

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 28, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- Private researchers – have identified a rare 400-year-old Nayak stone inscription at Papamadai in Avaniapuram in Madurai district recently.
- ✓ There were two stone pillars, which were 10 feet high and one-and-a-half feet in breadth.
- ✓ The inscriptions in the stone pillar describes the construction of a sluice
- ✓ The two inscriptions were found on one of the pillars, on two different sides.
- ✓ The first inscription had 19 lines inscribed on it with the first three lines being part of a devotional song, written in Telugu.



- ✓ The first inscription was deciphered by retired archaeologist C Santhalingan.
- ✓ The inscriptions paid tribute to the sixth king of the Madurai Nayak dynasty, Veerappa Nayaka Ayan, for constructing a sluice to help local farmers irrigate their farmlands.
- ✓ The second inscription was found engraved on the eastern side of the same pillar.
- ✓ However, words at the beginning of the sentence have been lost due to erosion and the second inscription is not yet deciphered

STATES

- **On March 26, Uttar Pradesh government - has announced to start an affordable rental housing scheme for students, urban migrants and poor people living in cities.**
- ✓ In this aspect, the Uttar Pradesh cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has proposed a new 'Affordable Rental Housing and Complexes' (ARHC) scheme
- ✓ The beneficiaries include poor migrants, students, urban migrants, low-income groups including factory workers, people from economically weaker section (EWS) and people associated with hospitality.
- ✓ Further, preference will be given to people from widows, working women & minorities, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes.
- ✓ This scheme will be implemented under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) to promote participation of private and public institutions to construct, operate and maintain rental housing complexes for the beneficiaries.
- ✓ The scheme consists of two models
 - ✓ The first model will convert vacant houses funded by central or state government into affordable rental housing and complexes through an agreement.
 - ✓ Under the second model, public or private entities will build, operate and maintain the ARHC on their available vacant land for a minimum of 25 years.
- **On March 25, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan – launched “MICE Roadshow Meet in India” Brand and roadmap for promotion of India as MICE destination in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh**



- ✓ During the event, a 'Chhatrasal Convention Centre' was also launched at Khajuraho
- ✓ It has been developed under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism.

- ✓ The “MICE Roadshow-Meet in India” was organised at Chhatrasal Convention Centre, Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh from March 25 to March 27, 2021.
- ✓ This event was organised with the objective of promoting India as MICE Destination (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions).
- ✓ It was conducted by Ministry of Tourism in association with Madhya Pradesh Tourism and India Convention Promotion Bureau.
- ✓ The event launched a draft Master Plan which was prepared by Ministry of Tourism to develop Khajuraho as an Iconic Tourist Destination.
- ✓ Under the Iconic Tourist Destination scheme framed by Ministry of Tourism, nineteen tourist destinations were identified to be developed as iconic destinations across country in a holistic manner.
- ✓ Some of the identified destinations are Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri, Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, Humayun’s Tomb, Red Fort and Qutub Minar, Colva Beach, Amer Fort, Somnath, Dholavira, Statue of Unity, Khajuraho, Hampi, Mahabalipuram, Kaziranga, Kumarakom, Konark and Mahabodhi Temple.

NATIONAL

- **West Bengal and Assam - reported 82% and 76.9% voter turnout respectively in the first phase of the 2021 Assembly elections held on March 27.**
- ✓ The voting for the first phase of elections in West Bengal and Assam began for 30 and 47 seats respectively
- ✓ Of the 30 seats in West Bengal, the BJP is contesting in 29 and one has been given to the All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU).
- ✓ In Assam, the BJP is contesting 39 of 47 seats in this phase and ally AGP (Asom Gana Parishad) the rest.

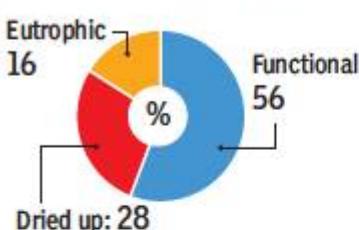
State Voter Turnout (%)	2016 Assembly	2019 Lok Sabha	2021 Assembly
Assam (47 seats)	84.1	78.1	77 (11pm)
West Bengal (30 seats)	85.0	84.3	80 (5pm)

- ✓ West Bengal will witness the polls in eight phases, while Assam will vote in three phases
- ✓ In 2016 the Trinamool swept 26 of the 30 seats on offer in this phase, while in Assam the BJP won 35 of 47 seats in this phase
- ✓ In West Bengal the Trinamool faces a tough test from the BJP in its bid for a third straight term.
- ✓ In Assam the BJP is hoping to win a second straight term, with Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal the biggest name facing elections in the first phase contesting from Majuli constituency

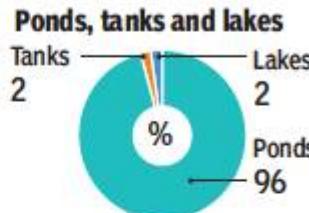
- The preliminary findings of the census survey of ponds, tanks and lakes in the Ganga river basin – have been released by the Quality Council of India (QCI)
- ✓ The QCI is an autonomous body set up by the ministry of commerce and industry
- ✓ It has undertaken a project of 100% mapping of all water bodies in Ganga districts for their improvement or rejuvenation
- ✓ The QCI has, so far, assessed 578 water bodies covering all 329 in Uttar Pradesh.
- ✓ According to the findings, more than 25% of government owned water bodies in the Ganga basin across five states are dried up
- ✓ Further, a total of 411 water bodies out of 578 surveyed are surrounded by settlements.
- ✓ The survey is being done under 'Namami Gange' (Ganga Rejuvenation) programme of the Centre
- ✓ It has been completed only in Uttar Pradesh and is not yet completed in Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.
- ✓ In UP where this survey is completed, 37% of water bodies are dried up while 21% have become eutrophic with excessive plant and algal growth and only remaining 42% are fully functional.

Survey Completed Only In UP

No. of water bodies* assessed in five states: 578



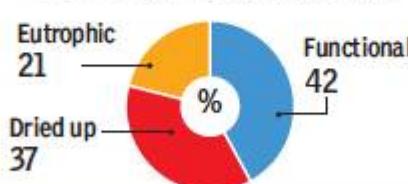
Eutrophic: Full of algae and aquatic plants, depletion of fish species and overall deterioration of water quality



- Survey is only completed in UP
- Other 249 out of 578 assessed water bodies are in Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal & Uttarakhand

STATUS IN UTTAR PRADESH

No. of water bodies* assessed:
329



Ghazipur district has maximum no. of functional water bodies

Objectives of the census survey of water bodies in Ganga basin

- Mapping of water bodies, using geo-tagging technique, depth measurement and drones
- Giving UID codes to water bodies
- Creating water body cleanliness index

- ✓ One of the key objectives of the survey is to map water bodies, using geo-tagging techniques, depth measurement and drones.
- ✓ All water bodies will also be given a unique identification (UID) code.
- ✓ A cleanliness index will also be prepared, using parameters such as encroachment, quality and functionality of the catchment area.
- ✓ The QCI in its findings noted that the pace of survey in West Bengal is quite slow due to lack of official support in the state.
- ✓ The QCI was supposed to start the survey in March last year 2020, but it got started only in November, 2020 due to Covid-19

➤ **The clinical trials of Covid-19 vaccine Covovax - have begun in India**

- ✓ The manufacturer, Serum Institute of India (SII) hopes to launch the vaccine by September this year
- ✓ This was confirmed by the SII CEO, Adar Poonawalla on March 27
- ✓ The vaccine is made through a partnership with US-based vaccine maker Novavax Inc and SII
- ✓ In August 2020, Novavax Inc had announced a licence agreement with SII for the development and commercialisation of its vaccine, NVX-CoV2373
- ✓ The NVX-CoV2373 is a Covid-19 vaccine candidate for low and middle-income countries and India.
- ✓ It has been tested against African and UK variants Covid-19 and has an overall efficacy of 89%.
- ✓ However, the pact excludes major upper-middle and high-income countries, for which Novavax continues to hold exclusive rights

➤ **On March 27, the ‘Jal Shakti’ or Water Resources Ministry - approved ₹465 crore as ‘performance incentive fund’ for seven Indian states**

- ✓ The states include Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh
- ✓ The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) aims to provide functional tap water connection to all rural households across the country by 2024.
- ✓ These states will receive the additional fund due to their better ground works, functionality of piped water supply schemes and capacity to utilise the fund for speedy implementation of the JJM target.
- ✓ Presently, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Goa and Telangana have become ‘Har Ghar Jal’ states/UT
- ✓ Further, every household in 55 districts and 85,000 villages of the country have tap water supply,” as per the ministry.
- ✓ Nearly four crore households have been provided with tap water connections since the launch of the Mission in August 2019
- ✓ Under the mission, the tap water supply has increased from 3.23 crore (17% of total rural households) to more than 7.20 crore (37.6%) rural households in the country.

- ✓ According to the ministry, Gujarat was among the best performing states to emerge beneficiary of the ‘performance incentive fund’
 - ✓ Further, Himachal Pradesh government was also praised for “intensive village-wise planning and implementation” to ensure assured tap water supply to rural homes.
- **India – has dispatched 200,000 doses of Covid-19 vaccines (AstraZeneca Vaccine) to the UN peacekeepers and peacekeeping missions on March 27, 2021**
- ✓ The vaccine gift to the UN peacekeepers was earlier announced by External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, in February 2021.
 - ✓ The Minister had announced this while addressing “UN Security Council open debate on implementation of resolution 2532 (2020) on cessation of hostilities” in the line of COVID-19 pandemic.
 - ✓ As per UN, a total of 85,782 personnel from 121 nations are serving in 12 peacekeeping operations led by Department of Peace Operations across the globe, as of January 31, 2021.
 - ✓ India is the largest troop contributing countries to peacekeeping missions.
 - ✓ The peacekeepers monitor and observe peace processes in post-conflict areas.
- **The Central government - has launched second tranche of commercial coal auction on March 25, 2021**
- ✓ During the second round, 67 coal blocks will be offered for auctioning
 - ✓ Out of 67, six are coking coal and rest is non-coking which are used in thermal power plants
 - ✓ These coal blocks are spread across Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh.
 - ✓ Out of this, 37 mines have been fully explored and could be brought to production immediately while 30 are partially explored.
 - ✓ Earlier, the commercial coal mining award was given to 19 mines out of 38 in first tranche of auction in November 2020.
 - ✓ Commercial coal mining will help in bringing new investments and boost socio-economic development in coal-bearing states.
 - ✓ Coal mining sector was opened for private companies in 2020, 47 years after coal mining was nationalised in India.
 - ✓ In this regard, Government had also amended the ‘Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015’ to open coal auction for non-mining, MSMEs and foreign companies.
 - ✓ In general, about 65% bidders were from ‘non-end user’ category where “bidder is not a direct user of coal”.
- **The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) - has launched a competency-based assessment framework on March 25, 2021.**

- ✓ The assessment framework was launched for classes 6-10 for three subjects namely, English (reading), Science, and Maths.
- ✓ This framework is a part of “CBSE Competency Based Education Project” which was launched to replace existing “rote learning model” in accordance with the new National Education Policy (NEP) in next 2-3 years.
- ✓ In this regard, CBSE had collaborated with British Council and three agencies from UK namely Cambridge, NARIC and Alphaplus.
- ✓ Under the exercise, 40 assessment designers, 180 test item writers and 360 master trainer mentors are being trained to use assessment framework.
- ✓ Under this phase, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas and private schools across India will participate in the programme.
- ✓ The programme will be rolled out to all 25,000 CBSE schools across India by 2024.

➤ **Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman - has launched Central Scrutiny Centre (CSC) and Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) Mobile App.**

- ✓ These tech-enabled initiatives were developed by Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- ✓ The new Apps will help in creating a new corporate and investor friendly ecosystem by enabling ease of doing business and ease of living for people.
- ✓ The Central Scrutiny Centre would help in scrutinizing certain ‘Straight through Process’ (STP) Forms filed by corporates on MCA21 registry.
- ✓ It would flag companies about data quality issues and irregularities for more in-depth scrutiny.
- ✓ The IEPFA Mobile App was launched with the aim of achieving goal of financial literacy and spreading awareness, education & protection among investors in rural as well as urban areas.
- ✓ The app comprises of facility to track status and progress of IEPF claim refund process.
- ✓ It also provides a mechanism for investors and common citizens to report on suspected fraudulent schemes.

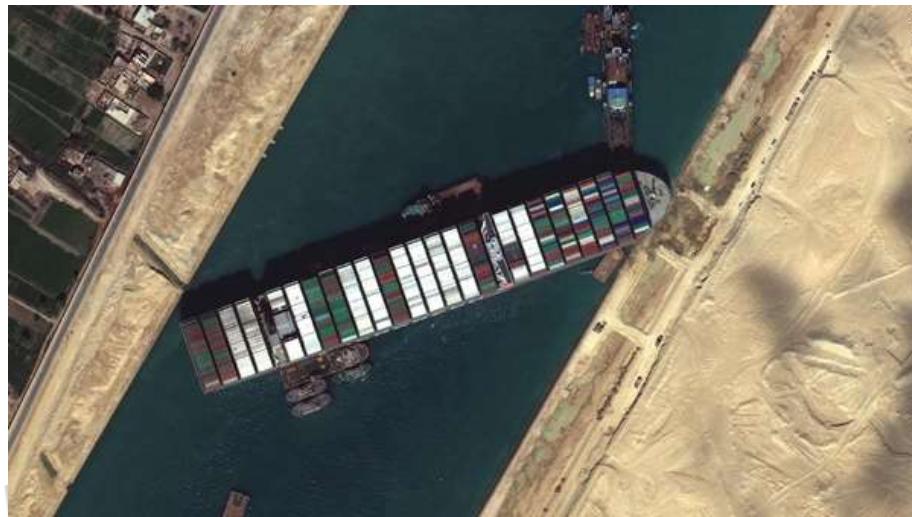
➤ **India – has reported a 24% year-on-year fall in registration of tuberculosis cases in 2020**

- ✓ This was revealed in the India TB Report 2021, which was published recently
- ✓ Amid the Covid-19 pandemic-led disruptions and lockdowns, an estimated 18.05 lakh TB cases were registered in India.
- ✓ As per the report, 24.04 lakh TB cases were reported in 2019, among which treatment success rate was 82% while mortality rate was 4%.
- ✓ India has the largest caseload of 2.64 million tuberculosis patients across the world.
- ✓ It accounts for 30% of the world’s TB cases.

- ✓ The government has aimed to have TB-free India by 2025, five years ahead of global target date, 2030.
- ✓ It had launched TB Harega Desh Jeetega Campaign in September 2019 to eliminate TB

INTERNATIONAL

- **The Suez Canal, one of the world's busiest waterways - continued to remain blocked as a giant container ship, MV Ever Given, is stuck sideways since March 23**



- ✓ The ship, stretching more than 1,300 feet, ran aground and blocked one of the world's most vital shipping lanes
- ✓ This has left more than 100 ships stuck at each end of the 120-mile canal, which is likely to go up to 350 ships in the coming days
- ✓ The vessel's immobility is holding up goods valued at \$9.6 billion a day costing about \$400 million an hour
- ✓ The Suez Canal connects the Red Sea to the Mediterranean and carries roughly 10% of worldwide shipping traffic.
- ✓ The 2.2 lakh tonne container ship, the Ever Given, was heading from China to the port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands.
- ✓ It ran aground amid poor visibility and high winds from a sandstorm that struck much of northern Egypt this week
- ✓ The Suez Canal is a key passage for oil flows from the Persian Gulf region in Asia to Europe and North America.
- ✓ The 193 km artificial sea-level waterway provides the shortest and fastest sea link between Asia and Europe.
- ✓ Roughly 5% of globally traded crude oil and 10% of refined petroleum products passed through the canal before the pandemic
- ✓ Stranded ships waiting to transit the Suez Canal are mostly bulk carriers, containerships, crude oil tankers, general cargo, vehicle carriers, oil producer

tankers, chemical tankers and some LPG and LNG tankers and ships carrying livestock.

- ✓ The shipping delays could impact everything from clothes to shoes, electronic, food or energy supplies.
- ✓ This route is used for Indian exports/imports worth US\$ 200 billion to/from North America, South America and Europe.
- ✓ It includes petroleum goods, organic chemicals, iron and steel, automobile, machinery, textiles and carpets, handicrafts including furniture, leather goods, etc.

➤ **China and Iran – have signed a landmark '25 years' strategic economic and security cooperation agreement on March 27**



- ✓ The deal was signed during Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's on-going six-nation tour to West Asia.
- ✓ The deal, which has been under negotiation for five years, was signed between Wang and his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif during a ceremony at the foreign ministry in Tehran.
- ✓ Wang is visiting Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, the UAE, Bahrain and Oman.
- ✓ As per the agreement, China agreed to invest \$400 billion in Iran over 25 years in exchange for a steady supply of oil to boost its growing economy.
- ✓ The deal could deepen China's influence in the West Asia and seriously affect US' efforts to keep Iran isolated.
- ✓ President Joe Biden has offered to resume negotiations with Iran over the 2015 nuclear deal that former President Trump cancelled three years after it was signed.
- ✓ The deal marked the first time Iran has signed such a lengthy agreement with a major world power.
- ✓ In 2001, Iran and Russia signed a 10-year cooperation agreement, mainly in the nuclear field, that was lengthened to 20 years through two five-year extensions.
- ✓ Iran did not make the details of the agreement public before the signing.
- ✓ As per the draft agreement, about \$400 billion of Chinese investments to be made in dozens of fields, including banking, telecom, ports, railways, health and information technology, over the next 25 years in Iran.
- ✓ In exchange, China would receive a regular, heavily discounted supply of Iran oil.

- ✓ The draft also called for deepening military cooperation, including joint training and exercises, joint research and weapons development and intel-sharing.
- **Norway - has planned to construct the world's first ship tunnel underneath the mountains in Stadhavet peninsula of Norway.**
- ✓ The construction on the project will start in 2022 and it will be completed by 2025-2026.
- ✓ The tunnel will be 37 meters high, 1,700 metres long and 26.5 metres wide.
- ✓ It will be built with a funding of \$315 million.
- ✓ The construction of the tunnel was included in the National Transport Plan of Norway government for the first time in 2013.
- ✓ The Norwegian Ministry of Transport and Communications approved for preparations to start in March 2021.
- ✓ The Ship Tunnel Project has been designed to help in navigation of ships through rough and treacherous Stadhavet Sea in north western Norway.
- ✓ At present, ships have to wait for few days so that harsh weather conditions and rough tides conditions in Stadhavet Sea is improved before transiting the area.
- **The Parliament of New Zealand - passed the 'Miscarriage bereavement leave law' on March 24**
- ✓ The new legislation provides a "right to paid leave" to mothers and their partners after a miscarriage or stillbirth.
- ✓ The new law provides the employees three days leave after a pregnancy ends with a stillbirth.
- ✓ This legislation was passed by considering the fact that, one in four New Zealand women has suffered a miscarriage.
- ✓ Further, the country has been a pioneer on issues related to woman's rights.
- ✓ It was the first country to give "voting rights to women" and also passed a law in 2020 to decriminalise abortion.

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **India – signed five agreements with Bangladesh during the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina on March 27**
- ✓ The five MoU's include –
 - ✓ MoU on disaster management, resilience and mitigation
 - ✓ MoU between Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC) and National Cadet Corps of India (INCC)
 - ✓ MoU on the establishment of a framework of cooperation in the area of trade remedial measures between Bangladesh and India
 - ✓ Tripartite MoU on establishment of sports facilities at Rajshahi college field and surrounding areas

- ✓ Tripartite MoU on supply of ICT equipment, courseware and reference books and training for Bangladesh-Bharat Digital Service & Employment and Training (BDSET) Center



- ✓ During the meeting, PM Modi handed over India's gift of 1.2 million COVID vaccine doses and a representational key of 109 ambulances to PM Hasina
- ✓ In return, he received a gold and a silver coin released on the occasion of the birth centenary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from PM Hasina, along with another silver coin released on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's Independence.
- ✓ During the meeting, PM Hasina emphasized the need to sign the interim Teesta water-sharing agreement which Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee continues to oppose vehemently
- ✓ The draft agreement of sharing the Teesta waters has already been agreed upon by both governments in January 2011
- ✓ PM Hasina had also raised the issue with PM Modi in their virtual summit last year in December.
- ✓ Indian side also requested Bangladesh for early finalisation of the draft of the interim agreement for sharing of Feni river water.
- ✓ Further, PM Narendra Modi visited the Matua temple at Orakandi, 130km from Dhaka.
- ✓ He also went to the Jashoreshwari Kali temple at Ishwaripur before arriving in Orakandi.
- ✓ Modi is the first Indian PM to reach out to the seat of the Matua community.
- ✓ Prime Minister Modi is on a two-day visit to Bangladesh at the invitation of PM Hasina
- ✓ Bangladesh is celebrating the birth centenary of the country's founding leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 50 years of Bangladesh's war of liberation and 50 years of the establishment of diplomatic ties between India and Bangladesh.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- President of United States, Joe Biden - has invited 40 world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for a two-day US-hosted virtual summit on climate in April 2021.
- ✓ It will commence on the occasion of Earth Day on April 22, 2021.

- ✓ During the summit, the US President will speak about US goal to reduce carbon emissions by 2030, which is a “nationally determined contribution” under Paris accord.
- ✓ Apart from PM Narendra Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping and President of Russia Vladimir Putin were invited for the conference.
- ✓ The summit is expected to be a key milestone towards United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November, 2021 in Glasgow.
- ✓ The Leaders’ Summit and the COP26 summit will be organised with the ultimate goal of limiting the global temperature rise at 1.5 degree Celsius.
- ✓ The summit will reconvene US-led ‘Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate’
- ✓ This forum will bring together 17 countries which are responsible for 80% of global emissions and GDP.

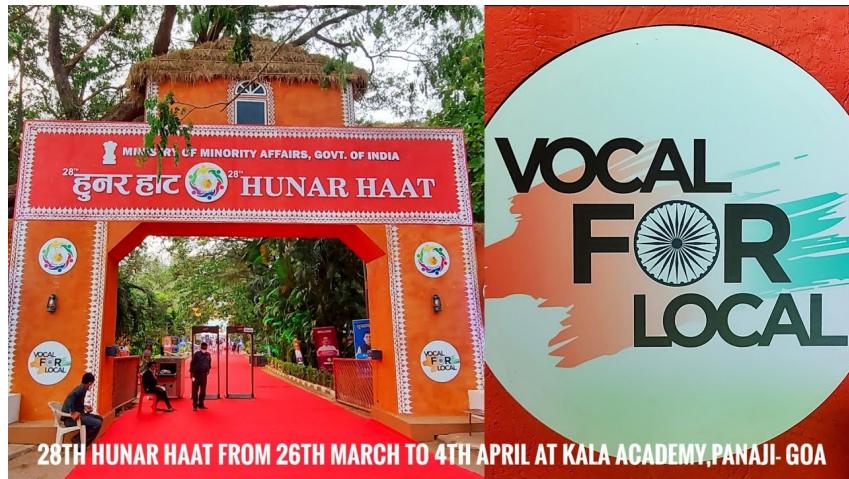
➤ **Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan - addressed the 7th annual summit of NATHEALTH in virtual mode on March 26, 2021.**



- ✓ The summit focused on ‘Indian Health system expansion in post-COVID era’.
- ✓ While addressing the summit, the minister reiterated the commitments of government for fulfilling goal of ‘Health for all’.
- ✓ Towards achieving this goal, the Government has launched the “National Health Policy” in 2017, the Minister said.
- ✓ Further, the minister said that the government launched Ayushman Bharat scheme with the objective of providing ‘Universal Free Access’ to primary health care, promoting health and wellbeing of deprived families

➤ **The 28th Edition of the Hunar Haat - is being organised at Kala Academy in Panaji, Goa.**

- ✓ The event was started on March 26th and will conclude on April 4, 2021.
- ✓ It is being held under the theme- “Vocal for Local”
- ✓ The Hunar Haat aims to popularise the products of indigenous artistry and crafts across the country
- ✓ The Hunar Haat is being organised by Union Ministry of Minority Affairs



- ✓ The event will witness the participation of more than 500 artisans and craftsmen from 30 states and UTs.
- ✓ They will showcase indigenous products like Bidriware, Kalamkari, Madhubani paintings, Udayagiri wooden cutlery, products made from cane-bamboo-jute, Tussar silk, Moonga silk, Marble products, Leather products, Black pottery, Handloom etc.
- ✓ “Hunar Haat” is being organised at different places across the country from time to time
- ✓ The next edition will be held in Dehradun in between April 16 to April 25, in Surat from April 26 to May 5.
- ✓ The subsequent editions of the event will be organised at Mumbai, Kota, Hyderabad, Patna, Jaipur, Prayagraj, Guwahati, Ranchi etc. later in the year.

- **Indian Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh and South Korean Defence Minister, Suh Wook - have inaugurated “Indo-Korean Bilateral Friendship Park” in Delhi Cantonment on March 26, 2021.**



- ✓ The Friendship Park has been built to commemorate contribution of Indian peacekeepers in the Korean War from 1950 to 1953.
- ✓ During the Korean War, both sides accepted UN resolution which was sponsored by India to call a ceasefire
- ✓ The official bilateral and diplomatic ties between India and South Korea were started in 1962 at the consular level and upgraded to ambassador level in 1973

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) – has postponed the scheduled launch of geo imaging satellite GISAT-1**
 - ✓ The satellite was proposed to be launched on March 28 on board GSLV-F10 rocket from Sriharikota spaceport.
 - ✓ The launch of the satellite in a geosynchronous transfer orbit has been now rescheduled to April 18 following a minor technical issue associated with the spacecraft
 - ✓ Originally, it was scheduled to be launched on March 5, 2020 but it was postponed due to technical reasons.
 - ✓ GISAT-1 is an Indian imaging satellite class for the geostationary orbit.
 - ✓ It will also carry multi-spectral multi-resolution imaging instruments.
 - ✓ Weighing about 2268 kg, the satellite will facilitate near real-time observation of Indian sub-continent at frequent intervals, under cloud-free condition.
 - ✓ It will provide image of entire Indian landmass every 30 minutes at 42 m spatial resolution.
- **The Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) – released the Global Wind Report 2021 on March 25**
 - ✓ In the year 2020, 93GW of new capacity were installed, which indicates a record 53% year-on-year increase.
 - ✓ The report warns that there is a need to install new wind power capacity three times faster by next decade to achieve global climate targets and to limit global warming below 2°C above the pre-industrial levels
 - ✓ As per the report, total global wind power capacity has gone up to 743GW now.
 - ✓ This is helping the globe to avoid over 1.1 billion tonnes of CO2 annually, which is roughly equivalent to annual carbon emissions of South America.
 - ✓ The report mandates to install a minimum of 280 GW of new wind energy per year in order to avoid worst impacts of climate change.
 - ✓ The growth in 2020 was driven by large scale installations in China and US, which are the two largest wind power markets of world.
 - ✓ Both the countries have over half of total wind power capacity and they accounted for 75% of new installations in 2020.
- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) – to collaborate with Indian Institute of Space Science & Technology (IIST) for futuristic research orbit**
 - ✓ Both the agencies have joined hands to carry out research activities
 - ✓ To coordinate the joint research, a dedicated framework has now been established in capacity building programme office (CBPO) in ISRO headquarters.
 - ✓ An advanced space research group has been constituted in order to identify application-oriented research projects matching the interests of IIST faculty and ISRO's requirement

- ✓ Further, an empowered overseeing committee has been set up to review and approve proposals.
- ✓ The project mix comprises of two years, three-five years, and seven-year projects which can be pursued by IIST.
- ✓ The association between ISRO and IIST is similar to the partnership between Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and US Space Agency NASA for futuristic research orbit
- ✓ The JPL is funded by NASA and managed by California Institute of Technology (Caltech).
- ✓ The IIST, situated at Thiruvananthapuram, is a Deemed to be University under Section 3 of UGC Act 1956.
- ✓ It is an autonomous body functioning under Department of Space of Government of India.
- ✓ This institute was constituted to cater the requirement for high quality manpower in Indian Space Research Organization.
- ✓ It was inaugurated on September 14, 2007 by Dr. G. Madhavan Nair.

ECONOMY

- **The United States Trade Representative (USTR) - has proposed retaliatory trade actions against India and certain other countries**
 - ✓ The actions have been taken on countries that have either imposed or are considering equalisation levy/digital services tax on e-commerce companies.
 - ✓ In this regard, the USTR has issued notices seeking public comments on proposed trade actions against six countries, including India.
 - ✓ According to a USTR document pertaining to India, it has requested "written comments regarding a potential trade action in connection with the Section 301 investigation of India's Digital Services Tax."
 - ✓ In June 2020, the US initiated an investigation under Section 301 of the US Trade Act, 1974 against the taxation on digital services adopted or under consideration by six countries - India, Italy, Turkey, UK, Spain and Austria.
 - ✓ The report of this investigation in January this year concluded that India's equalisation levy, by its structure and operation, discriminates against US digital companies.
 - ✓ It was strongly opposed by India.
 - ✓ The US had requested for bilateral consultations in this matter, and India had submitted its comments to the USTR on July 15, 2020.
 - ✓ It had also participated in a bilateral consultation held on November 5, 2020.
- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - has extended restrictions on withdrawals and deposits in Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank till 30 June, 2021.**



- ✓ Earlier, the RBI had imposed restrictions on the PMC Bank in September 2019 following financial irregularities in the bank
- ✓ It also appointed an administrator for next six months and limited withdrawals to Rs 1,000 first and later to Rs 25,000 from accounts of the customers.
- ✓ The restrictions were to expire on March 31, 2021.
- ✓ The RBI has extended restrictions following a delay in finalizing prospective investor for reconstructing the bank
- ✓ PMC Bank is undergoing regulatory actions and investigation over alleged irregularities in certain loan accounts particularly with respect to financially stressed real estate player Housing Development & Infrastructure (HDIL).
- ✓ The Enforcement Directorate has also filed a money laundering case on scam-hit multi-state cooperative bank
- ✓ The PMC bank was founded in 1984 and has 137 branches across seven states, with most of them in Maharashtra region

AWARDS

- **Range Officer Mahinder Giri - has become the only ranger from Asia to win the prestigious International Ranger Award.**



- ✓ He has been deployed at Motichur range of Rajaji Tiger Reserve (RTR) for the past few years
- ✓ The award has been announced for 10 professionals across the globe for their contribution towards conservation
- ✓ The award is announced by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)

- ✓ Giri won the award for his efforts in curbing human-wildlife conflict in and around Rajaji and his role in the ongoing tiger translocation exercise from Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR) to RTR.
- ✓ A total of 113 nominations of 630 forest staffers from 43 different countries were submitted
- ✓ Giri emerged as the only winner from Asia, while other winners were from Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe.
- ✓ All the winners will receive a uniform patch and their employing organisation will receive US \$10,000 (Rs 7,26,150) as prize money
- ✓ The prize money can be used to support the winner and their team to conduct their work
- ✓ This can include purchasing essential supplies or equipment, providing training, providing insurance, supporting the family of a deceased ranger, or other ranger welfare activities” as per World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).
- ✓ The award was created in 2020 by IUCN and WCPA in collaboration with the International Ranger Federation, Global Wildlife Conservation, and Conservation Allies.

SPORTS

- **On March 27, Gokulam Kerala – lifted their first ever 2020-21 I-League trophy at the Kishore Bharati Krirangan stadium in Kolkata**



- ✓ In the final match of the season, they had defeated Manipur's Tiddim Road Athletic Union (TRAU) with a come-from-behind 4-1 margin
- ✓ Gokulam Kerala finished the league at the top of the table with 29 points from 15 matches.
- ✓ They won nine games, drew two and lost in four matches during the season
- ✓ In the other game of the day, Churchill Brothers defeated RoundGlass Punjab FC 3-2 to finished runners-up at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata

- ✓ This is the first time in the history of the I-League/National Football League (NFL) league that a club from Kerala has been crowned the champions.
- ✓ Gokulam Kerala had started participating in the league from the 2017-18 season and this is their fourth season.
- ✓ With the win, the team has also secured an automatic slot to represent India in the group stages of the AFC Cup 2022.
- ✓ Bidyasagar Singh of TRAU emerged as the top goalscorer and named as the Hero of the tournament

- **The Sports Ministry - has decided to extend “Khelo India Programme” from 2021-22 to 2025-26.**
- ✓ In this regard, the Sports Ministry has furnished an ‘Expenditure Finance Committee’ (EFC) memorandum to Ministry of Finance to extend the annual programme.
- ✓ As per the memorandum to Finance Ministry, an amount of 8,750 crore has been estimated as a financial implication of new Khelo India Scheme.
- ✓ The Khelo India initiative was launched by Indian Government with the aim of building a sporting culture in grassroots level across the country.
- ✓ Apart from that, it also focuses on training athletes who has the potential to win medal for India at Olympics.
- ✓ The event is organised annually in January month usually.
- ✓ The first edition of the initiative was held in Delhi, while the second and third editions were held in Pune and Assam respectively.
- ✓ The fourth edition of Khelo India will be held in Panchkula, Haryana after Tokyo Olympics.

RANKINGS

- **The annual edition of ‘International Intellectual Property (IP)’ - was released on March 23, 2021 by ‘US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC)’.**
- ✓ India was ranked 40 among 53 global economies in the ninth IP index
- ✓ The IP Index evaluates Intellectual Property rights across 53 global economies on the basis of patent, commercialisation of IP assets, copyright policies and ratification of international treaties.
- ✓ As per index, overall global IP environment had improved in 2020 with positive score was increased in 32 economies of the 53 economies.
- ✓ India has scored 38.4 out of 100 on 50 intellectual property-related indicators.

COUNTRY	NINTH EDITION	EIGHTH EDITION	CHANGE IN OVERALL SCORE
United States	95.31%	95.28%	0.03%
United Kingdom	93.90%	93.92%	-0.02%
Germany	92.27%	91.08%	1.19%
France	91.43%	91.50%	-0.07%
Japan	91.12%	90.40%	0.72%
Sweden	90.92%	90.56%	0.36%
Netherlands	90.02%	89.64%	0.38%
Ireland	88.86%	88.98%	-0.12%
Switzerland	85.82%	85.34%	0.48%
Spain	84.68%	84.64%	0.04%
Singapore	84.38%	84.42%	-0.04%
South Korea	83.73%	82.20%	1.53%
Italy	83.15%	83.18%	-0.03%
Australia	80.55%	79.62%	0.93%
Hungary	78.23%	78.38%	-0.15%
Canada	74.71%	72.86%	1.85%
Israel	72.57%	72.76%	-0.19%
Greece	70.67%	70.10%	0.57%
Poland	70.50%	70.56%	-0.06%
New Zealand	69.10%	68.64%	0.46%
Taiwan	66.18%	66.33%	-0.15%
Morocco	59.62%	59.66%	-0.04%

- ✓ Overall score of India has increased from 36.04% in seventh edition to 38.46% in eighth edition.
- ✓ Among BRICS countries, India registered the second-highest growth in nine editions with an overall improvement of over 13%
- ✓ The typical examples of IP include patents, copyrights, trademarks and trade secrets.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

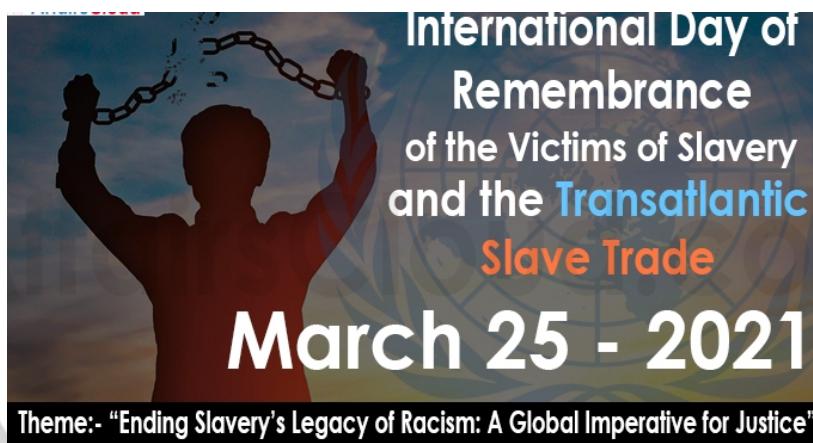
➤ World Theatre Day – March 27



- ✓ The Day is observed annually by the International Theatre Institute (ITI) centres and global theatre community
- ✓ The Day aims to highlight the importance of theatre arts and the significant role played by them in the field of entertainment.

- ✓ Theatre art comprises of various forms of fine arts involving live performers, actors or actresses to present their performance before a live audience providing real experience in a specific place or on the stage.
- ✓ The International Theatre Institute (ITI) started observing the World Theatre Day in 1961.
- ✓ The ITI has more than 85 centres across the world
- ✓ The author of the message of 'World Theatre Day 2021' is Helen Mirren who is one of the best-known and most respected actresses.
- ✓ She won the Academy Award for her performance in The Queen in 2007.

➤ **International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade - March 25**



- ✓ The day honours and remembers those who suffered and died because of 'transatlantic slave trade'
- ✓ The Transatlantic slave trade has affected more than 15 million men, women and children for over 400 years
- ✓ It aims at raising awareness regarding dangers of racism and prejudice.
- ✓ Theme 2021 – 'Ending slavery's legacy of Racism: A Global imperative for Justice'
- ✓ The day was proclaimed by United Nations in the year 2007 and first observed in 2008 under the theme "Breaking the Silence, Lest We Forget"
- ✓ The year 2015 marks the start of UN's International Decade for People of African Descent
- ✓ To commemorate this, a permanent memorial was unveiled at UN headquarters in New York entitled "The Ark of Return", which was designed by Haitian-American architect Rodney Leon.
- ✓ As on 2016, a total of more than 40.3 million people are estimated to be enslaved in the modern forms
- ✓ Out of this, 71% are women and girls and 25% are children

