



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 19, 2026

NATIONAL

➤ **Small Hydro Power Scheme**

- ✓ The Union Cabinet has approved the Small Hydro Power Scheme for 2026–31 with an outlay of ₹2584.6 crore to develop 1500 MW of clean energy across India.
- ✓ The scheme promotes decentralized hydropower projects (1–25 MW), focusing on North-East, hilly, and remote regions to tap untapped hydro potential sustainably.
- ✓ It offers financial incentives up to ₹3.6 crore per MW in special areas and aims to attract ₹15,000 crore investment while supporting domestic manufacturing.
- ✓ The initiative will boost renewable energy, generate employment, and drive rural development through eco-friendly power solutions.

➤ **New 'RISA' Brand**

- ✓ The Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched the premium brand “RISA: Timeless Tribal” on March 18, 2026, in New Delhi to promote tribal crafts globally.
- ✓ RISA is more than a brand; it is a movement to place tribal artisans and their craftsmanship at the heart of global fashion and lifestyle.
- ✓ RISA is a step towards preserving India’s cultural identity while ensuring economic empowerment, especially for tribal women and artisans.
- ✓ RISA: Past Forward – Inspired by the Past, Imagined for the Future.

INTERNATIONAL

- **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) expands to Srilanka**
- ✓ National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), expanded the acceptance of India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) across merchant establishments in Sri Lanka.
- ✓ The initiative aims to improve cross-border payment experiences for Indian tourists and further strengthen the longstanding economic and cultural ties between India and Sri Lanka.
- ✓ This new initiative will enable Indian tourists to make real-time account-to-account payments by scanning Lanka Quick Response (QR) codes through their preferred UPI-enabled mobile applications (apps).
- ✓ It is now operational in more than eight countries, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius, and Qatar.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- **First Sounding Rocket**
- ✓ Gujarat achieved a historic milestone in space research with the successful launch of its first sounding rocket at Dholera, reaching an altitude of approximately three kilometres.
- ✓ The single-stage sub-orbital rocket, developed by an Ahmedabad-based startup, carried a mini-satellite to collect essential weather data.
- ✓ The rocket's carbon fiber airframe was developed under the 'Make in India' initiative, with the launch authorised by IN-SPACe and supported by the Gujarat Spacetech Policy 2025-2030.

DEFENCE

- **IOS SAGAR 2026 Initiative**
- ✓ The Indian Navy launched the second edition of IOS SAGAR on March 16, 2026, to strengthen collaboration among 16 Indian Ocean Region nations.
- ✓ The initiative enables joint training and sailing onboard Indian naval ships, enhancing interoperability, trust, and coordination in maritime security.

- ✓ Aligned with SAGAR and MAHASAGAR visions, it promotes a safe, stable, and cooperative maritime environment across the region.
- ✓ The program highlights India's leadership after assuming IONS chairmanship and reinforces its role in regional security and defense diplomacy.

SPORTS

➤ World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026

- ✓ India topped the medal table at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026 in New Delhi, winning a total of 208 medals – 75 gold, 69 silver, and 64 bronze.
- ✓ Russia finished second with 35 medals, while Bosnia and Herzegovina placed third with three medals.
- ✓ The event featured 257 athletes from eight countries and served as the second stop of the 13th Grand Prix season, offering key classification opportunities ahead of the 2026 World Para Athletics Championships and 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics.

