

# Daily Current Affairs

Date : 18 March 2026



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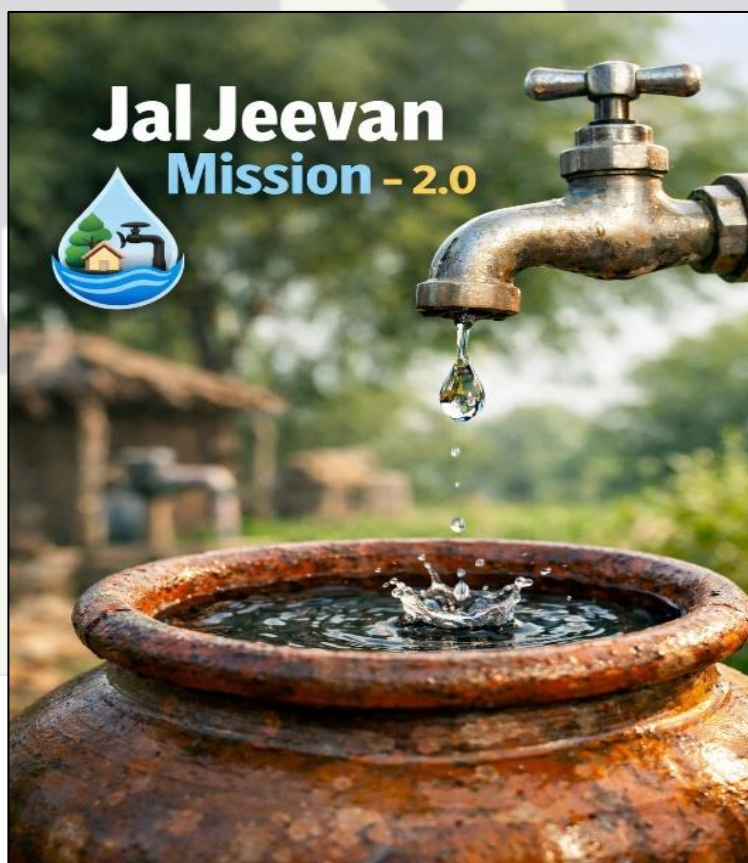


### Rajasthan: The Country's First State to Sign an MoU Under 'Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0'



#### Why in News?

- Recently, in accordance with the new guidelines issued under 'Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0', Rajasthan became the first state in India to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.



#### Key Points:

- Objective:** This agreement has been executed to enhance the quality, sustainability, and transparency of water supply services in rural areas, marking a major initiative towards achieving the goal of 'Har Ghar Jal' (Water in Every Household).

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- **Target:** To strengthen the water supply infrastructure within the state and to provide clean drinking water to all rural households under the pledge of 'Har Ghar Jal'.

## **Facts for Prelims (Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0):**

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, approved the extension of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) until December 2028 on March 10, 2026.
- JJM will be restructured as JJM 2.0, with its primary focus placed on structural reforms within the rural drinking water supply sector.
- A national digital framework named 'Sujalam Bharat' will be implemented to digitally map the drinking water supply system across the entire country— from the source to the tap.
- **Jal Mahotsav 2026:** A nationwide campaign is being organized by the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti from March 8 to March 22, 2026.

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## Exhibition by the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner: JKK (Jaipur)

### Why in News?

- On the occasion of the Rajasthan Day celebrations – 2026, a special exhibition was organized by the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, at the Jawahar Kala Kendra (JKK), Jaipur.

### Key Points:

- **Duration of the Event:** From March 17 to March 19, 2026.
- **Main Theme:** ‘Valuable Records of Historical and Administrative Significance Pertaining to the Princely States of Rajputana’.

### Main Attractions of the Exhibition:

- A Kharita (royal epistle) sent to the Maharaja of Udaipur, Fateh Singh Bahadur, on the occasion of the coronation of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir in 1885 AD.
- The agreement resolving the Ruparel River dispute between Alwar and Bharatpur.
- An order issued by the State of Jhalawar to prevent mismatched marriages under the Child Marriage Act of 1927.
- A copy of the order issued by the Maharana of Udaipur, Swarup Singh, to the Maharao of Kota regarding the suppression of the Sati practice.



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- Photographs related to the maps, royal emblems, founders, and genealogies of 19 princely states.
- Records pertaining to the Bikaner State's camel corps, 'Ganga Risala'.
- Records concerning the massacre perpetrated by the British Government during a gathering led by Govind Guru at Mangarh (Dungarpur-Banswara) in 1913 AD.
- A copper plate inscription detailing Maharana Pratap's grief over the injury and subsequent death of his horse, Chetak, during the Battle of Haldighati in 1576 AD.
- A letter written by Rabindranath Tagore during the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (Hindi Literary Conference) held in Bharatpur in 1927.
- **Exhibition of Rare Books from the Bikaner Library:** Report on Raj Marwar (1891), Bikaner Golden Jubilee (1887–1937), Rulers of India and the Chiefs of Rajputana (Thomas Headley), The King and Queen in India (1911–12), The Prince in India (1921–22), and Medical Topographical Account of Ajmer-Rajputana (1900).
- **Establishment of the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner:** In the year 1955.

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## Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation (RITI)

### Why in News?

- Recently, the Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation (RITI) completed two years since its establishment.



### Key Points:

- In March 2024, the State Government constituted the 'Rajasthan Institute for Transformation and Innovation' (RITI), replacing the 'Chief Minister's Rajasthan Economic Transformation Advisory Council' (CMRETAC).
- RITI is a policy-making institution (think tank) established by the Government of Rajasthan, modeled after the Central Government's NITI Aayog.

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- **Objective:** To formulate strategies to achieve the goal of 'Viksit Rajasthan @2047' (Developed Rajasthan @2047) and to foster innovation for the holistic development of the state.
- **Chairperson:** The Chief Minister of Rajasthan serves as the ex-officio Chairperson.
- **Lead Knowledge Institute (LKI):** The University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, has been designated as the 'Lead Knowledge Institute (LKI)' for RITI, providing research and technical support.

## Functions:

- To formulate policies for the state's development across various sectors.
- To review the implementation of government schemes and programs and offer suggestions for their improvement.
- To study successful policies from both domestic and international contexts and explore the feasibility of implementing them in Rajasthan.

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## ✂ NEWS IN SHORTS ⚡

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1.	<p><b>Exhibition on the Theme: 'Ancient Coins and Currency of Rajasthan' – Hawa Mahal (Jaipur)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ A special exhibition titled "Ancient Coins and Currency of Rajasthan" was organized at the Hawa Mahal in Jaipur to mark the Rajasthan Day celebrations of 2026.</li><li>■ <b>Organizer:</b> Department of Archaeology and Museums, Rajasthan.</li><li>■ <b>Dates:</b> From March 17 to 19, 2026.</li><li>■ A total of 154 ancient coins were displayed in this exhibition. The collection includes Punch-marked coins, the coins of Indo-Greek, Yaudheya Republic, Tribal, Kushan, Post-Kushan, Western Satrap, Gupta-era, Indo-Sassanian, Gadhahiya, Adivaraha, Ajayraj Chauhan, Somaladevi, Kalachuri, Delhi Sultanate, Mughal, Post-Mughal, Jaunpur Sultanate, Gujarat Sultanate, East India Company, British-era and, Jaipur's 'Jharshahi' coins, as well as various medals and tokens.</li></ul>
2.	<p><b>The World's First Play, 'Samudra Manthan' – JKK (Jaipur)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ As part of the Rajasthan Day 2026 celebrations, a grand theatrical production based on the mythological tale of 'Samudra Manthan' (The Churning of the Ocean) was staged at the Jawahar Kala Kendra (JKK) in Jaipur on March 17, 2026.</li><li>■ <b>Presented by:</b> The Repertory Company of the National School of Drama (NSD).</li><li>■ The play was written by Asif Ali and directed by Chittaranjan Tripathi, the Director of the National School of Drama.</li></ul>

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3.

## **AIU West Zone Vice-Chancellors' Meet 2025-26 – Udaipur**

- The Association of Indian Universities (AIU) organized the 'West Zone Vice-Chancellors' Meet 2025-26' in Udaipur.
- **Dates:** March 17 and 18, 2026.
- **Venue:** Janardan Rai Nagar Rajasthan Vidyapeeth (JRNRV), Dabok, Udaipur.
- **Key Theme:** "Self-reliant India (Atmanirbhar Bharat) through Swadeshi, Economic Patriotism, and Techno-Nationalism."
- Vice-Chancellors from universities across states such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra participated in this two-day conference.

4.

## **MoU for the Establishment of a Women's Skills Center and Entrepreneurship Hub**

- Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Princess Diya Kumari Foundation (PDKF) and Abercrombie & Kent Philanthropy (AKP) for the establishment of a Women's Skills Center and Entrepreneurship Hub in Jaipur.
- **Objective:** To empower women in rural Rajasthan by making them self-reliant through training in the fields of skill development, digital literacy, and entrepreneurship.

5.

## **Harshita Swami**

- Harshita Swami from Jaipur is the only player from Rajasthan participating in the Indo-Thailand International Ball Badminton Test Series.
- In this competition, India won gold medals in both the men's and women's categories.
- **Venue and Dates:** Pattaya (Thailand), from March 11 to March 15, 2026.

6.

## **Rajasthan at the 5th National Masters Weightlifting Championship**

- At the 5th National Masters Weightlifting Championship held in Loharu, Haryana, Rajasthan's women's team emerged as the champions, winning 6 gold and 1 silver medal, while the men's team finished as runners-up, securing 12 gold, 6 silver, and 3 bronze medals.
- **Women's Category:** Poonam Saini won the title of 'Best Woman Weightlifter' by lifting the heaviest weight of the competition.
- **Men's Category:** Prem Narayan Saini won the title of 'Best Lifter India' by lifting a weight of 260 kg.

7.

## **Tech Energya Industry Summit-2026**

- Recently, the 'Tech Energya Industry Summit-2026' was organized at the Rajasthan International Centre (RIC) by the University of Engineering and Management, Jaipur.
- **Objective:** To bring together experts from the fields of technology, industry, and energy on a single platform to deliberate on the path toward making India a \$30 trillion economy by 2047.

8.

## **Boxer Harsh Chaudhary (Jaipur)**

- Recently, Jaipur resident Harsh Chaudhary won a gold medal at the Senior National Boxing Championship 2026, held in Noida. In doing so, Harsh created history by securing a gold medal for Rajasthan at the national level in boxing after a hiatus of 34 years.
- Based on his performance in this competition, he was selected for the Asian Boxing Championship, scheduled to be held in Mongolia.

## NATIONAL

### Nominations Open for Padma Awards 2027

#### Why in News?

- The Central Government has commenced inviting nominations and recommendations for the Padma Awards 2027.



#### Key Points:

- The nomination process began on March 15 and will remain open until July 31, 2026.

#### Padma Awards

- **Established:** In 1954
- These are presented in three categories: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri.
- The 'Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service;

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- The 'Padma Bhushan' is conferred for distinguished service of a high order; and
- The 'Padma Shri' award is given for distinguished service in any field.
- These awards recognize "distinguished work" and are conferred for exceptional achievements or services across various fields, including Art, Literature and Education, Sports, Medicine, Social Work, Science and Engineering, Public Affairs, Civil Services, and Trade and Industry.
- However, with the exception of doctors and scientists, government employees—including those working in Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)—are generally not eligible for these awards.
- Self-nominations are also permitted.
- Nominations will be accepted exclusively through the online National Awards Portal.
- These awards are announced annually on the occasion of Republic Day.

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## 60th Jnanpith Award

### Why in News?

- Recently, Renowned Tamil lyricist and writer R. Vairamuthu has been selected for the 60th Jnanpith Award, making him the third Tamil writer to receive this honor and the first to be recognized specifically for Tamil poetry.



### Key Points:

- He also received the Sahitya Akademi Award (2003) for his novel Kallikattu Ithikasam. Furthermore, he was honored with the Padma Shri in 2003 and the Padma Bhushan in 2014.
- This award has previously been conferred upon Tamil writers Akilan (1975) and Jayakanthan (2002).

### The Jnanpith Award

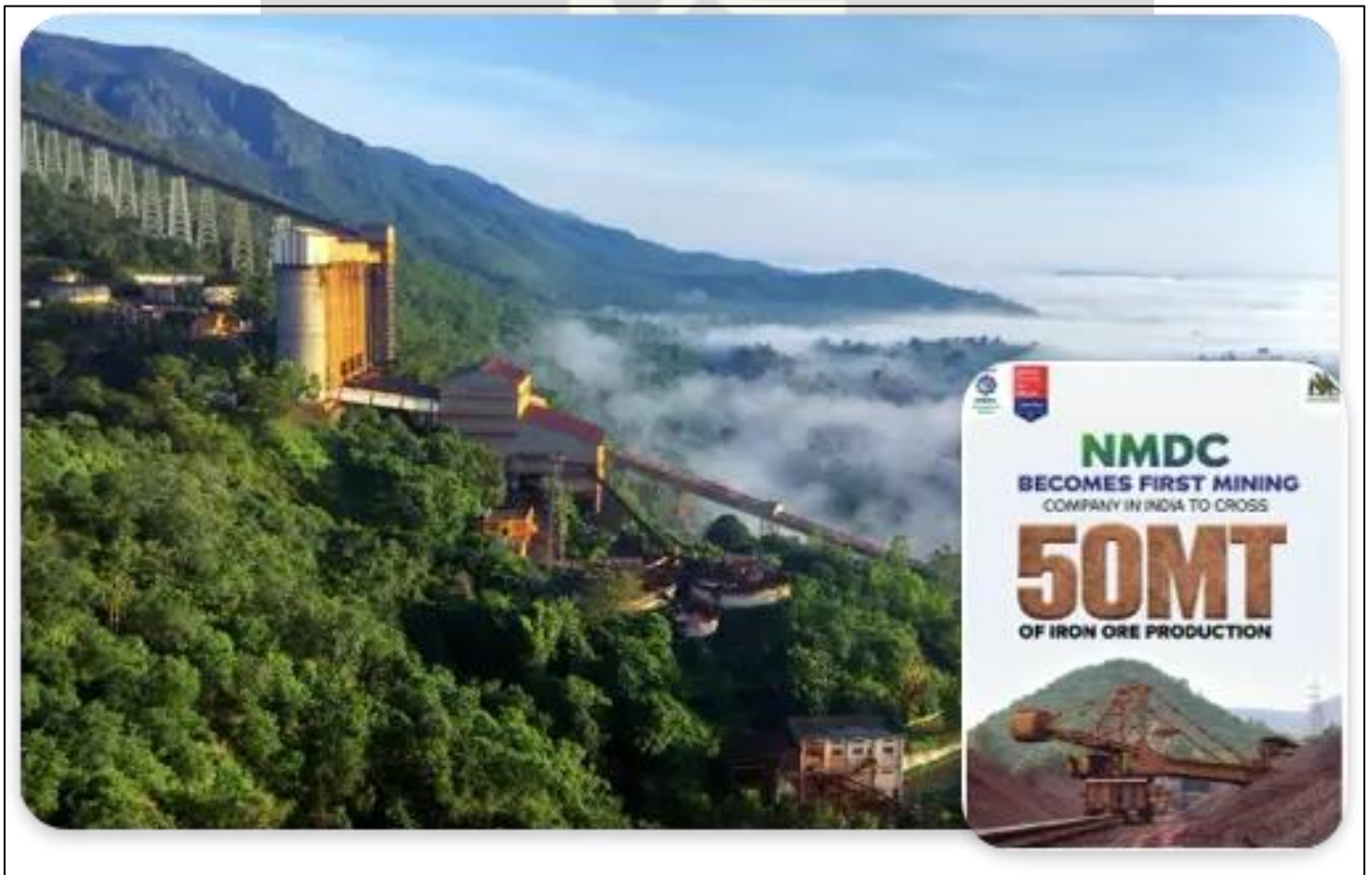
- Introduction:** Instituted by the Bharatiya Jnanpith in 1961, the Jnanpith Award is India's highest literary honor, recognizing the extraordinary lifetime contributions made by writers.
- It is often regarded as the "Nobel Prize of Indian Literature," highlighting India's linguistic diversity and literary integrity.

## Geography and Geology

### NMDC Iron Ore Production

#### Why in News?

- NMDC Limited has become India's first mining company to achieve an iron ore production of 50 million tonnes within a single financial year (FY 2025-26).



#### Key Points:

##### Iron Ore

- Iron ore refers to those rocks and minerals from which metallic iron is extracted.

- Iron ore is classified into four main types based on its iron content: Magnetite (best quality, >70% iron), Hematite (most important industrial ore, 60-70% iron), Limonite (low grade, 40-60% iron), and Siderite (poor quality, <40% iron).
- India is the fourth-largest producer, following Australia, Brazil, and China.
- Odisha leads in production, followed by Chhattisgarh and Karnataka.

## NMDC

- **Established:** In 1958
- India's largest iron ore producing company and a 'Navratna' CPSE (Central Public Sector Enterprise) under the Ministry of Steel.
- It supports India's target of achieving a steel production capacity of 300 metric tonnes by 2030.

## ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

### India's First National Report on the Nagoya Protocol

#### Why in News?

- India has recently submitted its first National Report (NR1) on the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol to the CBD Secretariat.



## Nagoya Protocol

#### Key Points:

- Prepared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in collaboration with the National Biodiversity Authority, this report covers the period from November 2017 to December 2025.

#### What is the Nagoya Protocol?

- Adopted in Nagoya, Japan, on October 29, 2010, and effective since October 12, 2014, it ensures fair access to genetic resources and the sharing of benefits through Prior Informed Consent and Mutually Agreed Terms.

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- India ratified the Protocol in 2012, aligning it with its Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

## India's Framework

- India's biodiversity management framework operates under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, which is supported by the Biological Diversity Rules, 2004, and the Biodiversity Management Regulations, 2003; this framework comprises the National Biodiversity Authority, State Biodiversity Boards/Union Territory Biodiversity Councils, and Biodiversity Management Committees at the local level.

UTKARSH

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