



60th Jnanpith Award, 2025

Renowned Tamil poet, lyricist, and author **R.Vairamuthu** has been conferred upon India's highest literary award.



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13th MARCH 2026

Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026

- **Context:** The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 was introduced in the Lok Sabha by the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment.



Key Highlights of the Bill

- The Bill aims to amend the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
- **Definition of Transgender Person:** It seeks to narrow the definition of “transgender person” and clarifies that persons with different sexual orientations or self-perceived sexual identities will not fall within the definition of transgender persons under the Act.
- **Changes To Recognition of Gender Identity:** The District Magistrate will issue a certificate of identity after examining the recommendation of a designated medical board headed by a Chief Medical Officer or Deputy Chief Medical Officer.
- The Bill also omits Section 4(2) of the 2019 Act, which presently recognises the right of a transgender person to self-perceived gender identity.
- **Changes To Procedure After Gender Reassignment Surgery:** A medical institution where a person undergoes gender reassignment surgery will be required to furnish details of the person to the District Magistrate and the designated authority.

- **Reconstitution of National Council:** Representatives of State Governments and Union Territories will be nominated by the Central Government on a rotational basis from the North, South, East, West and North East regions. Such representatives must not be below the rank of Director in the concerned Ministry or Department.
- **New Penal Provisions relating Forced Conversion and Exploitation:** Offences may attract rigorous imprisonment ranging from ten years to life and a minimum fine of ₹2 lakh.
 - In cases involving children, the punishment may extend to life imprisonment with a minimum fine of ₹5 lakh.
 - It also introduces offences for forcing persons or children to present themselves as transgender and engaging them in begging.

Need for the Amendments

- The amendment seeks to address difficulties that have arisen in implementing the 2019 Act due to vague and broad definitions of transgender persons.
- A precise definition is necessary to ensure that the protections under the Act reach those who face extreme social discrimination and to address serious offences involving abduction, bodily harm and forced assumption of transgender identities.

About LGBTQIA+

- LGBTQIA+ is an umbrella term for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual persons, with ‘+’ representing other identities that are not specifically included in these letters.
- Notably, LGBTQIA+ persons do not conform with traditional gender roles and expectations, display sex characteristics that do not fit the typical male or female binary, and their gender identities that differ from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Operation Sagar Bandhu

- **Context:** The Indian Army has launched a Major Bridge Project in Sri Lanka under Operation Sagar Bandhu.



Key Facts

- The bridge will connect Colombo, the capital city, with the key economic centre of Puttalam along a vital coastal corridor passing through Chilaw District.
- The project reflects India's engineering assistance to support Sri Lanka's infrastructure recovery and connectivity.
- It is aligned with India's Neighbourhood First Policy and broader regional cooperation initiatives.

Background

- India launched Operation Sagar Bandhu in November 2025 as a First Responder following the devastating Cyclone Ditwah.
- The operation aimed to provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) to Sri Lanka.

Kharg Island

- **Context:** Recently, U.S. forces struck military targets at Kharg Island in Iran.

About Kharg Island

- Often referred to as the "orphan pearl," Kharg Island is a small island in the northeastern Persian Gulf, approximately 25 kilometres off the coast of Iran's Khuzestan Province.

- Despite its modest size, it is the single most important oil export terminal in Iran and one of the most strategically significant energy chokepoints in the world.
- Almost all Iranian crude destined for international markets is loaded here before passing through the Strait of Hormuz into global shipping lanes.



Do you Know ?

- Iran is the third-largest producer in Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), accounting for roughly 4.5% of global oil supply.
- The country produces about 3.3 million barrels of crude oil per day, in addition to around 1.3 million barrels per day of condensate and other liquid hydrocarbons.

14th MARCH 2026

International Solar Alliance

- **Context:** Recently, the Government highlighted the growing global momentum behind solar energy and ISA's role in advancing the clean energy transition.

About International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- It is a global initiative aimed at accelerating the adoption of solar energy and supporting the transition to cleaner and sustainable energy systems.
- It was jointly launched by India and France during the COP21 Paris Climate Conference 2015 under the leadership of Narendra Modi.

- It works through four key pillars: mobilising finance for solar projects, promoting innovation and digital capacity building, strengthening regional and country-level partnerships, and developing technology roadmaps and policy frameworks.
- **Progress and Achievements:**
 - It has grown into a coalition of over 120 member countries, promoting international cooperation to expand solar energy, particularly in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Small Island Developing States to improve energy access and sustainable development.
 - India's solar capacity has reached about 136 GW, supported by initiatives like PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana and PM-KUSUM.

Global Pandemic Agreement

- **Context:** India is pushing for a fair benefit-sharing framework for developing countries in the upcoming pandemic agreement negotiations in Geneva.

About Global Pandemic Agreement

- It was adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2025.
- It seeks to establish a legally binding international framework to address global gaps and inequalities in pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.
- Its Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing (PABS) system is being negotiated to regulate how biological samples and genetic data are shared internationally.
- It is expected to be adopted by May 2026, will then be open for countries to sign and ratify, and will enter into force 30 days after 60 ratifications.

15th MARCH 2026

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)

- **Context:** The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has revised the rules for the empanelment of the State Director General of Police and Head of Police Force.

Key Changes in the Rule

- **Prior approval of the Supreme Court required for delay:** State governments must now obtain permission from the Supreme Court of India if there is any delay in sending the list of eligible DGP-rank officers to the Union Public Service Commission.
- **Three-month advance submission rule:** States must send proposals at least three months before the retirement of the incumbent DGP.
- **No concept of "Acting DGP":** The Court reiterated that States cannot appoint an acting DGP, as this concept does not exist under the guidelines laid down in the landmark Prakash Singh vs Union of India case.
- **UPSC cannot condone excessive delays:** There is no legal provision allowing UPSC to overlook major delays and proceed with empanelment. Delays may be considered only in exceptional situations such as:
 - Death of the incumbent DGP
 - Resignation
 - Premature relieving from office.



Rationale behind the Changes in Rules:

- Several State governments were delaying the submission of proposals to the UPSC for empanelment of eligible IPS officers for the post of DGP, despite the timelines prescribed by the Supreme Court of India in the landmark Prakash Singh vs Union of India case.
- Some States were appointing acting Directors General of Police to temporarily fill the vacancy.
- Such delays and ad-hoc arrangements undermined the objective of ensuring transparent, merit-based and politically insulated appointments to the top police leadership in the States.

Prakash Singh Judgment on Police Reforms

- The judgment in the Prakash Singh vs Union of India case (2006) laid down police reforms, including guidelines for appointing State DGPs. Key directions include:
- DGP must be selected from a panel of three senior IPS officers shortlisted by UPSC.
- The selected DGP should have a minimum tenure of two years.
- The process should ensure merit-based selection and insulation from political interference.

60th Jnanpith Award, 2025

- **Context:** Tamil poet and lyricist Vairamuthu has been selected for the Jnanpith Award for the year 2025.



Key Facts

- He is the third Tamil litterateur to receive the award after Akilan (1975) and Jayakanthan (2002), and the first to be honoured for Tamil poetry, while the earlier awardees were recognised for prose.
- He has written over 8,000 songs, won seven National Film Awards for lyrics, and earned the honorific “Kaviperarasu” (Emperor of Poets).
- The award, however, has been met with sharp criticism from some writers, artists and activists who point to sexual harassment allegations made against him during the #MeToo movement in India.

About Jnanpith Award

- Instituted in 1961 by the Bharatiya Jnanpith, it is India's highest literary honour, awarded annually to an Indian author for outstanding contribution to literature.
- Bharatiya Jnanpith is a literary and research organization founded by Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain and Rama Jain.



- It is awarded for the work in 22 languages recognized by the Constitution of India and, from 2013, in the English language.
- The award carries a ₹11 lakh cash prize, citation, and a bronze statuette of Vagdevi (Saraswati).
- The first recipient was Malayalam writer G. Sankara Kurup in 1965 for Odakkuzhal.

16th MARCH 2026

India's First National Report (NR1) on Nagoya Protocol

- **Context:** India recently submitted its first National Report (NR1) on Nagoya Protocol implementation to the CBD Secretariat, marking a key milestone in biodiversity governance.

Key Facts

- The report, prepared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in collaboration with the National Biodiversity Authority, covers the period from November 2017 to December 2025.
- During the reporting period (2017–2025), India issued 12,830 Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) approvals, including 5,913 approvals by the National Biodiversity Authority and 6,917 approvals by State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs/UTBCs) for commercial utilisation of biological resources.

About Nagoya Protocol

- Adopted on October 29, 2010, in Nagoya, Japan, and effective from October 12, 2014, it ensures fair access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing (monetary or non-monetary) via prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms.
- India ratified it in 2012, aligning with its Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- India's ABS framework operates under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, supported by the Biological Diversity Rules, 2004 and the ABS Regulations, 2004.

2025, through a three-tier institutional structure comprising the National Biodiversity Authority, State Biodiversity Boards/Union Territory Biodiversity Councils, and Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at the local level.

National Vaccination Day

- **Context:** India marked National Vaccination Day (March 16) to highlight achievements in immunisation.



Key Facts

- The day is observed to commemorate the first dose of the Oral Polio Vaccine administered in 1995 under the Pulse Polio Programme.
- Vaccination has played a transformative role in improving public health in India. The country has eradicated smallpox (1977) and eliminated polio (last case in 2011), yaws, and maternal and neonatal tetanus.
- It has significantly reduced child mortality and the burden of diseases such as measles-rubella and tuberculosis.
- India emerged as the “pharmacy of the world” during COVID-19, administering over 200 crore vaccine doses and supplying vaccines globally. Notably, India contributes nearly 60% of global vaccine production.
- Vaccination along with improvements in nutrition, sanitation, and healthcare, has significantly improved maternal and child survival rates in India.

- Full immunisation coverage increased from 62% (2015) to 98.4% (January 2026);
- Zero-dose children reduced from 0.11% (2023) to 0.06% (2024);
- Over 1.3 crore immunisation sessions conducted annually;
- Recognised globally as a model for large-scale public health delivery.

Government of India's Initiatives

- **The Universal Immunisation Programme:** Launched in 1985 and implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, it aims to provide free vaccines to children and pregnant women against various diseases. The programme reaches about 2.9 crore pregnant women and 2.54 crore newborns every year.
- **Mission Indradhanush:** It was launched in December 2014 by the Government of India to reach children and pregnant women who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated.
- **Recent Initiatives (2026):**
 - **HPV Vaccination Campaign:** Targets ~1.15 crore girls (14 years) for cervical cancer prevention.
 - **Indigenous Td Vaccine:** Manufactured at CRI, Kasauli; ~55 lakh doses planned for supply.
- **Digital Initiatives:**
 - **eVIN:** Real-time vaccine stock and temperature tracking;
 - **U-Win:** Digital vaccination registry and tracking platform;
 - **CoWIN:** Enabled administration of 220+ crore COVID vaccine doses.

17th MARCH 2026

Global Coconut Production

- **Context:** India is the world's largest producer of coconuts contributing to 30.37% of the Global coconut production.

Key Facts

- **Type of Plant:** Coconut is a perennial plantation crop and a monocotyledonous palm belonging to the family Arecaceae. Coconut is native to the Indo-Pacific region, with its origin commonly traced to Southeast Asia.
- **Climatic Requirements:** Coconut requires a warm and humid tropical climate for optimal growth. It grows best in regions with temperatures ranging between 25°C and 30°C and requires high and evenly distributed rainfall.
- **Soil Requirements:** Coconut thrives in well-drained sandy loam, alluvial, laterite, and coastal soils.
- **Distribution in India:** It predominantly grows in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Goa, and West Bengal.

Do you
Know ?

Coconut Promotion Scheme (Budget 2026-27): Aims to boost production by replanting old trees with improved varieties. The initiative is part of a broader ₹350 crore allocation for high-value agriculture, which includes coconut, cashew, and cocoa.

PM POSHAN Scheme

- **Context:** A Parliamentary Standing Committee has recommended the inclusion of breakfast in the PM POSHAN Scheme and extension of coverage up to Class 12.



About PM-POSHAN

- Earlier known as Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) and renamed as PM POSHAN (Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman) in 2021.
- It operates under the Ministry of Education and is approved for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme (jointly funded by Centre and States) providing one hot cooked meal to students in government and aided schools up to Class 8.
- It aims to address hunger (lack of adequate food intake) and educational outcomes (attendance, retention, learning) simultaneously.

18th MARCH 2026

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

- **Context:** US President Donald Trump has warned of leaving the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) after its allies declined to assist in securing the Strait of Hormuz.



NATO
NORTH ATLANTIC
TREATY ORGANIZATION

About NATO

- **Establishment:** A military alliance founded in 1949 with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, more popularly known as the Washington Treaty, in the aftermath of World War II.
- **Aim:** To ensure the security and defence of member states through the principle of collective defence.
- **Collective Defense:** The cornerstone of NATO is Article 5, which states that an armed attack against one or more of its members shall be considered an attack against all.

- **Members:**
 - **Founding members:** Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
 - **Present strength:** 32 member countries (Finland and Sweden became the 31st and 32nd members respectively).
- **Decision-Making:** Decisions within NATO are made on the basis of consensus among member countries. The North Atlantic Council, which includes the ambassadors of all member countries, is the principal political decision-making body.
- **Headquartered:** Brussels, Belgium.

Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA)

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet approved the Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojna (BHAVYA), with an allocation of ₹33,660 crore.

Key Highlights

- **Aim:** To create 100 “future ready” industrial parks that will integrate with the PM GatiShakti programme so that they can avail of that programme’s multi-modal connectivity and last-mile access. These parks will set new benchmarks in industrial infrastructure, ensuring reliability, reducing inefficiencies, and enhancing productivity across sectors.
- **Land Use:** Industrial parks ranging from 100 to 1,000 acres will be taken up for the development.
- **Funding:** While the Central government will provide funding of up to ₹1 crore per acre, the scheme is meant to include the involvement of the respective State governments as well as the private sector.
- **Infrastructure:** Core infrastructure like internal roads, underground utilities, drainage, common treatment facilities, ICT and administrative systems.
- The National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC), under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, will play a key role in implementing the initiative.

- The scheme duration would be for six years starting in 2026-27. The first phase of development would see 50 parks being set up.

19th MARCH 2026

2026 Stockholm Water Prize

- **Context:** Kaveh Madani, director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), has been awarded the 2026 Stockholm Water Prize, one of the most prestigious global honours in water research.

Key Facts

- The announcement was made at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, ahead of World Water Day (22 March, 2026), with the award to be presented in August during World Water Week in Stockholm.
- At 44, Madani is the youngest recipient in the prize’s 35-year history. He is also the first United Nations official and the first former politician to receive the award.
- The prize committee recognised his work for combining scientific research with policy engagement, diplomacy, and public outreach, often carried out under challenging political circumstances.
- Madani is widely known for introducing the concept of “water bankruptcy”, describing a condition where water scarcity reflects long-term systemic failure rather than temporary shortage.



Kalinjar Fort: National Geo-Heritage Site

- **Context:** The hill region surrounding Kalinjar Fort in Banda district, Uttar Pradesh, has been officially designated as a National Geo-Heritage Site by the Geological Survey of India (GSI).



Key Facts

- This recognition highlights the area's exceptional geological significance along with its rich historical and cultural legacy. The site lies within the Vindhya

Mountain range and is expected to emerge as a key attraction in a proposed tourism circuit connecting Kalinjar, Khajuraho and Chitrakoot.

- The Kalinjar region showcases a rare geological feature known as the Eparchaeon Unconformity. This phenomenon occurs when rock layers from vastly different geological periods come into contact.
- At Kalinjar, nearly 2.5-billion-year-old Bundelkhand granite is overlain by around 1.2-billion-year-old Kaimur sandstone. This formation provides crucial insights into Earth's ancient geological history and makes the site valuable for scientific study and geo-tourism.
- The geo-heritage status is expected to strengthen conservation efforts and promote awareness of the site's importance.

