Weekly Current Affairs PDF March 21 to March 27, 2021

Current Affairs PDF- March 27, 2021

INTERNATIONAL

Bangladesh celebrates 50 years of independence

- Bangladesh celebrates 50 years of its Independence and National Day on 26 March, coinciding with the grand celebration of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- On March 26, 1971, Bangladesh was proclaimed as an independent nation by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and this led to Bangladesh Liberation War when war ensued between Pakistan and Bangladesh liberation forces with Indian support.

NATIONAL

IIT Kharagpur wins CoreNet Global Academic Challenge 6.0

- A team of four undergraduate students from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur emerged as winners at the CoreNet Global Academic Challenge 6.0, sponsored by Cushman and Wakefield, KI and IA: Interior Architects. The team comprised Siddhant Samarth, Pratim Majumdar, Rishita Raj and Utkarsh Agrawal and were guided by Prof. Jenia Mukherjee (Department of Humanities and Social Sciences).
- The team from IIT Kharagpur was one of the four teams to progress into the final round out of 1300 teams all over the world and were pitted against the University of Washington, New York University and the University of Denver in the final round hosted online on 18th March 2021. This is the first time that a squad from India has emerged as winners in the CoreNet Global Academic Challenge since the inception of the competition in 2015.

Vizag gets mobile water from air kiosk and Water Knowledge Centre

- The Hyderabad-based startup, Maithri Aquatech has set up the world’s first mobile water-from-air kiosk and ‘Water Knowledge Centre’ in the smart city of Visakhapatnam. This initiative is supported by Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) and project SEWAH (Sustainable Enterprises for Water and Health) – an alliance between USAID and SWN (Safe Water Network).
- The kiosk will provide clean potable water from the air by making use of Maithri Aquatech’s Meghdoot solution as a source to generate water with no dependency on groundwater as well as surface water resources.
- The kiosk will also function as a Water Knowledge Resource Centre (WRKC) by creating awareness and imparting necessary information to members of the local underserved communities as well as nearby schools on the benefits of good water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices.
J&K LG Manoj Sinha e-inaugurates 73 AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres

- Jammu and Kashmir, LG Manoj Sinha has e-inaugurated 73 AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres under Ayushman Bharat across the UT. These centres aim to promote good health and expanding the outreach of comprehensive primary healthcare services to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Lt Governor observed that AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres would be a game-changer in the UT of J&K, especially in promoting the AYUSH sector, so that comprehensive primary health care through AYUSH principles and practices is provided to the community for achieving the basic objective of holistic wellness model by advocating self-care and home remedies amongst the community.

Features of Health & Wellness Centres:

- Some of the features of AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres include medicinal plants garden, yoga space, providing training and suggestions for home treatment, promoting Dincharya (Art of healthy Living), Ritucharya (Wellness calendar) and a personalized healthcare approach.

SPORTS

Khelo India Scheme extended till 2025-26

- Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has decided to extend the Khelo India scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The Ministry has furnished an Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) memorandum to the Ministry of Finance for extension/continuation of the Khelo India Scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- An amount of Rs 8750 crore has been estimated as the financial implication of the new Khelo India Scheme (2021-22 to 2025-26) in the EFC memorandum furnished to the Ministry of Finance. An amount of Rs 657.71 crore has been allocated in the Budget Estimate (B.E.) for the year 2021-22 under the Khelo India Scheme.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Indian Coast Guard Ship ‘Vajra’ commissioned to the Indian Coast Guard

- L&T-built Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) ICGS Vajra was commissioned into the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) by General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Defence Staff, at Chennai. ICGS Vajra is the sixth vessel in the series of seven OPVs being built by L&T under a Ministry of Defence contract signed in the year 2015. Like the five OPVs in the series, ICGS Vajra was also delivered ahead of the contractual schedule.
- OPVs are long-range surface ships, capable of operation in maritime zones of India, including island territories with helicopter operation capabilities.
- Their roles include coastal and offshore patrolling, policing maritime zones of India, control and surveillance, anti-smuggling and anti-piracy operations with limited wartime roles. It can attain a sustained speed of up to 26 knots.
- The entire design and construction process has been certified by the American Bureau of Shipping as well as the Indian Registrar of Shipping and overseen by the ICG’s resident team at Kattupalli.
India conducts first-ever joint patrol in Madagascar EEZ

- In a first, the navies of India and Madagascar undertook joint patrolling of Madagascar’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and also conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX). The first-ever joint patrol between the navies reflects the growing defence ties between the two Indian Ocean neighbours aimed at the common objective of ensuring maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- Indian Naval Ship INS Shardul made a port call at Antsiranana, Madagascar as part of the First Training Squadron’s (1TS) Overseas Deployment. INS Shardul and Malagasy Navy ship MNS Trozona carried out a Passage Exercise (PASSEX). The Joint exercise bears testimony to the growing bonds between the maritime forces of both the nations and aimed at common objectives of ensuring mariti

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Saurabh Garg appointed as new CEO of UIDAI

- Senior bureaucrat, Saurabh Garg has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) as part of a bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre. Mr Garg is at present serving in his cadre state Odisha. He is a 1991 batch IAS officer.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Mr Garg as the CEO, UIDAI in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry.

Atish Chandra appointed as CMD of Food Corporation of India

- Atish Chandra has been appointed as Chairman and Managing Director, Food Corporation of India in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary.
- Mr Chandra, a 1994 batch IAS officer of Bihar cadre, is currently Joint Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare.

Anish Shah to take over as M&M’s Managing Director, CEO

- Anish Shah who is set to take over as the managing director and CEO of Mahindra and Mahindra from 2 April will become the first professional executive to oversee the entire business of the $19.4 billion Mahindra Group. Pawan Goenka will retire as MD and CEO and member of the board effective April 2.
- Group chairman Anand Mahindra will be taking on a non-executive role. The markets regulator Sebi has mandated that from April 2022 the chairperson of the board of top 500 listed entities must be a non-executive director and not be related to the MD or CEO.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Earth Hour 2021: 27 March

- Every year, the Earth Hour is celebrated worldwide on the last Saturday of March month to show support for the fight against climate change and commitment towards a better planet. Earth Hour 2021 is being marked on March 27, 2021. The Earth Hour 2021 theme will focus on “Climate Change to Save Earth.”
The Day is a worldwide movement organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), encouraging individuals, communities, corporates, and households to turn off their lights for one hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. It was started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007 to raise awareness for energy consumption and its effects on the environment.

World Theatre Day: 27 March
- World Theatre Day is observed globally on 27th March every year. World Theatre Day was initiated in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute (ITI), France. It is celebrated annually on the 27th March by ITI Centres and the international theatre community. This day is a celebration for those who can see the value and importance of the art form “theatre”, and acts as a wake-up-call for governments, politicians and institutions which have not yet recognised its value to the people and to the individual and have not yet realised its potential for economic growth.
- Every year the Executive Council of ITI chooses an outstanding theatre personality to write the message for World Theatre Day. The author of the Message of World Theatre Day 2021 is Helen MIRREN, United Kingdom. The first World Theatre Day Message was written by Jean Cocteau in 1962.

Current Affairs PDF- March 26, 2021

INTERNATIONAL

Indian-American Doctor Vivek Murthy appointed as US Surgeon General
- The US Senate has voted, 57-43, to confirm the appointment of Indian-American doctor Vivek Murthy as the Surgeon General under US President Biden’s administration.
- The 43-year-old Dr Murthy would occupy the position of America’s Surgeon General for the second time. Prior to this, Dr Murthy was appointed as surgeon general under the Obama administration in 2011 but was fired by former President Trump in 2017.

World’s first Ship Tunnel to be built in Norway
- The Norwegian Coastal Administration has received the green signal to start working on the construction of the world’s first tunnel, being built exclusively for ships. The tunnel is dubbed as “Stad Ship Tunnel” and would be built under the mountainous Stadhavet peninsula in northwestern Norway.
  
  About the Tunnel:
  - The 1.7 km tunnel will be able to handle ships of up to 16,000 tonnes and give ships a safer passage through the treacherous Stadhavet Sea.
  - The tunnel will be 49 metres (161 ft) high and 36 metres (118 ft) wide.
  - It is estimated to cost at least 2.8 billion Norwegian kroner (NZ$460 million) the construction of this ship tunnel.
  - The construction would begin in 2022 and would take three to four years to complete.
NATIONAL

Nirmala Sitharaman launches Central Scrutiny Centre and IEPFA mobile App
- Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman virtually inaugurated Central Scrutiny Centre (CSC) and Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority’s (IEPFA) Mobile App. The two tech-enabled initiatives have been launched by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to leverage digital solutions to achieve the Prime Minister’s vision of ‘Digitally empowered India. 

**About the Mobile App:**
- The Mobile App will focus on financial literacy by spreading investors’ awareness, education, and protection among investors.
- The Mobile App has been developed for citizen engagement and information dissemination to promote awareness among investors.

Hardeep Singh Puri inaugurates Kurnool Airport in Andhra Pradesh
- Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Civil Aviation, Hardeep Singh Puri has inaugurated the Kurnool Airport, in Andhra Pradesh virtually. The flight operations at Kurnool airport will begin on 28 March 2021. This airport has been developed under the Regional Connectivity Scheme, Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN).

**About the airport:**
- Kurnool airport will bring the region closer to major hubs in South India by providing direct flight operations to Bangalore, Vishakhapatnam and Chennai.
- Kurnool is the 6th airport in Andhra Pradesh to become functional after Kadapa, Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, Rajahmundry & Vijayawada.

SPORTS

ISSF World Cup: India’s Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar Wins Gold
- India’s Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar won gold in the men’s 50m Rifle 3 Positions event at the ISSF World Cup in New Delhi. The 20-year-old became the youngest in history to win a shooting World Cup gold in the 3 Positions event. The two other Indian shooters in the final, Sanjeev Rajput finishing sixth and Niraj Kumar came at the last position.
- This was India’s 8th gold medal in the ongoing World Cup. India continues to dominate the medal tally with 15 so far. India has won three silver medals and four bronze to go with the eight gold medals.

OBITUARY

Acclaimed Polish Poet Adam Zagajewski passes away
- Renowned Polish poet Adam Zagajewski has passed away. He was a leading figure in Poland’s New Wave or Generation ‘68, a literary movement of the late 1960s that called for a simple language to relate directly to reality.
- Zagajewski’s “Try to Praise the Mutilated World,” was translated into English by Clare Cavanaugh and published in The New Yorker.
Sanjeev Kumar appointed as Chairman of Airports Authority of India
- IAS Sanjeev Kumar has appointed as Chairman of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- Kumar is a 1993-batch IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved his appointment.

Principal Scientific Advisor K. VijayRaghavan gets extension
- The government has extended the term of Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) K. VijayRaghavan by a year. He was appointed PSA in 2018 after retiring as Secretary of, Department of Biotechnology. His contract ends on April 2 but has now been extended until April 2022.
- Since the pandemic began, the Office of the PSA has been among the key coordinating agencies with industry, research bodies, health and science ministries to accelerate the development of diagnostics, drugs and vaccines. The PSA office has also been instrumental in formulating the National Science Innovation and Technology Policy as well as the forthcoming National Research Foundation.

CJI SA Bobde recommends Justice NV Ramana as his successor
- Chief Justice of India (CJI) SA Bobde has recommended Justice NV Ramana’s name as his successor after he retires next month. CJI Bobde is set to retire on 23 April. In a letter to the Law Ministry, CJI SA Bobde recommended Justice Ramana as his successor. Justice NV Ramana is the most senior judge in the apex court after CJI Bobde. On appointment, Justice NV Ramana will be the 48th Chief Justice of India and he will have a long tenure as CJI for over 16 months.
- The Centre had last week asked CJI Bobde to recommend his successor. Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had reportedly sent a letter to Justice Bobde, seeking his recommendation, as is the practice under the Memorandum of Procedure for Appointment of Chief Justice of India. The recommendation letter has to come around a month before the vacancy arises.

World TB Day 2021: Kerala’s TB eradication programme bags national honour
- Kerala’s tuberculosis eradication programme had won national honour as the state bagged the Union government’s award for reducing the prevalence of the disease through various systematic initiatives. Kerala is the only state had chosen for recognition in the state category.
- The southern state has reduced the TB prevalence rate by 5 per cent in the last five years as part of achieving sustainable development goals. The nation has set an ambitious goal to achieve “End Tuberculosis” by reducing the incidence of new TB cases by 80% by 2025, five years ahead of UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Asha Bhosle to be honoured with ‘Maharashtra Bhushan’
- Legendary singer Asha Bhosle will be honoured with the prestigious Maharashtra Bhushan Award for the year 2020. A committee chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray decided to select Ms Bhosle for the award for the year 2020. Ms Bhosle, whose sister Lata Mangeshkar
won the award for 1997, said she got to know from Mr Thackeray that she has been selected for the award for 2020. Ms Bhosle received the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2000.

- The award, instituted in 1996 by the State government to recognise distinguished work and achievements of eminent persons from the State, representing different walks of life, carries a cash prize of Rs.10 lakh and a citation.
- The first Maharashtra Bhushan awardee was Marathi writer P.L. Deshpande and the last winner of this award was historian Babasaheb Purandare who got it for the year 2015.

**BOOKS AND AUTHORS**

A book titled ‘My Experiments with Silence’ authored by Samir Soni

- The book “My Experiments with Silence” is authored by Samir Soni on anxiety and self-discovery. Soni’s book aims to be a personal account of his dialogues with himself during his growing-up years in Delhi, his stint at Wall Street and his time in Bollywood.
- The book will be published by OM Books International. Soni said his book will be an “ode to anyone who has fought or is fighting their inner demons”.

**BANKING AND ECONOMY**

Indian Overseas Bank launches ‘IOB Trendy’ savings account

- Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) has launched ‘IOB Trendy’, a savings account customised for the growing millennial population in the country by keeping their banking preferences in mind. IOB Trendy is a Savings Bank Account Scheme introduced by the bank towards this endeavour.

**About the IOB Trendy account**

- For opening an IOB Trendy account, a customer needs to be within the age bracket of 21 – 38 years.
- The account may be self or jointly operated. In the case of a joint account, the primary holder has to be a millennial at the time of account opening.
- There is no ‘Opening Balance’ requirement for IOB Trendy. So, no charges will be levied for the first month for non-maintenance of balance.
- However, IOB Trendy customers need to maintain a daily minimum balance of Rs.10,000 or a daily minimum balance of Rs.5,000 and a digital turnover (transactions using IOB ATM / CDM / IOB Mobile Banking or Internet Banking fund transfer / IOB UPI transactions or IOB Debit card POS transactions) of a minimum of Rs.20,000 per month.
- The millennial-focused account also offers features like an online application submission facility, free personalised accident (death) insurance cover of Rs.5 lakh if the quarterly average balance is Rs.1 lakh and above, auto-sweep facility when the balance exceeds Rs.50,000 among others.

**Current Affairs PDF- March 25, 2021**

**INTERNATIONAL**

Pabbi-Anti-Terror 2021: India, Pakistan and China to hold anti-terror exercise

- The eight-member bloc said that the decision to hold the joint exercise ‘Pabbi-Anti-Terror 2021’
was announced during the 36th meeting of the Council of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, including India, Pakistan and China, will hold a joint anti-terrorism exercise this year.

- “Decisions have been made to improve cooperation between the competent authorities of the SCO member states in identifying and suppressing channels that finance terrorist activities. Delegations of the competent authorities of India, Kazakhstan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the RATS Executive Committee attended the meeting.

NATIONAL

POWERGRID Launches Certified E-Tendering Portal “PRANIT”

- Power Grid Corporation of India (POWERGRID) has launched an “e-Tendering Portal” called ‘PRANIT’ to make the tendering process more transparent. The portal ”PRANIT” will involve less paperwork and allow ease of operation, which in turn will make the tendering process more transparent.
- The portal has been certified by Standardisation, Testing and Quality Certification Directorate (STQC), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, GoI. POWERGRID is the only organization in India to have an e-procurement solution on SAP Supplier Relationship Management (SRM), complying with all applicable requirements relating to security and transparency as stipulated by STQC.

Andhra Pradesh to launch India’s first Govt-Run Animal Ambulance Network

- The state government of Andhra Pradesh has decided to set up “India’s first government-run ambulance network” for animals. This decision was taken in order to further boost the animal husbandry and veterinary sector in the state. Ambulance network as one of its main missions in order to help in reaching out to the distressed animals to provide them with proper animal healthcare. The Animal Husbandry Department was directed to set up one Mobile Ambulance Veterinary Clinic at each of the assembly constituency.
- A total of 175 mobile ambulances (veterinary) clinics will be placed at Assembly Constituency Level on the lines of 108 Services for providing Veterinary services at the doorstep.
- These mobile ambulances shall provide veterinary first aid services along with spot diagnosis and attending to emergency cases. One of the major facilities these ambulances will provide is the ‘Hydraulic Lift’ facility to lift animals and shift them to the nearest Government Veterinary Facility in case of emergency.
- One veterinary doctor, One Para-veterinary worker, will be assigned to every ambulance.
- These ambulances will also have a 24/7 toll-free call centre.
- The department of Animal Husbandry has briefed CM that there are around 1576 veterinary dispensaries established across the state, with around 1376 veterinary doctors recruited.
- The chief minister said that more veterinary doctors need access to better functioning and better treatment.
Ramesh Pokhriyal inaugurates Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak in New Delhi

- The inauguration took place on the occasion of a programme organised by the University of Delhi on ‘Shaheed Diwas’ to pay homage and commemorate 90 years of martyrdom of our national icons of the Indian National Movement – Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru.

SPORTS

Shreyas Iyer Signs Up With Lancashire For Royal London Cup 2021

- English county Lancashire has announced the overseas signing of India batsman Shreyas Iyer for the 2021 Royal London Cup. Iyer becomes 6th Indian to sign for Lancashire. Iyer will arrive at Old Trafford on July 15 ahead of the start of the 50-over tournament and will remain with Lancashire for the duration of the month-long group stage. The top-order batsman is regarded as one of the most attacking and fluent stroke players in Indian cricket and he has played in 21 ODIs and 29 T20 Internationals for his country.
- The signing of Shreyas Iyer signals the latest step in Lancashire's long association with Indian cricket, which stretches back more than 50 years when India wicketkeeper-batsman Farokh Engineer joined the county in 1968. He would go on to become a Lancashire legend and now serves as a vice-president of the club. Since Engineer retired, four other Indian players -- Murali Kartik, Dinesh Mongia, VVS Laxman, and Sourav Ganguly -- have represented Lancashire.

India’s Singraj wins gold in Para Shooting World Cup 2021

- Indian para-athlete Singhraj won the gold medal in the 2021 Para Shooting World Cup at Al Ain in the UAE. He defeated Uzbekistan’s Server Ibragimov to get the top honour in the P1 – Men’s 10m Air Pistol SH1 final.
- Singhraj pipped Rio 2016 bronze medallist Ibragimov by a thin margin of 2.8 points. The final score read 236.8-234. Turkey’s former Paralympic champion Muharrem Korhan Yamaç took the bronze with 214.4 points. With this, India has moved to third place in the medals table. India has now two medals on its list – one gold and one bronze.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

- International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is observed annually on 25th March every year. This day offers the opportunity to honour and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system. International Day also aims to raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.
- International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is a United Nations international observance designated in 2007 to be marked on 25 March every year. The day honours and remembers those who suffered and died as a consequence of the transatlantic slave trade, which has been called “the worst violation of human rights in history”,
in which over 400 years more than 15 million men, women and children were the victims.

**SUMMITS AND MOU’S**

**India, Japan agree for greater cooperation in patent verification**
- India and Japan have agreed to recognize each other’s offices to act mutually as competent International Searching and International Preliminary Examining Authority (ISA/IPEA) for any international patent application filed with them. This memorandum of cooperation on the industrial property was arrived at during the 4th review meeting between DPIIT and Japan Patent Office.
- India had approved an MoC between the Indian Patent Office (IPO) and the JPO for entering into a PPH on a pilot basis for three years. This is a reciprocal arrangement, so the JPO will also be able to accelerate the prosecution of a Japanese application using positive examination results received from the IPO. The IPO will only offer acceleration for patent applications in certain technical fields such as physics, computer science, IT, electronics, metallurgy and automobiles.

**UP and MP sign agreement with Jal Shakti Ministry for ‘Ken-Betwa Link’ project**
- On the occasion of World Water Day, the governments of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh signed an agreement with the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti to implement the Ken-Betwa river interlinking project. The main purpose of this project is to carry water from surplus regions to drought-prone and water-scarce region through the interlinking of rivers.
- The surplus water will be transferred from the Ken river in Panna district in Madhya Pradesh to the Betwa river in Uttar Pradesh.
- The project will benefit the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, by resolving the water scarcity and thus bring prosperity to this region.
- The water will be transferred through the construction of the Dhaudan Dam and a 221 km-long canal.
- The Ken-Betwa Link Project will provide annual irrigation of 2.51 lakh hectares, 1,700 million cubic meters (mcm) of water to Uttar Pradesh and drinking water supply to about 62 lakh people and also generate 103 MW of hydropower.

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

**Hindi Writer Prof. Sharad Pagare Selected for Vyas Samman 2020**
- Well known Hindi writer, Prof. Sharad Pagare will be conferred with the prestigious Vyas Samman – 2020. He will be awarded the 31st Vyas Samman for his novel “Patliputru Ki Samragi”.
- The Vyas Samman started in 1991, is given by KK Birla Foundation for an outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years. It carries an award of four lakh rupees along with a citation and plaque.
Current Affairs PDF- March 24, 2021

INTERNATIONAL

Russia Launches 38 Satellites From 18 Countries Into Space

- Russian space agency ‘Roscosmos’ successfully launched 38 foreign satellites into orbit, onboard Soyuz-2.1a carrier rocket from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The 38 satellites belonged to 18 countries including South Korea, Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Italy and Brazil. One of these satellites named ‘Challenge-1’ was the first-ever satellite made completely in Tunisia, which was created by the Telnet telecommunications group.
- In 2018, a Soyuz rocket carrying a Russian cosmonaut and a NASA astronaut failed mid-flight, forcing the crew to carry out an emergency landing. Both survived without injuries.

NATIONAL

Indian Armed Forces 4th Strongest in the World

- China has the strongest military force in the world while India stands at number four, according to a study released by defence website Military Direct. China has the strongest military in the world, scoring 82 out of 100 points in the index. The USA, despite their enormous military budgets, comes in 2nd place with 74 points, followed by Russia with 69, India at 61 and then France with 58. The U.K. just about makes the Top 10, coming in 9th place with a score of 43.
- The study said “ultimate military strength index” was calculated after taking into consideration various factors including budgets, number of inactive and active military personnel, total air, sea, land and nuclear resources, average salaries, and weight of equipment.

SPORTS

India Legends wins 2020-21 Road Safety World Series T-20

- In Cricket, India Legends defeated Sri Lanka Legends by 14 runs to clinch the Road Safety World Series final title, held at Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.
- India Legends put up a total of 181/4 but Sri Lanks Legends could manage 167/7. Sachin Tendulkar was the captain of the India Legends.

Nozomi Okuhara bags women’s singles titles at All England Open

- Japan’s Nozomi Okuhara has won the All England Badminton Championships women’s title as she defeated Pornpawee Chochuwong 21-12, 21-16 in the finals. In the men’s category, Malaysia’s Lee Zii Jia has won the All England Badminton Championships title as he defeated Denmark’s Viktor Axelsen in the summit clash. With this win, Malaysia’s title drought came to an end and it is after four years, that someone from the country has managed to win the All England Open. Lee Chong Wei had last won the All England Open for Malaysia in 2017.

List of winners: All England Badminton Championships 2021:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Men’s singles</td>
<td>Lee Zii Jia (Malaysia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Women’s singles</td>
<td>Nozomi Okuhara (Japan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Men’s doubles</td>
<td>Hiroyuki Endo and Yuta Watanabe</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Women’s doubles</td>
<td>Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mixed doubles</td>
<td>Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino</td>
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</tbody>
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**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**ISRO Demonstrates India’s First Free-Space Quantum Communication**
- In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully demonstrated free-space Quantum Communication over a distance of 300 metres, with several technologies developed within the country. The demonstration included live video conferencing using quantum-key-encrypted signals, at Space Applications Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad, between two line-of-sight buildings within the campus.
- The experiment was done at night to ensure that there is no interference from the direct sunlight. This is a major milestone achievement for unconditionally secured satellite data-communication using quantum technologies.

**OBITUARY**

**Acclaimed Egyptian feminist Nawal Saadawi passes away**
- Nawal Saadawi, a renowned Egyptian feminist, psychiatrist and novelist, whose writings have stirred controversy for decades in an overwhelmingly conservative society passed away. She was a fierce advocate of women rights in Egypt and the Arab world.
- In 2005, she was awarded the Inana International Prize in Belgium, a year after she received the North-South prize from the Council of Europe. In 2020, Time Magazine named her on their 100 Women of the Year list. She was the founder and head of the Arab Women’s Solidarity Association and co-founder of the Arab Association for Human Rights.

**APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS**

**Arindam Bagchi takes charge as MEA spokesperson**
- Arindam Bagchi, an officer of the 1995 batch of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), has assumed charge as the new spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). He is replacing Anurag Srivastava, an officer of the 1999 batch of IFS.
- Before this, Bagchi was serving as the joint secretary (north) at the MEA headquarters. He was
an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer from the 1995 batch. In past, he has served as India’s ambassador to Croatia from November 2018 to June 2020. He was also India’s deputy high commissioner to Sri Lanka.

IMPORTANT DAYS

**World Tuberculosis Day: 24 March**

- World Tuberculosis Day is observed every year on 24 March to create awareness among the public about the global epidemic of tuberculosis (TB) and efforts to eliminate the disease. The date marks the day in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this disease.
- The theme of World TB Day 2021 – ‘The Clock is Ticking’ – conveys the sense that the world is running out of time to act on the commitments to end TB made by global leaders. This is especially critical in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic that has put End TB progress at risk, and to ensure equitable access to prevention and care in line with WHO’s drive towards achieving Universal Health Coverage.
- Tuberculosis (TB) is a potentially serious infectious disease that mainly affects your lungs. The bacteria that cause tuberculosis are spread from one person to another through tiny droplets released into the air via coughs and sneezes.
- Tuberculosis can also affect other parts of your body, including your kidneys, spine or brain. When TB occurs outside your lungs, signs and symptoms vary according to the organs involved. For example, tuberculosis of the spine may give you back pain, and tuberculosis in your kidneys might cause blood in your urine.

**World Meteorological Day observed globally on 23 March**

- The World Meteorological Day is celebrated every year on 23 March to commemorate the date of the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization in 23 March 1950. The day also highlights the contribution that the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services make to the safety and well-being of society.
- The World Meteorological Day theme is “The ocean, our climate and weather” celebrates WMO’s focus in connecting the ocean, climate and weather within the Earth System. It also marks the starting year of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

**Shaheed Diwas Observed On 23 March**

- Every year, March 23 is observed as Martyrs Day (Shaheed Diwas or Sarvodaya Day) to pay tribute on the death anniversary of the freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru, who laid their lives for the freedom of India.
- It was on March 23 in 1931, in Lahore (Pakistan), that these three were hanged to death for assassinating John Saunders, a British police officer in 1928. They had mistaken him for British police superintendent James Scott, who had ordered lathi-charge, which eventually led to the death of Lala Lajpat Rai. Also, 30 January is observed as Martyr’s Day or Shaheed Diwas in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi.
BANKING AND ECONOMY

RBI imposes Rs 15 lakh penalty on Fedbank Financial Services
- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a penalty of Rs 15 lakh on Fedbank Financial Services Limited, Mumbai. The penalty has been imposed for non-compliance with “certain provisions of the directions issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) contained in ‘Monitoring of Frauds in NBFCs (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2016′.
- The statutory inspection of the company with reference to its financial position as of March 31, 2019, revealed, inter alia, non-compliance with the directions issued by it. The inspection report of the Koyana Sahakari Bank based on its financial position as of March 31, 2019, revealed that it had exceeded the prudential inter-bank (single bank) exposure limit.

RBI sets up external advisory committee for evaluating banking applications
- The Reserve Bank of India has announced the names of the members of the Standing External Advisory Committee (SEAC) for evaluating applications for Universal Banks as well as Small Finance Banks. The committee has five members, with former RBI deputy governor Shyamala Gopinath as the chairperson. The panel will have a tenure of three years.
- Other members include Revathy Iyer, director, central board, RBI; B Mahapatra, former executive director, National Payments Corporation of India; T N Manoharan, former chairman, Canara Bank; and Hemant G Contractor, former MD, State Bank of India, and former Chairman, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority. According to guidelines, applications for universal banks and SFBs will first be evaluated by the RBI to ensure prima facie eligibility of the applicants, after which the newly formed committee will evaluate the applications.

Current Affairs PDF - March 23, 2021

NATIONAL

GoI launched “Gram Ujala Scheme” for Rural Areas
- The government of India has launched the “Gram Ujala Scheme” to provide the cheapest LED bulbs in rural areas. The scheme was launched by the Union power and new and renewable energy minister, Raj Kumar Singh. In the first phase, the scheme was launched from Arrah district in Bihar. In this phase, around 15 million LED bulbs will be distributed in the villages of Arrah (Bihar), Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra), and western Gujarat.
- The Gram Ujala Scheme is an ambitious scheme that offers the world’s cheapest LED bulbs in rural areas. This is the first such scheme in India. It provides the LED Bulbs in these areas at a mere Rs.10. This scheme also furthers its climate change strategy and strengthen the self-reliance credentials. The scheme does not come with the government’s support or subsidy.

Indian Navy undertakes exercise PASSEX with Royal Bahrain Naval Force
- Indian Navy on 18th March undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf under Operation Sankalp. PASSEXs are
conducted regularly by the Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign navies, whilst visiting each other’s ports or during a rendezvous at sea.

- The exercises are aimed at fostering interoperability and reflecting the commitments of both, India and Bahrain, to build cooperative partnerships in meeting emergent maritime challenges.

**Maharashtra farmers start fresh fruit cake ‘movement’**

- Fruit growers in rural Maharashtra have started an innovative ‘movement’ to promote fresh fruit cakes as a healthier option, instead of the traditional bakery-made cakes. According to farmers and agrarian experts, the aim of this ‘spontaneous’ movement is to encourage farmers and their families to increase the intake of fruits in their diet and to find a new way of selling their produce in times of the pandemic.

- As part of the movement, farmers, their families and various organisations of cultivators are encouraging cakes made locally using fruits like watermelon, muskmelon, grapes, orange, pineapple and banana while celebrating special events.

**Bihar becomes first state to have own ethanol policy**

- Bihar Cabinet has approved the Ethanol Production Promotion Policy, 2021, becoming the 1st Indian State to have an ethanol promotion policy. The policy allows the extraction of ethanol, which was restricted to sugarcane, from surplus quantities of maize as well. The new policy would permit ethanol production in Bihar from all feedstocks permitted by National Policy on Biofuels, 2018, and subsequently by the National Biofuel Coordination Committee.

- The Assembly was informed of the cabinet decision by deputy chief minister Renu Devi as the industry minister Shahnawaz Husain was away in poll-bound West Bengal for campaigning. So far, the government of India has granted permission for ethanol production from B-heavy molasses, C-heavy molasses, grains unfit for human consumption, sugarcane juice, sugar, sugar syrup, surplus rice and maize.

**SPORTS**

**ISSF WC: Yashaswini wins first gold for India**

- Yashaswini Deswal bagged the first gold medal for India in the Women’s 10M Air Pistol final of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun. Deswal accumulated 238.8 points to lead in her category. Another Indian shooter Manu Bhaker won a silver medal with 236.7 points.

- World number one shooter Divyansh Singh Panwar clinched the bronze medal in 10m Air Rifle (men’s category) and opened India’s medal account in the competition.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Defence Ministry deal with BDL to acquire 4,690 anti-tank guided missiles**

- The Defence Ministry has sealed a deal with the public sector undertaking Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) to acquire 4,960 MILAN-2T anti-tank guided missiles at a cost of ₹ 1,188 crores for the Indian Army. The missiles, having a range of 1,850 metres, are being produced by BDL under license from French defence major MBDA Missile Systems. These missiles can be fired from the
ground as well as vehicle-based launchers and can be deployed in the anti-tank role for both offensive and defensive tasks.

- The missile is being produced by BDL under license from MBDA Missile Systems, France. These missiles can be fired from the ground as well as vehicle-based launchers and can be deployed in Anti-Tank Role for both offensive & defensive tasks and will further enhance the operational preparedness of the Armed Forces.

**OBITUARY**

**Former Sebi chairman GV Ramakrishna passes away**

- Former Sebi chairman GV Ramakrishna passed away. He was appointed as the chairman of markets regulator Sebi in 1990 when it lacked legal status. He headed that body till 1994 and then became the first chairman of the Disinvestment Commission in 1996.

**IMPORTANT DAYS**

**International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

- The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on 21 March to remind people about the negative consequences of racial discrimination. This year theme is “Youth standing up against racism”. It engages the public through #FightRacism, which aims to foster a global culture of tolerance, equality and anti-discrimination and calls on each and every one of us to stand up against racial prejudice and intolerant attitudes.
- The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on the day the police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid “pass laws” in 1960.
- In 1979, the General Assembly adopted a programme of activities to be undertaken during the second half of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. On that occasion, the General Assembly decided that a week of solidarity with the peoples struggling against racism and racial discrimination, beginning on 21 March, would be organized annually in all States.

**World Poetry Day: 21 March**

- World Poetry Day is celebrated on 21 March every year to promote the reading, writing, publishing and teaching of poetry throughout the world. The Day celebrates one of humanity’s most treasured forms of cultural and linguistic expression and identity. Practised throughout history – in every culture and on every continent – poetry speaks to our common humanity and our shared values, transforming the simplest of poems into a powerful catalyst for dialogue and peace.
- UNESCO first adopted 21 March as World Poetry Day during its 30th General Conference in Paris in 1999, with the aim of supporting linguistic diversity through poetic expression and increasing the opportunity for endangered languages to be heard.

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

**67th National Film Awards Announced**

- The 67th National Film Awards are currently being announced in New Delhi. The awards are for
films from the year 2019. The event is organised by the Directorate of Film Festivals, which comes under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The ceremony was supposed to be held in May last year but was delayed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**list of all the winners:**

**Feature Film Awards**

- Best Feature Film: Marakkar: Lion of the Arabian Sea (Malayalam)
- Best Actor (shared): Manoj Bajpayee for Bhonsle (Hindi), and Dhanush for Asuran (Tamil)
- Best Actress: Kangana Ranaut for Panga (Hindi) and Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi (Hindi)
- Best Supporting Actress: Pallavi Joshi for The Tashkent Files (Hindi)
- Best Supporting Actor: Vijay Sethupathi for Super Deluxe (Tamil)
- Best Director: Sanjay Puran Singh Chauhan for Bahattar Hoorain (Hindi)
- Best Debut Film of a Director: Mathukutty Xavier for Helen (Malayalam)
- Best Child Artist: Naga Vishal for KD (Tamil)
- Best Action Direction: Avane Srimannarayana (Kannada), Vikram Mor
- Best Choreography: Maharishi (Telugu), Raju Sundaram
- Best Special Effects: Marakkar: Lion of the Arabian Sea (Malayalam), Siddharth Priyadarshan
- Special Jury Award: Oththa Seruppu Size 7 (Tamil), Radhakrishnan Parthiban
- Best Lyrics: Prabha Varma for Kolaambi (Malayalam)
- Best Music Direction: D. Imman for Viswasam (Tamil)
- Best Background Music: Prabuddha Banerjee for Jyeshthoputro (Bengali)
- Best Make-up Artist: Ranjith for Helen (Malayalam)
- Best Costumes: Sujith Sudhakaran and V. Sai for Marakkar: Lion of the Arabian Sea (Malayalam)
- Best Production Design: Anandi Gopal (Marathi), Sunil Nigwekar and Nilesh Wagh
- Best Audiology (Location Sound Recordist): Iewduh (Khasi), Debajit Gayan
- Best Audiology (Re-recordist of the final mixed track): Oththa Seruppu Size 7 (Tamil), Resul Pookutty
- Best Screenplay (Original): Jyeshthoputro (Bengali), Kaushik Ganguly
- Best Screenplay (Adapted): Gumnaami (Bengali), Srijit Mukherji
- Best Screenplay (Dialogue Writer): The Tashkent Files (Hindi), Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri
- Best Cinematography: Jallikattu (Malayalam), Gireesh Gangadharan
- Best Editing: Jersey (Telugu), Navin Nooli
- Best Children’s Film: Kastoori (Hindi)
- Best Film on Environment Conservation: Water Burial (Monpa)
- Best Film on Social Issues: Anandi Gopal (Marathi)
- Best Film on National Integration: Tajmahal (Marathi)
- Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment: Maharishi (Telugu)
- Best Female Playback Singer: Savani Ravindra for Bardo (Marathi)
- Best Male Playback Singer: B Praak for Kesari (Hindi)

**Best Films in Each Language:**

- Best Hindi Film: Chhichhore
- Best Telugu Film: Jersey
- Best Malayalam Film: Kalla Nottam
- Best Tamil Film: Asuran
- Best Paniya Film: Kenjira
- Best Mishing Film: Anu Ruwad
- Best Khasi Film: Iewduh
- Best Chattisgarhi Film: Bhulan the Maze
- Best Haryanvi Film: Chhoriyan Chhoron Se Kam Nahi Hoti
- Best Tulu Film: Pingara
- Best Punjabi Film: Rab Da Radio 2
- Best Odia Film: Kalira Atita and Sala Budhar Badla (shared)
- Best Manipuri Film: Eigi Kona
- Best Marathi Film: Bardo
- Best Konkani Film: Kaajro
- Best Kannada Film: Akshi
- Best Bengali Film: Gumnaami
- Best Assamese Film: Ronuwa – Who Never Surrender
- Special Mentions: Biriyani (Malayalam), Jonaki Porua (Assamese), Lata Bhagwan Kare (Marathi) and Picasso (Marathi)

**Non-Feature Film Awards**
- Best Voice-over/ Narration: Sir David Attenborough for wild Karnataka (English)
- Best Music Direction: Bishakhjyoti for Kranti Darshi Guruji – Ahead of Times (Hindi)
- Best Editing: Arjun Gourisaria for Shut Up Sona (Hindi/ English)
- Best Audiography: Radha (Musical), Allwin Rego and Sanjay Maurya
- Best On-Location Sound Recordist: Rahas (Hindi), Saptarshi Sarkar
- Best Cinematography: Savita Singh for Sonsi (Hindi)
- Best Direction: Sudhanshu Saria for Knock Knock Knock (English/ Bengali)
- Best Film on Family Values: Oru Paathira Swapnam Pole (Malayalam)
- Best Short Fiction Film: Custody (Hindi/ English)
- Special Jury Award: Small Scale Societies (English)
- Best Animation Film: Radha (Musical)
- Best Investigative Film: Jakkal (Marathi)
- Best Exploration Film: Wild Karnataka (English)
- Best Educational Film: Apples and Oranges (English)
- Best Film on Social Issues: Holy Rights (Hindi) and Ladli (Hindi)
- Best Environment Film: The Stork Saviours (Hindi)
- Best Promotional Film: The Shower (Hindi)
- Best Arts and Culture Film: Shrikshetra-Ru-Sahijata (Odia)
- Best Biographical Film: Elephants Do Remember (English)
- Best Ethnographic Film: Charan-Atva The Essence of Being a Nomad (Gujarati)
- Best Debut Non-Feature Film of a Director: Raj Pritam More for Khisa (Marathi)
- Best Non-Feature Film: An Engineered Dream (Hindi)
India slips to 56th rank in Global Home Price Index

- India has moved down 13 spots in the latest global home price index to finish last at 56th rank in the quarter ending December 2020. Against its 43rd rank a year ago, India saw a decline of 3.6% year-on-year (YoY) in home prices, leading to the drop in global position, showed Knight Frank’s Global House Price Index. India was the weakest-performing country during the fourth quarter of 2020, with a decline of 3.6% in home prices, followed by Morocco with a drop of 3.3%.
- According to the report, markets like New Zealand (19%), Russia (14%), the US (10%), Canada and UK (both 9%) have recorded accelerated growth in rankings in the last three months due to a growth in housing demand.
- The index tracks the movement in mainstream residential prices across 56 countries and territories worldwide using official statistics. In the 12-month percentage change for the period Q4 2019 – Q4 2020, Turkey continues to lead the annual rankings with prices up by 30.3% on-year, followed by New Zealand at 18.6% and Slovakia at 16.0%.

Current Affairs PDF- March 22, 2021

Advanced facility launched at NABI

- Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Science & technology Dr. Harsh Vardhan today inaugurated the new Advanced High Resolution Microscopy Facility at National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI) and Unveiled the 4 Star GRIHA Certification of Center of Innovative and Applied Bioprocessing (CIAB) Lab and Admin Building at Mohali in Punjab.
- Both NABI & CIAB are autonomous institutes under Dept. of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology.
- Following the gathering Dr. Harsh Vardhan urged both the institutes to address the problems of hunger & malnutrition and to bring nutritional revolution in the country. Minister emphasized that with government impetus on doubling the farmers income by 2022-23, NABI and CIAB’s roles are crucial to achieve this ambitious goal.

Three day Shehnai festival starts at BHU

- As a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a 3 day Shehnai festival started at Banaras Hindu University campus Varanasi today evening. Sangeet Natak academy and music and performing arts faculty of BHU has come together to organise this music evening to remember the shehnai Maestro Bharat Ratna Ustad Bismillah Khan.
- The Program was inaugurated by Prof SK Sharma and Dhrupad Singer Hritwik Sanyal and Faculty members of BHU, professor Rajesh Shah, Sangeeta Pandit, President of Sangeet Natak academy Lucknow Dr preetesh Aacharya who is son of noted artist Rajeshwar Aacharya were also present at the stage.
PM Modi to launch "Catch the Rain" campaign

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain' campaign on World Water Day, which is celebrated on March 22. The Prime Minister has launch the campaign at 12:30 pm through video conferencing.
- According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), the campaign has undertaken across the country, in both rural and urban areas, with the theme "catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls".
- "The campaign has implemented from March 22 to November 30 November - the pre-monsoon and monsoon period in the country. It has launched as a Jan Andolan to take water conservation at the grass-root level through people's participation. It is intended to nudge all stakeholders to create rainwater harvesting structures suitable to the climatic conditions and subsoil strata, to ensure proper storage of rainwater.

Jharkhand launches ‘SAAMAR’ campaign to fight malnutrition

- The state government of Jharkhand has launched a campaign called SAAMAR to tackle malnutrition in the state. SAAMAR stands for Strategic Action for Alleviation of Malnutrition and Anemia Reduction. The campaign has been launched with a 1000 days target, where annual surveys will be conducted to track the progress. The campaign will bring together various departments to identify anaemic women and malnourished children to effectively deal with the problem in a state where malnutrition has been a major problem.
- Most importantly, the campaign, as per the note, also tries to target Primarily Vulnerable Tribal Groups. Stating that there is no research-based information available on their food and nutritional habits, it encourages research and proposes fellowships on the nutritional behaviour of these groups for effective implementation.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Ustad Bismillah Khan birth anniversary

- Known for his impeccable art, Ustad Bismillah Khan was one of the gems of the country. He was the third classical musician to receive this highest civilian award the Bharat Ratna after M S Subbulakshmi and Ravi Shankar.
- The veteran musician was born on March 21, 1916, and passed away on August 21, 2006. This is 105th birth anniversary of Ustad Bismillah Khan.

Bihar Diwas 22 March : 2021

- Bihar Diwas, or Bihar Day is being observed 22nd March. This marks the formation of the state of Bihar when the state was carved out from the Bengal Presidency by the British in the year 1912.
- This day is observed as a public holiday for all state and central government offices and companies as well as for schools.
- This day is not only celebrated in Bihar but its observed in other countries as well by the Bihari diaspora.
World Water Day observed globally on 22 March

- World Water Day is observed globally on 22nd March every year. World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water. It is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis. A core focus of World Water Day is to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.
- The theme of World Water Day 2021 is “Valuing water”. The value of water is much more than its economic value – water has enormous and complex value for our households, food, culture, health, education, economics and the integrity of our natural environment.

World Down Syndrome Day: 21 March

- The World Down Syndrome Day is observed globally on 21 March each year, to raise public awareness for the rights, inclusion and well being of people with Down syndrome. This year, the theme for World Down Syndrome Day is “We Decide.” This day was first observed in the United Nation in the year 2012. The 21st day of March (the 3rd month of the year) has been selected to signify the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome.
- Down Syndrome is a condition in which the child is born with an extra 21st chromosome. It comes in the category of a genetic disorder, and it also causes developmental disabilities. The child born with this condition is likely to suffer thyroid or heart-related problems.

International Day of Forests: 21 March

- The International Day of Forests (also known as World Forestry Day) is celebrated every year on March 21. The day is to celebrate to raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests, and trees outside forests, for the benefit of current and future generations as well as to increase the public awareness among communities about the values, significance and contributions of the forests to balance the life cycle on the earth.
- The theme for International Day of Forests 2020 is “Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being”. This year’s theme fits into the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), a call for the protection and revival of ecosystems around the world.
- The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests in 2012 to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests. Countries are encouraged to undertake local, national and international efforts to organize activities involving forests and trees, such as tree-planting campaigns.

India ranks 139th in World Happiness Report 2021

- India has been placed at 139th position out of 149 countries in the UN World Happiness Report 2021 released. In 2019, India was ranked 140th. The World Happiness Report 2021 has been topped by Finland, for the fourth consecutive year. The 2021 report is the ninth World Happiness Report and focuses on the effects of COVID-19 and how people all over the world have fared.
Top 10 Countries
1. Finland
2. Iceland
3. Denmark
4. Switzerland
5. The Netherlands
6. Sweden
7. Germany
8. Norway
9. New Zealand
10. Austria

Bottom 5 Countries
1. Afghanistan (149)
2. Zimbabwe (148)
3. Rwanda (147)
4. Botswana (146)
5. Lesotho (145)

Current Affairs PDF - March 21, 2021

INTERNATIONAL

Dutch PM Mark Rutte powers to fourth straight election win
- Netherlands Prime Minister, Mark Rutte has won the 2021 parliamentary elections with most seats to be sworn in as the Prime Minister for the fourth straight term. Earlier Rutte and his entire Cabinet offered their resignation on 15 January 2021 in response to a scandal relating to child welfare fraud, however, Rutte remained in office till the conclusion of the 2021 election.
- Rutte has been Prime Minister of the Netherlands since October 2010.

Samia Suluhu Hassan sworn in as Tanzania’s first woman President
- Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn in as the sixth President of Tanzania, becoming the first female leader of the East African country. The 61-year-old Hassan assumed the presidency, following the death of previous President John Magufuli, due to a heart condition.
- She will finish Magufuli’s second five-year term, which will run until 2025. Prior to taking charge as President, Hassan was the Vice-President of Tanzania, also being the first female vice-president of the country, since November 2015.

SPORTS

Athlete Avinash Sable Sets New National Record In Men’s 3000m Steeplechase
- The Indian athlete Avinash Sable set a new national record in the men’s 3000m steeplechase event in the ongoing Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships in Patiala, with timing of 8:20.20. With this, the 26-year-old Avinash broke his own record of 8:21.37 which he set in 2019, after finishing 13th in the final of the World Athletics Championships in Doha.
The army man from the arid Beed district of Maharashtra broke the national record for the fifth time in his career. Sable has already secured a berth in the Tokyo Olympics 2020 in men’s 3000m steeplechase during the 2019 World Athletics Championships.

APPPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

NeoGrowth appoints Ajinkya Rahane as brand ambassador
- NeoGrowth Credit Pvt. Ltd, a lender to small businesses, has announced the appointment of cricketer Ajinkya Rahane as its brand ambassador. The agreement is for a year which can be extended further.
- Rahane will feature in a campaign slated to be released in the first week of April, which will talk about the ease of procuring loans through NeoGrowth for small businesses. The campaign “Keeping it simple” will show the day-to-day struggles of small businesses while scaling up and how NeoGrowth can help them overcome them.

IMPORTANT DAYS

UN French Language Day Observed Globally on 20 March
- The UN French Language Day is observed annually on 20 March. The day was established by the UN’s Department of Public Information in 2010, to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity as well as to promote equal use of all six official languages throughout the Organization. March 20 was chosen as the date for the French language since it coincides with the 40th anniversary of the International Organization of La Francophonie, representing countries and regions where French is a customary language.
- The date of French Language Day was chosen symbolically in reference to March 20, 1970, which marks the creation of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACCT), which became the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF).

World Oral Health Day is observed on 20 March
- World Oral Health Day is observed every year on 20th March. It focuses on highlighting the benefits of good oral health, spreads awareness about oral diseases and promotes maintenance of oral hygiene. The theme for the next three years, 2021-2023 is: Be Proud Of Your Mouth. The day is an initiative of FDI World Dental Federation; an organization that brings together the world of dentistry with the aim of achieving optimal oral health for everyone.
- Oral health is as important as general health. It helps you maintain a healthy mouth, teeth and gums. It also helps to improve your appearance. Poor oral health can not only lead to oral diseases but also major health problems like heart disease, diabetes mellitus, stroke, respiratory problems and premature births in pregnant women.

International Day of Happiness: 20 March
- International Day of Happiness is celebrated on March 20 to promote happiness as a fundamental human right for all human beings across the world. The 2021 International Day of Happiness campaign theme is ‘Keep Calm. Stay Wise. Be Kind’.
- Since 2013, the United Nations has celebrated the International Day of Happiness as a way to
recognize the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world. The day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 28 June 2012.

World Sparrow Day: 20 March

- World Sparrow Day is celebrated every year on March 20 to raise awareness about the House Sparrow and other common birds to urban environments, and of threats to their populations. The theme of 2021 World Sparrow Day “I LOVE Sparrows”. The day was initiated by the Nature Forever Society of India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France) and numerous other national and international organisations across the world. The first World Sparrow Day was celebrated in 2010.
- The sparrows are known to live in the backyards and green patches in urban areas but “in the last two decades, their population is on the decline in almost every city,” according to the wwfindia.org.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

PNB sets-up subsidiary to manage credit card business

- Punjab National Bank (PNB) has set up a wholly-owned subsidiary namely “PNB Cards & Services Ltd” to manage its credit card business. The PNB Cards & Services Ltd has been incorporated on March 16, 2021, by the Registrar of Companies, Delhi.
- The new subsidiary will undertake the non-financial support services related to the credit card business of the bank. The authorised capital of the company is Rs 25 crore and the paid-up capital is Rs 15 crore.