

Daily
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
CHRONICLE

 Friday, March 20, 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

- *Cabinet clears ₹33,660 crore BHAVYA scheme to boost manufacturing, jobs, and industrial infrastructure nationwide.*
- *Cabinet approves Small Hydro Scheme to add 1500 MW renewable capacity in remote and hilly regions.*
- *India–Australia partner to strengthen vocational education, skills, and workforce mobility.*
- *DGCA issues new rules ensuring free seats, transparent fares, and better passenger rights.*
- *India–Sri Lanka JV approved for power transmission to boost renewable energy cooperation.*
- *OpenAI launches GPT-5.4 Mini and Nano for faster, cheaper, scalable AI solutions.*
- *Hurun 2026 list: Elon Musk tops; AI drives surge in global billionaires.*
- *FIFA partners with YouTube for 2026 World Cup streaming and digital expansion.*
- *Supreme Court grants maternity leave to adoptive mothers regardless of child's age.*
- *Transgender Bill 2026 proposes medical verification, raises concerns over rights.*

Cabinet approves Rs 33K crore BHAVYA industrial cluster scheme



- The Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA) is a major initiative approved by the Union Cabinet with a total outlay of ₹33,660 crore. The scheme aims to accelerate industrial growth in India by developing modern industrial infrastructure and strengthening the manufacturing sector. It is part of the broader vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat, focusing on making India a global manufacturing hub.

Objective of the Scheme

- The primary objective of the BHAVYA scheme is to promote manufacturing, attract both domestic and foreign investments, and generate large-scale employment opportunities. It also seeks to improve the Ease of Doing Business by providing ready-to-use industrial infrastructure, thereby reducing delays in setting up industries.

Key Features

- A major highlight of the scheme is the development of 100 plug-and-play industrial parks across the country over a period of approximately 6 years.
- These parks will offer pre-approved land along with essential facilities such as electricity, water, and clearances, enabling industries to begin operations quickly. The parks will typically range between 100 to 1000 acres in size.
- The scheme also provides financial assistance of up to ₹1 crore per acre and will be implemented

through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model involving central government, state governments, and private players.

- Additionally, there is a strong emphasis on creating green and sustainable infrastructure.

Economic and Employment Impact

- The BHAVYA scheme is expected to significantly boost India's industrial ecosystem by enhancing manufacturing capacity and improving supply chains.
- It is projected to generate around 15 lakh direct jobs, along with numerous indirect employment opportunities in sectors such as logistics and services.
- This will contribute to overall economic growth and regional development.

Additional Facts:

- The scheme was announced as part of the Union Budget 2026 and is aligned with the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP). It complements other government initiatives like the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, which also aims to strengthen domestic manufacturing. Industrial corridors such as the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) further support the objectives of this scheme.

Union Cabinet approved the Small Hydro Power Development Scheme



Small Hydro Power Development Scheme (Rs 2,585 Cr)

Small Hydro Power in India

Friday, March 20, 2026

- The Union Cabinet approved the Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme for the period FY 2026–27 to FY 2030–31.
- Total outlay: ₹2,500+ crore (approx. ₹2,584 crore).
- Target: Development of ~1500 MW capacity through small hydro projects.
- Focus areas: Remote, rural, hilly, and North-Eastern regions.

Features of the Scheme

- Covers Small Hydro Projects (SHP) with capacity between 1 MW to 25 MW.
- Provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA):
- Up to ₹3.6 crore per MW or 30% of project cost (whichever is lower)
- Maximum limit: ₹30 crore per project (special support for NE and border areas)
- Encourages preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for around 200 projects.
- Promotes run-of-the-river projects (minimal environmental impact, no large dams).

Objective & Significance

- Boost renewable energy capacity and reduce dependence on fossil fuels
- Provide decentralized power supply in remote regions
- Support energy security and grid stability
- Promote sustainable and eco-friendly power generation

Additional Facts

- Small Hydro Power (SHP): Projects up to 25 MW capacity.
- India's estimated SHP potential: ~20 GW.
- First hydro project in India: Darjeeling (1897).
- Implementing Ministry: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)
- Part of India's broader push toward clean energy transition and Net Zero goals

India–Australia Vocational Education Collaboration



- Recently, India and Australia agreed to collaborate in the field of vocational education with the primary objective of strengthening skill development systems in both countries.

Key Highlights

- India and Australia held a bilateral meeting between:
- National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) (India)
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

The collaboration focuses on the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector.

- Aim: Knowledge exchange, quality assurance, and skill ecosystem development.
- It marks a step toward deepening India–Australia education and skilling partnership.

Objectives of the Collaboration

- Develop industry-aligned skill training systems
- Promote mutual recognition of qualifications
- Improve quality standards in vocational education
- Enhance workforce mobility between the two countries
- Build a future-ready skilled workforce

Key Areas of Cooperation

- Skill certification and assessment frameworks

- Training quality standards and regulation
- Curriculum development aligned with industry needs
- Capacity building of trainers and institutions
- Exchange of best practices in vocational education policies

Additional Facts

- NCVET: A regulatory body under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) responsible for vocational education standards in India.
- ASQA: Australia's national regulator for vocational education and training.
- The collaboration is part of the broader India–Australia Education and Skills Partnership.

Related initiative:

- Australia–India Education and Skills Council (AIESC) – platform for bilateral cooperation in education and skills.

Aligns with India's policies like:

- National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 (focus on vocational education integration)
- Skill India Mission

Civil Aviation Guidelines for Passenger Convenience & Transparency



- The Ministry of Civil Aviation, through the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), issued new passenger-friendly guidelines.

- Aim: Improve transparency, affordability, and passenger experience in air travel.
- Guidelines apply to all airlines operating in India to ensure uniform practices.

Major Provisions of the Guidelines

Free Seat Allocation:

- Minimum 60% of seats on every flight must be provided without extra seat selection charges.

Seating for Same PNR:

- Passengers booked under the same PNR (Passenger Name Record) must be seated together, preferably in adjacent seats.

Transparent Pricing:

- Airlines must clearly display fare structure and additional charges to avoid hidden costs.

Passenger Rights Awareness:

- Airlines should inform passengers about their rights, including refunds, cancellations, and facilities.

Communication in Regional Languages:

- Information related to passenger services must be made accessible in regional languages for wider understanding.

Improved Grievance Redressal:

- Strengthening mechanisms for complaints and dispute resolution.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (India):

- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Minister of Civil Aviation: Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu
- Minister of State of Civil Aviation: Murlidhar Mohol
- Director General: Faiz Ahmed Kidwai

India–Sri Lanka Joint Venture for Power Transmission Link



- Sri Lanka approved an India–Sri Lanka joint venture to develop a key power transmission link in the northern region.
- The project will connect wind energy projects and improve electricity transmission infrastructure.
- The contract was awarded to a joint venture involving:
 - India’s Jyoti Structures Limited
 - Sri Lanka’s Hayleys Fentons Limited

Objective & Significance

- Enhance renewable energy capacity in Sri Lanka
- Improve power evacuation and transmission systems
- Support clean energy transition and reduce dependence on fossil fuels
- Strengthen India–Sri Lanka energy cooperation
- Boost regional connectivity and energy security

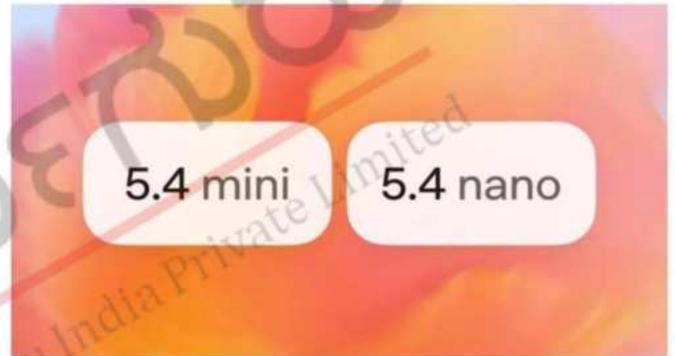
Project Importance

- Focuses on northern Sri Lanka, a region with high wind energy potential
- Helps integrate renewable energy into the national grid
- Supports Sri Lanka’s target of increasing renewable energy share (around 70% by 2030)
- Facilitates future cross-border electricity trade

Additional Facts:

- India and Sri Lanka are also working on a power grid interconnection project via undersea cable linking India (Madurai/Chennai) to Sri Lanka (Anuradhapura/Mannar region).
- This interconnection is part of broader South Asian regional energy integration efforts.
- India is already connected with Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal through cross-border electricity grids.
- The initiative aligns with India’s strategy of promoting clean energy diplomacy in the Global South.

OpenAI Launches GPT-5.4 Mini & Nano



- OpenAI introduced GPT-5.4 Mini and GPT-5.4 Nano, expanding its AI model lineup.
- These models are compact versions of the flagship GPT-5.4 model launched in 2026.
- Focus: High speed, low cost, and efficiency for large-scale workloads.
- Designed for coding, reasoning, and real-time AI applications.

Features of the Models

Faster performance:

- GPT-5.4 Mini operates significantly faster than previous models and supports real-time responses.

Cost efficiency:

- Much cheaper than full-scale models, making them suitable for high-volume usage.

Strong coding capabilities:

- Optimized for software development tasks and coding workflows.

Scalability:

- Suitable for applications requiring low latency and high throughput.

Near flagship performance:

- Performance approaches the main GPT-5.4 model in many benchmarks.

Objective & Significance

- Makes AI more accessible and affordable for developers and businesses
- Enhances productivity in coding and automation tasks
- Supports real-time AI applications like chatbots and assistants
- Promotes wider adoption of AI across industries
- Strengthens OpenAI's position in the global AI competition

Additional Facts:

- GPT-5.4 is a large language model (LLM) released in March 2026.
- It shows reduced factual errors (~33%) compared to earlier versions.
- These models are integrated into platforms like:
 - ChatGPT
 - APIs for developers
 - AI coding tools like Codex
- Earlier versions also followed a similar structure:
 - GPT-4.1 Mini & Nano (2025)

Hurun Global Rich List 2026

- The Hurun Research Institute released the Hurun Global Rich List 2026.

- Elon Musk topped the list with an estimated wealth of around \$792 billion.
- He became the richest person for the 5th time in 6 years.
- Jeff Bezos ranked second with about \$300 billion.
- Larry Page secured the third position.



Top 10 Richest People

- Dominated by technology and AI sector leaders
- Includes personalities like:
 - Elon Musk
 - Jeff Bezos
 - Larry Page
 - Sergey Brin
 - Mark Zuckerberg
 - Larry Ellison
- Indicates the growing dominance of Big Tech and AI-driven companies in global wealth creation.

Major Trends Observed

- Total global billionaires crossed 4,000 for the first time.
- Around 578 new billionaires were added in one year.
- Nearly 2 new billionaires were created every day.
- AI sector emerged as the biggest driver of wealth creation, producing the highest number of new billionaires.

Additional Facts

- Wealth calculation is based on a snapshot as of January 2026.

- The Top 10 billionaires together hold about \$2.8 trillion wealth.
- Elon Musk became the first person to surpass \$700 billion wealth.
- United States has the highest number of billionaires, followed by China, while India ranks among the top countries.

- Monetisation Opportunities: Helps broadcasters expand reach and generate revenue through digital platforms

FIFA:

- Founded: 1930
- Current champions: Argentina (3rd title)
- Most championships: Brazil (5 titles)

FIFA–YouTube Partnership for 2026 World Cup



- FIFA partnered with YouTube as a “preferred platform” for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.
- For the first time in World Cup history, broadcasters can stream the first 10 minutes of every match live on YouTube.
- Selected matches may be streamed fully on YouTube channels of official broadcasters.
- The tournament will be held from 11 June to 19 July 2026 across the USA, Canada, and Mexico.

Key Features of the Partnership

- “First 10-minute streaming model”: Acts as a teaser to attract viewers to full broadcasts on TV or other platforms.

Expanded Digital Content:

- Highlights, short videos, behind-the-scenes clips, and on-demand content
- Access to FIFA’s digital archive (historic matches and moments)
- Creator Ecosystem: Global YouTube creators will get exclusive behind-the-scenes access.

Supreme Court Ruling on Maternity Leave for Adoptive Mothers



- The Supreme Court of India struck down the provision that limited maternity leave only if the adopted child was below 3 months of age.
- The Court held that adoptive mothers are entitled to 12 weeks of maternity leave, regardless of the child’s age.
- The restriction under Section 60(4) of the Code on Social Security, 2020 was declared violative of Articles 14 and 21 (equality and right to life).

Key Observations by the Court

- Motherhood is not limited to biological childbirth; adoption is equally a form of parenthood.
- The objective of maternity benefits is to support care, bonding, and child development, not just childbirth.
- Denying leave based on the child’s age is discriminatory and arbitrary.
- Adoption is part of reproductive autonomy under Article 21.

Paternity Leave Observation

- The Court urged the government to introduce a law on paternity leave as a social security benefit.
- It emphasized the importance of both parents' presence in a child's early development.

Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017:

- Provides 26 weeks leave for biological mothers
- Earlier allowed 12 weeks leave for adoptive mothers (child below 3 months)

Code on Social Security, 2020:

- Consolidates labour laws including maternity benefits

Important Case Link:

- Deepika Singh v. Central Administrative Tribunal – Expanded definition of “family” and maternity rights

Supreme Court of India

- Headed by the Chief Justice of India (CJI).
- Maximum strength: 34 judges (1 CJI + 33 judges).
- Judges are appointed by the President of India.
- Surya Kant is the incumbent and 53rd chief justice of India, and was appointed on 24th November 2025.

Appointment & Tenure

- Judges are appointed under Article 124 of the Constitution.
- Retirement age: 65 years.
- Removal: Through impeachment by Parliament (special majority).

Jurisdiction

- Original Jurisdiction (Article 131):
- Disputes between Centre and States or between States

Appellate Jurisdiction:

- Appeals from High Courts in civil, criminal, and constitutional matters

Advisory Jurisdiction (Article 143):

- President can seek advice from the Court

Writ Jurisdiction (Article 32):

- Protection of Fundamental Rights

Powers

- Judicial Review: Can strike down unconstitutional laws
- Court of Record (Article 129):
- Power to punish for contempt
- Guardian of the Constitution

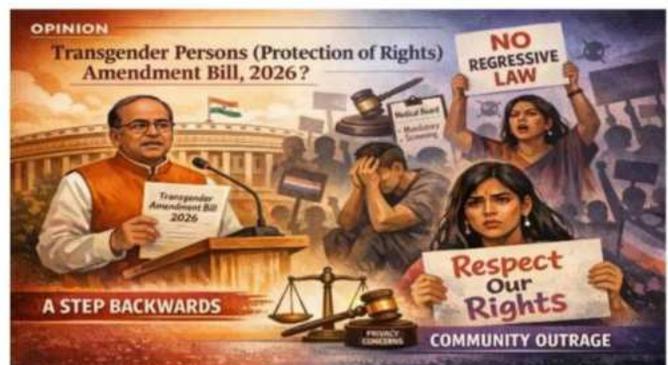
Important Articles

- Article 124–147: Supreme Court provisions
- Article 32: Right to Constitutional Remedies
- Article 136: Special Leave Petition (SLP)
- Article 141: Law declared by SC is binding
- Article 142: Power to do complete justice

Other Key Facts

- First Chief Justice: H. J. Kania
- Public Interest Litigation (PIL) originated in the 1980s to improve access to justice
- Works as the final court of appeal in India

Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026



Friday, March 20, 2026

- The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 seeks to amend the 2019 Act.
- It proposes to remove the provision of “self-perceived gender identity” for legal recognition.
- Introduces a system of medical boards/screening committees for issuing transgender identity certificates.
- The role of the District Magistrate (DM) will depend on recommendations of such committees.

Background

- The original Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 allowed identity based on self-perception.
- The landmark NALSA v. Union of India (2014) judgment by the Supreme Court:
- Recognised transgender persons as the third gender
- Upheld the right to self-identify gender without medical tests

Key Changes Proposed in 2026 Bill

- Removal of self-identification principle

- Mandatory medical/official verification before granting identity
- Revised definition of “transgender person”
- Provision for stricter punishments for crimes against transgender persons

Concerns & Criticism

- Seen as a rollback of rights guaranteed under the NALSA judgment
- Critics argue it may:
 - Violate Right to Equality (Article 14)
 - Violate Right to Privacy & Dignity (Article 21)
- Medical screening is viewed as intrusive and discriminatory
- Lack of consultation with stakeholders has also been highlighted

Government's Rationale

- To prevent misuse of welfare schemes meant for transgender persons
- To ensure benefits reach genuine beneficiaries through verification
- Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment: Virendra Kumar Khatik

Lets Revise

- ❖ What is the total outlay of the BHAVYA scheme? ₹33,660 crore.
- ❖ What type of industrial parks are planned under BHAVYA? Plug-and-play industrial parks.
- ❖ What is the duration of the Small Hydro Power Development Scheme? FY 2026–27 to 2030–31
- ❖ Which two organizations are involved in the India–Australia vocational education collaboration? NCVET and ASQA

- ❖ What percentage of seats must be free under the new aviation guidelines? **60%**
- ❖ Which countries are involved in the northern power transmission joint venture? **India and Sri Lanka**
- ❖ OpenAI introduced GPT-5.4. It belongs to which category of technology? **Large Language Model (LLM).**
- ❖ Who topped the Hurun Global Rich List 2026? **Elon Musk**
- ❖ Which country has the highest number of billionaires as per Hurun Global Rich List 2026? **United States**
- ❖ FIFA partnered with which platform for the 2026 World Cup? **YouTube**
- ❖ Which countries will host the 2026 FIFA World Cup? **USA, Canada, and Mexico**
- ❖ The Supreme Court's ruling on maternity leave for adoptive mothers was based on violation of which Fundamental Rights under the Indian Constitution? **Articles 14 (Right to Equality) and 21 (Right to Life and Dignity).**
- ❖ In the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, which key provision related to gender identity has been proposed to be removed? **The right to self-identification of gender.**
- ❖ Which landmark Supreme Court judgment recognized transgender persons as the third gender and upheld their right to self-identify their gender in India? **NALSA v. Union of India (2014).**

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.

-  SpardhaGuru
-  spardhaguru2022
-  spardhaguru2022
-  info@spardha.guru
-  www.spardha.guru

 No 8, 24th Block Manasi Nagar Beside of Bliss serviced Apartment, Mysuru, Karnataka 570029

