



March 20, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. The European Union has condemned Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, accusing him of blocking the provision of financial aid to Ukraine.

(i) Ukraine has been engaged in a war with Russia for over four years. Against this backdrop, the European Union—comprising 27 member states—decided last December to provide financial assistance to Ukraine's defense forces for the next two years.

(ii) Hungary, a member state, had also consented to this European Union decision prior to its formal adoption. However, the Union now alleges that the country's Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, is currently obstructing the delivery of this financial aid to Ukraine.

(iii) Last January, the Druzhba pipeline—which transports crude oil from Russia to Hungary and Slovakia via Ukrainian territory—sustained damage. Consequently, the supply of crude oil to Hungary was disrupted. Ukraine alleged that the damage was caused by an attack carried out by Russian drones on the Druzhba pipeline. However, Viktor Orbán countered by accusing Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of orchestrating a plot to cut off the supply of Russian crude oil to Hungary. Following this incident, Orbán expressed his opposition to the European Union providing financial assistance to Ukraine's defense forces.

(iv) With general elections scheduled to take place in Hungary on April 12, Viktor Orbán has launched a campaign portraying Zelenskyy as a threat to Hungary.

(v) Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo and Austrian Prime Minister Christian Stocker, condemning Viktor Orbán's actions, criticized him by stating: "At a time when hundreds of thousands of people in Ukraine are suffering, Viktor Orbán is attempting to block an already agreed-upon financial aid package in order to secure re-election. This is unacceptable."

2. Atanu Chakraborty, the Non-Executive, Part-time Chairman of HDFC Bank—the country's largest private sector bank—has abruptly resigned from his post.

(i) Having assumed this responsibility in May 2021, his decision to step down citing ethical conflicts—prior to the completion of his tenure—has created a stir. Following his resignation, Keki Mistry has been appointed as the Interim Chairman.

(ii) In a letter addressed to the Bank's Board of Directors regarding his resignation, Atanu Chakraborty stated that certain events and practices within the bank over the past two years were at odds with his personal values and moral principles.

(iii) He clarified that these policy-related differences were the sole reason behind his decision, and that his resignation was devoid of any ulterior motives concerning the bank's operations.

3. India will host the World Indoor Athletics Championships for the first time in 2028 in Bhubaneswar.

4. Argentine football star Lionel Messi has become the fastest to reach 900 goals in his football career. He has scored 900 goals in 1,142 matches. It is worth remembering that Portuguese star Cristiano Ronaldo reached the milestone in 1,236 matches.



5. The Senegal national team has announced that it intends to file an appeal with the Court of Arbitration for Sport against the decision to strip them off the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) football championship title and award it to the Moroccan team.

(i) AFCON is a biennial tournament contested by national football teams from African countries. In this context, the 35th edition of the AFCON tournament commenced last December and concluded in January.

(ii) In the final match held on January 18, Senegal defeated Morocco with a score of 1–0 to emerge as champions. The championship trophy was subsequently presented to the team.

(iii) However, the Appeals Committee of the Confederation of African Football—which had been investigating a controversy regarding a penalty kick during the final match—ruled that the championship title awarded to Senegal be revoked and the victory trophy be handed over to Morocco.

(iv) Consequently, Senegal has stated that it will file an international appeal against this decision with the Court of Arbitration for Sport, based in Switzerland.

6. On Ugadi—the Telugu New Year—Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu announced a State Population Management Policy featuring various new initiatives aimed at boosting the population, including an incentive of ₹25,000 for families with two or three children.

(i) Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister stated that efforts are also being undertaken to revitalize the joint family system, with the dual objectives of ensuring better care for the elderly and enhancing social stability.

(ii) Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu made this announcement while addressing the official Ugadi celebrations organized by the government in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. During his address, he observed:

- The declining birth rate coupled with the rising number of elderly people is emerging as a critical global issue. This trend has now begun to manifest in South India as well.
- The continued decline in the young demographic will, in the future, lead to reduced human participation in the workforce, thereby paving the way for the dominance of machines and automation.

7. India has secured the 116th position in the list of the world's happiest countries. Having stood at the 118th position last year, India has now advanced to the 116th spot.

(i) According to this ranking, India lags behind its neighboring countries.

(ii) The list of the happiest countries for the current year was released to mark the observance of the International Day of Happiness on March 20.

(iii) This list was published by the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford (UK), in collaboration with the U.S.-based Gallup organization and the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

(iv) Finland Takes the Top Spot:-

- Finland has retained the top position for the ninth consecutive year in this ranking, which was

compiled based on an analysis of data across various factors—including average per capita GDP, freedom, generosity, healthy life expectancy, and the absence of corruption in governance.

- The countries occupying positions 2 through 10 are Iceland, Denmark, Costa Rica, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Israel, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. The United States is ranked 23rd.
- India holds the 116th position in this list.
- India was ranked 118th last year, and 126th in 2024.

(v) 'Indians Are Hopeful':-

Commenting on Finland's continued status as the world's happiest nation, Kimmo Lähdevirta—Finland's Ambassador to India—stated, "Finland continues to hold the top spot in the global happiness index due to long-term development and social trust. While Finland is a happy nation, Indians are the most hopeful people in the world. The hopefulness of Indians and the happiness of the Finnish people can successfully converge in various ways."

vi) Afghanistan: The World's Unhappiest Country:-

- Our neighboring country, Afghanistan, continues to occupy the last position (147) on the list, bearing the label of the world's unhappiest country.

8. Importance of forests :-

(i) Chronological Timeline and Global Recognition

- 1971: The 16th European Agricultural Conference first decided to observe March 21 as "Forest Day" to raise awareness about importance of forest.
- 2012: The United Nations (UN) mandated that March 21 be observed globally every year as "World Forestry Day".
- 2022: The Tamil Nadu Government launched the "Green Tamil Nadu Mission" with the ambitious target of planting 265 crore saplings over 12,000 sq. km. to enhance green cover.
- 2024–2026: In the last two years, officials have successfully planted 30 lakh traditional tree saplings under the Green Tamil Nadu Mission.
- 2026 (Current): The theme for this year's World Forestry Day is "Forests and Economy".
- 2030 (Future Target): A call has been made for a collective global effort to increase forest cover significantly by 2030 through the "One Human – One Tree" initiative.

(ii) Causes of Forest Depletion :-

Several human-led factors contributing to the rapid destruction of forests:-

- Infrastructure Expansion: Trees are being cleared extensively for road and railway expansion projects.
- Urbanization: Fertile agricultural and forest lands are being converted into residential areas.
- Industrial Greed: Human greed has led to the occupation of elephant corridors and the construction of resorts in sensitive ecological zones.
- Exploitation: Wildlife and forest resources are targeted for medicine, ornamental items, and illegal hunting.
- Natural Disasters: Forest fires continue to be a major cause of sudden and massive loss of tree cover.



(iii) Consequences of Destruction of forests :-

The loss of forests leads to severe ecological and economic impacts:

- **Loss of Free Oxygen:** A human breathes oxygen worth roughly ₹2,100 daily (equivalent to three cylinders). Over a 60-year life, trees provide ₹4 crore worth of oxygen for free; destroying them removes this vital life support.
- **Natural Disasters:** Without tree roots to grip the soil, rain leads to soil erosion, landslides, and devastating floods.
- **Biodiversity Loss:** Forests are the primary habitat for animals, birds, and insects. Their destruction is pushing numerous species toward extinction.
- **Economic Hardship:** Tribal and rural populations lose their primary livelihoods (wood, medicinal herbs, honey) when forests perish.

(iv) Remedies and Solutions

- **The 1:10 Ratio:** International forestry standards dictate that for every one tree cut, ten must be planted.
- **Individual Action:** Every citizen is urged to adopt the "One Human – One Tree" philosophy, planting and maintaining at least one tree to ensure a green earth for future generations.
- **Preservation:** Beyond planting new saplings, the need to protect and maintain existing trees should be emphasised rather than just focusing on new numbers.

(v) Government Steps and Initiatives :-

- **National Missions:** The Central Government is implementing the "Green India Mission," the National Forest Growth Plan, and specific strategies to prevent desertification.
- **State Missions (Tamil Nadu):** The Green Tamil Nadu Mission involves a collaboration between the Forest Department, private companies, NGOs, and individual volunteers to reach its 265-crore sapling goal.
- **Species-Specific Conservation:** A conservation center for the Nilgiri Tahr has been established by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department in Gandhipuram, Coimbatore district.
- **Legislative Standards:** The UN standard is cited, stating that one-third of a country's land area must be forest to maintain natural balance, a target the Government is striving toward.