



NAMAN SHARMA
IAS ACADEMY

Daily **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

 March 07th, 2026



 **Offline Centre Location:**
SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh



Index

- 1. U.S. 'allows' India to buy Russian oil for 30 days**
- 2. Karnataka, A.P. plan social media ban for children**
- 3. India denies assisting U.S. Navy in attack on Iran's ship IRIS Dena**
- 4. Rights, justice, action for India's women farmers**
- 5. Balancing innovation with women's digital safety**

1. U.S. 'allows' India to buy Russian oil for 30 days

Why in the News?

The U.S. Treasury Department issued a 30-day reprieve allowing India to import Russian oil. This decision is significant because it comes amid a global energy crisis triggered by Iran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, which has constrained supplies and spiked oil prices. The move highlights the strategic energy partnership between the U.S. and India, even as Washington seeks to limit financial flows to Moscow.



Background

India is heavily dependent on oil imports, with over 55% of its crude passing through the Strait of Hormuz. Historically, India diversified its energy basket by increasing imports from Russia, which peaked at 43% in July 2024. However, by January 2026, Russia's share in Indian oil imports had fallen to 19.3%-the lowest in 44 months-partly due to U.S. pressure and shifting trade dynamics. Concurrently, India has been ramping up purchases of U.S. oil, which rose by 32% in the current financial year.

Feature

The key feature of this development is its temporary and conditional nature:

- Duration: It is a short-term, 30-day authorisation.
- Scope: It only covers oil shipments already "stranded at sea," ensuring minimal financial benefit to the Russian government.

- Strategic Intent: U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent framed it as a measure to counteract Iran's "energy hostage" situation, while also nudging India to increase future purchases of American oil.

Challenge

Despite the U.S. reprieve, India faces several pressing challenges:

- **Loss of Discounts:** Government sources indicate Russian oil may no longer be available at a discount due to competition from China.
- **Economic Strain:** With Brent crude nearing \$88 a barrel, India's monthly oil bill stands at \$11.5 billion. Analysts warn that if prices breach \$90, it could widen the Current Account Deficit (CAD) to 1.4% of GDP and depreciate the rupee to ₹95 against the dollar.
- **Supply Chain Vulnerability:** Although India has 25 days of reserves, the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz threatens the steady flow of West Asian crude, which remains a major part of India's energy mix.
- **Geopolitical Pressure:** India must balance its long-term energy security with U.S. expectations to cut Russian imports and buy more American oil.

Way Forward

To navigate this crisis, India is likely to pursue a multi-pronged strategy:

- **Diversification:** Continue increasing oil imports from the U.S. and other stable regions to reduce dependence on volatile West Asian routes.
- **Strategic Reserves:** Utilise the existing 25-day crude reserves as a buffer while securing alternative supply chains.
- **Diplomatic Engagement:** Leverage its status as an "essential partner" of the U.S. to negotiate favourable terms and ensure energy security without alienating either major power.
- **Market Adaptation:** Indian refiners are already sourcing more crude from other global markets to compensate for supplies stuck in the Strait of Hormuz.

Conclusion

The U.S. 30-day waiver for Russian oil imports provides India with temporary relief from an acute energy supply shock caused by the Iran-backed blockade. However, it underscores the fragility of global energy markets and India's vulnerability as a major importer. While the move strengthens near-term energy security, the long-term solution lies in further diversifying energy sources and strengthening strategic partnerships—balancing ties with both the U.S. and other global suppliers to ensure stable and affordable energy.

2. Karnataka, A.P. plan social media ban for children

Why in the News

The state governments of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have announced plans to ban social media for children to mitigate the adverse effects of excessive mobile phone and internet usage. Karnataka proposes a ban for children under 16, while Andhra Pradesh plans to prohibit access for those below 13 within the next 90 days. This move places South Indian states in alignment with a growing global trend, following Australia's recent legislation on the matter.

Background

The issue gained traction in Karnataka when Chief Minister Siddaramaiah proposed a mobile ban for schoolchildren during a meeting with State university Vice-Chancellors. Following public debate, the proposal was formalised in the State Budget. Andhra Pradesh, under Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, is moving forward with a similar but age-differentiated policy. These developments occur against the backdrop of increasing concern over the psychological and social impact of digital media on minors, and follow Australia's landmark law passed in December 2025 banning social media for under-16s.

Feature

The key features of these proposed regulations include:

- **Age Thresholds:** Karnataka aims to restrict children under 16, whereas Andhra Pradesh has set a lower threshold of 13, with potential regulations for the 13–16 demographic still under examination.
- **Implementation Timeline:** Andhra Pradesh has a concrete timeline, aiming to enforce the ban within 90 days. Karnataka has yet to announce a roadmap.
- **Legislative Context:** The move echoes Australia's strict model, which imposes penalties of up to \$32 million on platforms for serious and repeated violations.
- **Political Dialogue:** Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh welcomed Karnataka's decision as a form of policy endorsement, suggesting a competitive yet cooperative dynamic between the two states on child safety.



Challenge

Implementing such bans presents several significant challenges:

- **Enforcement Feasibility:** Experts are divided on how a blanket ban can be technically enforced without invasive surveillance or compromising privacy.
- **Age Verification:** Reliably verifying the age of users online remains a complex technical and legal hurdle.
- **Stakeholder Consensus:** There is an ongoing public debate with no clear consensus among parents, educators, and digital rights experts regarding the efficacy and desirability of a total ban.

- **Platform Compliance:** Social media companies may resist or struggle to implement geo-specific age restrictions for sub-national jurisdictions like states within India.

Way Forward

To make these policies effective and balanced, the states will likely need to:

- **Develop Clear Roadmaps:** Karnataka must outline a detailed implementation strategy, including technological and legal frameworks.
- **Consult Experts:** Engage with child psychologists, digital rights activists, and technology firms to design rules that protect children without stifling their digital literacy.
- **Coordinate Centrally:** Work with the Central government to ensure that state-level bans do not conflict with national IT laws and that enforcement mechanisms are uniform.
- **Complement with Education:** Pair the ban with digital literacy programs in schools to teach safe internet habits, as a ban alone may not be a long-term solution.

Conclusion

The proposed social media bans in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh represent a proactive, albeit contentious, step toward safeguarding children's mental health and well-being in the digital age. Inspired by international precedents like Australia, the move reignites the debate on balancing online freedom with protection. While the intent is widely supported, the success of these measures will depend on the practicality of enforcement, consensus among stakeholders, and the ability to adapt to rapidly evolving digital landscapes.

3. India denies assisting U.S. Navy in attack on Iran's ship IRIS Dena

Why in the News?

India officially denied reports that it assisted the U.S. Navy in targeting the Iranian warship IRIS Dena. The vessel was sunk by a U.S. submarine on March 4 in international waters off the coast of Sri Lanka. The denial comes amid concerns over India's strategic autonomy and its bilateral defence agreements with the United States, especially since the Iranian ship had just participated in a multilateral naval exercise hosted by India.

Background

The IRIS Dena was returning home after taking part in the multinational exercise 'Milan,' hosted by India, when it was attacked by a U.S. Navy submarine. Following the incident, reports emerged suggesting that India may have provided logistical or intelligence assistance to the U.S. under existing defence pacts. This prompted a clarification from Indian naval officials, who emphasised that no such assistance was provided or requested. The incident occurs within the context of the India-U.S. defence relationship, which is governed by foundational agreements like LEMOA (2016) and COMCASA (2018).

Feature

The key features of this development include:

- **Official Denial:** A top Indian naval officer termed reports of Indian assistance as "baseless."
- **No Request Made:** India clarified that Washington did not seek any logistical assistance in relation to the Iranian vessel.
- **Clarification on Defence Pacts:** Officials stressed that agreements like LEMOA and COMCASA are not automatic. They operate on a case-by-case basis with mutual consent and do not constitute a military alliance.
- **Context of the Attack:** The attack occurred shortly after the IRIS Dena participated in India's 'Milan' exercise, adding a layer of diplomatic sensitivity to the incident.

Challenge

The situation presents several diplomatic and strategic challenges for India:

- **Strategic Autonomy vs. Partnership:** India must balance its deepening defence partnership with the U.S. while maintaining its independent foreign policy and historical ties with Iran.
- **Perception Management:** The incident could create a perception that India is aligning too closely with U.S. military actions, potentially straining relations with Tehran.
- **Ambiguity of Agreements:** The case highlights the potential for public misunderstanding regarding the scope and application of foundational defence agreements like LEMOA and COMCASA.
- **Regional Stability:** The targeting of a vessel that recently participated in an Indian-hosted exercise near Sri Lankan waters complicates regional maritime security dynamics.

Way Forward

To navigate this sensitive situation, India is likely to pursue the following steps:

- **Diplomatic Reassurance:** Engage with Iranian authorities to clarify India's position and reaffirm that its defence pacts with the U.S. do not imply hostility toward Iran.
- **Transparent Communication:** Continue to publicly emphasise the non-binding, case-by-case nature of logistical agreements to dispel misconceptions about a formal military alliance.
- **Strengthen Policy Framework:** Ensure that internal protocols governing requests under LEMOA/COMCASA are robust and aligned with India's strategic interests.
- **Maintain Strategic Balance:** Reaffirm India's commitment to multi-alignment by continuing independent defence engagements, such as the 'Milan' exercise, which includes diverse participants like Iran.

Conclusion

India's swift and unequivocal denial of involvement in the U.S. attack on the IRIS Dena underscores its commitment to strategic autonomy. While foundational agreements like LEMOA and COMCASA enhance interoperability with the U.S., New Delhi has made it clear that these are tools of convenience, not compulsion. The incident serves as a critical reminder that India's defence partnerships are carefully calibrated to serve its national interests without compromising its non-aligned legacy or its relationships with other key players like Iran.

4. Rights, justice, action for India's women farmers

Why in the News?

This article is published in the context of International Women's Day (March 8, 2026) and the observance of 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer. It highlights the persistent gap between India's legal frameworks and the on-ground reality for women in agriculture, calling for urgent action to secure their rights, visibility, and well-being.

Background

Despite legal reforms such as equal inheritance rights for daughters, women in rural India remain largely invisible in agricultural policy. Land records are predominantly in men's names due to social norms, patrilineal customs, and administrative hurdles. As men migrate to urban areas, agriculture is rapidly "feminising," with women taking on greater responsibility for cultivation and food

provisioning. However, this increased role has not been accompanied by formal recognition, land rights, or access to resources.

Feature

The central argument of the piece is the structural disconnect between women's substantial contributions to agri-food systems and their lack of formal recognition as "farmers." **Key features of this disparity include:**

- **Invisibility in Data:** Women are excluded from land records, making them ineligible for credit, insurance, subsidies, and extension services.
- **Health and Nutrition Burden:** Despite feeding the nation, women farmers face high rates of anaemia, micronutrient deficiency, and drudgery-related health issues.
- **Intergenerational Impact:** Maternal undernutrition leads to low birth weight and stunting in children, perpetuating a cycle of malnutrition.
- **Limited Legal Reach:** The National Food Security Act and other entitlements often fail to reach women due to bureaucratic barriers and a lack of gender-sensitive design.



Challenge

The article identifies several systemic challenges that prevent progress:

- **Land Insecurity:** Without formal titles, women cannot access institutional credit or government schemes tied to asset ownership.
- **Work Burden Without Support:** Women face a "double burden" of productive farm work and reproductive household duties, exacerbated by a lack of labour-saving technologies.
- **Nutritional Paradox:** Women who grow food are often the most malnourished due to cereal-centric diets and limited access to diverse, nutrient-rich foods.
- **Digital and Administrative Exclusion:** Digitalisation of services risks excluding women with poor connectivity, documentation, or digital literacy.
- **Piecemeal Programmes:** Policies like the Public Distribution System remain fragmented and fail to integrate pulses, millets, and other nutrient-dense foods effectively.

Way Forward

Drawing from the work of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), the author outlines four priorities for action:

- **Visibility in Law and Data:** Implement the National Policy for Farmers' definition of a "farmer" (based on activity, not land ownership) and collect gender-disaggregated data to inform policy.
- **Strengthen Land and Resource Rights:** Accelerate joint spousal titling, enforce inheritance laws, and incentivise land registration in women's names. Strengthen women's collectives for collective bargaining.
- **Align Food Systems with Nutrition:** Promote cultivation of millets, pulses, and vegetables by women farmers and ensure their distribution through PDS, Anganwadis, and school meals. Support kitchen gardens and seed banks.
- **Provide Technology and Extension Services:** Ensure women have access to labour-saving tools, timely information, training, and market insights to reduce drudgery and enhance decision-making.

Conclusion

The article concludes that empowering women farmers is not merely a matter of equity but a prerequisite for building a resilient, nourished, and sustainable India. As agriculture feminises, recognising women as farmers, securing their rights to land and resources, and aligning food systems with nutritional goals are essential steps. The call for "Rights. Justice. Action." must translate into concrete policy shifts that enable women to move from being invisible labourers to visible, empowered decision-makers in the agri-food system.

5. Balancing innovation with women's digital safety

Why in the News?

This article is published in the context of International Women's Day 2026 (March 8) and follows the India AI Impact Summit 2026. It addresses the urgent need to prioritise women's digital safety amid the rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into daily life. The piece highlights the paradox of technological advancement coexisting with rising online threats like deepfakes and non-consensual imagery, specifically targeting women.

Background

As India deepens its engagement with AI, the digital landscape has become a new frontier of gender-based violence. Statistics indicate that between 16% and 58% of women have faced online harassment. Unlike physical violence, where women can take some precautionary measures, digital abuse is harder to escape due to technology's pervasiveness and the anonymity it affords perpetrators. The recent misuse of tools like Grok AI to generate sexualised deepfakes of women without consent underscores the gravity of the problem.

Feature

The core argument of the piece is that ethical AI development must be intrinsically linked to women's digital safety. The author identifies three key dimensions of this issue:

- The Deepfake Epidemic: AI-generated altered images and videos are being used to humiliate and abuse women, with traditional social restraints dissolving behind online anonymity.
- Lack of Representation: Women make up only 22% of AI professionals and less than 14% of senior roles. This homogeneity in development teams means that the unique lived experiences and safety concerns of women are not "baked into" the technology.
- Regulatory Response: The Indian government has introduced a notification requiring online intermediaries to remove deepfake reports within three hours, signalling a move toward stronger accountability.

Challenge

The article outlines several significant challenges in ensuring women's digital safety:

- Anonymity and Scale: The digital world allows abuse to cross geographical boundaries, making it difficult for victims to identify perpetrators or seek recourse.
- Under-Representation in Tech: With few women in AI development, the theoretical foundations and applications of technology often overlook gender-specific harms.
- Implementation Gaps: While Indian laws attempt to address online abuse, enforcement is far from prompt, and the new takedown guidelines face criticism and require robust review.
- Youth Vulnerability: With one in three internet users being children, the next generation is exposed to AI misuse without adequate sensitisation or digital literacy.



Way Forward

To balance innovation with safety, the author proposes a multi-pronged strategy:

- Diverse Development Teams: Increase the representation of women and diverse voices in AI research and development to ensure that technology is shaped by varied lived experiences, making it inherently safer and more inclusive.
- Stronger Enforcement: Move beyond legislation to ensure prompt investigation and action against unethical AI use. The three-hour takedown rule for deepfakes is a step, but it must be backed by rigorous implementation.
- Grassroots Education: Integrate digital safety into elementary education. Children and young adults must be sensitised to AI misuse as seriously as they are to physical and sexual abuse, fostering a generation that respects consent online.

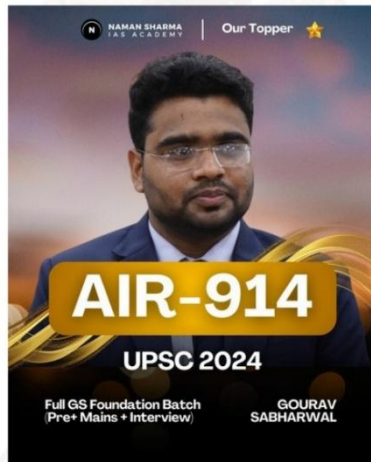
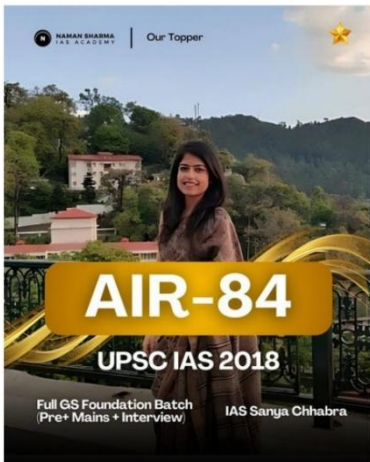
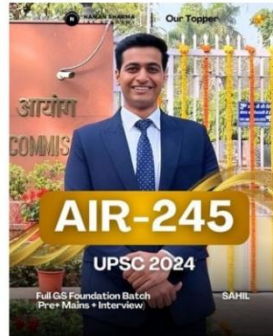
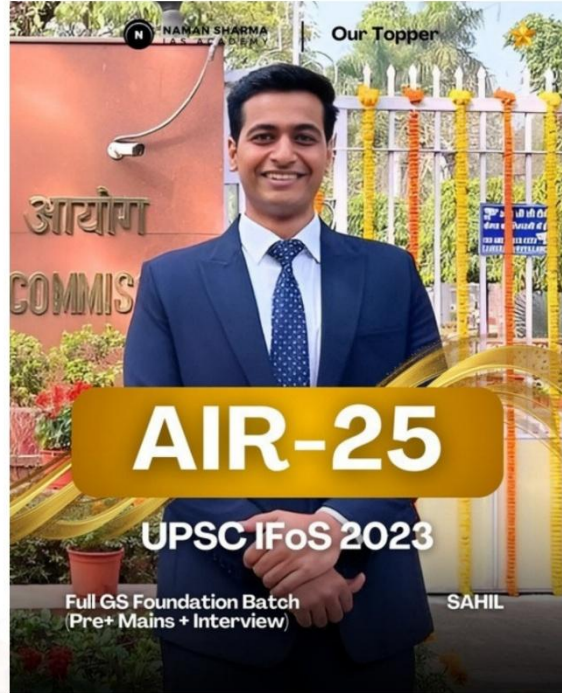
- Resistance is Futile, Regulation is Key: Acknowledge that AI integration is inevitable. Therefore, the focus must be on guiding its development with ethical guardrails rather than resisting the technology itself.

Conclusion

The article concludes that on International Women's Day 2026, the conversation around AI must pivot from pure innovation to inclusive innovation. Women cannot be left to bear the brunt of technological advancement. Ensuring digital safety is not a secondary concern but a foundational principle that must guide AI development. By diversifying the teams building AI, strengthening legal responses, and educating the young, India can work toward a digital future where women are not just users but equal and protected stakeholders in the technological landscape.



Our Recent Toppers



WhatsApp Now +91-843-768-6541



Offline Centre Location: SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh

Admissions Now Open!



**Saarthi for
UPSC 2027/28**

- ✓ 1/2/3 Years Course with Lifetime access
- ✓ Inclusive of Crash Course + Test Series
- ✓ Full Prelims + Mains
- ✓ Offline + Online + Hybrid Mode

Enroll Now

+91-8437686541
www.namaniasacademy.com

Enroll
in just **₹2000**

- Mode: Offline/Hybrid/Online
- Medium: Hinglish (Notes in English)
- Timings:

Morning: 9 AM - 1 PM

Evening: 4 PM - 8 PM

Enrollment Process:

- Visit Our Website: **Naman IAS Academy**
- Call us at **+91-843-768-6541**
for Free Seminar

Free UPSC seminar

Saturday, 4PM



Offline Centre Location: SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh