

7. Short News

World Wildlife Day

Context- On World Wildlife Day (3rd March), the Prime Minister reaffirmed India's commitment to wildlife conservation, sustainable practices, and the protection of its rich biodiversity and endangered species.

About World Wildlife Day

1. History- On 20 December 2013 at the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), March 3 was declared United Nations World Wildlife Day (WWD).
2. Theme 2026 Edition- "Medicinal and Aromatic Plants- Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods"

About Medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs)

1. These are essential for both human health and ecological balance.
For Example- American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*), spikenard (*Nardostachys grandiflora*) and agarwood (*Aquilaria*, *Gonystylus* and *Gyrinops* species).
2. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes their significance, particularly in developing countries, where 70-95 per cent of the population relies on traditional medicine for primary healthcare.

Significance

1. The World Wildlife Day holds significance as the day that the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was signed in 1973.

The UNGA Resolution designated the CITES Secretariat as the facilitator for the global observance of this special day for wildlife on the UN calendar

25 YEARS OF BUREAU OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY (BEE)

Context- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency celebrated its 25th Foundation Day on March 1, 2026, marking a quarter-century of energy conservation.

1. The Union Minister of Power commemorated BEE's journey by launching the BEE@25 logo, the RCO (Renewable Consumption Obligation) Portal, and the BEE Star Label Mobile App.

About BEE

1. Origin- Established on March 1, 2002, as a statutory body, under the provisions of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
2. Objective- Reduce the energy intensity of the Indian economy by developing policies and strategies.
3. Nodal Ministry- Ministry of Power
4. Function-
 1. Regulatory- Sets efficiency standards for appliances, identification of the energy intensive establishments and their inspection.
 2. Promotion- Drives national awareness, provides R&D support, and trains accredited energy auditors.
5. BEE's other flagship programs-
 1. Star Labelling Programme (2006)- Uses a visual 1-to-5-star scale based on Indian Standards to help consumers easily identify energy-efficient appliances, reducing electricity bills while encouraging manufacturers to adopt greener technology.

2. PAT Scheme (Perform, Achieve and Trade)- A market-based mechanism under the National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE) to reduce specific energy consumption in energy-intensive "Designated Consumers."
3. RCO Portal- A web-based monitoring tool for the Non fossil Obligation compliance mechanism.
4. CCTS (Carbon Credit Trading Scheme)- BEE is the lead agency for developing India's domestic carbon market to incentivize emission reductions.
6. Achievements So Far- 36% reduction in emission intensity of GDP from 2005 levels and achieving 52% non-fossil fuel capacity ahead of 2030 targets.

Legacy Thrust Territories

Context- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) designated formerly Naxal-hit districts as "Legacy Thrust Territories"

About Legacy Thrust Territories

1. LTTs is a strategic classification designed to prevent an "administrative vacuum" in districts where Left Wing Extremism has been significantly weakened but not yet fully eradicated.
2. Aim- To prevent any resurgence of insurgency and ensure long-term stability by integrating targeted development initiatives with phased security redeployment.
3. Key Features-
 1. Phased Redeployment- Ensuring Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) are not withdrawn abruptly, preventing a security lapse.
 2. Developmental Consolidation- Fast-tracking the completion of the 15,000 km road project and 9,000+ mobile tower installations to bridge the "infrastructure gap."
 3. Governance Monitoring- Ensuring states maintain responsive administration and efficient public service delivery in former conflict zones.
 4. Intelligence Vigilance- Monitoring urban gatherings and social media to counter a resurgence of extremist propaganda.
4. Significance- Following significant operational successes against Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), the Centre has transitioned from active combat to a "consolidation phase" to ensure sustained security and developmental intervention

About Left Wing Extremism

1. Intro- A broader term covering all armed leftist movements in India, including Maoists and Naxalites.
2. Origin- The movement originated in 1967 from an uprising in Naxalbari, West Bengal.
3. Ideology- Adherents follow the ideology of Chinese leader Mao Zedong, focusing on a "New Democratic Revolution" to replace the current state.
4. Core Areas- Historically, these groups operate in underdeveloped, tribal-dominated, rural areas, creating a "red corridor".
5. Current Status- As of 2026, LWE-affected districts have declined from 200 (in 2000) to just 7 districts (5 in Chhattisgarh, 1 in Jharkhand, 1 in Odisha).
6. Target- To completely eliminate Naxalism by March 31, 2026, removing the primary obstacle to development and tribal welfare in India's most remote regions.

laea Board of Governors Meet

Context- Following U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran, the International Atomic Energy Agency convened an emergency Board meeting amid conflicting claims over damage to Iran's nuclear facilities.

About International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

1. The IAEA is the world's central intergovernmental body promoting peaceful nuclear cooperation and preventing military misuse of atomic energy.

It functions autonomously within the UN system and reports to the UN General Assembly and Security Council.

2. Origin- Established in 1957 following U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" proposal.
3. Headquarters- Vienna, Austria.
4. Members- 180 members.

India is a founding member of the IAEA.

5. Structure- It comprises the General Conference (all members), a Board of Governors, and a Secretariat headed by a Director General.
6. Board of Governors- The Board of Governors is a 35-member key policy-making body which changes composition annually.

For the 2025-2026 period, the Board includes-

1. Americas- Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Peru, USA, Venezuela.
 2. Africa- Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Niger, South Africa, Togo.
 3. East Asia & Pacific- Australia, China, Japan, Philippines, Thailand.
 4. Europe- Belgium, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, UK.
 5. Middle East & South Asia- India, Jordan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia
7. Role- The IAEA verifies nuclear safeguards, develops safety and security standards.
 1. It serves as the essential, independent international inspectorate under the Article III of Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)
 1. It verifies that non-nuclear-weapon states comply with their commitment not to acquire nuclear weapons.
 2. It also promotes peaceful applications in health and agriculture, and facilitates technical cooperation among member states.
 8. Recognition- IAEA and its Director General, Mohamed ElBaradei, were awarded the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to prevent nuclear energy from being used for military purposes and to ensure that nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is used in the safest possible manner
 9. India at IAEA- India supports IAEA-led safeguards and civil nuclear cooperation while maintaining a strategic programme outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty framework.

Karbi Anglong Ginger

Context- GI-tagged Karbi Anglong ginger has been exported to the London market for the first time, marking a major milestone for Assam's agricultural exports.

About the Karbi Anglong Ginger

1. Karbi Anglong Ginger is one of the most aromatic and flavourful varieties of ginger in India.
2. Location- Cultivated in the hill district of Karbi Anglong, Assam.
3. GI Tag- Received Geographical Indication (GI) status, enhancing market recognition and export potential.

4. Agro-climatic Advantage- Grown in high rainfall, well-drained loamy soils of the North-East. Ideal for a humid tropical climate.
5. Distinct Quality- Known for high fibre content, strong aroma, and high oleoresin content, making it suitable for spices and medicinal uses.
6. Organic- Mostly cultivated with minimal chemical inputs; aligns with India's push for organic farming in the NE region.
7. Economic Significance- Major cash crop for tribal farmers; supports rural livelihood and agri-based value chains.

Artemis Lunar Programme

Context- NASA has restructured its Artemis program after repeated delays, prioritising a low-Earth orbit test before attempting a crewed lunar landing by 2028.

1. Due to technical setbacks in the Space Launch System (SLS) and Orion spacecraft, Artemis 3 will now conduct a rendezvous in low-Earth orbit with a lunar lander instead of proceeding directly to the Moon.

The original goal of Artemis III was to land a crew at the Moon's south polar region

About Artemis Lunar Programme

1. The Artemis programme is NASA's flagship human spaceflight initiative aimed at returning astronauts to the Moon and establishing a sustainable long-term presence.
2. Mission Objectives- Artemis seeks to land the first woman and next man on the Moon, develop lunar infrastructure, test deep-space technologies, and prepare for eventual human missions to Mars.

Artemis Mission is divided into four parts

1. Artemis I (2022)- First uncrewed integrated test flight of the Space Launch System (SLS) and the Orion spacecraft.
 1. Objective- Validate deep-space capabilities, test heat shield performance during re-entry, and demonstrate mission systems before crewed flights.
2. Artemis II (March 2026)- First crewed Artemis mission to travel around the Moon since the Apollo program era.
 1. Objective- Conduct a lunar flyby mission to test life-support systems, crew operations, and spacecraft performance in deep space.
3. Artemis III (2027)- Crewed mission involving rendezvous and docking with a commercial Human Landing System in lunar orbit.
 1. Objective- Demonstrate critical technologies (docking, spacesuits, landing systems) and prepare for sustained human landing missions.
4. Artemis IV (2028)- Mission supporting lunar surface operations and assembly of the Lunar Gateway.
 1. Objective- Deliver the International Habitation Module (I-Hab) to Gateway and land a four-person crew near the Moon's South Pole, marking the beginning of sustained lunar exploration.

Significance of Artemis 3

1. Risk Reduction Through Orbital Testing- By practising docking and systems integration in low-Earth orbit, Artemis 3 reduces technical and safety risks before committing astronauts to lunar descent.
2. Building Operational "Muscle Memory"- More frequent missions will help NASA rebuild institutional expertise, similar to the cadence achieved during the Apollo era.

3. Strengthening Strategic Position- The revised timeline sustains U.S. leadership in space amid growing competition from China's crewed lunar ambitions, reinforcing geopolitical and technological credibility.

Gitchak Nakana

Context- A team of ichthyologists from Europe, America and India has discovered Gitchak nakana, the first aquifer-dwelling (phreatobitic) fish from Northeast India, with findings published in Scientific Reports.

About Gitchak nakana

1. Gitchak nakana is a newly identified species of blind groundwater loach discovered in Assam, representing a new genus within the family Cobitidae.
Loaches are a diverse group of small, elongated, bottom-dwelling freshwater fish belonging to the suborder Cobitoidei, primarily found in Asia
2. Habitat- The species was found in a dug-out well in Assam and inhabits underground aquifers (phreatic zones), a rare and difficult-to-access freshwater ecosystem distinct from cave systems.
3. Key Features
 1. Complete Eye Loss- It lacks externally visible eyes, an adaptation known as troglomorphy, typical of subterranean organisms living in total darkness.
 2. Unique Skull Structure- The species shows a rare anatomical trait—complete absence of a skull roof, with the brain dorsally covered only by skin.
 3. Miniaturised and Translucent Body- Growing to only about 2 cm, it has a translucent, pigmentless body with a striking red coloration in life.

Significance of the Discovery- The discovery expands knowledge of subterranean biodiversity in Asia, highlighting Northeast India as a hotspot for rare and endemic groundwater fauna.