

NEXT IAS

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 28-03-2026

Table of Content

World Buddhist Peace Conference 2026

How Persian became the 'English of the era'

Global Out-of-School Population Climbs to 273 Million

Saudi Arabia's Land Restoration Model

NEWS IN SHORT

India Aiming for 60% Non-fossil Fuel Power Sources by 2035

Euthalia zubeengargi

Olive Ridley Turtle Conservation in Andhra Pradesh

Khelo India Tribal Games

Tunguska Air Defence Missile System

Red-Crowned Roofed Turtle

WORLD BUDDHIST PEACE CONFERENCE 2026

Context

- Hyderabad hosted the inaugural of the **World Buddhist Peace Conference 2026**.

About

- It is organised by **Buddhavanam and Telangana Tourism Development Corporation**, in association with **Vietnam Buddhist Sangha**.
- It brings together **ministers, monks, scholars and delegates** from **over 20 countries** in a bid to advance dialogue on peace, reconciliation and ethical leadership.
- Aim:** To showcase Buddhavanam as a Buddhist Heritage Theme Park to world Buddhist countries, and to encourage them to have their monasteries and educational institutions at Buddhavanam to attract maximum footfalls from India.
 - It is part of a larger global initiative aimed at **positioning Telangana as a centre for Buddhist heritage diplomacy and peace-building**.

Buddhavanam

- It is located in Telangana, and is **India's first Buddhist Heritage Theme Park**.
- It is located on the banks of the **Krishna River**, it showcases the life and teachings of Lord Buddha through art, sculptures, meditation zones, and thematic installations.
- It is developed by the **Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation**.

Buddhism

- Buddhism is a spiritual and philosophical tradition based on the teachings of **Siddhartha Gautama**, known as the **Buddha**, who lived between roughly **563 and 483 BCE** in what is now Nepal and India.
- The core of Buddhism** is the understanding of human suffering, its causes, and the path to overcome it.
- Buddhism offers a path to enlightenment, which is seen as liberation from suffering and the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (samsara).
- The ultimate goal in Buddhism is **to attain Nirvana**, a state of liberation from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.



Core Teachings of the Buddha

- The Four Noble Truths**
 - Dukkha:** Life is suffering or unsatisfactory.
 - Samudaya:** Suffering is caused by craving and attachment (tanh).
 - Nirodha:** The cessation of suffering is possible by letting go of craving.
 - Magga:** The path to the cessation of suffering is the Eightfold Path.
- The Noble Eightfold Path:** Grouped into three categories: wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline.
- The Three Marks of Existence**
 - Anicca (Impermanence):** All things are in constant change.
 - Dukkha (Suffering):** Existence is filled with dissatisfaction.

- ♦ **Anattā (Non-self):** There is no permanent, unchanging self.
- **The Goal: Nirvana (Nibbāna)**
 - ♦ A state beyond suffering and rebirth.
 - ♦ Achieved through wisdom, ethical living, and mental discipline.
 - ♦ Nirvana is the ultimate liberation and peace.

Buddhist Circuits

- In 2016, the Ministry of Tourism announced the **Buddhist Circuit as the country's first transnational tourism circuit**, covering sites in Nepal and Sri Lanka alongside those in India.
- The Buddhist Circuit seeks to **help tourists and pilgrims experience first-hand the teachings of Lord Buddha** and trace the footsteps of Buddha.
- **The main sites covered under the circuit span the life of Buddha** from his birth to his Parinirvana and comprise **Bodh Gaya, Vaishali, Rajgir, Kushinagar, Sarnath and Shravasti**, along with **Kapilavastu and Lumbini**.
- **Four Holiest Buddhist Sites (Chaturmahāsthāna):**
 - ♦ **Lumbini (Nepal):** Birthplace of Gautama Buddha.
 - ♦ **Bodh Gaya (Bihar):** Attained Enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree.
 - ♦ **Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh):** First sermon (Dhammachakra Pravartana).
 - ♦ **Kushinagar (Uttar Pradesh):** Mahaparinirvana (death).

About the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)

- It was founded in **2012** following the **Global Buddhist Congregation in New Delhi**.
- The IBC is the **world's first organization** that brings together Buddhist organizations, monastic orders, and lay institutions across 39 countries and over 320 member bodies.
- **Mission:** Embed Buddhist values into global conversations and foster harmony, the IBC upholds a vision of unity, compassion, and spiritual dialogue.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi.
- **Governing Structure:** Includes both monastic and lay participation, truly reflecting the principle of collective responsibility in preserving and propagating the Buddha Dhamma.

Source: TH

HOW PERSIAN BECAME THE 'ENGLISH OF THE ERA'

Context

- **Persian** has deeply influenced **India's language and literature for centuries**, and everyday speech, shaping administration, poetry, and vocabulary in Hindi, Urdu, and regional cultures.

Origin of Persian Language

- The origin of the **Persian language** lies in ancient Iran and **spans over 2,500 years of linguistic evolution**.
- It belongs to the **Indo-Iranian branch** of the **Indo-European language family**.
- It became the **language of the Persian Empire** and was widely spoken in the ancient days ranging from the **borders of India in the east, Russian in the north, the southern shores of the Persian Gulf to Egypt and the Mediterranean in the west**.
- Over the centuries Parsi has changed to its modern form and today Persian is spoken primarily in **Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and parts of Uzbekistan**.

Persian Language in India

- **Persian Influence on Indian Languages:** A significant portion of everyday Hindi vocabulary is derived from Persian. Its influence extended to Urdu, Marathi, Bengali, and other regional languages.
- **India as the Centre of Persian Literature:** From the time of Emperor Akbar, India became a global hub of Persian literary activity, by 1700 India had more Persian-literate people than Iran.
- **Language of Diplomacy and Governance:** Persian served as the official language of administration and diplomacy for centuries.
- **Exchange of Culture:** The Indo-Gangetic plain and the peninsula to its south have long been crossroads of transregional exchange.
- Within these flows, Persian texts and speakers moved across West, Central, and South Asia from the 11th century through expanding, dense networks.

Evolution of Persian Language in India

- **Dynasties in India:** From the mid-11th century, the Ghaznavid dynasty ruled much of Punjab from Lahore, bringing with them Persianate institutions and practices.
 - ♦ When the Ghazni Turks arrived in the 11th century, they brought Persian poets with them.

- **Language of Governance:** As regions such as Delhi, Kannauj, Gwalior, Ujjain, Bihar, and Banaras came under Muslim rule, a new hub of Persian learning emerged.
 - ♦ By the 14th century, Persian had become the principal language of governance across South Asia, used by vast revenue and judicial bureaucracies under the Delhi Sultanate, and later the Mughal Empire.
 - **Administration:** A large share of these loanwords relates to administration: kagaz, rasid, vakil, diwani, salahkar, chaprai.
 - ♦ Administrative units such as shahar, tahsil, mohalla, pargana, zila are all Persian.
 - ♦ Even the postal lexicon: Khat, lifafa, pata, khabar, and akhbar have Persian roots.
 - **Persian shaped the vocabularies of music and games:** Tabla, sitar, rubab, shahnai, nagara, sarod; and shatrank, tash, patang, caugan (polo), kushti, and pahalvani.
 - **Architecture:** Diwaar, haveli, makaan, manzil, baramda, burj, kila, mahal.
 - **Persian vocabulary also entered Indian religious thought:** In the Sikh tradition, key terms include hukm ('grace of God'), langar ('communal meal'), and khalsa ('community of sworn initiates').
 - **Mughal Period:** The decisive shift came in 1582, when Akbar made Persian the official language of the empire.
 - ♦ In administration and education alike, Persian became dominant: state records, reports, and chronicles were all written in it.
 - **Geographically Expansion:** In 18th-century Bihar, both Hindu and Muslim zamindars founded madrasas where Hindu literati taught Persian.
 - **East India Company's official language:** In 1765, Shah Alam II granted the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa to the Company on the condition that Persian remain the court language.
 - ♦ The Company, unable to overhaul existing systems, retained Persian across revenue, judicial, and police administration.
 - ♦ It was, then, only Britain's East India Company that made large investments in Persian, which remained the Company's official language of law and bureaucracy until the administrative reforms of 1832–37."
 - **Replacement with Urdu:** In 1832–37 the Company replaced Persian with Urdu (and later other vernaculars) in administration.
 - ♦ The civil and criminal codes were translated, retaining extensive Arabic-Persian vocabulary.
 - The rise of new imperial and vernacular languages eventually undermined Persian.
- Source: IE**
- ## GLOBAL OUT-OF-SCHOOL POPULATION CLIMBS TO 273 MILLION
- Context**
- According to the latest report by UNESCO, titled "2026 GEM Report — Access and Equity: Countdown to 2030", the global out-of-school population has reached 273 million in 2024.
- Key Highlights of Report**
- **Low Retention and Completion:** The report states that **only two-thirds** of students globally complete secondary education.
 - ♦ **One in six school-age children** remains excluded from education globally, indicating a major challenge to achieving universal education.
 - **Access Does Not Ensure Learning:** The report emphasises that increased enrolment in schools does **not necessarily translate into meaningful learning outcomes**.
 - ♦ The factors such as **overcrowded classrooms, lack of trained teachers, and insufficient learning materials** are major constraints to quality education.
 - **Inadequate Financing:** The report points out that **insufficient and poorly targeted public financing** remains a major obstacle to achieving universal education.
- Positive Trends in School Education**
- The report highlights that several countries have achieved **significant reductions in out-of-school populations since 2000**.
 - **Madagascar and Togo** have reduced out-of-school rates among children by over **80 percent**.
 - **Morocco and Vietnam** have achieved similar progress among adolescents, while **Georgia and Türkiye** have improved outcomes among youth.
 - **Côte d'Ivoire** has reduced out-of-school rates across **all age groups** by half during the same period.
- School Education in India**
- India operates one of the world's largest school systems, serving **24.69 crore students** across **14.71 lakh schools**, supported by over **1.01 crore teachers** (UDISE+ 2024-25).

- **Gross enrolment ratio (GER)** scores, as per NEP academic structure, are **95.4** at the preparatory stage (Grade III to Grade V), **90.3** at the middle stage (Grade VI to Grade VIII), and **68.5** at the secondary stage (Grade IX to Grade XII).

Government Initiatives taken in India

- **Samagra Siksha Abhiyan (SSA):** It is an overarching scheme for the school education sector extending from **pre-school to class XII**.
 - ♦ **The Scheme subsumes the three erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).**
- **PM SHRI Schools:** Development of **14,500 schools** as exemplary institutions with modern infrastructure and pedagogy.
- **Mid-Day Meal Scheme:** Provides free meals to students in government schools to encourage school attendance, improve nutrition, and reduce dropout rates.
- **Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009:** Guarantees free and compulsory education for children in the 6-14 age group, focusing on quality education and no discrimination.
- **National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education:** Aims to encourage girls from rural areas to continue education by providing financial incentives.
- **New Education Policy 2020:**
 - ♦ Emphasis on **early childhood care and education (ECCE)**, particularly for children up to **6 years**.
 - ♦ Introduction of a **5+3+3+4 school structure** (5 years of foundation, 3 years of preparatory, 3 years of middle, and 4 years of secondary education).
 - ♦ Focus on **critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving** rather than rote learning.

Concluding remarks

- The findings of UNESCO highlight that the **global education crisis** is not limited to access alone but **extends to issues of equity and quality of learning**.
- With the deadline for **Sustainable Development Goal 4** approaching in 2030, there is an urgent need for accelerated and focused action.
- Ensuring that every child not only attends school but also learns effectively is essential to achieving the vision of inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

Source: DTE

SAUDI ARABIA'S LAND RESTORATION MODEL

Context

- **The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification** reported that Saudi Arabia has restored nearly **one million hectares** of degraded land and is being seen as a model for large-scale land reclamation in water-scarce and desertified regions.

Extent of Global Land Degradation

- Land degradation refers to the **decline in land productivity** due to factors such as **soil erosion, salinisation, deforestation**, and unsustainable land use.
- Approximately **40%** of the global land surface is degraded, with the majority located in dryland regions and affecting **nearly three billion people** globally by **undermining food security, water availability, and livelihoods**.
- **According to the Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas 2021**, approximately **97.85 million** hectares, roughly **29.77%** of **India's** total geographical area, underwent land degradation during 2018-19.

Saudi Arabia model for land restoration

- **Cloud Seeding Initiatives:** Artificial enhancement of rainfall has been used to improve water availability in arid regions. It has supported vegetation growth and soil moisture restoration.
- **Early Warning Systems:** Advanced forecasting systems for sand and dust storms have reduced environmental and economic damage. These systems enhance disaster preparedness and climate resilience.
- **Expansion of Protected Areas:** Protected areas have been expanded to conserve biodiversity and prevent further land degradation. Ecosystem restoration has improved **soil fertility and land productivity**.

Causes of Land Degradation

- **Climatic Variability:** Prolonged droughts reduce soil moisture and vegetation cover, making land vulnerable to degradation.
- **Soil Erosion:** Wind erosion is dominant in arid and semi-arid regions, leading to loss of topsoil.
 - ♦ **Floods, cyclones, and landslides** degrade land by altering soil structure and removing vegetation.
- **Deforestation:** Removal of forest cover for agriculture, urbanisation, and industry exposes soil to erosion.

- **Industrialisation:** Expansion of industries and cities leads to land sealing and loss of fertile land. Mining activities remove topsoil and leave behind degraded landscapes.

Government Initiatives to Prevent Land Degradation

- **Soil Health Card Scheme:** It provides farmers with soil nutrient status reports to encourage balanced fertilizer use and improve productivity.
- **Promotion of Organic Farming:** Initiatives like Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) encourage organic farming practices to maintain soil health.
- **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA):** It focuses on enhancing soil health through integrated farming systems and agroforestry practices.
- **Green India Mission:** It aims to increase forest and tree cover by 5 million hectares and improve the quality of forest cover in another 5 million hectares.
- **National Afforestation Programme:** It supports the afforestation, reforestation, and eco-restoration of degraded forests and non-forest lands.

Global Initiatives

- **Global Soil Partnership (GSP):** It is an FAO-led initiative to improve global soil governance and promote sustainable soil management.
- **The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** has a pledge for **land degradation neutrality (LDN) by 2030**.
- **4 per 1000 Initiative:** It aims to increase soil carbon stocks by 0.4% annually to combat climate change and enhance soil health.

Concluding remarks

- Restoring land is not only an environmental necessity, it is a pathway to resilience, stability and prosperity.
- Sustained commitment towards land restoration not only combat desertification but also foster inclusive growth, stability, and long-term prosperity.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

- UNCCD was **established in 1994** to protect and restore the land and ensure a safer, just, and more sustainable future.
- is the **only legally binding framework** set up to address desertification and the effects of drought.
- There are **197 Parties** to the Convention, including 196 country Parties and the **European Union**.

Source: DTE

NEWS IN SHORT

INDIA AIMING FOR 60% NON-FOSSIL FUEL POWER SOURCES BY 2035

Context

- The Union Cabinet approved India's updated **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for 2031–2035** under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.

Updated NDCs

- **Emissions Intensity Reduction:** India has committed to reducing the emissions intensity (CO₂ per unit of GDP) of its GDP by **47%** by 2035 from 2005 levels.
 - ♦ India has already reduced its emissions intensity by about 36% between 2005 and 2020.
- **Expansion of Non-Fossil Fuel Capacity:** India has committed to achieving **60%** of its installed electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2035.
 - ♦ India has already achieved more than **52%** non-fossil fuel capacity by 2026, ahead of its earlier target.
- **Creation of Carbon Sink:** India has committed to creating a carbon sink of **3.5 to 4 billion tonnes** of CO₂ equivalent through forest and tree cover by 2035.

Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)

- As a signatory to the **Paris Agreement**, India was required to issue an updated **NDC in 2025**.
- NDCs are **country-specific climate action plans** submitted under the **Paris Agreement**.
- They outline targets for **reducing greenhouse gas emissions** and adapting to climate change.
- NDCs are **revised periodically** to enhance ambition.
- **Guiding Principles of India's NDC:**
 - India's NDC is based on the principle of **Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC)**. The approach emphasises equity and climate justice.
 - India's NDC **balances developmental needs, energy security, and climate commitments**.

Source: TH

EUTHALIA ZUBEENGARGI

Context

- A new species of butterfly recorded in a forest of Arunachal Pradesh has been named after Singer Zubeen Garg, the cultural icon of Assam.

About

- **Basar Duke** is proposed as the common name for **Euthalia zubeengargi**.
- The butterfly belongs to the **genus Euthalia**, a group commonly found across South and Southeast Asia.
- Members of this group are typically seen in **forested habitats and are known for their earthy brown wings marked with pale spots**.
- The newly discovered species stands out for its **distinct wing patterns** and structural features, which allowed them to confirm it as a separate species.
 - ♦ *Euthalia zubeengargi* prefers **cool, shaded forest interiors**.



- Much about the butterfly's life cycle, including its breeding pattern and host plants, remains unknown.
- *Euthalia zubeengargi* is **one of more than 80 species** from this group recorded in India's northeastern region.

Source: TH

OLIVE RIDLEY TURTLE CONSERVATION IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Context

- The officials of the Wildlife Management Authority and Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary have conserved nearly 20,000 eggs of Olive Ridley Turtles on Hope Island in the Kakinada Bay.

About Olive Ridley Turtles

- The olive ridley gets its name from the **olive green color** of its heart-shaped shell.
 - ♦ These are **carnivores** and feed mainly on jellyfish, shrimp etc.
- **Distribution:** Olive ridleys are found throughout the world primarily in the tropical regions of the **Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic oceans**.
- **Major nesting sites in India** are located along the coasts of **Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and**

Tamil Nadu including Rushikulya rookery coast (Odisha) and Gahirmatha beach (Bhitarkanika National park).

- **Features:** They are known for their unique mass nesting called **Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - ♦ **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
 - ♦ **CITES Appendix I**
 - ♦ **Schedule I** of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

**Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary**

- It is India's **second-largest mangrove forest**, located near Kakinada in **Andhra Pradesh**.
- The sanctuary lies in the **Godavari estuarine region**, where the Godavari River meets the Bay of Bengal.
- **Keystone Species:** Fishing cat, smooth-coated otter, and golden jackal.

Hope Island

- Hope Island (Krachchu Lanka) is a small **tadpole shaped Island** situated off the coast of Kakinada.
- It is formed from the sediment outflow carried by the waters of the **Koringa River**, a distributary of the Godavari.
- It is one of the **safe nesting grounds** of Olive Ridley Turtles in Andhra Pradesh.

Source: TH

KHELO INDIA TRIBAL GAMES

Context

- The inaugural edition of the Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) is being held in **Chhattisgarh**, across three host cities—Raipur, Jagdalpur and Sarguja.
 - ♦ The Games are being conducted over a ten-day period.

About

- It is the **first national multi-sport event** under the Khelo India programme dedicated exclusively to tribal athletes.
- **The Games feature seven medal sports**-athletics, football, hockey, weightlifting, archery, swimming and wrestling- along with demonstration events such as **mallakhamb and kabaddi**.
 - ◆ Over 60,000 athletes from 30 states and UTs will play for **338 medals** in the Games.
- The Games serve as a platform for talent identification, with a **dedicated Talent Identification and Development committee (TIDC)** deployed to scout promising athletes for further training and development under the Khelo India framework.
- **Mascot:** The official mascot is **Morveer**, derived from Chhattisgarhi words **Mor (our own) and Veer (bravery)**.

National Level Competitions Under Khelo India Scheme

- Khelo India Youth Games
- Khelo India University Games
- Khelo India Para Games
- Khelo India Winter Games
- Khelo India Beach Games

Source: PIB**TUNGUSKA AIR DEFENCE MISSILE SYSTEM****Context**

- The Ministry of Defence has signed contracts for the procurement of the Tunguska Air Defence Missile System.

About

- The Tunguska is a Soviet-origin (Inducted in early 1980s), tracked, self-propelled air defence system designed to protect ground forces from low-flying aerial threats.
- **Upgraded variants:** 2K22M, 2K22M1 with improved fire control and missile capability.
- **NATO designation:** SA-19 "Grison."
- It uniquely combines **missiles and guns** on a single platform.

Key Features

- **Hybrid System:** Integrates surface-to-air missiles with twin 30 mm autocannons, effective against helicopters, drones, and cruise missiles.

Missiles:

- ◆ 9M311 series
- ◆ **Range:** 8–10 km
- ◆ **Altitude:** up to 3,500 m
- ◆ **Guidance:** Radio command
- **Autocannons:**
 - ◆ **Fire rate:** 3,900–5,000 rounds/min
- **Radar & Tracking:** 360° target acquisition radar with detection range up to 18 km.

Source: ET**RED-CROWNED ROOFED TURTLE****Context**

- Once a jewel of the Ganga, the Red-Crowned Roofed Turtle now survives in a rapidly shrinking habitat.

About Red-crowned roofed turtle

- **Scientific Name:** *Batagur kachuga*
- **Genus:** *Batagur* (one of three large freshwater species in India).
- **Habitat:** Beyond India, Bangladesh and Nepal hold only marginal habitat, with no confirmed wild populations.
- **Diet:** Primarily herbivorous; helps regulate aquatic vegetation and maintain nutrient cycling, supporting balanced freshwater ecosystems.
- **Threats:** Rampant harvest of adults and eggs, illegal trade, and habitat degradation.
- **Conservation Status:** Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List); protected under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972; listed in Appendix I of CITES.

Do you Know?

- The Indian Turtle Conservation Program, supported by Namami Gange and the Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan forest departments, works to restore the species' former glory.

**Source: DTE**