

# CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

(Contents)

S.no	Topics	Page. No
1	Awards and Honours	2
2	Appointments	4
3	Banking & Finance	7
4	Indian Affairs	11
5	State Related Affairs	30
6	International Affairs	36
7	Foreign Relation	41
8	Ranks	43
9	Business related Affairs	45
10	Defence News	48
11	Science and Technology	49
12	Sports	53
13	Obituary	54
14	Important Days	55

# CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

## Awards and Honours

Name of the Recipient	Award Name	Extra Information
Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal	Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee award	The External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Speaker of People's Majlis of Maldives Mohamed Nasheed at the 6th India Ideas Conclave in Gujarat conferred the award.
Gaurav Gill	FMSCI Awards	Rally driver Gaurav Gill took home a special award at the Federation of Motor Sports Club of India (FMSCI) Awards.
One plus 7T pro	Best Smartphone of 2019	Global telecom industry body GSM Association (GSMA) declared OnePlus 7T Pro the Best Smartphone of 2019 at Global Mobile Awards for 2020.
Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh	'Greatest Leader of All Time'	The 19th century Sikh Empire ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh has been named the "Greatest Leader of All Time" in a poll conducted by 'BBC World Histories Magazine'.
Indira Gandhi	TIME magazine's 'Women of the Year' for 1976	The profile said that in 1976, Gandhi, "Empress of India" had become India's great authoritarian."
PV Sindhu	BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award	Shuttler PV Sindhu has won the inaugural BCC 'Indian Sportswoman of the Year' award. "We have to believe in ourselves. soon there will be more Indian sportswomen winning medals for the country.
Mr. Rajesh Chaplot	Highest Civilian Award of Uganda	None other than His Excellency Hon'ble President of Uganda, Mr Yoweri Museveni in a ceremony in Kampala recently, presented the award.
Paramananda Majumder	Moghai Ojah award	He awarded for his significant role in raising issues of public interest and society's betterment.
Rohini Mohan and Arfa Khanum Sherwani	Chameli Devi Jain Award for outstanding woman journalists	The 2019 Chameli Devi Jain Award for Outstanding Women Mediaperson for the year has been awarded to independent journalist Rohini

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

		Mohan and The Wire's Arfa Khanum Sherwani.
Prachi Salve, Pradeep Dwivedi	2019 Road Safety Media Fellowship award	The award recognized their contribution towards reporting on road safety by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS). A three-member jury selected the awardees.
Furstenberg and Margulis	2020 Abel Prize	For pioneering the use of methods from probability and dynamics in group theory, number theory and combinatorics".

# CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

## Appointments

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Extra Information</b>
Former India hockey star and Olympic bronze medallist	Malaysia's prime minister	Dressed in a traditional black outfit, the 72-year-old took the oath of office during an elaborate ceremony. His wife, Noorainee Abdul Rahman, accompanied him.
Seema Verma	Key member of US COVID-19 task force	Indian-American Seema Verma has been appointed as one of the key members of the White House Coronavirus Task Force constituted by US President Donald Trump
Ajay Bhushan Pandey	Finance Secretary	Government of India appointed the current Revenue Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey as the new Finance Secretary. Pandey replaces current Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar.
Sunil Joshi	BCCI selection committee chairman	Former India spinner Sunil Joshi was named chairperson of the national selection panel by the BCCI's Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC).
Sanjeev Nautiyal	MD & CEO – SBI Life	SBI Life Insurance on March 4 said it has re-appointed Sanjeev Nautiyal as managing director and chief executive officer of the company.
Kareena Kapoor	PUMA - brand ambassador	The brand aims to ignite a stronger women's narrative in India through their association with Kareena.
Bimal Julka	Chief Information Commissioner	Chief Information Commission had been functioning without a head after Sudhir Bhargava retired on January 11 and is at a reduced strength of six information commissioners.
Amita Pandove	Information Commissioner of CIC	Smt Amita Pandove sworn in as the Information Commissioner, Central Information Commission (CIC). The Chief Information Commissioner, Shri Bimal Julka, administered the oath of office.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

K.M. Mammen	Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA) – chief	Tyre major MRF's chairperson and managing director K.M. Mammen has been unanimously re-elected chairman of the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA).
Chalasanani Venkat Nageswar	Additional charge of deputy MD, CFO of SBI	State Bank of India said Chalasanani Venkat Nageswar has given additional charge of deputy managing director and chief financial officer (CFO) of the bank.
Eric Horvitz	CSO of Microsoft	Microsoft has appointed Eric Horvitz as its first-ever Chief Scientific Officer (CSO). He will provide cross-company leadership on advances and trends on scientific matters and on issues and opportunities arising at the intersection of technology people and society.
Prashant Kumar	MD – Yes Bank	Kumar has appointed as MD and CEO. Sunil Mehta, former non-executive chairperson of state-owned Punjab National Bank will be the non-executive chairperson of Yes Bank.
Ravinder Singh Dhillon	Chairman and Managing Director of Power Finance Corporation (PFC)	The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has cleared the appointment of Ravinder Singh Dhillon
Arundhati Bhattacharya	Salesforce – CEO	The move comes as the software company becomes aggressive in the country, a market that is increasingly adopting digital technologies.
Noel Quinn	HSBC – CEO	HSBC Holdings plc (LON:HSBA) announced the appointment of Noel Quinn as Group Chief Executive Officer.
Adnan Al-Zurfi	Iraq – Prime Minister	Al-Zurfi has 30 days to form his cabinet, which he must then put to a vote of confidence in Iraq's fractious parliament.
Karan Bajwa	MD of Google Cloud in India	He will be responsible for driving all revenue and go-to-market operations for Google Cloud's extensive solution

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

		portfolio that includes Google Cloud Platform and G Suite in the country.
Ranjan Gogoi	Member of Rajya Sabha	There are 11 other nominated members in the Rajya Sabha.
R Gandhi, Ananth Gopalakrishnan	Additional directors on YES Bank Board	The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) appointed R Gandhi and Ananth Narayan Gopalakrishnan as additional directors to the board of private sector lender YES Bank for a period of two years.
Vasant Rao	International Data Corporation (IDC) - MD	International Data Corporation (IDC) announced the appointment of Vasant Rao as Managing Director for IDC India and South Asia, effective March 18, 2020.
Sanjiv Kapoor	GoAir – Advisor	Low cost airline GoAir said that it has appointed Sanjiv Kapoor as Advisor. Kapoor was at Vistara as its Chief Strategy and Commercial Officer.
Sameer Aggarwal	Walmart – Deputy CEO	He will continue reporting to Krish Iyer, President & CEO Walmart India, and oversee operations, merchandising, people, marketing, real estate, kirana development program, digital, eCommerce and strategy,” a company spokesperson said.
Iqbal Singh Bains	Madhya Pradesh Chief Secretary	In an official order, Bains a 1985 batch IAS officer, who posted as Chairman of the Revenue Board has appointed as the Chief Secretary.
Sunil Chhetri	FIFA’s COVID-19 Campaign	The World Governing body FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association or International Federation of Association Football) has selected Indian Football Captain Sunil Chhetri among 28 other stars for its campaign.
D.S Rawat	Bharti Infratel – MD & CEO	The Board of Directors of the Company has appointed him the MD&CEO for a period of up to six months.

## Banking and Finance

### **HDFC Bank launches co-branded credit card with IndiGo**

HDFC Bank joined hands with the country's largest airline IndiGoNSE 2.80 % to launch a co-branded credit card, which will effectively work like a loyalty programme for the carrier. Labelled Ka-ching, the card will offer many benefits like complimentary air tickets, lounge access, 5 per cent cashback or reward points on Indigo bookings, and 3 per cent cashback on dining, grocery and entertainment, the companies said.

### **Nabard infuses Rs 1.46 lakh crore in rural banking system in 2019-20**

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development said it has infused Rs 1.46 lakh crore in the rural banking system during the current fiscal. Nabard has been extending financial support to the banks operating in rural areas to help them deploy their resources effectively for meeting the credit needs of rural people, including farmers.

### **On-lending by banks to NBFC, HFCs to be part of priority sector in FY'21: RBI**

The Reserve Bank said bank credit to registered NBFCs towards agriculture, MSEs and housing sector up to prescribed limits will be treated as priority sector loans during the next fiscal starting April.

The move will help boost credit disbursement in the targeted segment like agriculture, MSME and housing sector.

### **RBI advances second tranche of G-Sec buying under OMOs to March 26**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on March 23 said it has preponed the second tranche of purchase of Rs 15,000 crore of government securities under open market operations (OMOs) to March 26. The OMO purchase auction was earlier scheduled for March 30.

“On review of current liquidity and financial conditions, the RBI has decided to advance the second tranche of purchase of government securities under OMOs for Rs 15,000 crore to March 26, 2020,” the RBI said in a release.

### **Indian rupee to average at 77 per US dollar in 2020, 80 in 2021: Fitch Solutions**

Fitch Solutions revised down its forecast for the Indian rupee, saying the currency will average 77 per US dollar in 2020 and 80 in 2021 amid ongoing global risk-off sentiment and likely steep monetary easing.

It saw real GDP growth at 5.4 per cent in 2020-21 fiscal that starts in April and 5.8 per cent in the following financial year.

### **State Bank of India raises \$100 million in green bonds**

India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) said it has raised \$100 million in green bonds through private placement.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

“Continuing its commitment towards sustainable development, the bank raised \$100 million floating rate notes at a coupon rate of 80 basis points (bps) above the three-month Libor,” SBI said, adding that these bonds will be issued through SBI’s London branch and shall be listed on Singapore Exchange (SGX).

### **RBI approves Mega Bank Consolidation Plan**

The Reserve Bank of India is to implement a merger plan of 10 state-run banks into 4 larger banks from April 1, 2020. The GoI earlier of March 2020 had notified the Amalgamation of the banks.

According to the plan, the United Bank of India and Oriental Bank of Commerce are to be merged with Punjab National Bank. The Syndicate Bank is to be amalgamated with Canara Bank. The Allahabad Bank is to be amalgamated with Indian Bank. Also, Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank are to be amalgamated with Union Bank of India.

### **EPFO lowers interest rate on deposits to 8.5 pc for 2019-20**

Retirement fund body, Employees’ Provident Fund Organization, (EPFO) lowered the interest rate on provident fund deposits to 8.5 per cent for the current financial year.

Earlier it was 8.65 percent. Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar made this announcement in New Delhi after the meeting of the EPFO apex decision making body – the Central Board of Trustee.

### **SBI cuts lending rate, home, auto loan EMIs to fall**

The country’s largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has cut its marginal cost of fund-based lending rate (MCLR) by up to 15 basis points across various tenors effective March 10, a move which will make home loans cheaper.

SBI has reduced its one-year MCLR by 10 basis points to 7.75% from 7.85% earlier. This is 10th consecutive cut in MCLR by the bank in the current fiscal. The lender had on February 10th had cut MCLR rates by 5 basis points across all tenors.

### **RBI extends restrictions on PMC Bank for three more months**

Reserve bank of India extended the regulatory restrictions on Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank (PMC) Bank by another three months. The central bank also added that it has been in talks with various authorities for the quick sale of securities and recoveries of loans. The validity of the directive dated 23 September 2019, stands modified from 23 March 2020 to 22 June 2020.

### **ADB to give \$200 mn to companies manufacturing products to combat coronavirus**

The funds will be made available through ADB’s Supply Chain Finance Program and provided to selected companies within weeks, the Manila-headquartered multilateral funding agency said in a release.



## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

Companies manufacturing and distributing products, including medicines and personal protective equipment, are increasingly strained as production and distribution ramp up to address COVID-19, it said

### **RBI revised exposure limits for UCBs**

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) revised exposure limits for urban cooperative banks (UCBs) to a single borrower and a group of borrowers to 15% and 25%, respectively, of tier-I capital. Previously, the UCBs were permitted to have exposures of up to 15% and 40% of their capital funds to a single borrower and a group of borrowers, respectively.

The revised exposure limits will be applicable to all types of fresh exposures taken by UCBs, and they will have to bring down their existing exposures, which are in excess of the revised limits, by 31 March 2023. The preceding financial year will be considered for the purpose of fixing the exposure limits, tier-I capital as on 31 March.

### **RBI to use swap transactions, LTRO to infuse liquidity**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that, in the wake of the epidemic Covid-19, the central bank would use Forex swap and long-term repo operations (LTROs) to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 on the Indian Economy.

### **LTRO-**

The LTRO is Long Term Repo Operations. The LTRO were deployed during 2008 financial crisis and were huge success. LTRO is a tool with which the apex bank offers loans to banks in the country for a period of one to three years at the prevailing repo rate.

### **State Bank of India acquires 6.82% stake in Zero Mass**

State Bank of India has entered into an agreement on 16 March 2020 to acquire 6.825% stake in Zero Mass. As part of the deal, the Bank has sold its entire stake in A Little World to the Zero Mass.

ZERO Mass Pvt. Ltd. was founded by Anurag Gupta, Founder and Director, 20 March, 2007 and it is the first ever Business Correspondent in the country (starting in 2006 with Seiling village in Mizoram) providing business correspondent and business facilitator services to banks through a last line local entrepreneur distribution of network to enable provision of services related to financial inclusion, remittances etc. pan India.

### **Centre imposes withdrawal limit for depositors of Yes Bank**

The government of India has imposed a withdrawal limit of Rs.50,000 for depositors of Yes Bank for one month. The notification regarding this was issued by the Ministry of Finance. The cap will be in effect till 3 April. GoI has allowed a few exemptions in cases like higher education, medical emergency, marriage, and unavoidable emergency for the limit on withdrawal.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

### **World Bank and GoI sign Agreement on Climate Resilient Rain-Fed Agriculture**

World Bank, Government of India and Government of Himachal Pradesh signed a loan agreement of 80 million USD to increase agricultural productivity and improve water management practices in Himachal Pradesh.

### **ICICI Lombard And BharatPe Partner To Launch Coronavirus cover for shopkeepers**

BharatPe, India's largest merchant payment & lending network has partnered with ICICI Lombard to roll out 'COVID-19 Protection Insurance Cover' for shopkeepers. Amid the contagious pandemic, this policy on a diagnosis of COVID-19 (+ve) will pay 100% of the sum insured, irrespective of hospitalisation expenses.

### **HIL India Limited launched Customer Payment Portal**

HIL (India) Limited, in association with Union Bank of India, launched "Customer Payment Portal" in New Delhi. It was launched by Dr. S.P. Mohanty, Chairman, and Managing Director, Shri. Anjan Banerjee, Director Finance) of HIL (India) Limited; and Shri R. K. Jaglan, Head, Government Business Department, Shri G. K. Sudhakar Rao, Regional Head Delhi South of Union Bank of India.

### **RBI announced 3 month moratorium on repayment of term loans means for borrowers**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that all banks and Non-bank financial institutions (NBFCs) have been permitted to allow a moratorium of 3 months on repayment of term loans outstanding on 1 March 2020. As per RBI's move, the tenure or time period of the loans will be increased by 3 months. All lending institutions including banks and NBFCs will allow a moratorium on loan repayments for 3 months.

### **RBI infuses Rs 374,000cr liquidity shot**

As expected, the RBI announced substantial liquidity measures saying it will conduct upto three-year tenure for an amount of upto Rs 100,000 crore at a floating rate linked to policy repo rate.

Under this, liquidity has to be deployed in investment grade corporate bonds, commercial papers, the RBI said. Investment made by banks will be considered as held to maturity, the RBI said.

## Indian Affairs

### **Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla launches ‘Suposhit Maa Abhiyan’ in Kota**

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla launched “Suposhit Maa Abhiyan” to provide nutritional support to pregnant women and adolescent girls. Union Minister Smriti Irani also attended the programme at Bhamashah Mandi in Anantpur.

### **MoS Jitendra Singh launches Pension Adalat in Jammu**

Union Minister of State (independent charge) Jitendra Singh inaugurated the Pension Adalat and National Pension System (NPS) Awareness and Grievance Redressal Programme at the Convention Centre here.

The redressal programme is being conducted by the Department of Pension and Pensioners’ Welfare, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India. The minister also launched the “Do You Know” Twitter series on family pension, along with a booklet highlighting case studies with interpretation of pension rules.

### **Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated 2020 Pusa Krishi Vigyan Mela**

The Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the Pusa Krishi Vigyan Mela 2020 on 1 March. The fair aimed at calling talent in Agriculture.

The festival aims to make agriculture a profitable venture. The government provides funds to promote agriculture as it is vital that the share in GDP and exports should rise.

### **GST collection crosses Rs one lakh crore mark in February**

Government has collected over one lakh five thousand crore rupees as Goods and Services Tax in February this year which is eight percent more than the GST collected in the same month of last year.

Out of the total revenue, Central Goods and Service Tax (CGST) is over 20 thousand crore rupees, State Goods and Service Tax (SGST) is over 27 thousand crore and Integrated Goods and Service Tax (IGST) is over 48 thousand crore rupees.

### **Ekam Fest to Promote Craftsmanship & Products of Divyang Artisans And Entrepreneurs**

Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot will inaugurate the week long Exhibition-cum-Fair “EKAM Fest” organised by National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation (NHFD) under M/o Social Justice & Empowerment evening at State Emporia Complex, Baba Kharak Singh Marg, New Delhi-1 on 02nd March 2020 .

### **Govt allows airlines to provide in-flight Wi-Fi services**

The central government permitted airlines operating in India to provide in-flight Wi-Fi services to passengers, according to an official notification.

“The Pilot-in-Command may permit the access of Internet services by passengers on board an aircraft in flight, through Wi-Fi on board, when laptop, smartphone, tablet, smartwatch, e-reader or a point of sale device is used in flight mode or airplane mode,” the notification stated.

### **National Chambal sanctuary, home of gharials and Gangetic dolphins, declared eco-sensitive zone**

National Chambal sanctuary has been declared as an eco-sensitive zone by the central government. The decision to declare the area as an eco-sensitive zone will prohibit the construction of hotels or resorts within an area of zero to two kilometres from the sanctuary, according to a report by PTI.

### **35th edition of AAHAR, Food and Hospitality fair, begins in New Delhi**

The 35th edition of AAHAR – the Food and Hospitality fair began in New Delhi. This five-day-long fair is being organized by India Trade Promotion Organisation, ITPO, with support of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Agriculture and Processed Food Products Development Authority and several apex industry associations.

### **68th All India Police Athletic Championship kick starts in Haryana**

68th All India Police Athletic Championship-2019 began at Bhanu in Panchkula District of Haryana. Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijiju declared the meet open at Basic Training Centre of ITBP. Addressing the meet, Mr Rijiju said that with an aim to bring India in top 10 in the Olympics scheduled in 2028, the government has identified 15,000 plus children and started their training across 284 Sports Authority of India (SAI) training centres across the country.

### **Centre announces free ATM withdrawals for 3 months**

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that debit cardholders could withdraw cash from any other bank's ATM free of charge for the next three months. There will not be any minimum balance requirement fee in the bank accounts. The announcement comes as lockdown, and the curfew is in place in many parts of India amid coronavirus pandemic. Centre has also waived minimum bank charges for savings bank accounts.

### **EPFO directs field offices to timely credit pension to 65 lakh EPS beneficiaries**

Retirement fund body EPFO said it has issued directions for timely credit of monthly pension to over 65 lakh employees' pension scheme (EPS) beneficiaries amid the coronavirus outbreak. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) disburses monthly pension to over 65 lakh pensioners every month under the EPS.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

### **Lok Sabha passes Finance Bill without discussion**

The Lok Sabha passed the Finance Bill, by voice vote without discussion, amid ruckus in the House with opposition parties seeking a fiscal stimulus package in the wake of the Coronavirus outbreak.

In the Union Budget 2020-2021, the government proposed to spend Rs 30,42,230 crore in the next financial year, 12.7% higher than the revised estimate of 2019-20. By passing the Bill, these financial proposals have been given effect.

### **Delhi announced as next Google Cloud Region after Mumbai**

Google announced that it will open its next cloud region of India at Delhi by 2021. This is the second cloud region of Google after Mumbai, that was launched in 2017. Google owns 22 cloud regions in Asia Pacific.

Along with Delhi Cloud Region, Google will also open its data centers in Toronto (Canada), Melbourne (Australia) and Doha (Qatar).

### **Cabinet Approval: Mega Consolidation of Public Sector Banks**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Narendra Modi had approved mega consolidation of 10 Public Sector Banks. The mega merger is to come into effect from April 1, 2020. It includes amalgamation of United Bank of India and Oriental Bank of India into Punjab National Bank. Also, amalgamation of Syndicate Bank into Canara Bank.

### **Cabinet Approval: Foreign Direct Investment Policy on Civil Aviation**

The Union Cabinet under PM Modi cleared the Foreign Direct Investment Policy on Civil Aviation. According to the policy, 100% FDI is permitted in the air transport services. Earlier only 49% was available for sale to NRIs.

### **Mumbai to host 2023 IOC session**

Mumbai will be hosting the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) session in 2023. The announcement was passed by IOC president Thomas Bach. The committee chose India to encourage and support the National Olympic Committee of India and all the National Federations to promote and strengthen Olympic sport in the country. The decision by IOC committee is yet to be ratified at the 136th IOC session in Tokyo in July 2020.

### **Workshop on Increasing Water Use Efficiency in Industries held in New Delhi**

Workshop on "Increasing Water Use Efficiency in Industries" was inaugurated by the Secretary, Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation (WR, RD & GR) U.P. Singh. The workshop was organized by the National Water Mission (NWM) in Delhi as a part of the "HarKaamDeshkeNaam" initiative.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

### **India Pharma 2020 and India Medical Device 2020 Conference to be held in Gujarat**

India Pharma 2020 & India Medical Device 2020 Conference & Exhibition has been scheduled to be held at Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat from 5-7 March 2020. The conference will be inaugurated by the Chemicals & Fertilizers Minister Shri Sadananda Gowda. The fifth edition is organized for the first time in Gujarat.

### **India Post launched free digital parcel locker service**

The Department of Posts has introduced a free digital parcel locker service in the city from 11 March for the first time in India. The Chief Post Master General, West Bengal Circle, Gautam Bhattacharya, inaugurated the service from the Nabadiganta IT Post Office.

Free digital parcel locker facility will be available in two post offices in Kolkata, one in the Nabadiganta IT Post Office in Sector 5 of Salt Lake City and two another in New Town. The locker will enable customers to collect their consignment from specified post offices at their convenience.

The facility is popular in European countries. It will be limited to consignments received through registered post or speed post. This facility will be given for the working people who cannot receive parcels because they have no one at home to receive consignments during office hours

### **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (amendment) bill passed in the Parliament**

Insolvency and Bankruptcy (Amendment) bill, 2020 has been passed in the parliament. It was earlier passed by Lok Sabha and is now being passed by Rajya Sabha. The amendments were earlier introduced as ordinances. Now after the Parliament session begun the ordinance was introduced as bill. And the bill has now been passed as an act in the parliament.

### **Dearness Allowance hiked from 17% to 21% for central govt employees**

The Union Cabinet approved an increase in the Dearness Allowance to central government employees and Dearness Relief to pensioners from 17% to 21% with effect from January 1, 2020. The move will benefit at least 50 lakh government employees and 65 lakh pensioners. The impact on the exchequer over the DA hike will be ₹14,500 crore per annum.

### **Cabinet approved Minimum Support Price for Copra for 2020 season**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved for the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for copra for 2020 season. The approval was recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).

### **NMCG concludes 'Ganga Amantran Abhiyan' in New Delhi**

The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) recently organised a grand event in the national capital to mark the conclusion of its flagship programme 'Ganga Amantran Abhiyan'.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah was invited as the chief guest at the event to confer the awards to various achievers who contributed towards the successful completion of the programme.

### **Jobs provided under scheme of compassionate appointment**

The family members of the personnel of paramilitary forces killed in the line of duty were offered jobs under the scheme of compassionate appointment. The announcement was made by Shri Nityanand Rai, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs.

The Compassionate appointment Scheme aims to grant appointment on compassionate grounds to a dependent family member of a Government servant killed in the line of duty or who is retired on medical grounds, thereby leaving his family without any means of livelihood. The scheme also focuses on the family of the Government servant concerned from financial destitution and to help it get over the emergency.

### **CRPF instituted Shakti Award**

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has instituted a special ‘Shakti Award.’ It will be annually presented to chosen personnel who works for the empowerment of women.

Women who work for creating women-friendly infrastructure, better work environment, ease of living with safety, addressing women-specific issues, and related innovation and initiatives will be awarded. The award will carry a reward of Rs.1 lakh, a citation, and a trophy.

### **Sports sponsorship crosses Rs 9000 cr mark in 2019 driven by media, on-ground spends: Report**

ESP Properties– the entertainment and sports division of GroupM India, released the 2020 report on sports sponsorship in India. Overall sports sponsorship grew 17% to cross the Rs 9000 crore mark in 2019 driven by media spends and on-ground sponsorship.

Cricket continued to drive the sports sponsorship market in 2019 with IPL and ICC World Cup giving a big push to on-ground sponsorship and media spends. Sports sponsorship added Rs 1347 crore to the total value with media spends contributing a whopping Rs 800 crore.

### **The 49th edition of IHGF-Delhi Fair Spring has been postponed**

The Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) has postponed the 49th edition of Indian Handicrafts and Gifts Fair (IHGF)-Delhi Fair Spring 2020. The fair was scheduled to held from 15-19 April 2020. The cancellation was in view of the COVID-19 outbreak. The announcement was made by the Director-General of EPCH. The fair could is expected to be organized in June or July.

### **500 officials of TRIFED Van Dhan India unleash power of Webinars to Work from Home**

Around 500 officials of TRIFED (The Tribal cooperative Marketing Development federation of India) operating under Ministry of Tribal Affairs unleashed the power of Webinars.

The Trifed Social Media team has reached 2.5 million people in three days. TRIFED Van Dhan GIS based website gathered more than 50 lakh tribal gatherers spread across 27 different states. Through “Tech for Tribals” scheme that was recently launched in March 2020, around 3.5 lakh tribal entrepreneurs were gathered.



# CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

## **Covid-19 impact: Govt relaxes rules for withdrawal from EPFO accounts**

The labour minister issued a notification allowing millions of subscribers of the employees' provident fund organization (EPFO) to withdraw a portion of their retirement savings with immediate effect amid the Covid-19 lockdown.

As per the gazette notification, EPFO subscribers can withdraw 75% of their savings or up to a maximum of three months' basic pay and dearness allowance from their PF account – whichever is lower. Once a subscriber withdraws the amount, it cannot be replenished after the situation improves.

## **Around 1.5 lakh SSAs covered with at least one bank branch under PMJDY**

Ministry of Finance reported that all villages were mapped by banks into 1.59 lakh Sub-Service Areas (SSAs) under Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). One SSA caters to 1,000 to 1,500 households. The report was submitted by Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, Minister of State for Finance & Corporate Affairs in Rajya Sabha.

## **More the Rs.20 crore has been sanctioned under the Stand Up India Scheme**

Ministry of Finance reported that more than Rs.20,466.94 crores of loans had been sanctioned under Stand Up India Scheme to over 91,000 accounts up to 10 March 2020. The information was shared by Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, Minister of State for Finance & Corporate Affairs.

### **Stand Up India Scheme:**

Stand Up India Scheme was launched by the Government of India on 5 April 2016 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is a part of the Department of Financial Services' (DFS) to promote entrepreneurial projects.

## **International Conference on Nano-Science and Nano Technology held in Kolkata**

Department of Science of Technology operating under Ministry of Science and Technology organized an International Conference on Nano-Science and Nano Technology (ICONSAT) at Kolkata. The Conference is to be held between March 5, 2020 and March 7, 2020.

## **What is BHOG of FSSAI?**

The Tamil Nadu Food Safety and Drug Administration recently asked the administrators of temples to obtain BHOG certificate from FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India). This was launched in 2018.

BHOG is Blissful Hygiene Offering to God. These are certificates issued by FSSAI. The BHOG certificates ensure quality of food offered to devotees and deities as well. It was launched as a precautionary measure to maintain hygiene of foods at the temples.

## **Lok Sabha passed Direct Tax Vivad Se Viswas Bill, 2020**

Lok Sabha passed the Direct Tax Vivad Se Viswas Bill, 2020. The bill aims to reduce the number of litigation that are associated with direct tax payments. The Direct Tax Vivad Se



## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

Viswas concept was introduced by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman during the Union Budget 2020-21.

### **Cabinet Approval: To amend Companies Act, 2013**

Union Cabinet approved 72 changes to the Companies Act, 2013. The main aim of the amendment is to decriminalize the provisions in the act.

The amendment aims to recategorize 23 offences and omit 7 compoundable offences. Under the amendment, the companies with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) obligation of less than Rs 50 lakhs need not constitute a CSR committee.

### **CRISPR (CaS9)-The Gene Editing Tool used to treat blindness for the first time**

The Gene Editing Tool called CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) has been used for the first time to treat blindness. However, doctors claimed that it will take a month to check if the vision of the patient has restored. This has been achieved at the Oregon University, Portland, USA.

### **“Stay Home India with Books” initiative launched by GoI**

The National Book Trust functioning under Ministry of Human Resources and Development launched Stay Home India with Books initiative. Under the initiative more than 100 books can be downloaded from the NBT website.

The National Book Trust was founded in 1957. The trust activities include publishing, promotion of Indian books, children literature, etc.

According to the ministry, majority of the books uploaded are children books. Apart from these, the other books include activity-based learning science, women scientists in India, Gandhi: Warrior of Non-Violence and many more. The books uploaded are of different Indian languages. It includes English, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu, Kokborok, Bodo, Mizo, Tamil, Nepali, Kannada, Urudu, Malayalam, Telugu, etc.

### **Union Cabinet approves recapitalisation of RRBs**

The Centre has approved a ₹1,340-crore recapitalisation plan for regional rural banks (RRBs) to improve their capital-to-risk weighted assets ratio (CRAR), strengthening these institutions that are critical to the provision of credit in rural areas.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs gave its nod for an outlay of ₹670 crore as the central share for the scheme on the condition that the release of the funds will be contingent upon the release of the proportionate share by the sponsor banks, an official statement said.

### **India, first in the world to start antibody tests for Corona Virus**

India is all set to begin antibody tests to confirm if a person was previously infected with the virus. This will help understand the epidemiology of Covid – 19.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

The test determines if the person had viral infections based on the presence of antibodies in their blood. The antibody test is not a confirmatory test. However, it is a test for the purpose of surveillance. It helps to generate data about number of people that got exposed to the virus.

### **What are DMF Funds that are to be used by the states to combat COVID-19?**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman recently instructed the state governments to use DMF (District Mineral Foundation) funds to fight against COVID-19. This is being done to supplement medical facilities that will help fight against Corona Virus.

#### **DMF Funds –**

The District Mineral Foundation is a non-profit body. It was set up in those districts that were affected by mining works. The Foundation works towards the benefit and interest of the persons affected due to the mining activity. The Funds are allocated according to the rules of MMDR act.

### **Centre approved more than Rs.5 crore to 8 states**

Government of India approved an additional Rs.5,751.27 crore as an aid to 8 states that were hit by floods, landslides, cyclone ‘Bulbul’ and drought in 2019. The approval was decided by a high-level committee under the Chairmanship of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The eight states which will be given the financial assistance are Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Odisha, Rajasthan, and West Bengal.

### **GoI clears Genome India Project**

The Department of Biotechnology operating under Ministry of Science and Technology has cleared Genome India Project. More than 20 leading institutions including IISc Bengaluru are to participate in the project.

### **Fourth Edition of Global Ayurveda Festival 2020 from May 16 to 20**

Researchers from Raman Research Institute (RRI), an autonomous institution under the Department of Science & Technology, have devised a new test for fairness of quantum coin or ‘qubit’ (the basic unit of information in a quantum computer) using entanglement theory.

### **Centre to make Sanitary pad disposal bags mandatory from 2021 January**

The Centre is to make it mandatory for the sanitary napkin companies to provide biodegradable disposal bags from January 2021. The information was announced by the Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar at an International Women’s Day event in Pune on 8 March.

Also, the sanitation norms for Corporations and municipalities will now be applied to villages with a population of more than three thousand. 50 small and 50 large waste classification centres will be set up in Pune, and financial support for this will be made through the MPs fund.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

### **Fourth International Diabetes Summit 2020 started in Pune by Chellaram Diabetes Institute**

Fourth International Diabetes Summit 2020 inaugurated at JW Marriot Hotel Pune. Lt Gen Dr. Madhuri Kanitkar (Deputy Chief of Integrated Defense Staff under the Chief of Defense Staff) was the Chief Guest, and Dr. Bhushan Patwardhan (Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission, New Delhi

Eminent international speakers and over 50 renowned faculty members from India are speaking at the summit. International Diabetes Summit will help to throw new light on diabetes management. The fourth International Diabetes Summit 2020 renowned international doctors and researchers spoke on advances and advancements in the field of diabetes. Insulin gives only 20 percent effective for diabetes patients the rest is given by patient education and not only by treatment.

### **Odisha's Konark sun temple & Statue of Unity in Gujarat finds place in iconic tourism sites list**

According to the Union Minister of State (Independent) for tourism and culture, Prahlad Singh Patel, the central government has included grand Konark Sun Temple, the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) world heritage site in Odisha & Statue of Unity in Gujarat in the Iconic Tourist Sites list, taking the total number of such places from 17 to 19.

### **Parliamentary Panel: More than 40% of schools are without power and playgrounds**

A Parliamentary panel set up on education submitted its report to Rajya Sabha on 2020-21 demand for grants. The report said that shortfalls in budget funds has led to critical infrastructure gaps.

The Panel in its report says that more than 27% cuts have been made in budget allocations for school education. The report also says that only 56% of schools have electricity. The lowest rates were found in Manipur and Madhya Pradesh. Also, only 57% of schools have playground.

### **PM Modi addresses the Nation: Introduces "People's Curfew", Economic Response Task Force to fight Corona Virus**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation on combating Corona Virus. The PM introduced People's Curfew during his speech. He also said that Economic Task Force is to be implemented under the Finance Minister.

People's Curfew The Prime Minister has requested the citizens not to leave their homes between 7 AM and 9 PM. This has been named as People's Curfew.

### **What is Greenco Rating System followed in India?**

The Ministry of Railways presented the details of Greenco System in the country in Lok Sabha. As on 2018, 42 Railway Production units have implemented Greenco Rating.

### **What is GreenCo?**

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

The assessment of major workshops and production units in various industries based on their ecological sustainability. The assessment helps the companies in resource conservation and reduction. It also helps to track the environmental impact caused by the infrastructural projects undertaken.

### **Eleventh Bengaluru INDIA Nano conference and exhibition held at Bengaluru**

The three-day event was organized by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of Karnataka, and Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), in association with other Govt Institutions and corporate companies.

#### **Highlights :**

- Research work to tackle infections related to antimicrobial resistance, eco-friendly batteries, and tools on nanotechnology, which was developed for agriculture were showcased by JNCASR at the exhibition.
- A set of Zn-air eco-friendly batteries were also displayed.
- Rhino Lure and Rhyncho Lure, eco-friendly, cost-effective, and residual free control strategy tools to monitor and manage Rhinoceros Beetle and Red Palm Weevil pests and protect crops like coconut, date palm, oil palm, and arecanut were exhibited.

### **GoI approved industrial licenses to 15 companies to manufacture Bullet Proof Jackets**

The 15 companies for manufacturing Bullet Proof Jackets have the production capacity in the country of over 10 Lakh per annum to meet the domestic and export requirement.

India exports Bullet Proof Jackets to 18 countries. Earlier, Indian soldiers did not have bullet-proof jackets. At present, 1.86 lakh soldiers are given BPJs.

### **DheeYantra launched Virtual assistance to curb fake messages on Coronavirus**

DheeYantra, the pioneers in Indian languages NLP and conversational AI, has launched “Aham!”, a virtual assistant. The chatbot was developed to provide answers to the concerns on the COVID-19 crisis.

#### **Aham!-**

Aham! is released in 7 Indian languages namely Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, and Tamil, in addition to English. Aham aims to combat the rise of fake news related to COVID-19 contagion across India and the world

### **TRIFED launched Trifed VanDhan GIS-based website**

A group of 500 officials from the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) has unveiled Trifed VanDhan GIS-based website, the power of Webinars to keep in touch with each other and keep moving and working.

The move aims to support people working from home amid the lockdown due to the Coronavirus outbreak. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, people across 27 states are working from home. Working on their computers from home, they have raised the bar very high, achieving unbelievable results.

### **Indian Railways offer 3.2 lakh isolation beds**

The Indian Railways until 31 March, 2020 has modified 20,000 coaches to accommodate 3.2 lakh people. It is still working with 5,000 more coaches to add 80,000 more beds.

The Indian Railway coaches have been converted into isolation wards to fulfil the isolated quarantine requirements to treat COVID-19 patients. One single coach is expected to support 16 beds of isolation. The coaches will also have nurses cabins. Only non-AC coaches are being converted into quarantine coaches.

### **“Stranded in India” Portal launched to help Foreign Tourists**

The Ministry of Tourism had launched “Stranded in India”, a portal aimed to support foreign tourists. The portal aims to disseminate information to the foreign tourists stuck far away from their homeland amidst COVID-19 threats and Lock Down.

The tourists can use the portal to learn information about steps or measures being made by the Indian Government and the foreign government to take them home safely.

### **“Satyarup Siddhanta”, an Indian Mountaineer enters ‘Limca Book of Records’ conquering highest volcanoes**

The Indian Mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta has entered ‘Limca Book of Records’. He has set the record of becoming the first Indian to climb the highest volcanoes in the world of all the 7 continents.

The mountaineer achieved the record of climbing all the highest summits in the world in 7 continents in January 2019. He already holds Guinness Book of World Records, India Book of Records, Asia Book of Records, British Book of records and Champion Book of Records.

### **Cabinet approves relaunch of bulk drug park scheme**

The Cabinet approved the relaunch of a scheme to set up three bulk drug parks and four medical device parks for a total outlay of ₹3,400 crore over five years. This comes amid the coronavirus epidemic that hit supply of crucial pharmaceutical raw materials from China.

### **Major Port Authorities Bill, 2020 introduced in Lok Sabha**

The Major Port Authorities Bill, 2020, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 12 March. The Bill was introduced by the Union Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

#### **Major Port Authorities Bill, 2020:**

- The Bill will provide for the regulation, operation, and planning of major ports in India and to provide greater autonomy and flexibility in decision-making.
- The Bill is not aimed at the privatization of government ports. The number of labour trustees will remain the same as earlier.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

- The Bill will provide the ports greater autonomy and flexibility to major ports in decision-making as they have to compete with the private sector.
- The Bill proposes to repeal the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963.

### **Parliament passed amendments to IBC Amendment Bill**

Parliament passed the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2020, on 12 March 2020. It was earlier passed in Lok Sabha on 6 March. The Bill will now replace an ordinance passed in 2019.

The amendments will introduce a mechanism to incorporate viable changes in the legislation. The Bill will remove bottlenecks and streamline the corporate insolvency resolution process. It aims to provide protection to new owners of a loan defaulter company against prosecution for misdeeds of previous owners.

### **Centre issued notification for adaptation of 37 central laws in JK**

The government of India issued a gazette notification for the adaptation of 37 central laws in the Concurrent List for the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir. The gazette notification was issued by the Department of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh Affairs of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. It comes into force with immediate effect.

### **GoI: Left Wing Extremism has declined by 38% in last five years**

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs replied in Rajya Sabha about the decline in Left Wing Extremism in the last five years. This has been possible mainly due to the implementation of “National Policy and Action Plan-2015”.

### **APEDA signs MoU with SFAC to boost food clusters**

In a bid to bring in better synergy, Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has signed MoU with Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)

The MoU was signed by Neelkamal Darbari, Managing Director SFAC and Paban Kumar Borthakur, Chairman, APEDA.

### **Domestic Manufacturing of Medical Devices approved by Cabinet**

The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Modi approved the Medical Device Park Scheme. The scheme is to be implemented for the next five years. The GoI has approved Rs 13,760 crores for the scheme. The amount is mainly to be used in medical devices and drugs production.

The scheme aims to boost the domestic manufacturing of medical devices in the country. It includes setting up of medical device parks in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

### **Cabinet approved MoU signed between India and Germany to enhance Railway sector**

The Union Cabinet led by the PM Narendra Modi apprised a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Ministry of Railways, GoI and DB Engineering & Consulting GMBH of Germany. The MoU was signed for technological cooperation in the Railway Sector. The agreement was signed in February 2020.

### **Cabinet approved the continuation of RoSCTL scheme from 1 April**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved for continuation of Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) scheme from 1 April 2020. Until then, the scheme will be merged with the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP). It is expected to make the textile sector competitive by rebating all taxes and levies that are currently not being rebated under any other mechanism.

### **Hola Mohalla festival was celebrated at Anandpur Sahib Punjab**

Hola Mohalla festival was celebrated at Anandpur Sahib Punjab from 10-12 March 2020. Hola Mohalla is a Sikh festival celebrated in the month of Phalgun, a day after Holi.

The three-day festival will host mock battles, poetry, and music competitions. The Nihang Singhs will carry the martial tradition with mock battles and displays of swordsmanship and horse riding. They also perform daring feats, such as tent pegging, Gatka (mock encounters), bareback horse-riding, and standing erect on two speeding horses.

### **IITM hosts India's first Hyperloop Pod Competition-What is Hyperloop Pod?**

For the first time in India IIT Madras is to host Hyperloop pod competition in July 2020. India has taken a few steps in bringing the environment friendly Hyperloop pod transport in the country.

### **Website launched by SAARC Disaster Management Centre for COVID-19 information**

The Disaster Management Centre of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation has launched a website related to COVID-19. The website shows number of Corona virus Cases in member states.

According to the website, currently there are 960 cases of Corona Virus in the SAARC region. Recently the SAARC leaders held a video conference to contain the spread of Corona Virus. During the Conference, PM Modi had launched SAARC COVID-19 Emergency Funds.

### **GOKADDAL-worlds first Digital Solutions Exchange cloud launched in India**

The world's first Digital Solutions Exchange in the cloud "GOKADDAL" has been launched in India. GOKADDAL will revolutionize the way digital solutions are sourced, delivered, and managed.

The cloud-based platform is created to help the customers realize their digital transformation vision by bringing them the right solutions with the right tools and right providers. The platform focus on Automation, Artificial Intelligence, Analytics, and Augmentative Technologies.



## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

GOKADDAL will create a new and significant revenue base for the solution providers. GOKADDAL provides features including Solution search, compare, use EOI/Bidding process to select the right solution in the right budget.

### **Wings India 2020 began in Hyderabad**

Wings India 2020, an International conference and exhibition on the Civil Aviation sector, has begun on 12 March in Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad, India. The conference will be held from 12-15 March 2020.

The biennial event is organized by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Airports Authority of India (AAI) along with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

### **6th International Day of Yoga led by PM Modi to be held in Leh**

The Major national event for the 6th International Day of Yoga is to be held in Leh, the capital of Ladakh on 21st June, 2020. The event is to be led by PM Modi. Since 2015, PM Modi leads a mass demonstration of Yoga every year on the International Day of Yoga. This year, the Yoga demonstration is to be differe

### **Coronavirus | Govt offers Rs 1,500 to women Jan Dhan a/c holders, free cylinders under Ujjwala scheme**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on March 26 announced an ex-gratia amount of Rs 500 per month for the next three months to all the women Jan Dhan account holders to run their households. Around 20 crore such women account holders will be covered under this scheme.

### **Govt to supply 7 kg/person subsidised foodgrains under PDS for 3 months: Food Min official**

The government will supply over next three months additional 2 kg subsidised foodgrains under the PDS, taking the total monthly quota to 7 kg per person, a senior Food Ministry official said.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi had approved the Food Ministry's proposed to supply extra two kilo subsidised foodgrains to over 80 crore people registered under the Public Distribution System (PDS) amid nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19.

### **CRISIL, ICRA lower GDP's growth forecast for FY21**

Two domestic research agencies, CRISIL and ICRA, sharply lowered their GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth forecast for FY21.

While CRISIL has lowered growth projection by 170 basis points (100 basis points mean one percentage point), ICRA's cut is in the range of 50-100 bps. These revisions have been done at a time when India is passing through 21-day nationwide lockdown in an effort to contain the spread of Covid-19.



# CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

## **Extraordinary Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit**

An Extraordinary Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit was convened on 26 March 2020 to discuss the challenges posed by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and to forge a global coordinated response.

Earlier, PM had a telephonic conversation with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia on this subject. The extraordinary G20 Summit was a culmination of the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting and G20 Sherpas Meeting on the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Covid-19 impact: CII sets up a fund for MSMEs**

In the wake of the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is setting up a fund to assist rehabilitation of small enterprises and Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

The Confederation will request all its members (mainly corporates) to contribute an amount from their CSR allocation for the fund, CII COVID Rehabilitation and Relief Fund (CRR), the body said in a statement.

## **IWD 2020: Thinlas Chorol sets up first women's travel company in Ladakh**

The International Women's Day will be celebrated on 8th of this month. Government has taken series of initiatives to empower women. People are using the #IWD 2020 and #BetiPadhaoDeshBadhao to share uplifting stories in the run up to International Women's Day.

In Ladakh, a young woman Thinlas Chorol has introduced woman trekking guide in the male dominated trekking industry. To train the other women as trekking guide, she setup the first women's travel company fully operated by women only. Every trekking season from April to September, she train 20 to 30 rural women to work as trekking guide.

## **Google Cloud Announces Delhi as Its Second India Region Will Open in 2021**

Google announced plans to open its second Cloud region in India in Delhi next year and help regulated industries such as healthcare and financial services as well as public sector organizations across the country to achieve their Cloud goal.

Google launched the Mumbai region in 2017. The new cloud region will expand Google's existing network, which stands at eight areas in the Asia Pacific and 22 neighborhoods globally.

As the company's customers in India grow and diversify, Google cloud regions bring Google Cloud Platform (GCP) services to organizations in industries like media and entertainment, retail, and manufacturing.

## **Ranjan Gogoi, the former Chief Justice of India nominated to Rajya Sabha by the President**

The President of India Ramnath Kovind nominated the former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi to Rajya Sabha. The former chief justice retired in November, 2019. Rajya Sabha is

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

called the council of states. The Council of states of defined by Article 80 of the constitution. The council of states consists of 12 members that are nominated by the President of India.

### **Ghojadanga of West Bengal and Agartala of Tripura designated as immigration check posts**

Ghojadanga of West Bengal and Agartala of Tripura were designated as land immigration check posts. They are located in Indo-Bangladesh border. The Government of India has designated Agartala and Ghojadanga to check all classes of passengers entering to and exiting from India. The immigration posts will check travel documents of the passengers.

### **India shares two SARS-CoV-2 Genome Sequences with Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data**

India officially shared two SARS-CoV-2 with the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID). The Pune based National Institute of Virology has shared two sequences of novel corona virus with Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data.

### **United Nations Global Compact Study: Women Labour-force has declined greatly in India**

The United Nations Global Compact conducted a study recently and found that female labour participation has decreased from 34% in 2006 to 24.8% in 2020. The study also says that out of the 153 countries surveyed, India is the only country where economic gender gap is greater than political gap.

### **Mineral Law Amendment Bill passed in Lok Sabha**

The Lok Sabha passed Mineral Laws (Amendment) bill, 2020. The bill aims to amend Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) act, 1957 and also Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015.

### **Cabinet approved the continuation of RoSCTL scheme from 1 April**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved for continuation of Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) scheme from 1 April 2020. Until then, the scheme will be merged with the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP). It is expected to make the textile sector competitive by rebating all taxes and levies that are currently not being rebated under any other mechanism.

### **ARCI developed technology to improve fuel efficiency of internal combustion engines**

International Advanced Centre for Powder Metallurgy & New Materials (ARCI) developed ultrafast laser surface texturing technology. The technology can improve the fuel efficiency of internal combustion engines.

Laser surface micro-texturing offers precise control of the size and shape. The density of micro-surface texture features gains momentum as a way to control friction and wear. The special feature of the technology is a pulsating laser beam creates micro-dimples or grooves on the surface of materials in a very controlled manner.

### **Invest India launched The Invest India Business Immunity Platform**

Invest India launched a platform named “The Invest India Business Immunity Platform”. The platform is hosted on the Invest India website.

The Business Immunity Platform (BIP) has been designed as a comprehensive resource to help businesses and investors get real-time updates on India’s active response to COVID-19. The platform operates 24/7. The platform is dynamic and constantly provides an update about the pandemic.

### **RIL sets up first COVID-19 dedicated hospital in Mumbai**

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) established India’s first COVID-19 dedicated hospital in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The 100-bedded Covid-19 centre is located at Seven Hills Hospital, Mumbai.

The hospital was established by Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital in collaboration with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). This first-of-its-kind-in-India centre is fully funded by Reliance Foundation.

### **First “Made in India” COVID-19 Test Kit gets commercial approval from CDSCO**

A Pune based testing services MyLab has become the first Indian company to get an commercial approval from CDSCO for the sales of COVID-19 testing kits sale.

The kit was developed by MyLab testing services. The testing time of COVID-19 in current lab testing services is 4 hours. However, MyLAB’s testing time is 2 ½ hours. The laboratory is to sell the kits at Rs 1,200 to Rs 1,500 per test.

### **What are the Bio-Safety Levels of Containment in India?**

The National Centre for Disease Control provides four levels of Bio-Safety to be followed in India.

Bio-Safety is the principle used to contain the spread of pathogens and toxins. This is not for the safety of the institutions working with the pathogens. However, the safety levels are implemented to safeguard the public from being infected.

### **Google India launches skill development programme for women**

Google India introduced DigiPivot, a skilling programme designed for women who are looking to return to their corporate careers after a break or simply planning to make mid-career shifts to digital marketing.

### **TIFAC under Ministry of Science and Technology launches Vigyan Jyoti**

TIFAC operating under Ministry of Science and Technology launched Vigyan Jyoti. The scheme was announced to celebrate International Women’s Day. The Technology Information Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) launched Vigyan Jyoti in order to encourage women to take science as their career.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

### **Delimitation Commission set up for Arunachal, Manipur, Assam, J&K, Manipur**

A Delimitation Commission was formed under former Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai. The Delimitation for the state of Jammu and Kashmir is to be carried out according to Jammu and Kashmir reorganization act. The previous delimitation for the state of Jammu and Kashmir was done in 1995. The state was under President's rule when the last delimitation was done.

### **New facility for EPFO subscribers: PPOs, UAN cards available on DigiLocker**

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) said that Pension Payment Order (PPO) and Universal Account Number (UAN) numbers are now available on the government's e-locker service DigiLocker. "PPOs and UAN cards is now available on DigiLocker," the retirement fund body said in a tweet.

### **India pledged USD 10 million toward a Covid-19 emergency fund**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosted a video-conference meet of leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) member nations to tackle the novel coronavirus (Covid-19).

The conference witnessed the participation of leaders of all SAARC countries. PM Modi proposed for Covid-19 emergency fund. India pledged \$10 million toward a Covid-19 emergency fund and planned to put together a rapid response team of doctors and specialists for SAARC nations. India suggested Integrated Disease Surveillance Portal (IDSP) that is currently being used to detect infected patients and contact tracing.

### **Five months since new Motor Vehicles Act, road accidents come down by 10%**

Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, and Chandigarh have seen around 12-14% decrease in road accidents, five months since the new Motor Vehicles Act was implemented, Union minister of road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari informed the Parliament.

Gadkari revealed data from 12 states and union territories in the Rajya Sabha, comparing the rate of accidents with that five months before September 2019, when manifold increase in penalties on violation of traffic rules provided by the Act, was enforced.

### **Indian Culture Portal to showcase rich cultural heritage of India**

Indian Culture Portal, an online portal of the Ministry of Culture, showcases the information about the rich cultural heritage of India across the globe.

Indian Culture Portal was launched on 10 December 2019. The portal is available in 2 languages, namely Hindi and English. The portal aims to create awareness about the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of India.

### **‘An Extraordinary Life’: Book on the late Goa CM Manohar Parrikar to hit the shelves in April**

A book on the life and times of bureaucrat-turned-politician Manohar Parrikar, who served as the defence minister and Goa chief minister, will hit the stands in April, announced publishing house Penguin Random House India.

The book titled ‘An Extraordinary Life: A biography of Manohar Parrikar’ is written by veteran journalists Sadguru Patil and Mayabhushan Nagvenkar.

### **Corona Virus: India declares COVID-19 as “notified Disaster”**

With more than 80 confirmed COVID-19 cases, India has declared “notified Disaster”. With this, the SDRF funds are to be temporarily used for supply of food, medical care and water for patients in quarantine camps.

### **Gold Imports of 2019-20 dip by 8.86% narrowing Current Account Deficit to 143 billion USD**

Commerce Ministry reported that the gold imports for the period April to February (2019-20) has reduced by 8.86% as compared to the previous year.

India is the largest importer of gold in the world. As the gold imports of the country have been reduced, the trade deficit has reduced to 143.12 billion USD. It was around 173 billion USD a year ago.

## State related affairs

### **Kerala Govt to Offer Safe Homes Rs 70,000 Aid to Inter-Faith and Inter-Caste Married Couples**

Kerala government decided to offer safe abodes for couples who married across religion and castes. The main initiative, named Safe Homes will provide inter-faith and inter-caste couples temporary shelters for up to a year after their marriage. The project is likely to be initiated soon. The government will be joining hands with NGOs for opening the safe houses in all districts.

### **Mayiladuthurai to be Tamil Nadu's 38th district**

Tamil Nadu chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami announced bifurcation of Nagapattinam district to create a new district with Mayiladuthurai as its headquarters. Mayiladuthirai will be the 38th district in the state.

Making a suo motu announcement in the assembly, the chief minister said, "The district is created for administrative reasons and to speed up the welfare measures to the public."

### **Mo Jeeban Pogramme**

The "Mo Jeeban Programme" was launched by the Odisha Government to contain the spread of COVID-19. The programme was launched by the Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

'Mo Jeeban' means 'My Life'. The State Government through the programme appeals to the people to stay indoors. The programme urges the working population to take an oath in name of their children and parents to cooperate and support by not stepping outside. It also raises awareness of washing hands at least for 20 seconds.

### **Sikkim govt announced an economic package to provide immediate relief to EWS**

Sikkim Chief Minister P S Tamang announced an economic package to provide immediate relief to economically weaker sections (EWS) of society following a meeting of the State Task Force for COVID-19 prevention in Gangtok on 27 March.

### **Control Room set up in Bihar Bhawan to assist Migrant Labourers**

Government has set up a control room in Bihar Bhawan, New Delhi. The information was passed by the Resident Commissioner of Bihar, Vipin Kumar. The control room will facilitate and provide holistic assistance to the migrant labourers of Bihar. It will work 24X7. It will provide all possible support and assistance to the people. The helpline numbers to reach the control room are 011-23792009 and 011-23014326.

### **Himachal Pradesh launched mobile app to monitor quarantined people**

Himachal Pradesh State government has unveiled 'Corona Mukht Himachal', a mobile application on 31 March as a measure to protect the State's people. The app will track and monitor the people who are quarantined for COVID-19.

### **Jharkhand launched PRAGYAAM to provide essential services**

Jharkhand state government has launched PRAGYAAM, a Mobile application, on 30 March. The app was launched by the State Chief Minister Hemant Soren. The app aims to issue e-passes to everyone associated with the delivery of essential services during the nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19.

### **Jammu Airport comes under CISF**

The Jammu airport security was taken over by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). With this there are 63 airports under CISF at present. The CISF is responsible for airport security at all commercial airports of India. Earlier the airports were under the control of airport police. However, after the hijack of Indian Airlines Flight 814 in 1999, it was handed over to CISF.

### **Tamil Nadu tops in Poshan Abhiyan's participants list**

The Union Government is implementing the flagship programme Poshan Abhiyan for improving the nutritional status of Indian citizens. It helps children, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers by leveraging technology, a targeted approach and convergence. The importance being given to the programme is evident from the fact that as many as fourteen Central Departments and all the State Governments are being involved in the programme.

### **Kerala capital hosts Attukal Pongala, world's largest religious congregation of women**

Attukal Pongala, an annual festival said to be to the largest religious congregation of women in the world, was celebrated in Thiruvananthapuram.

The festivities were held in and around the Attukal Bhagavathy Temple. Head priest Vamanan Nampoothiri lit earthen hearths, and hundreds of women cooked rice porridge with jaggery and coconut.

### **UP govt announces one month free food grains to poor**

Uttar Pradesh govt announced several actions and measures in its fight against coronavirus. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced to provide one-month free food grains to poor people along with Rs 1,000 as compensation to daily wage workers who have been affected due to the outbreak of the deadly virus.

### **Bihar govt. declares COVID-19 an epidemic**

It issued the Bihar Epidemic Diseases COVID-19 Regulation 2020 which gives legal powers to government officials to conduct mass screening of suspected patients. The Bihar government has declared COVID-19 as an epidemic and issued the Bihar Epidemic Diseases COVID-19 Regulation 2020.



### **JK approves adoption of IT/ITeS policy**

In a significant move to develop a modern IT ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir, the Administrative Council headed by Lt Governor G C Murmu accorded approval to the adoption of J-K IT/ITeS policy.

The J-K IT/Information Technology Enabled Services (ITeS) policy aims to provide time bound approvals and single window clearances to prospective investors, besides provisioning a host of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to attract investments.

### **Punjab to reduce government employees retirement age to 58 years**

Punjab State government announced major changes in the 2020-21 budget. The budget announcement was made by Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal. He presented a Rs.1,54,805 crore budget in the state Assembly. The state government announced to waive Change of Land Use (CLU) charges for two years for the new industries coming up outside the municipal limits and slash the “mandi” fee on vegetables from 4%-1%.

### **Tamil Nadu to set up technical textiles park in Salem**

Close on the heels of the Government of India announcing a Rs 1,480-crore National Technical Textiles Mission, the government of Tamil Nadu has decided to set up a ‘technical textiles park’ in Salem.

In an informal chat with BusinessLine on the sidelines of the annual meet of the Tamil Nadu chapter of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the state’s Chief Secretary, Mr K Shanmugam, said that the government has planned two textile parks, in Tuticorin and Salem. The one in Salem would be for technical textiles, he said.

### **Haryana’s Rakhigarhi to soon emerge as a major tourist destination**

Rakhigarhi in Haryana will soon emerge as a major tourist destination on the map of India. Situated around 170 kilometres from Delhi, the village is one of the most prominent and largest sites of the Harappan civilisation, popularly known as the Indus Valley Civilisation.

### **UP Government provides Rs 900 per month to farmers willing to keep stray cattle**

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced that his government will pay Rs 900 per month to farmers willing to keep stray cattle. Earlier in 2019, the farmer protests in Uttar Pradesh had gone up over stray cattle destroying their fields. The population of stray cattle in the state increased as the UP Government had banned illegal animal slaughtering in the state.

### **UP: Famous Rangotsav begins at Barsana in Mathura**

The famous Rangotsav began at Barsana in Mathura, the place which is famous for its colourful holi festivities. Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the 10-day Rangotsav and also participated in Laddoo Holi.



## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

### **Chapchar Kut, the biggest and most joyful festival of Mizos, being celebrated**

In Mizoram, the biggest and most joyful festival of Mizos, Chapchar Kut is being celebrated across the state. The Chapchar Kut is also regarded as the most popular spring festival to the people of the state. The gaiety and fervour of Chapchar Kut shines through with plenty of dancing and music to keep everyone in good spirits. This festival is a public holiday in the state.

### **Gairsain was made the new summer capital of Uttarakhand**

Gairsain was made the new summer capital of Uttarakhand. The announcement was made by Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat at the assembly session convened in Gairsain. It partially fulfilled an over two-decade demand by statehood. CM dedicated the announcement to the people who sacrificed themselves for the formation of Uttarakhand state.

### **Gujarat has highest number of Solar Rooftop Installations**

Gujarat has topped solar roof top plants across the country. The state government has taken up dedicated schemes in order to achieve renewable power goals. There are more than 50,915 rooftop solar plants set up in the state. The state government has adopted the scheme called “Surya Gujarat” in order increase the use of solar energy at domestic level.

### **Maharashtra approves a bill on caste validity certificate**

Maharashtra State Assembly approved a bill on caste validity certificate. The Bill was unanimously passed by the Maharashtra state assembly on 11 March 2020.

The Bill will allow gram panchayat members to submit their caste validity certificates within a year of winning elections. The Bill will ensure that the aspiring candidates are not barred from contesting the elections if they do not have a caste validity certificate.

### **Maharashtra implements happy hour for autorickshaws**

Maharashtra State government approved the implementation of “happy hour” for autorickshaws. The move was recommended by Khatua panel, which is led by retired IAS officer BC Khatua and the four-members of the panel.

The government resolution stated that fares would be slashed by 15% between 12 noon and 4 pm, barring the minimum fare first 1.5 km. It is applicable only for autorickshaws and not to local taxis and app-based taxis. The panel stated that it would turn lean hours to happy hours, especially for housewives and senior citizens. The move is opposed by the autorickshaw unions of the state.

### **Hola Mohalla is celebrated in Punjab**

Holi gets this joyful name in the state of Punjab. The festival is celebrated in an entirely different manner, it’s meaning and significance also shifts a little here.

Hola Mohalla is actually an annual fair that is organised in a large scale at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab on the day following the festival of Holi. Practise of holding a fair of this kind was

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

initiated by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh guru. Purpose of the fair was to physically strengthen the Sikh community by holding military exercises and mock battles.

### **Tamil Nadu hosts Divya Kala Shakti for the first time**

Tamil Nadu State government is to host the first-ever regional event “Divya Kala Shakti: Witnessing the abilities in disabilities a unique cultural” event at Kalaivanar Arangam, Chennai on 12 March 2020. The event will be witnessed by Governor of Tamil Nadu Shri Banwarilal Purohit.

Around 1000 invitees including Persons with Disabilities, Parents of Persons with Differently Abled, teachers, care-givers and NGOs, etc. are participating in the event. A large number of women are taking part in the event.

### **Maharashtra approved renaming Mumbai Central Terminus station as Nana Shankarseth Terminus Station**

The Maharashtra state cabinet government approved the renaming Mumbai Central Terminus station as Nana Shankarseth Terminus Station or Jagannath Sunkersett. The proposal will be sent to the Ministry of Railways for its approval.

The proposal was initiated by the transport ministry headed by Anil Parab. Jagannath Sunkersett was born on 10 February 1803 in Mumbai. He was a very reliable businessman. He was one of the first directors of India’s first railway company. Along with Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Sunkersett founded the Indian Railway Association in 1845.

### **Manipur government announced schemes for sportspersons, artistes**

The Manipur State government is to provide benefits to sportspersons and artistes of the state and the country. The announcement was made by the Chief Minister N Biren Singh on 15 March. It was declared that it was the biggest ever scheme for the welfare of the sportspersons and artistes of the state.

#### **CMAST scheme:**

- For the Chief Ministers Akhannaba Sanaroisingi Tengbang (CMAST) scheme, around Rs.7.36 crore will be required.
- Under the CMAST scheme, suitable employment in government services would be provided to sportspersons winning medals in international events, on the basis of criteria laid down by the state government.
- It will also support the sportspersons for purchasing costly sporting items.
- Cash awards will be awarded for Olympians who bag gold, silver, bronze, and the winners will be given Rs.1 crore, Rs.75 lakh, and Rs.50 lakh respectively.
- The government will provide incentives of up to Rs.2 lakh per annum to around 250 local clubs of the state.
- The scheme includes a lifetime pension scheme for unemployed sportspersons and coaches of 50 years and above who have represented the state or the country either in national or international tournaments.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

### **Telangana becomes latest state to pass resolution against CAA, NRC, NPR**

The Telangana government passed a resolution urging the Centre to amend the Citizenship (Amendment) Act to remove all references to any religion or country. It also expressed concern over the proposed implementation of the National Population Register (NPR) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) which “may result in exclusion of a large number of people”.

With this, Telangana joins a host of other states to oppose CAA, including Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab, West Bengal, Delhi, Rajasthan, Puducherry, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar

### **UP govt transferred Rs.611 crore to the beneficiaries under MNREGA**

On 30 March, the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath transferred Rs.611 crore in the accounts of 27.15 lakh Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) labourers of the state. The move comes in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

## International Affairs

### World economy faces worst performance since the past decade

Bank of America Corporation (BofA) economists stated that the world economy is heading for its worst performance since the 2009 financial crisis. The decline is due to the increasing spread of coronavirus across the world. The economists stated that they are expecting 2.8% global growth in 2020, which is the weakest since 2009. The forecast did not include a global pandemic that would basically shut down economic activity in many major cities.

### North Macedonia Officially Joins NATO alliance as 30th Ally

North Macedonia (formerly the Republic of Macedonia) officially became NATO's 30th member upon depositing its instrument of accession to the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO) with the US State Department in Washington DC. An official statement was released by NATO headquarters in Brussels.

### UP CM Yogi Adityanath sets up 'Team-11' to beat Coronavirus

Uttar Pradesh (UP) Chief Minister (CM) Yogi Adityanath has set up "Team-11" consisting of inter-departmental committees with over 2 dozen senior officials to fight the coronavirus spread. Each of the committees will be headed by a senior bureaucrat of the state while the CM will be the head of the Team-11.

### Fish on a click: Bengal's fish market starts home delivery

The traditional fish market is shifting to digital space with online order of fish and doorstep delivery slowly becoming the norm in Kolkata.

Besides the West Bengal government's 'Smartfish' app for online shopping of fish, six engineering students from different premier institutions have launched an online retail shop where one can get fresh fish and meat along with groceries and some other food stuff.

### Rajasthan foundation Day on march 30

Rajasthan Day is celebrated every year on March 30 to commemorate the day on which the state of Rajasthan came into existence. Rajasthan Day commemorates the valor, strong willpower and sacrifice of the people of Rajasthan. Rajasthan earlier known as Rajputana came into existence on March 30, 1949.

The state mostly comprises lands of Rajputs including the erstwhile nineteen princely states, two chief ships, and the British district of Ajmer-Merwara. Rajasthan, which is the largest state of India in terms of the area, also shares borders with Pakistan's Punjab province.

### Tokyo Olympics might be held in 2021 July

Tokyo Olympics organizers are planning to host the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics in July 2021. The event was delayed due to the coronavirus. The Tokyo Organising Committee is

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

planning to begin the events from 23 July 2021. The day was suggested by Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike.

The plan to host it in July 2021 comes as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had decided to move the games to be held in northern Sapporo city, Japan instead of Tokyo.

### **Maldives introduce motion to launch inquiry into gender discrimination on International Women's day**

Maldives Parliament introduced a motion to launch an inquiry into systemic gender discrimination on the occasion of International Women's day. Parliament's deputy speaker Eva Abdulla presented the motion seeking to identify policies, laws and systems that are detrimental to women.

Noting that women constitute 49 per cent of the country's population, the motion stated that putting an end to gender discrimination and facilitating more opportunities for women contributes to the swifter development of the nation.

### **World Cities Summit 2020 to be held in Singapore**

'World Cities Summit' is a global biennial conference hosted by Singapore. This year, World Cities Summit (WCS) 2020 is scheduled to be held from July 5 to 9. The theme of this year's summit as announced by the Singapore government is 'Liveable and Sustainable Cities: Adapting to a Disrupted World.'

### **IMF projects contraction of global output in 2020 and recovery in 2021**

The International Monetary Fund projected a contraction of global output in 2020 and recovery in 2021 as it asked the leaders of the G-20 countries to back a doubling of its USD 50 billion emergency financing capacity in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

### **World Entered Recession:IMF**

International Monetary Fund, IMF, has said that the world is in the face of a devastating impact due to the Corona virus pandemic and has clearly entered a recession. However, it projected a recovery next year.

Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said that IMF has reassessed the prospects for growth for 2020 and 2021. It said that the current recession is as bad or worse than in 2009. She said that the recovery in 2021 will only be possible if the international community succeeds in containing the virus everywhere and prevent liquidity problems from becoming a solvency issue.

### **UN economists forecast drop of up to 15% in FDI worldwide**

The rapid spread of the deadly Novel Corona virus is expected to take a serious toll on foreign direct investments worldwide, with UN economists forecasting a drop of up to 15 percent.

A fresh report from the United Nations Conference on Trade, Investment and Development (UNCTAD) warned that regardless of how quickly the COVID-19 outbreak lasted, it would

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

significantly drag down global FDI, which is a measure of cross-border private sector investment.

### **Greece handed over Olympic flame to Tokyo 2020 organisers**

Greece has handed over the Olympic flame to Tokyo 2020 organisers at an event which was 'significantly scaled-down' due to coronavirus pandemic. The ceremony, which took place at Athens' iconic Panathenaic stadium, did not include the planned cultural ceremonies from Greece or Japan.

### **Worlds only female white Giraffe and calf killed by Poachers**

Conservationist stated that Kenya's only female white Giraffe and her calf had been killed by poachers. White giraffes are rare animals that aren't found anywhere else in the world. Now, only one white Giraffe, a lone male borne by the same slaughtered female, is alive.

### **UNCTAD: India among 15 countries economically affected due to Corona Virus**

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development recently released a report on the effect of COVID-19 on global economy. According to the report, India was ranked 10th.

### **First human trial of a vaccine to protect against COVID-19 began in the US**

The first human trial of a vaccine against coronavirus (COVID-19) began at Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute (KPWHRI) in Seattle, the US.

The vaccine is called mRNA-1273. The vaccine has shown promise in animal models. It was developed by NIAID scientists and their collaborators at the biotechnology company Moderna, Inc., based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

A 43-year-old woman from Seattle received the first dose. The vaccine contains a harmless genetic code copied from the virus that causes the disease. It cannot cause COVID-19. The trial will enroll 45 healthy adult volunteers over approximately six weeks.

### **Luxembourg: The First Country in the World to provide Free Public Transport**

Luxembourg in Europe has become the first country to make all forms of public transport free. It is the second smallest country in the European Union. Around 0.2 million passengers travel to Luxembourg from its neighbouring countries such as Belgium, France and Germany for work. Also, it has the highest car density in European Union.

### **IMF says COVID-19 might cause a global recession**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that the COVID-19 pandemic will cause a global recession in 2020. The recession could be worse than the global financial crisis of 2008-2009. It is also expected that the world economic output should recover in 2021. The information was passed by the IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.

### **US-Iran: Four Nuclear Restrictions renewed by US**

The US renewed four nuclear restrictions imposed on Iran. The restrictions were imposed to prevent Iran from building its nuclear programme. The nuclear restrictions on Iran imposed by the US has been renewed for another 60 days. The decision makes it harder for Iran to work on its Nuclear programme amidst the threat of COVID-19.

### **China recommended bear bile to treat COVID-19 patients**

The National Health Commission of China published a list of recommended treatments to treat COVID-19. Apart from western medicine and Chinese medicine, the list included Tan Re Qing, injections that contain bear bile powder.

#### **Bear's Bile:**

Tan Re Qing is secreted by the liver and stored in the gallbladder of the bear. The bile from various species of bears, including Asiatic black bears and brown bears, has been used as a traditional Chinese medicine since the 8th century. Bear's bile contains high levels of ursodeoxycholic acid, also known as ursodiol.

### **Global Coalition for Biodiversity launched on World Wildlife Day**

On the sidelines of the World Wildlife Day celebrations, Global Coalition for Biodiversity was launched. The initiative was launched by the European commission. The coalition was named "United for Biodiversity".

The Coalition has called the institutions all over the world to join before the Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming, China. The Convention is to be held in China in October 2020.

### **Sri Lanka to lead BIMSTEC's Science, Technology and Innovation sector**

Sri Lanka agreed to a plan for a Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) facility for technology transfer within the country while also deciding to appoint a Director to the BIMSTEC Secretariat in June this year, during the finalisation of areas of cooperation among BIMSTEC member states, at the 20th Session of the Senior Officials' Meeting (SoM), chaired by Foreign Secretary Ravinatha Aryasinha on 3 March.

### **Prime Minister Pays Tributes to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on his 100th Birth Anniversary**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid tributes to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on his 100th Birth Anniversary. In a tweet, the Prime Minister said that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is remembered for his courage and indelible contribution to Bangladesh's progress.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

### **Asian badminton meet moved from Wuhan to Manila**

The Asian Badminton Championships slated to take place in Wuhan from April 21-26 has been relocated to Manila. The decision to move the tournament away from the epicentre of the Covid-19 outbreak which is now rocking the world, was confirmed by Badminton Asia.

### **Coronavirus outbreak could cost global economy up to USD 2 trillion: UNCTAD**

The coronavirus outbreak could cost the global economy up to USD 2 trillion this year, the UN's trade and development agency said, warning that shock from the epidemic will cause a recession in some countries and depress global annual growth to below 2.5 per cent.

### **Iran seeks financial assistance from IMF for the first time since 1962 to counter coronavirus pandemic**

Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif announced on Twitter that the Ministry had written a letter to IMF Chief Kristalina Georgieva seeking a loan to help contain the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in the country through IMF's Rapid Financial Instrument.

The RFI "provides rapid financial assistance, which is available to all member countries facing an urgent balance of payments need," as per IMF's website.

### **Canada first country to withdraw from 2020 Summer Games, others welcome talk of Olympics postponement**

Canada became the first country to pull out of the Tokyo Games due to the coronavirus pandemic and Australia told its athletes to prepare for an Olympics next year as Japan and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) flagged the prospect of a postponement for the first time.

### **United Nations Warns: 4.4 billion people to live with limited water by 2050**

On World Water Day, the United Nations warned that 3.5 to 4.4 billion people are to live with limited access to water by 2050. Of these more than 1 billion are to live in major cities.



## Foreign Relation

### **HAL planning to set up logistics bases in Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Sri Lanka**

State-run aerospace behemoth Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) is looking at setting up logistics bases in Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Sri Lanka as part of initiatives to woo the countries to buy India's light combat aircraft Tejas and military helicopters.

Chairman and Managing Director of HAL R Madhavan said the HAL is considering to build logistics bases in the four countries as they use a number of Russian-origin military aircraft and choppers whose serviceability is "very poor".

### **India-Turkey Kashmir Irritant: India proceeds with FSV Indian Navy Agreement with Turkey**

India had put the Fleet Vessel Ship (FVS) Agreement on hold. The agreement was signed with Turkey to manufacture 45,000 tonne FSV at Vishakhapatnam. India and Turkey signed the FSV agreement in 2016. FSVs are important for the Indian Navy to transport fuel and other supplies for warships at sea.

### **United Nations: India and China likely to stay away from Global Recessions**

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) made a new analysis under the title "The COVID-19 Shock to Developing Countries". The analysis says that leading exporting countries are to face drop in investments between 2 trillion USD and 3 trillion USD in the next two years.

### **India, Japan signed major rail projects for public, freight transport**

Japanese government funding agency JICA signed Rs.15,295 crore agreement with the Indian government for three mega rail infrastructure projects.

The agreement aims to cope up with the increase in freight transport demand in India by constructing new dedicated freight railway system between Delhi and Mumbai. Agreement

### **Project Arunank running in full swing in China border despite of COVID-19**

The Border Road Organization (BRO) is working in full swing to completely replace the Daporijo bridge. The bridge is the only line of communication to 451 villages located in the China border. Also, the BRO is engaged in snow clearance of Manali-Leh axis to provide relief to Ladakh and Lahaul valley.

### **Saudi Arabia to provide uninterrupted LPG supply to India**

The Union Minister of Oil Dharmendra Pradhan said that Saudi Arabia has announced to provide uninterrupted liquid petroleum gas (LPG) supplies to India. On 29 March, he discussed global oil market developments with Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman and Aramco's Chief Executive Amin Nasser.

### **Indo-Thai workshop on stellar variability and star formation was held at ARIES**

Indo-Thai workshop on stellar variability & star formation was held at ARIES, Nainital, Uttarakhand. The one-day workshop was organized by Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Department of Science and Technology (DST), that functions under the Ministry of Science & Technology.

The workshop aimed to strengthen the ongoing collaboration and expand the Indo-Thai cooperation from stellar sources to other areas of astronomy and astrophysics such as extra-galactic astronomy and instrumentation.

### **Agreement between India & Brunei for Exchange of Information notified**

The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Brunei Darussalam for the exchange of information and assistance in collection with respect of taxes (hereinafter referred to as the Agreement), was signed in New Delhi, India on 28th of February, 2019. The Agreement has been notified in the Gazette of India (Extraordinary) on 9th of March 2020.

### **India and Israel sign Rs 880 crore Defence Deal**

The Indian Armed Forces operating under Ministry of Defence signed an agreement with the Israel Weapons Industry. According to the agreement, India is to procure 16, 479 LMG (Light Machine Guns) for Rs 880 crores.

The Light Machine Guns are used as squad automatic weapons. The LMG were first used in Second World War. The name of the LMGs India is buying from Israel is called Negev. Negev is gas operated LMG.

### **India to provide 107.01 million Nepali Rupees for three new school buildings in Nepal**

Indian government will provide 107.01 million Nepali Rupees for three new school buildings in Nepal. Embassy of India and Nepal's Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with Mahakali Municipality, Darchula, and Mukhiyapatti Musharniya Rural Municipality, Dhanusha in Kathmandu for the construction of two new school buildings.

## Ranks

### **At USD 83.5 bn, India has 3rd highest trade-related illicit financial flow globally: Report**

India has the third-highest trade-related illicit financial flow among over 135 countries with a whopping USD 83.5 billion escaping the government's tax net owing to trade-based money laundering tactics, according to a report released by US-based think tank Global Financial Integrity (GFI).

The GFI classifies as illicit flows funds which are illegally earned, transferred, and/or utilised across an international border.

### **Italy becomes the country with most deaths due to COVID-19**

Italy announced 427 more fatalities from COVID-19 as it becomes the country with the most deaths due to the virus outbreak. The total death toll in the European nation at more than 3,400 has crossed China's death toll of 3,245. The total number of infections in Italy has crossed 41000.

### **International Energy Agency: India the third largest producer of Electricity**

The Ministry of Power quoted International Energy Agency ranking in the Parliament. According to the ranking, India is the third largest producer of electricity in the world. Also, it is ranked 106th in terms of per capital consumption.

### **FIH Rankings: Indian Men's Hockey Team Gets 4th Spot, Highest Ever**

The Indian men's hockey team has secured an all-time highest spot in the FIH rankings. Team India attained the fourth position since the inception of FIH world rankings in 2003. The Indian team has got this ranking because of its performance in FIH Hockey Pro League.

### **Jack Ma overtook Mukesh Ambani to become Asia's richest man**

Bloomberg Billionaires Index reported that Jack Ma became Asia's richest man. Mukesh Ambani, who stood as Asia's richest man, has moved to the second position after oil prices collapsed along with global stocks. The novel coronavirus erased \$5.8 billion from Ambani's net worth and pushed him to No.2 on the list of Asia's richest people.

### **India listed as the world's second-largest arms importer as per SIPRI**

India stands as the world's second-largest arms importer as per the "Trends in international arms transfers 2019" report of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) data. The data was released on 9 March. Saudi Arabia topped the list. Also, India has ranked 23rd position among the top 25 weapon exporters.

### **Animal Protection Index: India ranks second**

Global Animal Protection Index 2020 was released by World Animal Protection, an international animal welfare charity. India was ranked second in the index. The Animal

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

Protection Index ranks countries from A to G. India was ranked along with Spain, Mexico, France and New Zealand. In other words, these countries were ranked equally to India.

### **India shares second position with China as most promising source of disruptive technologies: KPMG**

India surged back to tie the second position with China in KPMG's 2020 global technology industry innovation survey which includes responses from more than 800 global leaders in the technology industry.

With the potential innovation headwinds China is now facing and US policies encouraging more tech professionals to return to or remain in India, the future bodes well for Indian innovation.

### **Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh top in farm credit disbursals**

Tamil Nadu has topped in disbursement of agriculture credit by giving away loans worth ₹1,63,289 crore out of a total of ₹10,33,183 crore distributed across the country till December 31 this fiscal. The South Indian State led from the front in disbursing agricultural loans last year too with disbursal of ₹1,90,222 crore.

### **United Nations launches World Happiness Report, 2020: India ranks 144**

2020 United Nations released the World Happiness Report on the International Day of Happiness, 2020. Finland ranked first in the report and India ranked 144. Around 156 countries were assessed under the ranking. This is the eighth World Happiness Report prepared by the organization.

This year the report has given a special role for environments and has linked people's happiness to their environment. Apart from environment, the report also considers urban, social and other natural factors in framing the index for a country.

## Business

### **Uber India launches sponsorship initiative for junior female employees**

Cab aggregator Uber has launched a diversity and inclusion sponsorship programme for women in India. This will be a six to twelve month engagement between a sponsor and sponsee with an aim to develop and advance junior-level female employees in their career.

### **Voda Idea to rationalise operations, merge telecom circles to cut costs**

Vodafone Idea has started operationally merging 6-7 of its weaker telecom circles with stronger ones, multiple sources familiar with the matter said, as the loss-making telecom carrier moves to cut costs and focus on prominent markets.

The decision is expected to result in another round of job losses, they said, without specifying how many employees would be asked to leave. The telco, which employs about 11,000 people directly, is working on severance packages for the workers, the sources added.

### **Google launched a tool to help developers make websites more color blind friendly**

Google launched a new Chrome tool that will allow developers to tune their websites for visual impairments like color blindness to help them fix accessibility issues on their sites.

The developers can use this feature by launching Google Chrome. The developers can head to the browser's Developer tools. Choose More tools, then select Rendering and Emulate visual deficiencies. The emulate vision deficiencies features a drop-down menu of vision limitations. The developer should select one from the menu, such as tritanopia (a condition where a person cannot distinguish the colors blue and yellow).

### **Bill Gates stepped down from the Microsofts board**

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates stepped down from Microsoft's board. Microsoft did not announce any replacement for Gates on the board. Gates also announced that he would be stepping down from the board of Berkshire Hathaway. Since 2004, he has served as a director of Berkshire Hathaway.

### **SpiceJet, GHASL sign agreement to develop free trade zone at Hyderabad's RGI airport**

SpiceJet has signed an Agreement to Lease with GMR Hyderabad Aviation SEZ Limited (GHASL), a 100 per cent subsidiary of GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd.

Under the partnership, GHASL will construct a facility for SpiceJet to carry out the warehousing, distribution and trading activity within the Free Trade Warehousing Zone of multi-product Special Economic Zone (SEZ), popularly known as GMR Aerospace & Industrial Park.

### **OIL signed agreement with Numaligarh Refinery for crude oil sale**

India's second-largest national oil explorer Oil India Ltd (OIL), signed an agreement with Numaligarh Refinery for purchase and sale of crude oil for a term of five years. The agreement was signed by the finance directors of the two companies.

### **Microsoft, US CDC tie-up to create 'Clara', a COVID-19 self-screening bot**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has introduced an AI bot called 'Clara' to help people assess potential symptoms of COVID-19.

The CDC has partnered up with CDC Foundation and Microsoft Azure's Healthcare Bot service to create Clara, the "coronavirus self-checker." the bot is currently only available in the US on the CDC website.

### **ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel completes acquisition of Bhandar power unit in Hazira**

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) announced that it has completed the acquisition of Bhandar Power Plant in Hazira, Gujarat from Edelweiss Asset Reconstruction Company. Bhandar, a natural gas-based thermal plant with an installed capacity of 500 MW, will remain captive to AM/NS India's steel manufacturing operations at Hazira. The size of the deal was not immediately disclosed but it is understood to be around Rs 500 crore.

### **Microsoft, Accenture team up to help entrepreneurs amplify**

Microsoft Corp. and Accenture said that they were teaming up to help deepen the reach of entrepreneurs and start-ups that are focused on social impact and sustainability. The joint initiative will provide hands-on support and technologies to social enterprises, helping them build scalable solutions and business models that can lead to more tangible and lasting benefits for a greater number of people around the world, the two companies said.

### **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana signs MoU with Amazon to e-market**

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) has signed MoU with Amazon to e-market products made by self help groups in India. The MoU has been signed as a part of Women's Day celebration. Every year March 8 is celebrated as International Women's Day.

### **Shriram Transport signs MOU with Indian Oil Corporation to offer fuel credit to its customers digitally**

Shriram Transport Finance Company (STFC) has signed a MOU with Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL) through which its customers will be offered credit limit to purchase fuel from their outlets.

### **Reliance Communications' Resolution Plan Filed Before NCLT**

The resolution professional of Reliance Communications has approached the National Company Law Tribunal with a resolution plan approved by the creditors of the telecom firm under the insolvency and bankruptcy code, according to a regulatory filing.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

### **Aon buys Willis for \$30 billion in world's largest insurance deal**

Aon Plc said it would buy Willis Towers Watson Plc for nearly \$30 billion, in an all-stock deal which will make it the world's biggest insurance broker and give it more pricing power, but also attract regulatory scrutiny.

### **Microsoft India, NASSCOM Foundation launch initiative to empower people with disabilities**

Microsoft India and NASSCOM Foundation launched the Innovate for Accessible India campaign aimed at empowering people with disabilities with the technology and tools required for better integration into society and access to equal opportunities.

### **HUL to acquire VWash from Glenmark Pharma**

Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) said it has signed an agreement with Glenmark PharmaceuticalsNSE 0.50 % Ltd to acquire its intimate hygiene brand VWash.

The deal includes acquisition of intellectual property rights including trademarks, design and know-how related to the VWash brand but not manufacturing units. The brand, launched in 2013 controls half the the female intimate hygiene category and grew 48% in FY 2018-19.

### **IOC becomes 1st company to begin supply of BS-VI fuel across country**

Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the nation's biggest oil firm, has begun the supply of the world's cleanest petrol and diesel across the country with all its 28,000 petrol pumps dispensing ultra-low sulphur fuel a good two weeks before the April 1 deadline.

"We have successfully rolled out the supply of BS-VI grade fuel across the country," IOC Chairman Sanjiv Singh said.



## Defence News

### **India's 40 million USD defence deal with Armenia beats Russia and Poland**

India bagged a deal to supply 4 indigenously built radars (capable of locating weapons) to Armenia. The deal was worth 40 million USD. India and Armenia signed deals on DRDO built "Swati" weapon locating radars. Armenia has decided to go with Indian built radars after testing Russian and Poland made systems. Armenia also claims that Indian made systems were more reliable as compared to the other two.

### **'She inspires Us' Indian Army conducts Self Defence Training for Women**

Nalbari, 06 Mar. As a prelude to the upcoming International Women's Day and conscious to the increasing danger to the safety of women in our society, a unit of Indian Army organized a demonstration on Self Defence themed "Stronger You Stronger Society" for the local womenfolk at Dhamdhama Anchlik College in Nalbari District.

### **CISF celebrated 51st raising day on 10 March**

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) celebrated the 51st raising day on 10 March. The day was celebrated by CISF personnel and their families. CISF was established on 10 March 1969.

It is a Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) in India. There are around 2,800 personnel in CISF. It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs. CISF is headquartered in New Delhi. Union Home Minister Amit Shah is the Minister in charge of the force. The Director-General of CISF is Rajesh Ranjan, IPS.

### **DRDO develops N99 masks, ventilators and hand sanitizers to help fight against COVID-19**

The DRDO (Defence Research Development Organization) has been tracking the spread of the COVID-19 virus since it began to spread in China. Now, the organization has developed four items to help India in its "War against Corona".

### **Indian Army launched Operation Namaste**

Indian Army has launched an initiative christened 'Operation Namaste' to extend all possible assistance to the government in containing the spread of coronavirus. The operation was launched by Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane on 27 March.

Under the operation, the Indian Army has issued several directives to all its bases to insulate the force from the coronavirus. The army has set up a command-wise helpline as part of measures to deal with any possible eventualities arising out of the pandemic. The army has set up 28 service hospitals to deal with coronavirus cases including civilian patients.

## Science and Technology

### Researchers detected biggest explosion since Big Bang

Researchers have detected evidence of a colossal explosion in space which is five times bigger than anything observed before. The huge release of energy is expected to have occurred from a supermassive black hole which is located around some 390 million light-years from Earth. Also, the scientists stated that the explosion might have left a giant dent in the Ophiuchus galaxy cluster.

### INST Scientists develops calcium-modified carboxymethyl-starch to stop rapid blood loss during accidents

Scientists from the Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST) have developed a starch-based ‘hemostat’ material, named calcium-modified carboxymethyl-starch, that can stop life-threatening bleeding after a serious injury.

The Hemostat material is a biodegradable microparticles. It concentrates the natural clotting factors in blood by physically absorbing excess fluid. The microparticles were prepared by modifying some of the chemical hydroxyl groups on starch to carboxymethyl groups and incorporating the beneficial calcium ions.

This combination increases the aggregation of red blood cells (RBCs) and platelets and speeds up the activation to generate the fibrin protein network that forms a stable blood clot.

### INST Scientists develops calcium-modified carboxymethyl-starch to stop rapid blood loss during accidents

Scientists from the Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST) have developed a starch-based ‘hemostat’ material, named calcium-modified carboxymethyl-starch, that can stop life-threatening bleeding after a serious injury.

The Hemostat material is a biodegradable microparticles. It concentrates the natural clotting factors in blood by physically absorbing excess fluid. The microparticles were prepared by modifying some of the chemical hydroxyl groups on starch to carboxymethyl groups and incorporating the beneficial calcium ions.

This combination increases the aggregation of red blood cells (RBCs) and platelets and speeds up the activation to generate the fibrin protein network that forms a stable blood clot.

### UN Report: “Peatland” protection will help attain climate goals

The Food and Agriculture Organization operating under United Nations released a report recently on Peatlands. The report says that though Peatlands cover only 3% of the earth’s surface, they trigger the carbon that were locked in a few decades.

## **Mutation and Pangolins main source of COVID-19**

According to a research published in the journal “Pathogen”, virus jumped to humans from Pangolins. Also, mutation was the main reason for the virus to target human cells so easily and hence leads to fast spread of the virus.

## **Red pandas are actually two separate species, study finds**

Red pandas, the bushy-tailed and russet-furred mammals that dwell in Asia’s high forests, are not a single species but rather two distinct ones, according to the most comprehensive genetic study to date on these endangered animals.

Scientists said they found substantial divergences between the two species – Chinese red pandas and Himalayan red pandas – in three genetic markers in an analysis of DNA from 65 of the animals.

## **Scientists found bacteria that can replace fertilizers, fungicides in tea plants**

Researchers at the Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST) Guwahati found significant plant-growth-promoting and antifungal activities of endophytic actinobacteria associated with Tea plant and related genera, Eurya.

## **ARI developed ARI-516, a hybrid variety of grapes**

Scientists from the Agharkar Research Institute (ARI) have developed a hybrid variety of grapes, ARI-516. It is resistant to fungal diseases, high yielding, and has excellent juice quality.

### **Highlights :**

- ARI-516 was developed by interbreeding of two species from the same genus Catawba variety of *Vitis labrusca* and Beauty seedless variety of *Vitis vinifera*.
- The hybrid suitable for the preparation of juice, raisin, jam, and red wine, and farmers are enthusiastically adopting the variety.
- It is expected that the hybrid can benefit farmers, the processing industry, and consumers.
- The grape has superior quality fruits and higher yield per unit area. It matures in 110-120 days after pruning.

## **Methanotrophic Bacteria Culture first time in India**

The Agharkar Research Institute of Pune has isolated 45 strains of methanotrophic bacteria. These bacteria are capable of reducing methane emissions in rice plants.

Apart from isolating the strains, the scientists have also created methanotrophic culture. The isolated bacteria were from southern and western India.

## **Roche Diagnostics India first private firm to get COVID-19 test approval**

Swiss firm Roche Diagnostics India received the license for conducting coronavirus tests after approval from drug regulator DCGI, making it the first private firm to get such permission after the government decided to allow accredited private labs to test for COVID-19.

According to a senior official, the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) is now assessing giving license to another private diagnostic firm, bio rieux, which has also sought approval to conduct tests for coronavirus.

## **ISRO to launch 36 missions in the current fiscal year**

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh, announced that the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) had planned 36 missions for the fiscal year 2020-21. ISRO is to send up ten earth observation satellites during 2020-21.

### **Mission of ISRO for FY-2020-21:**

- Earth observation satellite- 10
- Communication satellite- 3
- Navigation satellite-
- Space science satellite- 3
- Technology Demonstration- 1
- PSLV- 10
- GSLV MK II- 3
- GSLV MK III- 1
- Small Satellite Launch Vehicle- 2
- Gaganyaan (Unmanned mission)- 1

## **WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic**

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, a “pandemic” on 11 March. The infectious disease has spread freely in more than 100 countries around the world.

In January, WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a “global health emergency.” WHO’s highest level of alarm reserves for the most sudden, serious, unexpected outbreaks that cross international borders and might require a coordinated response between countries.

### **Pandemic-Definition:**

According to WHO, a new disease that is spread worldwide and the determination is made based on the geographic spread of a disease, the severity of illnesses it causes, and its effects on society are defined as “pandemic.”

## **IISc researchers develop a method to rapidly detect disease-causing bacteria**

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have developed a new method to rapidly identify and check whether a disease-causing bacterium is alive or dead. The uniqueness of the method is the rapidity and sensitivity of the method.

### **Fossil links human hands to fins for the first time in Human Evolution**

The Paleontologists of Canada have linked human hands to the fins of fish. The researchers examined a fossil of “Elpistostege”. The Elpistostege represents the pivotal stage of transition of fish into land vertebrates. The transition was supported by the front fins of the fish called the pectoral fins.

### **GoI develops new biofortified high protein wheat variety**

The scientists of Agharkar Research Institute (Pune), operating under Department of Science and Technology (DST) have developed biofortified high quality wheat. The new variety is MACS 4028.

The new wheat variety has 14.7% better nutritional quality, 40.3 ppm of iron content and high milling quality. The new variety is semi-dwarf and matures in 102 days. Also, it has high yielding ability of 19.3 quintals per hectare.

# CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

## Sports

Name	Tournament Name	Extra Information
Dutee Chand	Khelo India University Games – Gold in 100m race	Long distance runner Narendra Pratap Singh bagged his second title at Khelo India University Games in Bhubaneswar.
Rafael Nadal	Mexican Open title	In Tennis, World Number 2 Rafael Nadal captured his first title of the year, defeating unseeded Taylor Fritz in straight sets, 6-3, 6-2, in the final of the ATP Mexico Open.
Shafali Verma	Becomes world number one WT20I batsman after 18 T20Is	Shafali is only the second Indian batsman after Mithali Raj to top Women's T20I rankings.
Australia	ICC Women's T20 World Cup	Defending champions Australia have won the ICC Women's T20 World Cup for record fifth time, outclassing India by 85 runs in the summit clash at Melbourn.
Amit Panghal, Lovlina Borgohain	bronze medal in the Asian Boxing Olympic qualifiers	Boxers Amit Panghal and Lovlina Borgohain won the bronze medal in the Asian Boxing Olympic qualifiers held in Amman, Jordan. Both the boxers had already claimed their place in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
Tai Tzu Ying	2020 All England Badminton Championships	Taiwan's Tai Tzu Ying won the third women's singles title in four years at the Yonex All England Badminton Championships 2020 in Birmingham, England.

## Obituary

<b>Name</b>	<b>Associated Field</b>
Joginder Singh Saini	Veteran athletics coach and Dronacharya awardee
Balbir Singh Kullar	Former India hockey star and Olympic bronze medallist
Javier Pérez de Cuellar	Former U.N. Chief and Peruvian Diplomat
K Anbazhagan	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) General Secretary
Vijayan Pillai	CPI(M) MLA
Santu Mukhopadhyay	Veteran Bengali actor
Patil Puttappa	Former Rajya Sabha member and veteran journalist
Kenny Rogers	Country Music Icon
Viswanathan	Tamil director
Abdul Latif	Former Indian international Football Player
Albert Uderzo	Asterix co-creator and illustrator
Joseph Lowery	Civil rights leader
Beni Prasad Verma	Former Union Minister and Samajwadi Party founding member
Chandan Singh	1971 war icon



# CURRENT AFFAIRS PDF – MARCH 2020

## Important Days

Day	Date	Theme
Zero Discrimination Day	March 01	
World Defence Day	March 01	
World Hearing Day	March 03	Don't let hearing loss limit you
World Wildlife Day	March 03	Sustaining all life on Earth
National Security Day	March 04	
Janaushadhi week	March 01 - 07	
International Women's Day	March 08	An Equal World is an Enabled World
World Consumer Rights day	March 15	The Sustainable Customer
Ordnance Factory Day	March 18	
French Language Day	March 20	Happiness For All, Together.'
World Sparrow Day	March 20	I Love Sparrow
French Language Day	March 20	
International Nowruz Day	March 21	Forests and Biodiversity
World Water Day	March 22	Water and Climate Change
Shaheedi Diwas	March 23	
World Meteorological Day	March 23	Climate and Water
Tuberculosis Day	March 24	It's time to end TB!
International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade	March 25	
International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members	March 25	
World theatre day	March 27	