

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAR 10, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- **Former AIADMK minister C Ponnaiyan - was appointed vice-chairman of the State Planning Commission (SPC) on March 9**



- ✓ The Commission is functioning under the chairmanship of the chief minister.
 - ✓ The new vice-chairman will enjoy cabinet rank.
 - ✓ The commission is responsible for advising the government on ways and means of development of the state.
 - ✓ The 78-year-old politician has worked with former Chief Ministers, party founder M G Ramachandran and J Jayalithaa earlier
 - ✓ Ponnaiyan hails from Namakkal district in the state.
- **Chennai - becomes the first city in Tamil Nadu to get an Art District.**
 - ✓ The Chennai Corporation inaugurated the Kannagi Nagar Art District, showcasing work of renowned artists from various countries.
 - ✓ Municipal Administration Minister S.P.Velumani launched the Art District on March 9
 - ✓ The Kannagi Nagar Art District is the fifth project in the country.
 - ✓ The project is intended to promote art and culture for social transformation and civic improvement.



- ✓ The facade of 15 high-rise buildings has been transformed by the artwork.
- ✓ The civic body is planning to cover more buildings under the project soon.
- ✓ Chennai Corporation has supported artists who participated in the initiative with assistance of Chennai Smart City Limited and Start India.
- ✓ The Kannagi Nagar Art District has been developed based on the model implemented in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Kolkata and Goa.
- ✓ The regular art festivals were conducted in such districts since 2014.
- ✓ Similar art festivals are expected to be organised by the Chennai Corporation in Kannagi Nagar Art District also

STATES

- **The state of Andhra Pradesh - has been ranked first for the overall implementation of Poshan Abhiyan, as per a recent report by NITI Aayog**
- ✓ The state has imparted training to all its Angan Wadi Workers on modules created based on a lifecycle approach, within the first 1000 days of life, with the support of the incremental learning Approach (ILA).
- ✓ The State Government has also provided smartphones to all the 55,607 angan wadi workers to improve service delivery and for day-to-day reporting.
- ✓ The Poshan Abhiyan seeks to reduce malnutrition in a phased manner by adopting a synergized and result oriented approach.
- ✓ It aims to achieve improvement in the nutritional status of children up to 0-6 years, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers in a time-bound manner.
- ✓ The Union Government has launched Poshan Abhiyan, which was earlier known as National Nutrition Mission, across the nation on December 18, 2017 to address the problem of malnutrition.

- **Gujarat - has topped solar roof top plant installations across the country**
- ✓ The state has more than 50,915 rooftop solar plants set up as on date.
- ✓ After Gujarat, Maharashtra topped with solar rooftop power plant installation with more than 5,513 installations.

- ✓ The Gujarat government has adopted the scheme called “Surya Gujarat” in order increase the use of solar energy at domestic level.
- ✓ The scheme aims to cover more than 8 lakh domestic consumers by 2022.
- ✓ The above data is based on a written reply provided by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy in the Parliament
- ✓ The current solar power capacity of India as of January 2020 is 34.045 GW
- ✓ Earlier, India had set target of reaching 20 GW by 2022.
- ✓ As the target was achieved earlier, India increased its target to 100 GW by 2022, which includes 40 GW of rooftop solar power as well.

NATIONAL

- **The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (TRIFED) – is planning to launch a nutra beverage developed from the Mahua flower soon**
- ✓ The Mahua flower is the key ingredient of the traditional country beer enjoyed in the tribal heartlands of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand
- ✓ The beverage will be in a blend of conventional fruits with high nutrition value and low alcohol content of up to 5%.
- ✓ Once production level is increased, Trifed plans to expand the outreach in the market to other states.
- ✓ To begin with, Chhattisgarh based Adivasi Bahuuddeshiya Co-operative Society in Raigarh has entered into an agreement with National Research Development Corporation to produce and market the mahua nutra beverage
- ✓ The beverage was developed by Trifed after two years of research collaboration with IIT Delhi.
- ✓ After the product testing among consumers, Trifed has now signed a MoU with NRDC for the technology transfer to suitable entrepreneurs to produce and market the beverage.

COURT VERDICT

- **The Madras high court - has dismissed the plea of Madhya Pradesh seeking geographical indication (GI) tag for basmati rice grown in areas falling under the state.**
- ✓ With the dismissal, the state government’s struggle to join the elite ‘basmati’ league has failed once again
- ✓ A division bench of Justice R Subbiah and C Saravanan also refused to quash an order passed by the Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) granting GI certificate to basmati to Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)
- ✓ The IPAB has passed orders earlier on February 5, 2016, granting GI certificate to basmati in favour of APEDA

- ✓ In 2016, the MP government contended that GI tag cannot be awarded to APEDA as some of the regions falling under MP also produce basmati have been omitted from the list provided by APEDA
- ✓ However, the IPAB rejected the claim of the MP government citing the evidences shown.
- ✓ The issue dates back to November 2008 when APEDA, a statutory body, filed an application before an Assistant Registrar of Geographical Indications in Chennai seeking GI tag for basmati rice.
- ✓ In May 2010, GI status was given to basmati grown only in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and 26 districts of western Uttar Pradesh besides Jammu and Kathua.
- ✓ Madhya Pradesh opposed the decision legally demanding that its 13 districts be recognised as traditional basmati growing regions.
- ✓ The 13 districts of Madhya Pradesh which have been excluded from the tag are Monera, Vidisha, Bhind, Raisen, Gwalior, Sehore, Sheopur, Hoshangabad, Datia, Jabalpur, Shivpuri, Narsinghpur and Guna.
- ✓ According to MP government, these 13 districts have been growing basmati for several decades
- ✓ These districts are located in the Indo-Gangetic plains having climatic conditions favourable for cultivation of basmati.
- ✓ The non-inclusion of the state in the basmati growing areas would have an adverse effect on the lives of farmers who mainly depend on basmati cultivation

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **Qatar - has suspended entry of travellers from 14 countries, including India, from March 9**
- ✓ The move is intended to tackle spread of coronavirus within the country.
- ✓ The 14 countries are Bangladesh, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, and Thailand.
- ✓ The decision will affect all people with valid visa upon arrival, a residence or work permit, and also the temporary visitors.
- ✓ Flights to and from Italy have already been barred by the Gulf state
- ✓ However, the move will not affect the transit passengers booked on Qatar Airways to travel between India and the rest of the world via Doha, the capital city of Qatar.

DEFENCE

- **India – is ranked as the world’s second-largest arms importer, just behind Saudi Arabia**
- ✓ The country is ranked at the 23rd position among the top 25 weapon exporters, with Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Mauritius being its biggest clients

- ✓ However, the weapon exports of India constitutes a negligible 0.2% share of the total global figure
- ✓ These data on international arms transfers were released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on March 9
- ✓ It shows India accounted for 9.2% of the total global arms imports during 2015-2019, while Saudi Arabia registered 12%.
- ✓ China stood at the fifth position (4.3%), while Pakistan was at 11th (2.6%).
- ✓ Between 2010-14 and 2015-19, arms imports by India and Pakistan decreased by 32% and 39%, respectively.
- ✓ The report titled “Trends in International arms transfers 2019” mentioned Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China as the top 5 arms importers in the world
- ✓ These 5 countries accounted to 36% of world arms imports.

NOT ENOUGH BANG FOR BUCK

Military Expenditure			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ India is world's 5th largest military spender after US, China, Russia & Saudi Arabia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Spent over \$80bn in arms deals over last 15-16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Defence Budget (2020-21) is ₹3.37 lakh crore. Another ₹1.33 lakh crore for defence pensions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Revenue outlay (65%) dwarfs Capital outlay (35%) for modernization in defence budget
Arms Deals		Operational Hollowness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ World's second largest arms importer, gets over 60% of requirements from abroad due to poor domestic defence-industrial base ➤ Biggest suppliers Russia, Israel, France & US ➤ Around 65 capital acquisition contracts worth over ₹1.5 lakh crore inked with foreign vendors since 2016-17 ➤ Over 80% of domestic acquisitions from five defence PSUs, four shipyards and 41 ordnance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Poor long-term planning; haphazard procurements; little tech transfer despite mega deals ➤ Army has critical gaps in artillery, infantry weapons, light helicopters, night-fighting etc ➤ IAF does not have enough fighter jets, mid-air refuellers, AWACS, drones etc ➤ Navy short of submarines, multi-role helicopters, minesweepers etc ➤ Maintenance of 15-lakh armed forces, pay & pensions consume bulk of the expenditure 	



- ✓ India deployed French (Mirage-2000s) and Russian (Sukhoi-30MKIs and MiG-21s) fighters, along with Israeli precision-guided bombs (Spice-2000s) and Swedish artillery (Bofors) during the Balakot air strikes in February 2019
- ✓ Pakistan used American (F-16s) and Chinese (JF-17s) jets, and Swedish AWACS during the military face-off.
- ✓ Russia remained the largest arms supplier to India in 2010-14 and 2015-19
- ✓ But, its deliveries fell by 47% and its share of total Indian imports went down from 76% to 56%.

- ✓ Imports from the US, which became India's second-largest arms supplier in 2010-14 as part of the growing strategic partnership, also fell by 51% in 2015-19.
 - ✓ In contrast, arms imports from Israel and France increased, by 175% and 715% respectively, making them the second and third-largest suppliers to India in 2015-19
 - ✓ China accounts for 73% of the ally Pakistan's arms imports, followed by Russia (6.6%) and Italy (6.1%).
 - ✓ The US, which earlier supplied 30% of the arms imported by Pakistan, was down to just 4.1% in 2015-19 after it decided to stop military aid to the country.
 - ✓ India's arms exports have picked up from ₹2,060 crore in 2015-16 to ₹10,746 crore in 2018-19.
 - ✓ The figure for 2019-20 stood at ₹5,883 crore in December 31 last year.
- **The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) – is planning to set up logistics bases in Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.**
- ✓ The move is aimed at promoting the sale of country's military helicopters and Light Combat Aircraft Tejas to these countries
 - ✓ The proposed selling of Indian defence structures will also help India achieve its defence target of Rs 35,000 crores by 2024.
 - ✓ The Tejas is being promoted for its high lifespan of 30 years.
 - ✓ HAL has identified West Asia, South East Asia and North Africa to sell helicopter Rudra, Tejas and Dhruv.
 - ✓ Currently India is exporting defence products of worth Rs 17,000 crores.
 - ✓ The efforts of HAL are aimed at increasing defence exports and to help India achieve its 5 billion USD defence target

SPORTS

- **Indian boxing superstars Amit Panghal and MC Mary Kom – have secured Olympic berth in their respective categories at the Asia-Oceania Olympic Qualifiers in Amman, Jordan on March 9.**



- ✓ Both are strong favourites to win a medal among Indian boxers at Tokyo Olympics

- ✓ The 24-year old Amit defeated Carlo Paalam of the Philippines in the 52kg quarterfinal clash to secure the place in the quadrennial showpiece event
 - ✓ The 2019 World Boxing Championships silver medallist won with a 4-1 split verdict in his favour.
 - ✓ World No. 1 Amit is the reigning Asian Games and Asian Championships gold-medallist
 - ✓ MC Mary Kom, 2012 London Olympics bronze medallist, secured India's seventh Olympics quota from the tournament.
 - ✓ The 37-year-old boxing legend defeated Irish Magno of the Philippines 5-0 in a unanimous verdict in her 51kg quarterfinal bout.
 - ✓ It will be Mary's second appearance in the Olympics.
 - ✓ Mary Kom is the six times World Champion
 - ✓ Earlier, on March 8, veteran Satish Kumar became the first super heavyweight (+91kg) Indian boxer to qualify for the Olympics.
- **Indian badminton star, P.V. Sindhu - was voted as the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year**



- ✓ She collected more popular votes than boxer Mary Kom, para-shuttler Manasi Joshi, sprinter Dutee Chand and wrestler Vinesh Phogat.
- ✓ On the occasion of International Women's Day, legendary athlete P.T. Usha was conferred with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

RANKINGS

- **Uttar Pradesh - topped the list with 22,655 fatalities (1 5% of all road deaths) in road accidents last year**
- ✓ Next to UP, Rajasthan, Odisha, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Assam also reported a large number of deaths.
 - ✓ In 2019, around 1.49 lakh people died in road accidents across the country
 - ✓ However, the casualties witnessed a reduction of nearly 1,600 from 2018.
 - ✓ Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Uttarakhand saw the decade's highest year-on-year decline in fatalities in 2019.

- ✓ While Delhi reported 227 fewer deaths in 2019 as compared to 2018, Gujarat and Maharashtra registered 696 fewer fatalities.

DELHI, TN RECORD BIG DIP IN 2019



Annual				
	2018	2019	Change	% change
Total accidents	4,61,292	4,48,294	-12,998	-2.8
People killed	1,50,648	1,49,068	-1,580	-1
Injured	4,67,187	4,52,242	-14,945	-3.2

Last quarter (MV Act was implemented from September)				
	Oct-Dec 2018	Oct-Dec 2019	Change	% change
Total accidents	1,14,094	1,08,674	-5,420	-4.8
People killed	38,035	36,153	-1,882	-4.9
Injured	1,11,639	1,06,565	-5,074	-4.5

Source: Provisional data shared by states with Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety

- ✓ Karnataka reported 673 fewer road deaths followed by Uttarakhand (181).
- ✓ Delhi with 1,433 deaths and Tamil Nadu with 10,317 reported the lowest death toll in the last decade
- ✓ Tamil Nadu led the list of states showing decline in fatalities.
- ✓ The southern state has shown nearly 39% decline in fatalities since 2016.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu had reported 17,218 fatalities in 2015, which came down to 10,525 last year.
- ✓ The total number of accidents in Tamil Nadu in 2019 is 57,228
- ✓ UP, which has the largest share of fatalities, saw 399 more deaths in 2019, which was the slowest ever increase in the past decade.
- ✓ The data also indicates the impact of the amended Motor Vehicles Act, which came into force from September 1, on road deaths.

➤ **Bogota in Colombia, Brazil's Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, Turkey's Istanbul and Sao Paulo, Brazil – were ranked as the five most congested cities in the world**

- ✓ This is based on a study by transportation analytics firm INRIX Inc, ranking congestion in more than 900 cities worldwide
- ✓ India wasn't part of the study conducted by the agency
- ✓ According to the study, Car traffic is worsening in the US and many cities around the world
- ✓ However, congestion charges and novel policies in some cities have proven effective in reducing the number of vehicles on the road
- ✓ Chicago and Los Angeles have already started studies on such congestion charges.

- ✓ Congestion fees in London, Stockholm and Singapore have significantly reduced car traffic.
 - ✓ New York will be the first US city to implement congestion pricing in 2021.
 - ✓ Novel initiatives in New York and San Francisco to ban cars from main streets have also boosted bus ridership and reduced commuting times
 - ✓ Many cities are trying to reduce car travel in order to cut carbon dioxide emissions and shorten commuting times.
 - ✓ Still, drivers in 2019 overall spent more time stuck in traffic than in previous years, as per the report
- **India - has 128 sites contaminated by toxic and hazardous substances, as per a recent update by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).**
- ✓ West Bengal led the list with 27 sites followed by Odisha at 23.
 - ✓ 20 sites in 6 States have prepared a detailed project reports and an action plan to clean up sites.
 - ✓ These action plans are based on orders by the National Green Tribunal (NGT).
 - ✓ There are four such sites in Kerala (Eloor-Edayar), Odisha (Ganjam, Orichem) Tamil Nadu (Ranipet), Uttar Pradesh (Rania, IPL and Deva Road), West Bengal (Nibra village), Madhya Pradesh (Ratlam).
 - ✓ The contaminations in these sites include oil contamination due to leakage of underground oil pipelines of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited in Tamil Nadu, pesticide and heavy metal contamination in creeks at Eloor, Kerala, chromium contamination at Rania, improperly disposed electronic waste lying on the banks of river Ramganga, Moradabad and mercury contamination of the soil at Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, and Ganjam, Odisha.
 - ✓ The Union Environment Ministry has been monitoring these sites known to be contaminated and has begun to commission clean-up jobs.

