

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 23, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **On March 22, the Tamil Nadu government - ordered all colleges, universities and deemed universities to stop holding physical classes and conduct only online classes from March 23 due to the rising Covid-19 cases in the state.**
 - ✓ In this regard, an order was issued by the state chief secretary Rajeev Ranjan
 - ✓ The order directed all colleges to complete practical classes and practical exams before March 31, and hold end-semester exams only through online mode.
 - ✓ The decision follows a videoconference meeting conducted by the chief secretary
 - ✓ The meeting was represented by vice-chancellors, director of technical education, director of collegiate education, director of public health and preventive medicine (DPH) and other health officials
- **Tamil films – bagged seven awards at the 67th National Awards announced on March 22**
 - ✓ The Best Actor award was won by Dhanush (shared with Manoj Bajpayee) for his brilliant performance in Vetri Maaran's action drama Asuran, which was also adjudged the Best Tamil Film.



- ✓ Vijay Sethupathi won the Best Supporting Actor award for his moving portrayal of a trans-person in the film 'Super Deluxe'.
- ✓ This is the first National Award for the actor.
- ✓ D Imman won the Best Music Direction (Songs) award for his popular songs in the Ajith Kumar-starrer Viswasam
- ✓ R Parthiban's experimental film 'Oththa Seruppu Size 7' won the Special Jury Award and also got its sound designer, the Oscar-winning Resul Pookutty, the Best Audiography award.
- ✓ Naga Vishal bagged the Best Child Artist award for his charming performance in the movie 'KD (a) Karuppu Durai'.
- ✓ Chennai-based choreographer Raju Sundaram also figured among the winners, as he won the Best Choreographer award for his work in Mahesh Babu's Telugu film Maharishi

NATIONAL

- **On March 22, the health ministry - revised the interval between two doses of the Covishield vaccine to four to eight weeks, from the existing four to six weeks**
- ✓ The decision follows after evidences showed higher efficacy in case of longer gap between the shots.
- ✓ The revised time interval between two doses is applicable only to Serum Institute of India's Covishield and not to Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.
- ✓ In a long-awaited US study, AstraZeneca reported that its Covid-19 vaccine provided strong protection among all adults, with an efficacy of 79%.
- ✓ The interim data confirms the vaccine's efficacy on those over 65 years, and showed a100% efficacy against severe disease and hospitalisation.
- ✓ As per the government's advisory, the protection is enhanced if the second dose of Covishield is administered between 6-8 weeks, but not later than stipulated period of 8 weeks.
- ✓ The move is based on recommendation by the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) and by National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 (NEGVAC) after reviewing the issue in accordance with the emerging scientific evidence.
- ✓ Recently, the World Health Organisation's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunisation (SAGE) had recommended an interval of 8 to12 weeks between the doses based on observations that two-dose efficacy and immunogenicity increase with a longer interval.
- ✓ However, if the second dose is inadvertently administered less than 4 weeks after the first, it does not need to be repeated.
- ✓ In February, AstraZeneca had submitted clinical trials data of its vaccine, which was co-developed with Oxford University

- **On March 22, Parliament - passed a bill to raise the limit of foreign investment in insurance companies from the existing 49% to 74%.**
- ✓ The Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021, was passed by Lok Sabha on March 22 after it was passed by Rajya Sabha last week.
- ✓ The bill was moved by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who said raising the FDI limit in the insurance sector would help insurers raise additional funds and manage financial problems.
- ✓ Many insurance companies were struggling to maintain a solvency ratio of 150% as per norms, she added.
- ✓ Three out of seven public sector insurers were below the solvency margin
- ✓ However, since they were in the public sector, the government would infuse capital and their solvency margin would be taken care of, she said.
- ✓ The FM said the FDI limit was raised on the recommendation of insurance regulator IRDAI after extensive consultations with stakeholders.

DEFENCE

- **India - is yet to decide whether its troops will participate in a multi-nation counter-terrorism exercise “Pabbi-Antiterror-2021” of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**
- ✓ The joint exercise will be held at Pakistan’s National Counter Terrorism Centre near the Pabbi town in Nowshera district of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province later this year
- ✓ The exercise will witness the participation of Chinese soldiers
- ✓ The decision about the exercise was taken after the 36th meeting of the council of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) held at Tashkent in Uzbekistan on March 18.
- ✓ If India does participate in the exercise, it will be the first time that Indian soldiers will go to Pakistan for such wargames.
- ✓ India, along with Kazakhstan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, had attended the meeting of the RATS executive committee on March 18.

- **On March 22, the defence ministry - signed a ₹1,056 crore contract with Mahindra Defence Systems Ltd (MDSL) for supply of 1,300 “light specialist fighting vehicles” to the Indian Army.**
- ✓ The delivery of the vehicles will be completed within the next four years
- ✓ The vehicles will be attached to various fighting units for carriage of anti-tank guided missiles, medium machine guns and automatic grenade launchers
- ✓ The Army recently ordered emergency procurement of 27 M4 wheeled armoured vehicles under a ₹178 crore contract signed with the Pune-based Bharat Forge company of the Kalyani group.

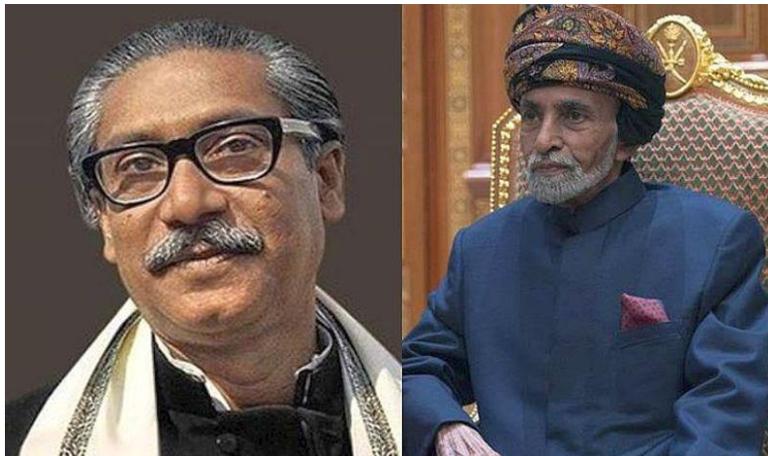
AWARDS

- **The 67th National Film Awards for 2019 – were announced by the Central government on March 22**
- ✓ Mohanlal's yet-to-be-released film, written and directed by Priyadarshan 'Marakkar Arbikadalinte Simham' (Marakkar: Lion of the Arabian Sea) was selected as the Best Feature Film



- ✓ Sanjay Poooran Singh Chauhan won the Best Director Award for Hindi film 'Bhattar Hoorain'
 - ✓ This is only his second film after 'Lahore' that won him the Indira Gandhi Award for the best debutant director in 2010.
- ✓ The best acting award went to Manoj Bajpayee for 'Bhonsle', Dhanush for Tamil film 'Asuran', and Kangana Ranaut for two of her films – 'Panga and Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi.'
- ✓ This is the second National Award for Best Actor for Dhanush after he won it for 'Aadukalam' in 2011
- ✓ For Manoj Bajpayee, the award comes after he won the Certificate of Merit for 'Pinjar' in 2003.
- ✓ This is the fourth National film award for actress Kangana Ranaut
- ✓ Vijay Sethupathi won the best-supporting actor award for film 'Super Deluxe'
- ✓ Versatile actress Pallavi Joshi won the best-supporting actress award for 'The Tashkent Files'
- ✓ Sushant Singh Rajput's last theatrical release, 'Chhichhore', was adjudged as the best feature film in Hindi

- ✓ D. Immam got the Best Music Award for his songs in Tamil film 'Viswasam', while Prabuddha Banerjee bagged the Award for the Best Background score in Bengali film 'Jeyesthaputro'
 - ✓ B. Praak won the Best Playback Singer Award for Hindi film 'Kesari' and Savani Ravindra won the Best Female Playback Singer Award for Marathi film 'Bardo'
 - ✓ Telugu film 'Maharishi' won the award for the Best Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment.
 - ✓ Among a total of 47 awards in the feature films category, 'Asuran' won the best Tamil film and 'Jersey' the best Telugu film.
 - ✓ The Nargis Dutt Award for Best Film on National Integration went to Marathi film 'Taj Mahal'.
 - ✓ The jury also declared Sikkim as the most film-friendly state in 2019
 - ✓ The award for best book on cinema was given to Sanjay Suri's 'A Gandhian Affair: India's Curious Portrayal of Love in Cinema'.
 - ✓ In the non-feature film category, Hindi film 'An Engineered Dream', was declared winner.
 - ✓ The best voice over/ narration award went to Sir David Attenborough for 'Wild Karnataka'.
 - ✓ 'Kastoori' was awarded best children's film, while 'Shrikshetra-Ru-Sahijata' won the best arts and culture film.
 - ✓ The jury comprised eminent film makers and film personalities including N Chandra (Chairman), Arun Chaddha, Shaji N Karun and Saibal Chatterjee
 - ✓ The ceremony was supposed to be held in May last year, but was delayed indefinitely due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - ✓ The event is organised by the Directorate of Film Festivals, which comes under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- **On March 22, India - conferred the prestigious Gandhi Peace Prize to two statesmen of Asian countries, making an exception from the norm**



- ✓ The 2019 Prize was conferred posthumously on Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman, while the 2020 Prize was also conferred posthumously on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, founder of Bangladesh.
- ✓ PM Narendra Modi is scheduled to travel to Dhaka to be chief guest at the Mujib centenary celebrations and the golden jubilee celebrations of Independence of Bangladesh on March 26
- ✓ It would be his first visit to any country post-Covid pandemic and second to Bangladesh as the Prime Minister
- ✓ The year is also being celebrated as Mujib Barsho in both Bangladesh and India.
- ✓ In Dhaka, the PM will oversee a digital exhibition — Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Exhibition, launched by the two PMs recently.
- ✓ Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the first President of Bangladesh, who also became the Prime Minister later
- ✓ He was assassinated on August 15, 1975
- ✓ Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said was the longest serving king in the Middle East, who died in January 2020
- ✓ The Gandhi Peace Prize is given for social, economic and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian methods
- ✓ This award was launched in the year 1995 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Mohandas Gandhi.

SPORTS

- **India – won second gold medal in the 10m air pistol mixed team event consisting of Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker in the shooting World Cup at New Delhi**



- ✓ In the final game, the Indian pair defeated the Iranian pair of Javad Foroughi and Golnoush Sebghatollahi
- ✓ Further, Divyansh Singh Panwar and Elavenil Valarivan combined to bag the 10m air rifle mixed team gold.
- ✓ The duo prevailed over the Hungarian pair of Eszter Denes and Istvan Peni in the final match

- ✓ Then, Yashaswini Singh Deswal and Abhishek Verma claimed the bronze medal after defeating Turkey's Seval Ilayda Tarhan and Ismail Keles in the 10m air pistol mixed team playoff match.
- ✓ Divyansh and Elavenil had clinched the gold, edging past the Hungarian pair of Eszter Denes and Istvan Peni
- ✓ India's men's and women's skeet shooters too clinched gold and silver, respectively, in their team competitions.

