

## Current Affairs - 18 March 2025

### MOUNT FUJI



- Mount Fuji, also called Fuji-san, is **Japan's tallest mountain**, with a height of 3,776 meters.
- It is situated close to the **Pacific coast** in the Yamanashi and Shizuoka prefectures in the heart of the large island of Honshu, about 100km to the southwest of the Tokyo-Yokohama metropolitan area.
- It is part of the **Fuji Volcanic Zone**, a volcanic chain that extends northward from the Mariana Islands and the Izu Islands through the Izu Peninsula to northern Honshu.
- It is a **stratovolcano** that has been dormant since its last eruption, in 1707, but is still generally classified as active by geologists.
- Mount Fuji is one of Japan's "**Three Holy Mountains**" along with Mount Tate and Mount Haku.
- The mountain is the major feature of **Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park** (1936), and it is at the centre of a **UNESCO World Heritage** site designated in 2013.

### **Mount Fuji Origin:**

- According to tradition, the volcano was formed in 286 BCE by an **earthquake**. The truth is somewhat more complex.
- The age of Fuji is **disputed**, but it seems to have formed during the past 2.6 million years on a base dating from up to 65 million years ago; the first eruptions and the first peaks probably occurred sometime after 700,000 years ago.
- The earliest precursors to Mount Fuji were **Komitake** (which forms the mountain's north slope) and **Ashitaka-yama** (which sits southeast of the mountain).
- The present-day mountain is a composite of three successive volcanoes: at the bottom is Komitake, which was surmounted by **Ko Fuji** ("Old Fuji") about 100,000 years ago and, finally, by the most recent, **Shin Fuji** ("New Fuji").

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### PI DAY



10-year-old Alberto Davila Aragon from Bristol, UK set a new world record by recalling 280 decimal places of Pi in one minute on Pi Day.

- Pi Day, or **International Day of Mathematics**, celebrated on **March 14** every year, honours the mathematical constant Pi, recognising its significance in mathematics.
- Pi Day is celebrated by lovers of mathematics every year through Pi recital competitions and Pi Day workouts to stimulate interest in learning and practising mathematics.
- The **theme for Pi Day 2025** is 'Mathematics, Art, and Creativity'.
- **Why March 14?**
  - The **approximate value of Pi is 3.14**.
  - The **date**, when written in the format of month/day (3/14), matches the first three digits of the mathematical constant.
- **History of Pi Day:**
  - The first Pi Day was celebrated in 1988 by physicist Larry Shaw at the San Francisco Exploratorium.
  - In 2009, the United States House of Representatives officially designated March 14 as Pi Day.
  - Later, in **2019**, **UNESCO** declared **Pi Day** as the "**International Day of Mathematics**" during its general conference.
  - **Albert Einstein**, the renowned physicist behind the "General Theory of Relativity," was **born on Pi Day in 1879**.

What is Pi ( $\pi$ )?

- Pi is a **mathematical constant** that represents the **ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter**.

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- It is an infinitely long, **irrational number**, and its **exact value cannot be known**.
- Pi has been calculated to over 50 trillion digits beyond its decimal point.
- As an irrational and transcendental number, it will **continue infinitely without repetition or pattern**.
- It is **nearly equal to 3.14, or 22/7**.
- It is **represented by the Greek letter ‘ $\pi$ ’**.
- Why that letter? It’s the first Greek letter in the words “periphery” and “perimeter,” and pi is the ratio of a circle’s periphery — or circumference — to its diameter.
- **History:**
  - Pi has been known for nearly 4,000 years and was **discovered by the ancient Babylonians**.
  - **One of the first calculations** of pi was carried out by **Greek mathematician Archimedes of Syracuse (287 B.C. to 212 B.C.)**.
  - The symbol  $\pi$  was devised by British mathematician William Jones in 1706.
- **Applications:** It is used in a wide variety of mathematical and scientific calculations, including **geometry, trigonometry, calculus**, and more.

### SHISHTACHAR SQUAD



Delhi Police has formed district-wise dedicated anti-eve-teasing squads (Shishtachar squads) across the national capital to check incidents of harassment and ensure the safety of women in public spaces.

- The Shishtachar Squad is an **anti-eve-teasing initiative** by Delhi Police aimed at improving women’s safety in public spaces.
- Inspired by **Uttar Pradesh’s Anti-Romeo Squads**, it adopts a multi-faceted approach involving prevention, intervention, and victim assistance.

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- Each district will form at least two squads, which will be supervised by the ACP Crime Against Women cell of the concerned district.

### Features:

- **Composition:** Each squad includes one inspector, one sub-inspector, five male officers, four female officers, and technical support from the **Anti-Auto Theft Squad**.
- **Area Identification:** The **district DCPs** shall identify and compile a list of hotspots and vulnerable areas, that pose risks to women's safety
- **Patrolling:** The squad will also routinely move around in vulnerable areas and conduct drives in **at least two vulnerable points every day**.
- **Surprise Checks:** **Plain-clothed officers** perform surprise checks in public transport and interact with DTC staff to encourage reporting of harassment cases.

### PM INTERNSHIP SCHEME

Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently launched a dedicated mobile application for the Prime Minister Internship Scheme and urged more companies to join the programme.



- PM Internship Scheme is a remarkable initiative launched by the Indian government, designed to provide **valuable internship opportunities for the youth** of India.
- It aims to provide young individuals aged **21-24 years** from low-income households with **12-month internship** opportunities in the country's top 500 companies.
- The pilot phase targets **25 lakh youth**, with a five-year goal to facilitate internships for one crore young individuals.
- These internships span 24 sectors, including oil, gas, energy, travel, hospitality, automotive, banking, and financial services.
- **Eligibility Criteria:**

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- Passed 10th, 12th, ITI, Polytechnic, or Diploma courses.
- Fresh graduates from non-premier institutions.
- Anyone from a household that includes a person who earned an income of Rs.8 lakh or less in a year.
- No family member has a government job.
- **Note:** Students from IITs, IIMs, National Law Universities, and individuals with professional degrees like CA, MBA, MBBS, etc., are excluded to promote inclusivity for underrepresented groups.
- The program, part of the larger vision for skill development and employment, aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world experience.

### RBI'S SARTHI AND PRAVAAH INITIATIVES

The Reserve Bank of India was recently selected for the UK's Digital Transformation Award 2025 for its tech innovations Sarthi and Pravaah systems.



- The Sarthi system, named after the Hindi word for 'charioteer', was launched in January 2023 to **digitise all of RBI's internal workflows**.
- It enables employees to securely store and share documents, improving record management and enhancing data analysis through reports and dashboards.
- The online Sarthi Pathshala ('school') helps users become familiar with the system, and the Pathshala was rolled out alongside extensive in-person training.
- Additionally, Sarthi mitras ('friends') are people in each RBI office who know the system well and can help colleagues with any issues.

#### About Pravaah Initiative:

- Building upon the foundation of Sarthi, the Pravaah system, meaning 'smooth flow' in Hindi, was introduced in May 2024.



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- This platform allows external users to submit regulatory applications digitally, seamlessly integrating with the Sarthi database for processing within RBI's offices.
- The transition to a fully digital infrastructure, supported by centralised cybersecurity and tracking mechanisms, has significantly improved transparency and efficiency.
- Pravaah's seamless integration with Sarthi has not only streamlined the submission process but also provided **real-time tracking and analytics** for both applicants and RBI managers, cutting down on the lengthy delays caused by paper-based systems.
- The RBI has seen an **80% increase in monthly applications since Pravaah's launch**, marking a significant achievement in the central bank's digital evolution.

### KANGER VALLEY NATIONAL PARK (KVNP)



Kanger Valley National Park (KVNP), which is located in the once Maoist-infested pocket of Bastar district in Chhattisgarh, has been recently included in the tentative list of Unesco world heritage sites under the 'Natural' category.

- It is located in Jagdalpur in the **Bastar district** of
- The national Park derives its name from the **Kanger River**, which flows centrally from the Northwest to the Southeast direction.
  - Kanger River is a **tributary of the Kolab River**, which ultimately joins the **Godavari**
- **Topography**: It features low flatlands, gentle slopes, steep inclines, plateaus, **deep gorges, valleys**, and winding stream courses.

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- **Tirthgarh Falls**, which originates from the Kanger River, presents an enchanting view falling from a height of 150 feet.
- The national park has more than 15 **limestone caves**, including the famous **Kotumsar, Kailash, and Dandak caves**.
- **Flora**: Blend of **mixed moist deciduous** type of forests with the predominance of **Sal, teak, and bamboo**.
- **Fauna**:
  - Major wild animals include **tigers, mouse deer, leopards, wildcat, sambar, chital, barking deer, langurs, jackals, rhesus macaque, flying squirrel, etc.**
  - The aerial fauna at the park consists of **common hill myna, red jungle fowl, spotted owlet, racket-tailed drongos, parrots, etc.**

### BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA (BCI)



The Bar Council of India (BCI) recently issued a strict warning against 'unethical' legal advertising and misleading social media promotions leading to professional misconduct by advocates.

- It is a **statutory body** created by Parliament to regulate and represent the Indian bar.
- It was established under the **Advocates Act, 1961**, based on the recommendations of the All India Bar Committee.
- Its main objective is **safeguarding the rights, interests, and privileges of advocates** throughout India.
- **Functions**:
  - It performs the **regulatory function** by **prescribing standards of professional conduct** and etiquette and by exercising **disciplinary jurisdiction** over the bar.
  - It also **sets standards for legal education** and **grants recognition to Universities** whose degrees in law will serve as qualification for enrolment as an advocate.

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- It conducts the All India Bar Examination (AIBE) to grant a 'Certificate of Practice' to advocates practising law in India.
- BCI also funds welfare schemes for economically weaker and physically handicapped advocates.
- It also recognizes on a reciprocal basis foreign qualifications in law obtained outside India for admission as an advocate under this Act.
- **Composition:**
  - It comprises members elected from each State Bar Council, the Attorney General of India, and the Solicitor of India, who serve as members automatically.
  - The members of the State Bar Councils are elected for five years.
  - The Council has the power to choose its own Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among its members, and they serve for two years.

### ELECTORAL REFORMS IN INDIA: CHALLENGES AND THE PATH FORWARD

#### The Need for Electoral Reforms:

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has initiated discussions with political parties to address concerns related to electoral transparency and voter integrity.
- Allegations of electoral roll manipulation, duplicate voter IDs, and EVM transparency have sparked fresh debates about the need for comprehensive electoral reforms.
- Additionally, issues such as unregulated election expenditures, criminalization of politics, and violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) continue to threaten the integrity of India's elections.
- Strengthening electoral laws is essential to maintaining free and fair elections, a fundamental aspect of India's democratic framework.

#### Proposed Electoral Reforms:

- Strengthening EVM and VVPAT Verification



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- The **sample size for VVPAT-EVM matching** should be determined scientifically, dividing states into regions.
  - If even one discrepancy is found, full VVPAT verification should be conducted in the affected region.
  - Introducing "Totaliser" machines, as recommended by the ECI in 2016, would aggregate votes from multiple EVMs, making it harder to manipulate results at the booth level.
  - **Preventing Electoral Roll Manipulation**
    - Linking Aadhaar to EPIC numbers could prevent duplicate registrations, but privacy concerns must be addressed through stakeholder consultations.
    - The ECI should conduct regular audits of voter lists and rectify anomalies before elections.
  - **Regulating Election Expenditure**
    - A legal cap on political party spending should be introduced.
    - Political parties should **disclose financial assistance to candidates**, ensuring expenditure remains within permissible limits.
  - **Addressing Criminalization of Politics**
    - **Political parties must strictly comply** with Supreme Court orders to **publicize candidates' criminal backgrounds**.
    - The ECI should have the power to **ban repeat offenders** from contesting elections.
  - **Strengthening the Model Code of Conduct (MCC)**
    - The ECI should be empowered to **revoke the "Star Campaigner" status** of leaders who repeatedly violate MCC rules.
    - Under **Paragraph 16A of the Symbols Order**, the ECI can **suspend or withdraw recognition of a political party** for severe MCC violations.
    - Strict implementation of **social media regulations** to prevent the spread of fake news and hate speech during elections.
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