



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 16, 2021

TAMIL NADU

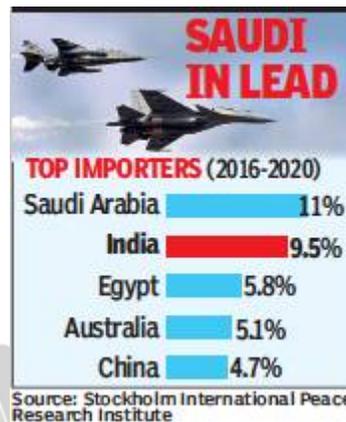
- **The Southern Railways - has upgraded its ticketing system to a browser-based application called ticketing peripherals management system (TPMS).**
 - ✓ The new system has been developed for real-time monitoring and management of ticketing peripherals and accessories
 - ✓ It will help in rectifying equipment failures in booking and reservation counters in a timely manner and thus assist in better delivery of ticketing services to rail passengers.
 - ✓ This unique application is developed in-house using open source software and latest web technologies without involving any cost to Railway administration.
 - ✓ Under the earlier system, the supervisor of a ticketing centre had to contact the controller who, in turn, informed the people or contractors concerned when a printer or a computer or any other equipment turns 'faulty'.
 - ✓ Now, this can be done online and can be tracked online by anyone.
 - ✓ Repairs will also be faster as information about the computer or printer including its date of installation and its lifecycle will also be available online.
 - ✓ The system would also help the railways carry out timely maintenance of its equipment.

- **IIT Madras - has established an Institute Advisory Board (IAB) comprising eminent alumni and well-wishers**
 - ✓ The objective of the IAB is to guide the institute on best practices followed by renowned international institutions.
 - ✓ The board has 10 external members, who are drawn from different fields like business, academia and philanthropy
 - ✓ They will help devise strategies to implement global best practices that enable acceleration of research programmes, establishment and growth of world-class research centres, encouragement of innovation and entrepreneurship, and recruitment of top faculty members and students from across the world.

- ✓ The Board will also help connect faculty and students with internationally acclaimed researchers, strengthen industry connections with the institute and continue to raise an endowment of ₹2,000 crore.

NATIONAL

- **India – is the world’s second-largest arms importer, even though the country’s arms imports fell by 33% between 2011-2015 and 2016-2020**
- ✓ Saudi Arabia topped the list of arms importers (11%), followed by India, Egypt (5.8%), Australia (5.1%) and China (4.7%).
- ✓ Pakistan was placed at the 10th (2.7%) position.



- ✓ India accounted for 9.5% of total global arms imports during 2016-2020
- ✓ This was revealed by the latest data on international arms transfers released by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on March 15.
- ✓ India’s top three arms suppliers during 2016-2020 were Russia (49%), France (18%) and Israel (13%), followed by the US in the fourth place.
- ✓ Though Russia was the most affected supplier, India’s arms imports from the US also fell by 46%, as per the Swedish think-tank.
- ✓ But still, over 60% of the weapons systems used by the 1.5 million strong Indian armed forces are still of Russian-origin.
- ✓ The report does not take into account India’s mega deals with Russia for which deliveries are yet to begin.
- ✓ These include the \$5.43 billion one for S-400 Triumf surface-to-air missile systems in 2018 and the over \$3 billion lease of Akula-1 nuclear-powered attack submarine in 2019.
- ✓ The five largest arms exporters in 2016-20 were the US (37% share), Russia (20%), France (8.2%), Germany (5.5%) and China (5.2%), together accounting for 76% of all exports of major weapon systems.
- ✓ While the major clients of the US were Saudi Arabia, Australia and South Korea, Russia’s main customers included India, China and Algeria.
- ✓ Pakistan, Bangladesh and Algeria, in turn, were the major recipients of Chinese arms.

- **On March 15, the government - assured the Lok Sabha that it is not planning to privatise Life Insurance Corporation (LIC).**
 - ✓ The Government has only planned an IPO to raise the market share of the largest life insurer in the country and bring more investment for better prospects of its policy holders.
 - ✓ This was announced by the Minister of state for finance Anurag Thakur while responding to questions on LIC disinvestment.

- **On March 15, Twitter - announced a series of initiatives in several Indian languages to encourage “healthy” conversations ahead of the assembly elections in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry.**
 - ✓ The platform will publish a series of eye-openers to tackle misinformation regarding EVMs, VVPATs, postal ballots, Covid-19 related restrictions, among other issues.
 - ✓ The information will be based on inputs provided by civil society groups, including Youth Ki Awaaz and Association of Democratic Reforms.
 - ✓ The information will be available in six languages - Assamese, Bengali, English, Hindi, Malayalam and Tamil.
 - ✓ Additionally, the platform will host a series of political discussions under two hashtags #DemocracyAdda and #HerPoliticalJourney.
 - ✓ These initiatives will promote civic participation among young Indians and the political journeys of women leaders and stories of their struggles and triumphs.

- **Indian authorities - are looking for uranium reserves just three kilometres from the India-China border in Arunachal Pradesh in the first exercise of the kind.**
 - ✓ In this regard, the Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) has commenced the exploration process after obtaining the approval from the Centre
 - ✓ Exploration was taken up in Aalo in West Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh, at about 619 metres from ground level.
 - ✓ Uranium is used for the production of nuclear energy, which is considered clean energy.
 - ✓ Uranium exploration has also been taken up in several other states with acceptance coming from the northeastern states as well.
 - ✓ Efforts towards uranium exploration are also being made in Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Assam, Nagaland, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, and Jharkhand.

HIGH COURT VERDICT

- **The Kerala high court - has ordered that a transgender person be allowed to join the National Cadet Corps and has also directed that the law be amended to include transgenders in the NCC.**

- ✓ The verdict was pronounced by Justice Anu Sivaraman after considering a petition filed by Hina Haneefa, a student of University College in Thiruvananthapuram.
- ✓ At present, the NCC Act does not recognise the third gender and detailed guidelines are yet to be introduced for the integration of persons of the third gender into the NCC.
- ✓ The Court pointed out that the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 recognises the right of transgenders to a life of dignity and prohibits discrimination against them.
- ✓ Provisions of the NCC Act cannot preclude the operation of the law on transgender rights, as per the court.
- ✓ The court also said the enactment on transgender rights was one intended to give effect to the rights guaranteed to such persons under Articles 14, 15, 19 and 21 of the Constitution and that it has to be kept in mind when considering cases of this nature.
- ✓ A transgender has not only the right to be recognised as a transgender but also the right to self-perceived gender identity as per the law, the court noted.
- ✓ Section 6 of NCC Act, which allows only males and females to enrol themselves in the NCC, was challenged by the petitioner.
- ✓ The NCC had contended that there was no provision in law to allow the entry of transgenders.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **A mosquito protein, called AEG12 – exhibits properties to inhibit the family of viruses that cause yellow fever, dengue, West Nile, and Zika, and also weakly inhibits coronaviruses**
- ✓ This was revealed by a new research undertaken by scientists at the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) and their collaborators.
- ✓ According to the researchers, the mosquito protein AEG12 works by destabilising the viral envelope and breaking the protective covering of the virus.
- ✓ However, the mosquito protein does not affect the viruses which do not have any envelope.
- ✓ The researchers used the X-ray crystallography to solve structure of the protein.

ECONOMY

- **The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) - has launched the “UPI-Help” on the BHIM UPI Application**
- ✓ The NPCI has said that users can now get disputes sorted out on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform transactions using the BHIM app.
- ✓ To start with, the NPCI has gone live on the BHIM app for customers of SBI, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank.
- ✓ Customers of Paytm Payments Bank and TJSB Sahakari Bank shall also be able to get the advantage of UPI-Help soon.

- ✓ Other banks will be activated in the coming months.
- ✓ The requirement to have an in-app redressal mechanism for grievances was mandated by the Reserve Bank of India to increase confidence in digital payments.
- ✓ The NPCI has launched UPI-Help on its app as part of its Digi-Help initiative.
- ✓ The new feature will enable users to check the status for pending transactions, raise a complaint about transactions that have not been processed or money not credited to the beneficiary or raise a complaint in respect of merchant transactions.
- ✓ In case of pending transactions where the user doesn't take any action, the UPI-Help shall also proactively attempt to auto-update the final status of the transactions on the app.
- ✓ The Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) App has been developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) based on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- ✓ The app, named after B. R. Ambedkar, was launched on December 30, 2016

OBITUARY

- **Kathakali maestro, Guru Chemancheri Kunhircman Nair (105 years) - died at his residence near Cheliya in Koyilandy on March 15 following age-related ailments.**



- ✓ Kunhircman Nair, one of the oldest practitioners of the art form, had staged Kathakali even at around 100 years of age.
- ✓ He had also been one of the foremost teachers of classical dances in north Kerala.
- ✓ His portrayal of Krishna roles had earned much acclaim.
- ✓ Besides Kathakali, he was also trained in Bharatanatyam and Kerala Nadanam.
- ✓ The Government of India awarded him the fourth highest civilian honor, Padma Shri in 2017
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan were among those who mourned the death.

