

# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 23 March 2026



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### International Day of Forests – State-Level Program



#### Why in News?

- The state-level program for the International Day of Forests (March 21) was organized at the Rajasthan International Centre (RIC), Jaipur.



#### Key Points:

- In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly declared March 21, as the 'International Day of Forests'.

- **Theme for 2026: "Forests and Economies"**

#### At the State-Level Program:

- Inauguration of 'Atal Van' in Shahpura (Jaipur)—a site featuring an Interpretation Centre, Walking Trail, Watch Tower, Solar Fencing, and various other innovations aimed at biodiversity conservation.

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- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):** An MoU was signed between the Rajasthan Forestry and Biodiversity Conservation Society (Forest Department) and Rajeevika (Rural Development Department) under the ‘Climate Change Response and Ecosystem Services Enhancement Project’ (CRESEP) to address the impacts of climate change.
- **Main Objective:** To empower the livelihoods of communities residing in forest areas and to promote environmental conservation.
- **New Modules for the “DigiVan” Digital Platform:** Launch of the PoC-3 and PoC-4 (Proof of Concept) modules of the “DigiVan” digital platform. This platform is India’s first ‘Digital Forest Stack,’ initiated by the Rajasthan Forest Department.
- **Objective:** To facilitate the planning and tracking of forest projects, as well as the online monitoring of plantation activities.
- **20 Prey Base Augmentation Centers:** With the aim of strengthening wildlife conservation, 20 Prey Base Augmentation Centers were inaugurated—at a cost of ₹30 crore—across the protected areas of Kota, Baran, Pali, Sirohi, Churu, MHTR (Mukundra), and Ajmer.
- **Objective:** To ensure the availability of adequate natural prey within the forests themselves for predatory wildlife.
- This initiative is part of the State Budget 2025–26, which proposes the establishment of a total of 20 prey base augmentation enclosures across Rajasthan.

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## Potential Benefits of 'Samarth Scheme 2.0' for Rajasthan

### Why in News?

- The 'Samarth 2.0' scheme, announced in the Union Budget 2026-27, is set to prove a game-changer for Bhilwara—often referred to as the 'Manchester of Rajasthan'—as well as for Pali and Balotra, which are key hubs for dyeing and printing.



### Key Points:

- Samarth 2.0 is an upgraded version of the Samarth scheme, announced in the Union Budget 2026-27, as part of a new integrated program for the textile sector.

- Its primary objective is to modernize and upgrade the textile skills ecosystem through deeper collaboration between industry partners and academic institutions.
- **Samarth Scheme:** Launched in 2017, to address the shortage of skilled manpower within the textile industry.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Union Ministry of Textiles.

### Facts for Prelims:

- **Rajasthan's First Cotton Textile Mill:** 'The Krishna Mills Limited,' established in 1889, in Beawar by Seth Damodar Das Rathi.
- **Rajasthan's Largest Textile Mill:** The Maharaja Umed Mill (established in 1942), located in Pali, is the state's largest textile mill in terms of production capacity.

### Major Centers of the Textile Industry in Rajasthan:

- **Balotra:** Particularly renowned for its textile dyeing and printing activities.
- **Bhilwara:** Known as the 'Textile City of Rajasthan' and the 'Manchester of Rajasthan.' It houses the highest concentration of cotton textile industries in the state.
- **Others:** Pali, Beawar, Vijayanagar, Kishangarh, Jaipur, and Sri Ganganagar.
- **SPINFED:** The Rajasthan Cooperative Spinning and Ginning Federation (SPINFED) was established on April 1, 1993, to oversee mills operating in both the private and cooperative sectors.

## Rajasthan Mandapam and Global Capability Center

### Why in News?

- Modeled after the India Mandapam located in New Delhi, the proposed Rajasthan Mandapam in Jaipur is set to become the premier destination for multinational companies and the corporate sector to host conferences, seminars, and exhibitions.



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## Key Points:

- **Architect:** Anoop Bhartia.
- **Construction:** National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) India Limited. NBCC is a 'Navratna' status Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) operating under the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- **Announcement:** Made by Finance Minister Diya Kumari during the Annual Budget for the Financial Year 2024-25.
- This center will bolster Rajasthan's MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) ecosystem and emerge as a leading hub for international events, conferences, and exhibitions.

## Facts for Prelims (Rajasthan GCC Policy – 2025):

- The Rajasthan Global Capability Center (GCC) Policy – 2025 has been launched with the aim of establishing the state as a leading hub for global innovation and investment.
- The primary objective of this policy is to position Rajasthan as the preferred destination for multinational companies (MNCs) for their back-end operations, IT services, and Research & Development (R&D) activities.
- **Target:** To establish over 200 GCCs in Rajasthan by the year 2030.
- **Key Hubs:** Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Udaipur are to be developed as GCC hubs.
- **Validity:** Until March 31, 2029.
- **Nodal Department:** Department of Industries and Commerce.

## ✂ NEWS IN SHORTS ⚡

S. No.	News
1.	<p><b>Gangaur Festival, Jaipur – 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <b>Dates:</b> From Chaitra Krishna Pratipada to Chaitra Shukla Tritiya.</li><li>■ <b>Main Procession:</b> Every year in Jaipur, a procession featuring the deities Gan (Lord Shiva) and Gaur (Goddess Parvati) is organized. This is a major cultural and religious festival of Rajasthan, dedicated to Goddess Parvati (Gauri) and Lord Shiva.</li><li>■ <b>Organizers:</b> Department of Tourism and District Administration, Jaipur.</li></ul>
2.	<p><b>Marwar Horse Research Centre, Manaklav</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Recently, Governor Haribhau Bagde participated in a Vedic Yajna (ritual fire ceremony) and other rites at the Marwar Horse Research Centre in Manaklav, on the occasion of the Srishti Nav Varsh (New Year) 2083.</li><li>■ The Marwar Horse Research Centre in Manaklav (Jodhpur) is dedicated to the conservation, breeding, and research of indigenous Marwari horses.</li></ul>
3.	<p><b>6th International Classical Dance and Music Festival: Jaipur</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Recently, Colonel Rajyavardhan Rathore, the Minister of Information Technology and Communication, unveiled the poster for the 6th International Classical Dance and Music Festival.</li><li>■ <b>Dates:</b> April 26 and 27, 2026.</li><li>■ <b>Organizers:</b> Kathak Ashram, Udaipur, and the All India Dancers Association.</li></ul>

4.

## **‘Padhai with AI’ Initiative: Tonk**

- Recently, the Chief Secretary of Rajasthan reviewed the ‘Padhai with AI’ (Study with AI) initiative currently being implemented in the Tonk district.
- The primary objective of this initiative is to improve students' performance in challenging subjects—particularly Mathematics—and to alleviate ‘Maths Phobia’ (fear of mathematics).
- Through this platform, students are provided with practice questions, instant solutions, and explanations tailored to their individual capabilities, with bilingual support available in both Hindi and English.

5.

## **Patrika Keynote Program**

- To mark the birth centenary year of Patrika Group founder Karpoor Chandra Kulish, a special event titled ‘Patrika Keynote’ was recently organized in Jaipur.
- **Theme:** ‘Democracy and Newspapers’.

6.

## **Vani Utsav – 2026 (Barmer)**

- **Organizers:** Ruma Devi Foundation and Gramin Vikas Evam Chetna Sansthan, Barmer.
- **Objective:** To preserve and promote the traditional Veena Bhajan singing style.

7.

## **‘U-Shaped’ Traffic Management System in Jaipur**

- The Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) is implementing a ‘U-shaped’ traffic management system on the city's main roads to create signal-free corridors and alleviate congestion.
- The primary objective of this initiative is to close traditional ‘median cuts’ and replace them with ‘U-turns’.

## 8. Rajasthan's First Mini Food Park and Agro-Processing Cluster

- Rajasthan's first Mini Food Park and Agro-Processing Cluster will be established in Jodhpur.
- **Objective:** To promote agro-based processing units and enhance farmers' income.
- **Capacity:** A plan to establish 150 units across three phases.

## 9. Flexible Smart Semiconductor Sensor

- A 'Flexible Smart Semiconductor Sensor' is being developed by the Hybrid Electronic Sensor Technology (HESTECH) Lab at IIT Jodhpur, in collaboration with AIIMS Jodhpur.
- This sensor can flex to conform to the body's movements and can facilitate the early detection of diseases—such as cancer—through bodily fluids like sweat and saliva, without causing any pain.
- The core foundation of this innovation is the Organic Electrochemical Transistor (OECT).

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### Operation Sankalp



#### Why in News?

- Indian Navy warships are providing security to Indian-flagged merchant vessels in the Gulf of Oman.



#### Key Points:

##### Operation Sankalp:

- Launch:** June 19, 2019
- Objective:** To ensure the safe passage of Indian-flagged vessels. Its aim is to safeguard India's maritime trade and energy supply lines.
- Area of Operation:** The Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf region.
- Strategic Significance:** Approximately 20% of global oil trade passes through the Strait of Hormuz. This is of paramount importance to India's energy security.

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## IOS Sagar



### Why in News?

- The Indian Navy organized the second edition of the 'Indian Ocean Ship' (IOS) Sagar initiative.



### Key Points:

#### IOS Sagar:

- **Objective:** It enables naval personnel from friendly nations to undergo training and sail aboard Indian Navy ships.
- **Participation:** 16 nations belonging to the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) participated in this initiative.
- This aligns with India's vision of 'Security and Growth for All in the Region' (SAGAR).
- It also contributes to the broader 'MAHASAGAR' framework (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security Across the Regions).

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## History and Culture



### Mahad Satyagraha



#### Why in News?

- A conference was organized to mark the centenary year of the Mahad Satyagraha.



#### Key Points:

##### Mahad Satyagraha:

- **Date and Location:** It commenced on March 20, 1927, at the Chavdar Tale (Tank) in Mahad (Maharashtra).
- This was a non-violent protest led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Its objective was to secure for the 'untouchable' (Dalit) communities the right to access public water sources, as they were barred from drawing water on the grounds of caste-based discrimination.
- It involved symbolic acts—such as drinking water from public tanks and publicly burning the \*Manusmriti\*—and served as a rejection of the caste system.
- **Prominent Leaders:** Anantrao Chitre, Bapu Sahasrabuddhe, Sambhaji Gaikwad, and Ramchandra More.
- Following a decade of litigation, the Bombay High Court upheld the right of 'untouchables' to access public tanks in 1937.



## Geography and Geology



### Shipki La Pass



#### Why in News?

- Trade between India and China is set to resume starting June 1st via the Shipki La Pass in Himachal Pradesh.



#### Key Points:

- Trade through this pass had been disrupted following the Doklam standoff and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In 2025, India and China had agreed to reopen border trade through three designated trade routes. These are: Lipulekh Pass (Uttarakhand), Shipki La Pass, and Nathu La Pass (Sikkim).
- The Lipulekh Pass is situated near the tri-junction of India, China (Tibet), and Nepal.

#### Shipki La Pass:

- It connects India and Tibet (China).
- The Sutlej River enters India precisely through Shipki La.

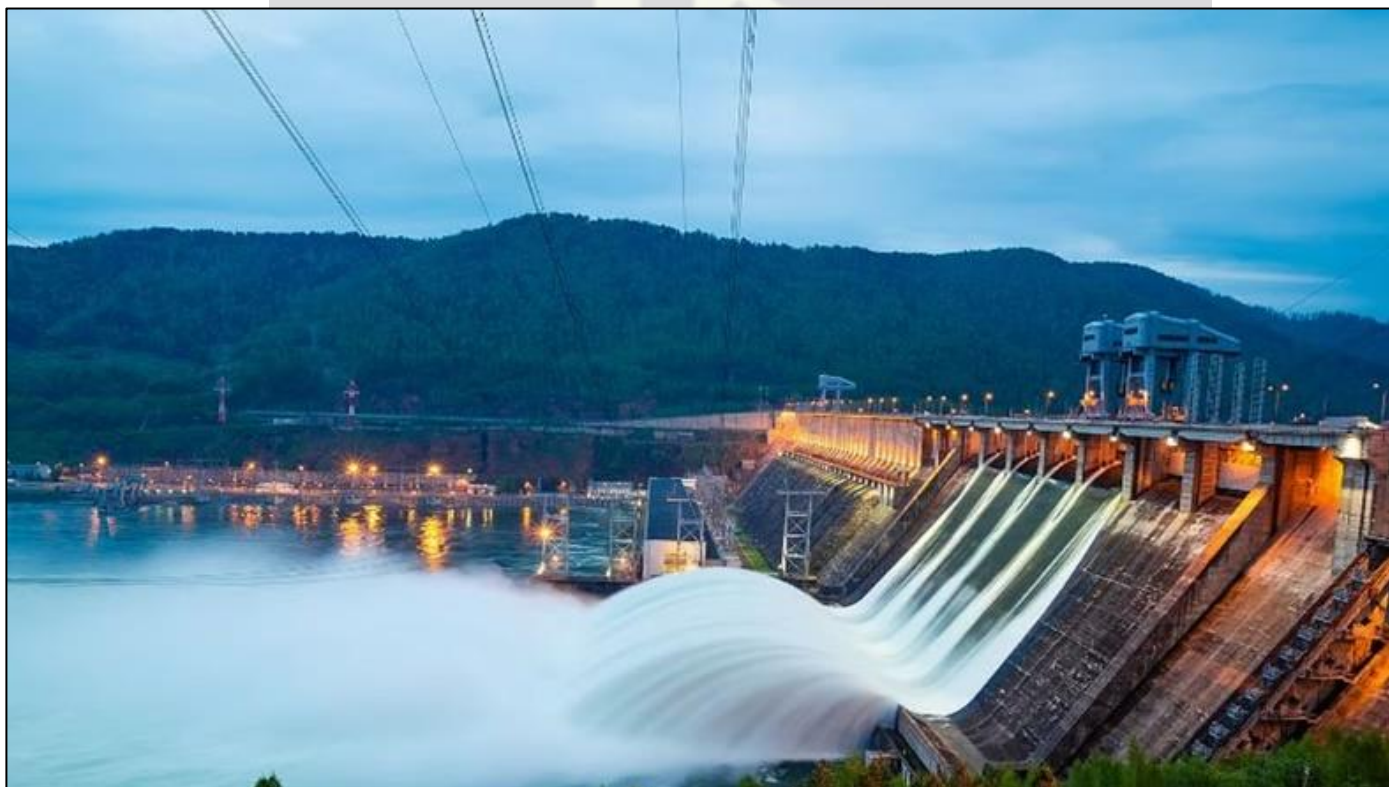
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## Schemes and Policies

### Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme

#### Why in News?

- The Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme has been approved. This scheme will particularly benefit the Northeastern (NE) and hilly states, which possess high potential for hydropower.



#### Key Points:

##### Key Features of the Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme

- **Duration:** From the financial year 2026-27 to 2030-31.
- **Financial Assistance:**
- **Northeastern and Border Areas:** ₹3.6 crore per megawatt or 30% of the project cost (whichever is lower). The maximum assistance limit will be ₹30 crore per project.

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- **Other States:** ₹2.4 crore per megawatt or 20% of the project cost (whichever is lower). The maximum limit for financial assistance will be ₹20 crore per project.
- **Detailed Project Report (DPR):** A financial incentive of ₹30 crore will be provided to the State and Central governments for the preparation of approximately 200 DPRs.

## About Small Hydro Power (SHP) Projects

- In India, hydropower plants with a capacity of 25 megawatts or less are classified as 'Small Hydro Power'.
- These can be established as 'Run-of-River' projects utilizing small water sources on hilly slopes, or at canal falls/drops, or at the toe of a dam.
- Their development is monitored by the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

## Classification (Based on Capacity):

- **Micro Hydro:** Up to 100 kilowatts (kW).
- **Mini Hydro:** From 101 kilowatts to 2 megawatts (MW).
- **Small Hydro:** From 2 megawatts to 25 megawatts.

## Bharat Industrial Development Scheme (BHAVYA)

### Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Bharat Industrial Development Scheme. The Bharat Industrial Development Scheme marks the beginning of a new era of 'Plug-and-Play' industrial development, aimed at creating world-class industrial infrastructure.



### Key Points:

#### Key Features of BHAVYA

- **Objective:** To develop 100 'Plug-and-Play' industrial parks across India with an allocation of ₹33,660 crore.
- An industrial park is a planned area of land that may or may not contain ready-built factory units, and features shared facilities for multiple industries.
- **Eligibility:** Industrial parks ranging in size from 100 acres (25 acres for the North-Eastern and Hilly regions) up to 1,000 acres will be selected.
- **Scheme Duration:** 6 years (from Financial Year 2026-27 to 2031-32).
- **Implementation:** By the National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC)—under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India—in partnership with State governments and the private sector.

## Export Promotion Mission (EPM)

### Why in News?

- The Central Government has approved the "RELIEF" initiative under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM).



### Key Points:

#### RELIEF

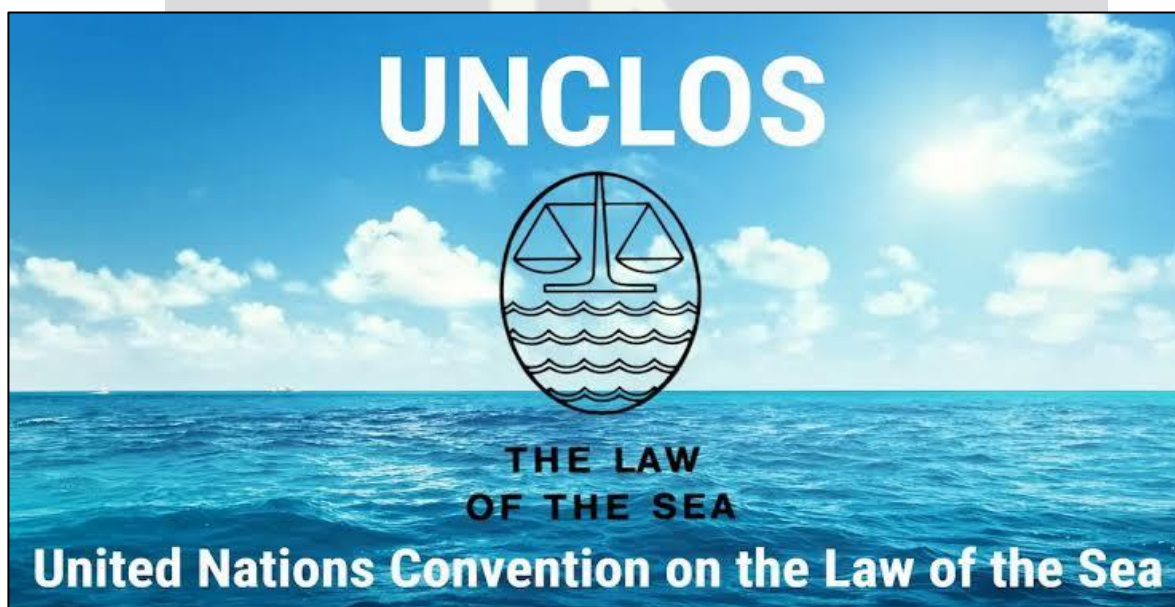
- **Meaning of RELIEF:** Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation.
- **Objective of the RELIEF Initiative:** To provide assistance to Indian exporters affected by abnormal increases in freight rates, elevated insurance premiums, and war-related export risks resulting from disruptions in the Gulf and West Asia maritime corridor.
- **Nodal and Implementing Agency:** ECGC Ltd., a wholly-owned entity of the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Export Promotion Mission**
- **Vision:** To provide a comprehensive, robust, and digitally-driven framework for export promotion.
- **Mission Duration:** Six years (from FY 2025–26 to 2030–31).
- **Implementing Agency:** Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).

## INTERNATIONAL

### International Maritime Law

#### Why in News?

- Recently, a U.S. submarine sank the Iranian warship \*IRIS Dena\* using a torpedo in international waters near Sri Lanka. This incident has raised questions regarding the implementation of maritime law.



#### Key Points:

##### Legal Framework Related to International Maritime Law:

- UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea):** This primarily regulates activities within the maritime domain during peacetime. However, it does not regulate naval warfare during armed conflicts.

##### Provisions of the UN Charter:

- Article 2(4):** This prohibits the use of force between nations.
- Article 51:** This permits the use of force in self-defense following an armed attack.
- Authorized by the UN Security Council:** Military action may also be undertaken with the approval of the UNSC under Chapter VII.

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## Shah Gas Field



### Why in News?

- Operations at the Shah Gas Field in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have been suspended following a drone attack.



### Key Points:

#### Shah Gas Field:

- Location:** It is situated in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), near the border with Saudi Arabia.
- Type:** It is one of the world's largest 'sour gas fields.' It contains a very high concentration of hydrogen sulfide alongside natural gas.

#### Other Key Sites:

- South Pars Gas Field:** It is located on the southern coast of Iran.
- It is part of a massive gas reservoir shared with Qatar's 'North Dome' gas field. Together, these two fields constitute the world's largest natural gas reservoir.
- Ras Laffan Industrial City (Qatar):** Home to the world's largest LNG export plant.

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## Exercise Sea Dragon 2026

### 📣 Why in News?

- The Indian Navy is participating in Exercise Sea Dragon 2026, near the island of Guam (a U.S. territory) in the North Pacific Ocean.



### 📌 Key Points:

#### Exercise Sea Dragon:

- This is an annual multinational Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercise led by the U.S. Navy.
- This exercise brings together the forces of Australia, Japan, and New Zealand. Its objective is to enhance coordination and combat readiness in underwater warfare.

## Patriot Missile Defense System

### Why in News?

- NATO is deploying the U.S. Patriot missile defense system in Turkey's southern province of Adana.



### Key Points:

#### About the System:

- **Full form of 'PATRIOT':** Phased Array Tracking Radar to Intercept on Target.
- It is a ground-based, mobile missile defense interceptor developed in the United States.
- It detects, tracks, and destroys unmanned aerial vehicles, cruise missiles, and short-range or tactical ballistic missiles.

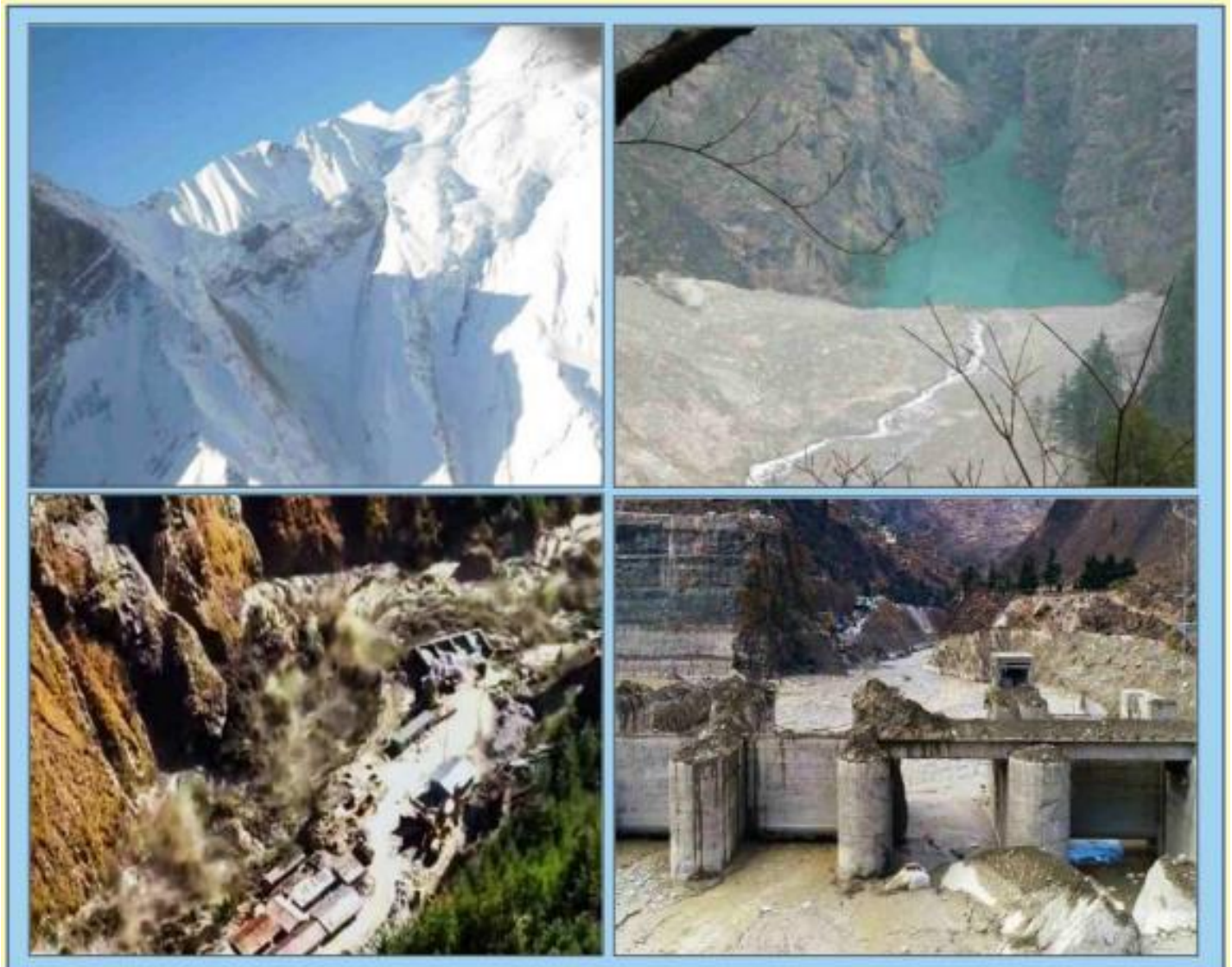
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## ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

### Cryo-hydrological Risks

#### Why in News?

- According to a recent study by ISRO scientists, the flash flood that struck Dharali village in 2025, was caused by the sudden collapse of an 'exposed ice patch' (an open area containing ice fragments). According to the scientists, this flood was not triggered by a cloudburst or a Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF).



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## Key Points:

- This layer of ice was situated within the 'ablation zone'—specifically, the accumulation zone—of the Srikanta Glacier.

### Causes for the Increase in Disasters in the Himalayan Region

- **Climate Change:** The rapid melting and thinning of glaciers, shifts in precipitation patterns, and rising temperatures diminish the seasonal snow cover that typically insulates and protects the underlying ice.
- **Thermal and Mechanical Instability:** Exposed and isolated ice patches react rapidly to temperature fluctuations and minor seismic disturbances. This heightens the risk of rapid melting, fracturing, and sudden gravitational collapse.

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## INDEXES AND REPORTS



### Consumer Justice Report 2026



#### Why in News?

- The Consumer Justice Report 2026, has been released by the India Justice Report. Its objective is to assess the capacity and performance of consumer dispute redressal commissions in India.



#### Key Points:

- **Rising Burden of Pending Cases:** Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the disposal rate of consumer cases has improved. Out of a total of 7.64 lakh cases, 88.5% were disposed of. Despite this, a 21% increase in the total number of pending cases was recorded between 2020 and 2024.

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- This figure significantly exceeds the timelines stipulated under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, which mandates the disposal of cases within three to five months of their filing.
- **Underutilization of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Measures:** According to available data from 23 states, only 134 cases were referred for mediation across the entire country.
- **Declining Representation of Women:** In 14 State Consumer Commissions, the share of women serving as Presidents and members declined from an average of 35% in 2021 to 29% in 2025.
- **High Number of Vacancies:** As of 2025, the post of President remained vacant in approximately 50% of the State Consumer Dispute Redressal Commissions.

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## UNIGME Report 2025

### Why in News?

- The 'Levels and Trends in Child Mortality Report 2025,' released by UNIGME, highlights that India has achieved a significant decline in its child mortality rate.

### Key Points:

- This report has been released by the 'United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation' (UNIGME).

### Findings Related to India:

- The mortality rate for children under five years of age has declined from 127 in 1990 to 26.6 in 2024, marking a sharp reduction of 79%.
- The neonatal mortality rate dropped to 17 in 2024.
- The infant mortality rate declined to 23.3.

## World Happiness Report 2026

### Why in News?

- The World Happiness Report 2026, has been published with the theme 'Happiness and Social Media'.

### Key Points:

- It highlights a "concerning" decline in the happiness of young people and links this to social media usage.

### World Happiness Report 2026:

- **Publishers:** Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford, Gallup, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
- **Top 3 Countries:** Finland, Iceland, Denmark.
- **Bottom 3 Countries:** Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Malawi.
- **India's Rank:** 116th out of 147 countries. This marks a marginal improvement from its 118th position in 2025 and 126th position in 2024.



## Global Terrorism Index, 2026

### Why in News?

- The Global Terrorism Index, 2026, was recently published by the Sydney-based independent think tank, the 'Institute for Economics and Peace'.



### Key Points:

- **Top Ranking:** Pakistan topped this index, emerging as the country most affected by terrorism.
- Approximately 70% of deaths caused by terrorism occurred in just 5 countries (Pakistan, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo).
- **Decline in Terrorism:** Globally, deaths resulting from terrorism have decreased by 28%, and the number of attacks has declined by approximately 22%.
- **The 4 Deadliest Organizations of 2025:** IS, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and Al-Shabaab.
- **India's Rank:** 13th

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