

Daily Current Affairs

Date : 17 March 2026



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RAJASTHAN



42nd Maharana Mewar Award Ceremony – 2026



Why in News?

- The '42nd Maharana Mewar Award Ceremony – 2026' was organized by the Maharana Mewar Charitable Foundation (MMCF) at the City Palace, Udaipur, on March 15, 2026.



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Key Points:

Major Awards and Winners:

Award Name	Winner Name	Field / Special Contribution
Colonel James Tod Award	Dr. Molly Emma Atkin (USA)	Scholar of Mewar and Rajput court painting
Haldighati National Award	Kamlesh Kishore Singh	Journalism
Maharana Uday Singh Award	Marimuthu Yoganathan (Tree Man of India)	Environmental conservation
Pannadhay Award	Jet Airways Flight 9W569 Crew	Humanitarian service (emergency childbirth)
Dagar Gharana Award	Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia	Music (Flute playing)
Maharana Kumbha Award	Tarun Kumar Dadhich	Rajasthani litterateur
Aravalli Award (Sports)	Ramratan Jat and Avani Lekhara	Ultra-marathon and Parashooting
Maharana Mewar Award	Bhuvnesh Jain	Journalism
	K. Prithika Yashini	India's first transgender woman police sub-inspector
Maharana Sajjan Singh Award	Ajay Rawat	Fine arts (Sand art)
Rana Punja Award	Dimple Chandat	Preservation of tribal Mandana art
Hakim Khan Sur Award	Squadron Leader Rizwan Malik, VRC	National service

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Other Honors:

- **Rajesh Vaishnav:** The ‘Maharana Mewar Special Honor’ for the preservation of Mewar’s 500-year-old ‘Jal Sanjhi’ tradition.
- **Maharshi Harit Rashi Samman:** Presented to Vedamurti Devavrat Mahesh Rekhe for the critical editing of a rare text of the Yajurveda.
- **Maharana Arvind Singh Mewar Samman:** Dr. Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, Chairman of the Maharana Mewar Charitable Foundation (MMCF), announced the institution of a new national honor—the ‘Maharana Arvind Singh Mewar Samman’—in memory of the late Arvind Singh Mewar. This award was conferred upon Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of The Indian Hotels Company Limited.

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Rajasthani Short Story Collection 'Bharkhama' Wins 2025 'Sahitya Akademi Award'

Why in News?

- Recently, it was announced that the Rajasthani short story collection 'Bharkhama' has been awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for the year 2025.

Rajasthani Short Story Collection 'Bharkhama' Wins the 2025 'Sahitya Akademi Award'



Key Points:

- Author:** The author of the Rajasthani short story collection 'Bharkhama' is Jaipur District Collector Dr. Jitendra Kumar Soni (IAS).
- Jury:** The selection committee for this year's award in the Rajasthani language comprised Dr. Dinesh Charan, Madhu Acharya 'Ashavadi', and Prof. Sohandan Charan.

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- Dr. Jitendra Kumar Soni (IAS) had previously received the 'Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar' (Youth Award) in 2016 for his poetry collection 'Rankhar'.
- **The Story Collection 'Bharkhama':** It is a compelling collection depicting rural life, life's struggles, and cultural values. A Rajasthani film has also been produced based on his work.
- **Other Works by Jitendra Kumar Soni:** 'Chirag', 'Regmal', 'Rankhar', 'Yadavari', 'Apna Rukh', and 'Mhare Panti Ra Pana'.

Other Important Points (Sahitya Akademi Award):

- The Sahitya Akademi Award is considered one of the most prestigious honors in the realm of Indian literature.
- Recently, the annual Sahitya Akademi Awards were announced across 24 Indian languages. The selected works included 8 poetry collections, 4 novels, 6 short story collections, 2 essays, 2 memoirs, and one work each of literary criticism and autobiography.
- As part of this honor, the author is presented with a citation, a copper plaque, a shawl, and a cash prize of ₹1 lakh.
- The winning authors for the year 2025 will be felicitated in New Delhi on March 31, 2026.

Rajasthan Tribal Pride Day – 2026

Why in News?

- As part of the Rajasthan Day celebrations – 2026, 'Rajasthan Tribal Pride Day' was observed on March 16, 2026, at Beneshwar Dham in Dungarpur.



Key Points:

- On this occasion, the Chief Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for 326 development projects worth over ₹1,902 crore.

Announcements:

- Tribal Tourism Circuit:** A new 'Tribal Tourism Circuit' will be developed at a cost of ₹100 crore. This circuit will connect key sites such as the Tripura Sundari Temple, Mangarh Dham, Beneshwar Dham, Sitamata Sanctuary, Rishabhdev, Gautameshwar Temple, and Matrukundiya.

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- **Forest Rights Campaign:** A special campaign will be launched to grant 'Forest Rights Titles' (Pattas) to families residing in forest areas.

Facts for Prelims:

Beneshwar Dham:

- Every year on Magh Purnima (the full moon day of the month of Magh), the Beneshwar Fair is organized at the Triveni Sangam (confluence of three rivers)—the Som, Mahi, and Jakham—in Dungarpur. It is also referred to as the 'Kumbh of the Bhils/Tribals' or the 'Prayagraj of Vagad'.
- The Shivling (sacred stone idol of Lord Shiva) located here is the only Shivling in the world that is broken on five sides.

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NEWS IN SHORTS

S. No.	News
1.	<p>Insolation Energy Limited (INA Solar) Receives 'Most Trusted Brand of India - 2026' Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Recently, Insolation Energy Limited (INA Solar)—a solar panel manufacturing company based in Rajasthan—was honored with the 'Most Trusted Brand of India - 2026' award.
2.	<p>Dr. Shweta Chaudhary Honored as 'Future Shaper - 2026'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Jaipur-based entrepreneur Dr. Shweta Chaudhary was honored with the 'Future Shaper - 2026' award.This honor was conferred upon her during the YourStory SheSparks 2026 conference. Dr. Shweta Chaudhary is the founder of 'Code Edu'.She received this award in recognition of her innovative work, leadership capabilities, and outstanding contributions toward shaping a better future.
3.	<p>JK Lakshmi Cement Limited Becomes Principal Sponsor of RR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Recently, JK Lakshmi Cement Limited became the Principal Sponsor for the Rajasthan Royals (RR) team for the Indian Premier League - 2026 season.
4.	<p>'DM with Didi' Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The 'DM with Didi' initiative, launched by Tonk District Collector Kalpana Agarwal, is a unique innovation aimed at women's empowerment and economic self-reliance.Its primary objective is to transform women belonging to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) affiliated with 'Rajeevika' into 'Lakhpati Didis'—that is, to help them achieve an annual income exceeding ₹1 lakh.Under this initiative, the Collector interacts with groups of three women each for two days every month.

5.

State-Level FMD Vaccination Drive

- To protect livestock in Rajasthan from Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), the seventh phase of the state-level FMD vaccination drive was launched on March 16, 2026.
- **Launch:** Inaugurated by the Minister of Animal Husbandry, Joraram Kumawat, from the Ramdev Gaushala (Cow Shelter) located in Bagru (Jaipur).
- Under this campaign, a target has been set to vaccinate 23.2 million cattle and buffaloes across all districts of the state.
- Goal to make Rajasthan free from Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD): By the year 2030.

6.

46th All India Rabi Seminar: Bharatpur

- The 46th All India Rabi Seminar (covering Oils, Oilseeds, Oil Trade, and Industry) was organized in Bharatpur on March 14–15, 2026.
- **Organizers:** Held under the joint aegis of the 'Central Organization for Oil Industry and Trade' (COOIT) and the 'Mustard Oil Producers Association of India' (MOPA).
- **Rajasthan's Rank in Mustard Production:** First.

NATIONAL

World Para Athletics Grand Prix, 2026

Why in News?

- Recently, India secured the top spot in the medal tally at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix, 2026, held in New Delhi.



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Key Points:

- **Venue:** Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi.
- **Dates:** March 11 to 13, 2026.
- **Participation:** 257 athletes from 8 countries.
- **Results:**

Rank	Country	Medals
1 st	India	Total 208 medals (75 Gold, 69 Silver and 64 Bronze medals)
2 nd	Russia	35 medals
3 rd	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3-3 medals

- **India's Prominent Gold Medalists:** Preetipal (Women's 200m event), Shubham Juyal (14.45m throw), Rakesh Bhatt (Men's 200m event), Manoj Kumar Sabapati (Men's 400m event), and Paralympians Sumit Antil and Praveen Kumar.
- **Note:** This leg, held in New Delhi, marked the second stage of the 13th Grand Prix season, offering a crucial opportunity to secure significant positions in the international rankings ahead of the 2026 World Para Athletics Championships and the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics.

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98th Academy Awards, 2026 (98th Oscars, 2026)

Why in News?

- The 98th Academy Awards ceremony was held on March 15, 2026, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.



Key Points:

- Winners:** At this ceremony, the best films of 2025 were honored across 24 categories.

Category	Best / Description
Best Film	One Battle After Another: This film recorded the biggest win by securing a total of 6 awards including Best Picture.
Best Actor	Michael B. Jordan (Film: Sinners)
Best Actress	Jessie Buckley (Film: Hamnet)

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Best Supporting Actor	Sean Penn (Film: One Battle After Another) (Third Oscar)
Best Supporting Actress	Amy Madigan (Film: Weapon)
Best Director	Paul Thomas Anderson (Film: One Battle After Another)
Best International Feature Film	Sentimental Value (Norway)
Best Live Action Short Film	High
Best Cinematography Award	Autumn Durald Arkapaw : Became the first woman to win this award.

Other Notable Winners:

- **Best Documentary Feature Film:** "Mr. Nobody Against Putin"
- **Best Original Score:** "Sinners" (Composer: Ludwig Göransson)
- **Best Visual Effects:** "Avatar: Fire and Ash" (Director: James Cameron)
- **NOTE:** The Academy has introduced a new award category for Best Casting.

Indian Entries:

1. Kantara: A Legend – Chapter 1
2. Tanvi the Great
3. Mahavatar Narasimha
4. Tourist Family
5. Sister Midnight

- **Note:** Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas, alongside Oscar winner Javier Bardem, presented the award for Best International Feature Film.

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History and Culture

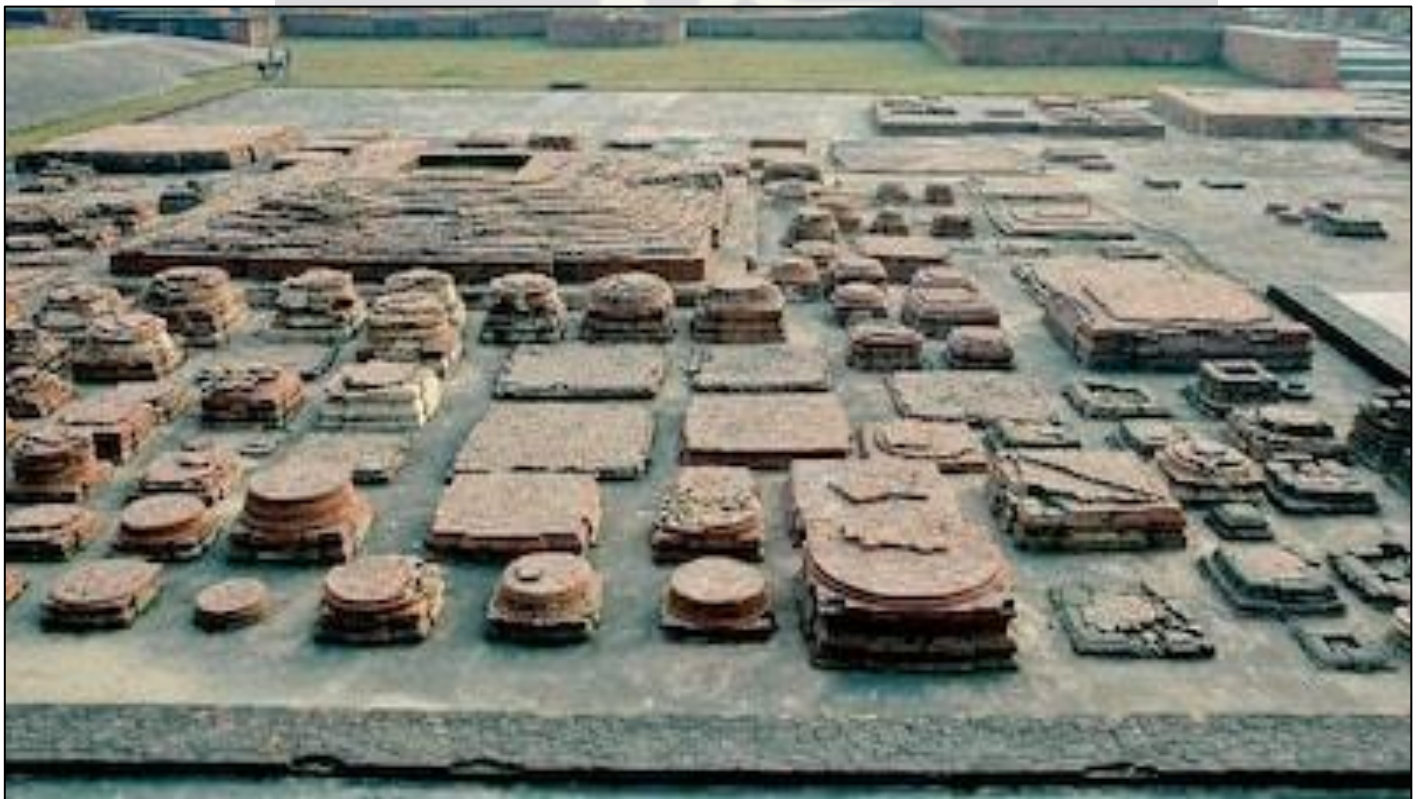


Balirajgarh Excavation



Why in News?

- Recently, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has approved fresh scientific excavations at the Balirajgarh Fort, located in the Madhubani district of Bihar.



Key Points:

Balirajgarh Fort:

- First Identification:** By George Abraham Grierson in 1884.
- Excavations:** Conducted in 1962–63, 1972–73, and 2013–14.
- Remains:** Structural remains, Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW) pottery, and artifacts.

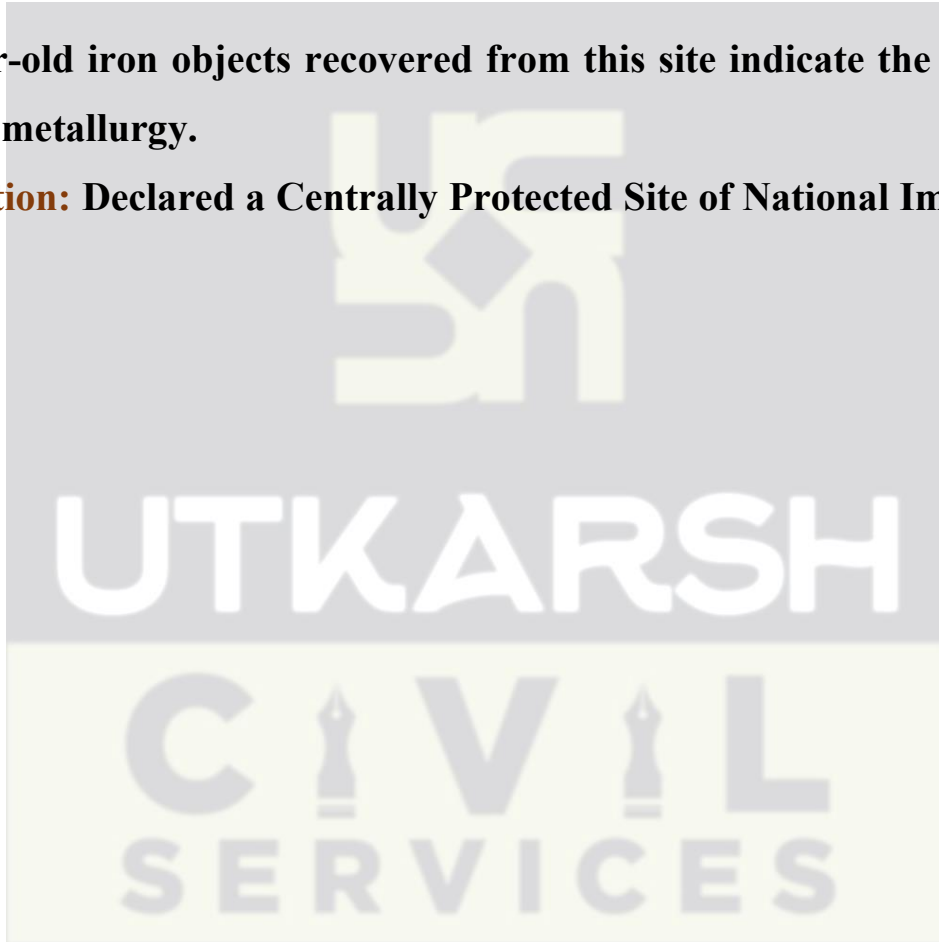
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- A five-fold cultural sequence has been identified here, encompassing the Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW) phase, as well as the Shunga, Kushan, Gupta, and Pala periods.
- **Construction of the Fort:** Built during the Shunga period, approximately 200 BCE.
- 2,300-year-old iron objects recovered from this site indicate the existence of advanced metallurgy.
- **Conservation:** Declared a Centrally Protected Site of National Importance in 1938.



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Sangeetha Kalanidhi Award

Why in News?

- Recently, Jayanthi Kumaresh—a practitioner of Carnatic music—was honored with the 'Sangeetha Kalanidhi' award for the year 2026.

Key Points:

- Presented by the Madras Music Academy, the Sangeetha Kalanidhi award is considered the highest honor in the field of Carnatic music. It is often referred to as the "Nobel Prize of Carnatic Music."

Carnatic Music:

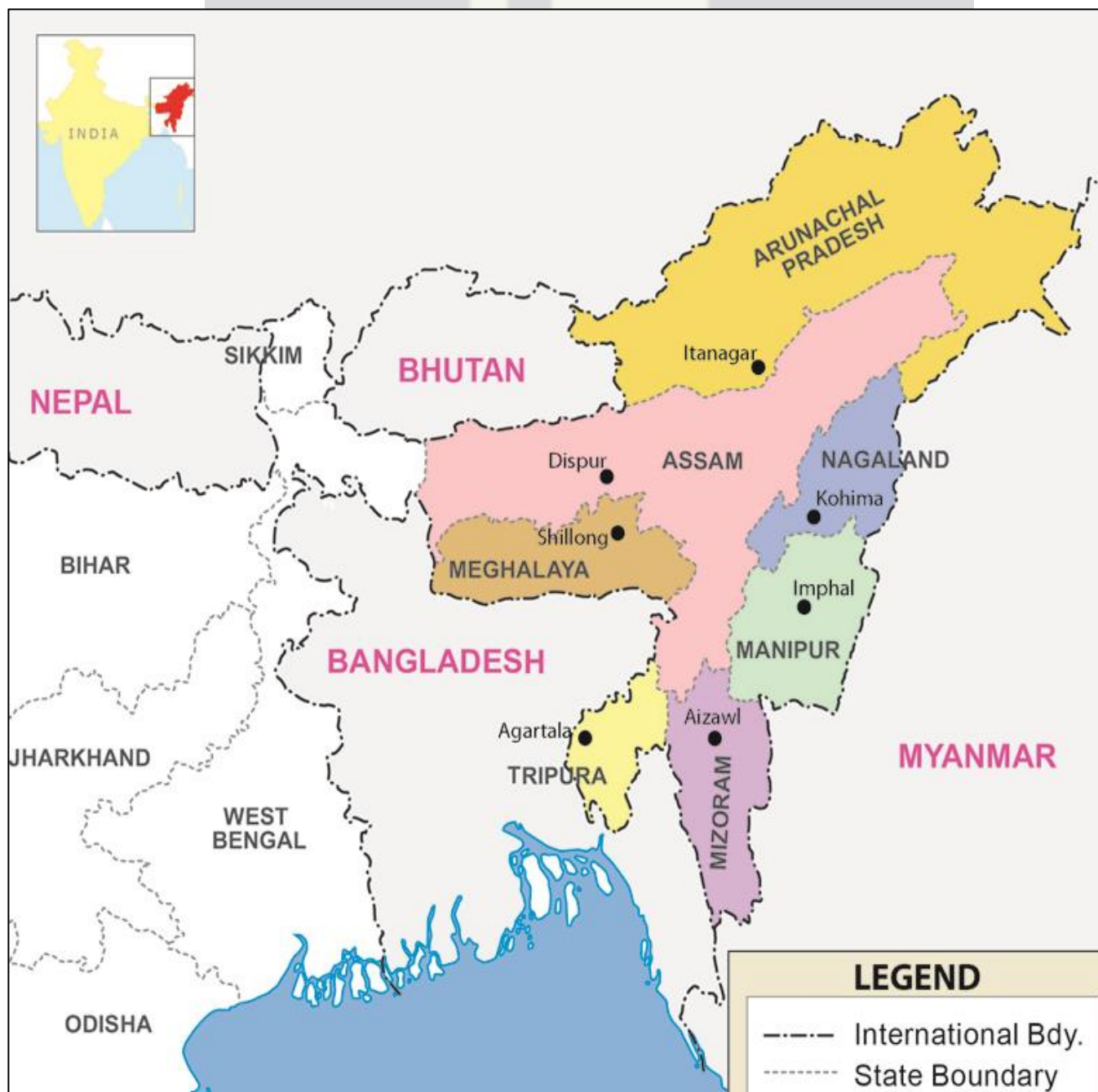
- It is the classical music tradition of South India. It is one of the two main systems of Indian classical music, the other being Hindustani music.
- It is primarily devotional in nature.
- Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar, and Syama Sastri are known as the Trinity of Carnatic music.

Geography and Geology

Nor'wester

Why in News?

- Recently, widespread damage was caused in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha due to Nor'westers—northwesterly and local winds.



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Key Points:

Nor'wester:

- **Introduction:** These are high-velocity storms driven by convection in eastern and northeastern India. They occur during the pre-monsoon season (April to June).
- **Affected Regions:** West Bengal, Jharkhand, Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Tripura, Bangladesh, Southern Nepal, and Bhutan.

Local Names:

- **Kal Baisakhi (West Bengal):** Named so because it occurs during the month of Baisakh.
- **Bardoisila / Bardoli Cheerha (Assam):** Named after a fierce goddess.

Origin:

- During the summer season, a low-pressure area forms over the Chota Nagpur Plateau due to rising temperatures.
- Due to this low pressure, winds from the Bay of Bengal are drawn inland, where they interact with dry, cool winds descending from the northwest.
- This interaction results in atmospheric instability, high convective energy, and wind shear, leading to the formation of cumulonimbus clouds.

Other Important Points:

Various Local Winds of India:-

Local Wind	Affected Region	Other Details
Mango Showers	South India (Kerala, Coastal Karnataka and Tamil Nadu)	Pre-monsoon winds, indicate ripening of mangoes and arrival of rainfall.
Aandhi (Loo)	North India (Ganga plains, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab)	Summer season, causes 10–15% loss in crop production.
Blossom Showers / Cherry Blossom	South India (around Kerala)	Pre-monsoon winds, beneficial for coffee.
Elephanta	Malabar Coast (Kerala)	Moist winds blowing from sea to land, indicate the end of monsoon.
Dust Storm (Aandhi)	North-Western and Central India	Pre-monsoon winds.

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Sociology

Tribal Art Festival, 2026

Why in News?

- The Tribal Art Festival, 2026, was organized at the Travancore Palace Grounds, New Delhi, from March 3 to March 31, 2026.



Key Points:

- **Organizer:** A national cultural event organized by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.
- **Collaborators:** National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) and FICCI.
- **Objective:** To accord global recognition to tribal art and to economically empower the artists.

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Prominent Tribal Art Forms Featured and Exhibited:

- **Tribal Art:** Tribal art encompasses a wide range of forms such as painting, metal crafts, wood carving, textiles, pottery, and body art, many of which originate in rural and forest areas.
- Common themes include nature, animals, mythology, ancestral spirits, agrarian life, and community celebrations.

Warli Painting:



- A folk art tradition of Maharashtra, practiced by the Warli tribe.
- Dating back to the 10th century CE—or even the Neolithic era (2,500–3,000 BCE)—this art form reflects a deep connection with nature.
- **Prominent Artist:** Madhukar Rambhau Vadu.
- Awarded the GI Tag in the year 2014.

Rabha and Tamang Masks:



- Created by Shanti Ram Rabha, a resident of Alipurduar in West Bengal.
- The Rabha tribe is primarily found in Assam and parts of North Bengal.

Gond Painting:



- An art form created on the walls and floors of homes in Central India (specifically Madhya Pradesh). (An art form that has received the GI Tag).
- **Association:** The Gond community.

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Bhil Painting:



- The Bhil community is one of the largest and most ancient indigenous groups in India.



Schemes and Policies



Samruddha Gram Phygital Services Initiative



Why in News?

- The Ministry of Communications inaugurated 'Samruddhi Kendras' under the Samruddha Gram Phygital Services Initiative.



Key Points:

Samruddha Gram Phygital Services Initiative

- **Department:** Launched under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).
- This initiative is currently in the pilot phase. It will be implemented in three villages.
- It utilizes high-speed broadband connectivity provided under BharatNet. Its objective is to transform digital connectivity into an integrated platform for the delivery of services in rural areas.
- Under this initiative, the 'Samruddhi Kendra' is envisioned as a single-window rural service center. It brings together healthcare services, education, and e-governance assistance at a single location.



INTERNATIONAL



Port of Fujairah



Why in News?

- Recently, during the Iran-US-Israel conflict, the UAE's Port of Fujairah came under attack.



Key Points:

- Port of Fujairah:**



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- It serves as a major shipping hub for the Gulf and the wider region. The Port of Fujairah is the only multi-purpose maritime facility located on the eastern coast of the United Arab Emirates.
- It is strategically situated just 70 nautical miles outside the Strait of Hormuz. This port provides a vital economic link between Europe and Asia. It opens up markets in the Indian subcontinent and Northeast Africa for both local and international trade.
- **Other ports in the news:** Jebel Ali Port (UAE), Haifa Port (Israel), Al-Faw Port (Iraq), etc.

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🕒 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY 🕒

Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS)

📣 Why in News?

- The atomic clock onboard ISRO's IRNSS-1F satellite has ceased functioning. Launched in 2016, IRNSS-1F is the sixth navigation satellite in the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) constellation, which comprises seven satellites.

📌 Key Points:

- Its payload included a highly precise Rubidium atomic clock, a critical component for providing navigation services.

Atomic Clock

- An atomic clock is a highly precise, space-qualified time-measuring instrument. It measures time by monitoring the natural frequency (resonant frequency) of transitions occurring between the energy levels of atoms in elements such as Cesium, Rubidium, or Hydrogen.
- It functions similarly to a conventional clock; however, its timekeeping basis relies on the properties of transitions between the various energy states of atoms.
- When an atom is excited by an external energy source, it transitions to a higher energy state and subsequently returns to a lower energy state. During this transition, the atom emits energy at an extremely precise frequency, which is utilized for timekeeping.
- Atomic clocks are said to drift by only one second every 100 million years, whereas conventional quartz-based clocks can accumulate a discrepancy of one second within just a few days.

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- They have a lifespan of 10–15 years, which generally corresponds to the average operational life of a satellite.

IRNSS – Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC)

- This is a regional navigation satellite system being developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- **Satellite Constellation:** It comprises a cluster of 7 satellites along with a network of ground stations.
- Three of the satellites are positioned in Geostationary Orbit (GEO), while four are located in Geosynchronous Orbit (GSO).
- It has been designed to provide accurate positioning information to users across India, as well as in extensive regions extending up to 1,500 kilometers beyond its borders.

Key Services:

- **Standard Positioning Service (SPS)** — for civilian users.
- **Restricted Service (RS)** — for strategic users.

Gujarat's First Sounding Rocket Test

Why in News?

- On March 14, 2026, Gujarat successfully tested its first sounding rocket from Dholera.

Key Points:

- Development and Launch:** Conducted by the startup Omspace Rocket and Exploration Private Limited (OSRE) (based in Ahmedabad).
- Launch:** This single-stage sub-orbital sounding rocket was launched from Bavaliyari, Dholera, Gujarat.
- Testing:** The rocket reached an altitude of approximately 3 km and successfully tested several key systems, including propulsion, avionics, and an autonomous recovery system.
- Launch Operations:** The launch was conducted under the authorization of IN-SPACE and with the support of the Gujarat Spacotech Policy, 2025–2030.
- Payload:** A mini-satellite was also launched to collect meteorological data.

Other Important Points:

Sounding Rockets:

- Introduction:** These are single- or two-stage solid-propellant rockets used for investigating the upper atmospheric regions and for space research.
- They serve as easily affordable platforms for testing prototypes of new components or sub-systems intended for use in launch vehicles and satellites.



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History:

- In 1963, the first sounding rocket (an American Nike-Apache) was launched from the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (established on November 21, 1963).
- In 1967, India's indigenous sounding rocket, the Rohini RH-75, was launched.
- The series of sounding rockets is known as 'Rohini'.

Sounding Rocket	RH-200	RH-300 MK-II	RH-560 MK-II
Payload (Kilogram)	10 kg	60 kg	100 kg
Height (Kilometer)	80 km	160 km	470 km
Objective	Meteorology	Aeronomy	Aeronomy
Launch Pad	Thumba, Balasore	SDSC-SHAR	SDSC-SHAR

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