, supporting young entrepreneurs.
- Trend Insight: Rise of AI-based startups is creating young billionaires globally
- Forbes 2026 Insight: A record number of under-30 billionaires emerged, many from the AI sector.

World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026: India Creates Record with 208 Medals



- India delivered an outstanding performance at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026, held in New Delhi (Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium), by securing a record 208 medals, finishing at the top of the medal tally.
- The medal haul included 75 gold, 69 silver, and 64 bronze medals. The event witnessed participation from over 250 athletes across 8 countries.
- India also achieved multiple podium sweeps (winning all three medals in events), highlighting its dominance in para athletics.

Key Highlights

- Preeti Pal won two gold medals in sprint events.

- Sumit Antil, Paralympic champion, secured gold in javelin throw.
- Athletes like Shubham Juyal (shot put) and Manoj Kumar Sabapathy (800m) also won gold medals.

Top Positions (Medal Tally)

- India – 208 medals
- Russia – 35 medals
- Bosnia & Herzegovina – 3 medals

Additional Facts:

- The event is part of the World Para Athletics Grand Prix series (13th season).
- It serves as preparation for major events like the 2026 World Para Athletics Championships and 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics.
- India had won 134 medals in 2025, showing significant improvement in 2026.
- Para sports in India are governed by the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI).
- The global governing body is the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

Paralympic Committee of India:

- Headquarters: New Delhi, India
- President: Devendra Jhajharia
- Secretary General: Jayawant Gundu Hamanawar

International Paralympic Committee:

- Headquarters: Bonn, Germany
- President: Brazil Andrew Parsons
- Vice President: New Zealand Duane Kale

Dholera Makes History: Gujarat's First Sounding Rocket Successfully Launched



- India achieved a significant milestone in the private space sector as Gujarat's first sounding rocket was successfully launched from Dholera (near Ahmedabad) by an Indian startup.
- The single-stage sub-orbital rocket reached an altitude of about 3 km within seconds and safely returned using a dual-parachute recovery system, marking a successful test of critical technologies.
- This is the first-ever rocket launch from Gujarat's soil, highlighting the growing role of private players in India's space ecosystem.

Key Highlights

- Developed by Ahmedabad-based startup OmSpace Rocket & Exploration (OSRE).
- Rocket used indigenous technologies such as:
 - 3D-printed igniter
 - Sugar-based solid fuel
 - Carbon-fibre airframe
- Launch conducted with approvals from agencies like IN-SPACE, DGCA, and AAI.
- Validated systems: propulsion, avionics, and recovery mechanism.

What is a Sounding Rocket?

- A sounding rocket is a sub-orbital rocket used for scientific research.
- It collects data on:
 - Temperature
 - Pressure
 - Upper atmospheric conditions

- These rockets are cost-effective and used for testing technologies before larger missions.

Additional Important Facts

- India's space journey began with sounding rockets in the 1960s (Thumba, Kerala).
- India's first privately built rocket: Vikram-S (launched in 2022).
- The private space sector is regulated by Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre.
- Dholera is part of the Dholera Special Investment Region (SIR), a major industrial smart city project in Gujarat.
- The startup plans to develop a reusable orbital launch vehicle ("Infinity One") in future.

SATHEE App: Government's Free Platform for Competitive Exam Preparation

SATHEE App FEATURES



- The Ministry of Education has launched a free digital learning platform named SATHEE (Self-Assessment, Test and Help for Entrance Exams) to assist students in preparing for major competitive exams like JEE, NEET, and CUET.
- The platform has been developed in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur and provides free access to high-quality study material, mock tests, and video lectures prepared by experts.

- It aims to support economically weaker students by reducing dependence on expensive coaching institutes and ensuring equal access to quality education.

Key Features

- Free video lectures & notes by IIT and top institution faculty
- Mock tests & previous year question papers for self-evaluation
- Multilingual content for wider accessibility
- Doubt-solving support & interactive learning tools
- Accessible anytime, anywhere (app + web platform)

Additional Important Facts

- SATHEE was launched in November 2023 as part of digital education initiatives.

It supports multiple exams including:

- JEE, NEET, CUET, SSC, IBPS, RRB, CLAT, ICAR
- Content is curated by experts from IITs and AIIMS, ensuring high academic quality.
- The platform includes 80,000+ practice questions and daily practice problems (DPPs).
- It has been integrated with AI-based features such as personalized learning and doubt-solving tools (announced at India AI Impact Summit 2026).

SATHEE complements other government initiatives like:

- DIKSHA platform (school education)
- SWAYAM & SWAYAM Prabha DTH channels

Lets Revise

- ❖ What is the main objective of the Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026? **To prevent forced or fraudulent religious conversions**
- ❖ What is the maximum punishment under the Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026? **7–10 years imprisonment**
- ❖ Which airline partnered with Adani Airports for duty-free rewards? **IndiGo**
- ❖ How many languages are covered under Sahitya Akademi Awards? **24**
- ❖ Who won the 2025 Sahitya Akademi Award in English? **Navtej Sarna**
- ❖ Where was the Gajapati inscription recently discovered? **Guntur, Andhra Pradesh**
- ❖ Which body's approval is now mandatory for delay in DGP appointment? **Supreme Court of India**
- ❖ How many medals did India win at the World Boxing Futures Cup 2026? **5**
- ❖ Who became one of the youngest self-made billionaires in 2026? **Surya Midha**
- ❖ How many medals did India win at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026? **208**
- ❖ From where was Gujarat's first sounding rocket launched? **Dholera (Gujarat)**
- ❖ What does SATHEE (an initiative of Ministry of Education) stand for? **Self-Assessment, Test and Help for Entrance Exams**
- ❖ SATHEE platform was developed in collaboration with which institute? **IIT Kanpur**

Current affairs form the dynamic backbone of preparation for competitive examinations such as UPSC, SSC, and banking services. They bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and real-world developments, transforming static knowledge into practical understanding. In an age marked by rapid geopolitical changes, economic reforms, and policy innovations, a significant portion of these exams—often 30–35%—draws directly or indirectly from recent events.

Mastery of current affairs not only enhances scores but also cultivates analytical thinking, clarity of perspective, and decision-making skills—qualities indispensable for future administrators and professionals.

Key Dimensions of Importance

- **Syllabus Integration:** Current events seamlessly connect with core subjects like polity, economy, history, and geography. For instance, understanding constitutional provisions becomes more meaningful when linked to recent judicial reforms or landmark judgments.
- **Scoring Edge:** Many questions in prelims and mains are derived from contemporary developments. A well-prepared aspirant can secure quick and confident marks through accurate knowledge of high-yield topics from reliable news sources.
- **Interview Excellence:** In personality tests and interviews, panels evaluate awareness of pressing national and global issues—ranging from climate diplomacy to economic policy—requiring thoughtful, balanced responses.

As many toppers emphasize, current affairs are not a separate subject but the soul of exam preparation. Consistent engagement with credible sources like The Hindu, PIB releases, and Yojana magazine strengthens critical thinking and nurtures a well-rounded outlook, moving beyond rote memorization.

In a competitive landscape where millions aspire for limited opportunities, current affairs serve as a decisive differentiator. Adopting structured habits—daily news analysis, monthly revisions, and regular mock tests—empowers candidates to adapt confidently to evolving exam patterns. Ignoring this essential component is like navigating uncertain waters without direction—while mastering it ensures clarity, confidence, and a competitive advantage.



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