UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 06-03-2026

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Geography

Salar de Pajonales

Scientists identified Salar de Pajonales as a Mars analogue site for astrobiological research.

• **Located at –** Atacama Desert, Chile.
• **Environment –** Incredibly dry, freezing salt flat, 3.5 km above sea level, blasted by ultraviolet (UV) radiation.
• **Significance –** Close replica of *Mars-like environment.*
• **Key finding –** *Gypsum ($CaSO_4 \cdot 2H_2O$),* present on *both Earth and Mars*, and its role in supporting and preserving life through *stromatolites.*
  - Living microbes were found just beneath gypsum surfaces, where translucence allows light in but *blocks harmful radiation and retains moisture.*
  - Deeper layers *contained fossils and chemical traces* of ancient microbes, preserved by gypsum.

Stromatolites

• Stromatolites (*Greek for "layered rock")* are microbial reefs formed by cyanobacteria.
• **Formation –** Built through sediment trapping, binding, and mineral precipitation by microbial communities.
• **Structure –**
  - Microbes remain active on the surface layer.
  - The deeper layers are lithified remnants of past microbial activity, effectively serving as trace fossils of ancient life.

Hydroxyl Megamaser

Astronomers using the MeerKAT telescope found the most distant hydroxyl (OH) maser ever detected.

• **Hydroxyl Megamaser**
  - A giant, naturally occurring laser in space.
  - Unlike visible-light lasers, it amplifies *microwave/radio waves.*
  - "Hydroxyl" refers to the OH molecule (oxygen + hydrogen).
• **Formation –**
  - Found in gas clouds of distant galaxies.
  - Triggered by
    ■ Galaxy collisions.
    ■ Intense star formation.
    ■ Feeding of supermassive black holes.
  - Massive infrared energy excites hydroxyl molecules, pushing them into high-energy states.
  - As molecules return to lower energy, they emit a powerful, amplified beam of radio waves.
  - Amplified radio beams millions of times brighter than ordinary masers.
  - These beams act as cosmic beacons, shining through dust that hides galaxies.

Polity & Governance

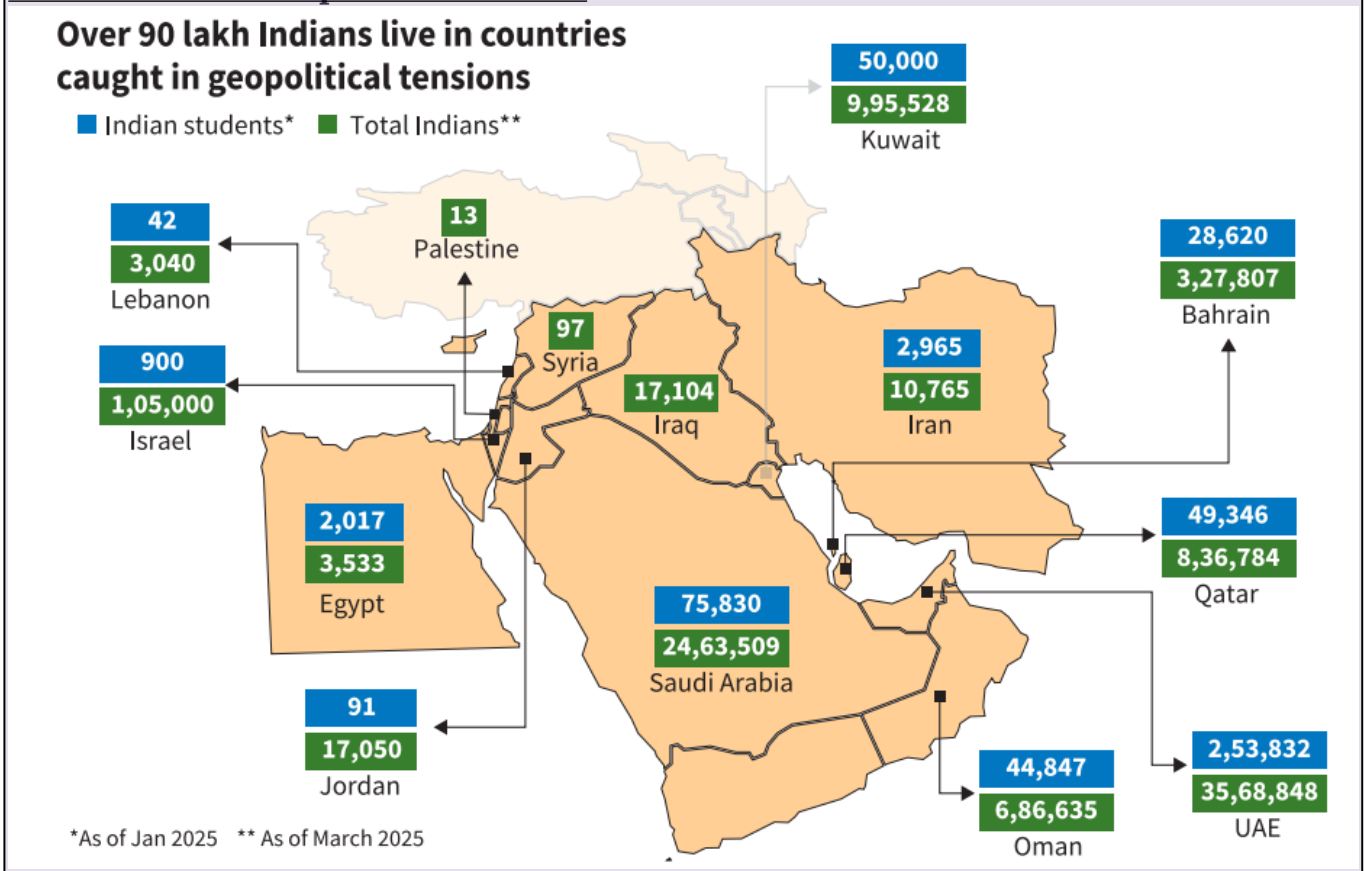
Free LPG Cylinder Scheme

President to launch two Delhi government schemes 'Pink National Common Mobility Card' and a free LPG cylinder scheme.

• **Aim –** To provide 2 free LPG cylinders annually to all ration card holding families.
• **Launched under –** Sashakt Nari, Samriddh Delhi (Empowered Woman, Prosperous Delhi).
• **Implementation through –** Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of cylinder cost to the Aadhaar-linked bank account of the family head.
• **Significance –** It promotes women's empowerment and welfare.

International Relations and Issues

Indians in Gulf Cooperation Council



Environmental Cooperation

• **Renew of MoU between –** India and Finland.
• **Scope of collaboration –** To provides a structured framework for cooperation on:
- Pollution control (air, water, soil remediation).
- Waste management (hazardous waste, recycling, waste-to-energy).
- Circular economy & low-carbon solutions.
- Climate change mitigation & adaptation.
- Environmental and forest monitoring (including data management).
- Marine, coastal, and water resource conservation.

Economy

SEBI's Tech-Driven Market Regulation

• **Enhanced Surveillance & Enforcement –** Leveraging technology to crack down on market manipulators and cyberfraudsters.
• **AI for Investor Awareness –** Expanding the reach of education programs.
• **SEBI Check Tool -**
  - Integrated into UPI interface.
  - Identifies registered intermediaries before payment.
  - Designed to curb fraudulent brokers/traders promising unrealistic gains.
• **AI Campaign –** Pilot with SARVAM (Bengaluru-based AI firm) reaching 3.85 lakh people via multilingual calls about SEBI Check.

Census-2027

Union Home Minister unveiled mascots Pragati (female) and Vikas (male), along with 4 digital tools in New Delhi.

• World's largest census exercise.
• **Conducted in –** 2 phases with over 30 lakh officials involved.
• **Digitalization –**
  - For the 1st time, the census will be carried out digitally.
  - **Self-Enumeration option introduced —** Secure online submission in 16 languages before door-to-door survey.
• **4 Digital Tools**
  - **HLBC Web Application –** Creates houselisting blocks using satellite imagery.
  - **HLO Mobile App –** Offline app for enumerators to collect/upload houselisting data in 16 languages.
  - **Self-Enumeration Portal –** Secure web facility for households to submit data online; generates unique SE ID for verification.
  - **CMMS Portal –** Centralized platform to plan, manage, and monitor census activities with real-time dashboards.

Agriculture

Coconut Promotion Scheme

• **Announced in –** Budget 2026-27.
• **Objectives –** To improve productivity by rejuvenating old, non-productive gardens with high yielding coconut varieties.
  - To establish new plantations along the coast.
• **Similar schemes –** Already implemented by Coconut Development Board (CDB).
  - **Aim –** Helped rejuvenate old gardens and expand cultivation into non-traditional regions like *Gujarat, Assam and other non-peninsular regions*, partly offsetting disease-driven losses in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Indian's Coconut Position

• India is the *largest producer and consumer of coconuts.*
• **Price Gap –** Domestic coconut and tender coconut prices are much higher than international market levels.
• **High Productivity –** Despite this, India's per palm productivity already exceeds that of *Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Indonesia.*
• **Trend –** Domestic price of coconut has increased 3x since 2024.
• **Example –** In Anaimalai, Tamil Nadu, dwarf × tall hybrid palms yield an impressive 250–300 tender coconuts per tree.