

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 9, 2021

STATES

- The Delhi government - presented the “Deshbhakti budget” for financial year 2021-2022 on March 9, 2021.
- ✓ The Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, Manish Sisodia presented a ₹69,000-crore budget which was themed on patriotism.

KICKSTARTING 75 WEEKS OF CELEBRATIONS

Delhi budget 2021-22 to have a coat of patriotism

- A section of the budget may be named ‘Deshbhakti Budget’
- To mark **75 years of Independence** on August 15, 2022

Pan-India functions planned to showcase

- Role of Delhi in the independence movement
- Delhi’s journey since independence
- Delhi of 2047, a 25-year vision

Budget estimate likely to be above ₹65,000 crore

Key focus areas

- Education
- Health
- Transport
- Environment
- Infrastructure

Budget session scheduled to begin on Monday

- Outcome budget and Economic Survey to be tabled on Monday
- Budget to be present on Tuesday
- Session to end on **March 16**

- ✓ While presenting the budget, he announced that the government has decided to celebrate 75th Independence Day of India in a grand manner.
- ✓ In this regard, the Delhi government will hold programmes from March 12, 2021 which will last for 75 weeks.

- ✓ Under the “Deshbhakti Budget”, government has proposed to allocate Rs. 45 crore to install high masts so as to hoist the national flag at 500 places in Delhi.
 - ✓ Further, the Government proposed that the Deshbhakti period will be organised in the city schools.
 - ✓ The government sought to increase the per capita income of the Delhi in order to reach to the level of Singapore by year 2047.
 - ✓ The government will also allocate Rs.10 crores for the programmes on Bhagat Singh’s life during the Deshbhakti celebrations.
 - ✓ This year’s budget accounts for the budget outlay of more than 6.1% than the budget presented for financial 2020-21.
- **Odisha - has decided to set up the dedicated “District Investment Promotion Agencies (DIPA)” in 30 districts of the state.**
- ✓ The DIPA will help in promoting and facilitating the investment in the state apart from monitoring the progress of projects
 - ✓ They will operate under the respective District Collector and will be established at the District Collectorate
 - ✓ The District Collector will be supported by the team of professionals to provide the investment facilitation, project monitoring and to promote the local entrepreneurship.
 - ✓ It will be set up in phased manner from April 2021 to December 2021.
 - ✓ The performance of the DIPAs will be monitored by the “State Level Single Window Clearance Authority”.

NATIONAL

- **The country’s horticulture production - is likely to touch an all-time high of 327 million tonnes (MT) in 2020-21 with potato and mango dominating the vegetables and fruits segments, respectively.**
- ✓ The estimates of horticulture crops in the 2020-21 crop year (July-June cycle) were released on March 8
 - ✓ As per the estimates, an increase of nearly 2% is predicted over 2019-20 in production of fruits, vegetables, aromatic & medicinal plants and plantation crops.
 - ✓ Output of spices and flowers has, however, shown a decline over the previous year.
 - ✓ The horticulture production has once again overtaken foodgrain production in 2020-21 – a trend which has been visible since 2012-13.
 - ✓ With an increase in output of potato by nearly 10%, the overall output of vegetables is estimated to be 194 million tonnes (MT) in 2020-21 compared to 189 MT in the previous crop year.
 - ✓ Among the three most popular kitchen staples, tomatoes, onions and potatoes (TOP), onions recorded a marginal increase, while tomato production dropped by nearly 1MT in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20.

- ✓ Considering the 'king of fruits' mango recording an increase of over 4% to 21MT, the overall production of fruits is estimated to be 103MT in 2020-21 compared to 102MT in 2019-20
 - ✓ Output of bananas too is estimated to be higher at 33.7MT for 2020-21 compared with 32.5MT last year.
 - ✓ The ministry had last month released estimated output data of foodgrains, showing a new record of around 303 MT which is over 2% higher than the production in previous year.
 - ✓ Record production of both horticulture crops and foodgrains can be attributed to good monsoon rainfall (9% higher than the long period average) and its better distribution in most states last year.
- **The Central Silk Board (CSB) under the Ministry of Textiles and the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare - has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a “convergence model” in order to implement the “Agro-forestry in silk sector” under the “Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) Scheme”.**
- ✓ The MoU was signed in the presence of Union Minister of textile and Women & Child Development, Smriti Irani and the Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Parshottam Rupala.
 - ✓ The convergence model in the silk sector will be implemented with the aim of providing incentives to the farmers so as to implement the “sericulture-based Agroforestry models”.
 - ✓ The initiative in the sericulture sector is targeted to increase the size of sericulture host plants like Asan, Arjuna, Som, Soalu, Mulberry, BadaKesseru and Phanat on farmlands.
 - ✓ The Central Silk Board will be the agency that will promote Agroforestry in silk sector.

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- **On March 8, the Supreme Court - decided to examine whether to review the 50% limit on total quotas, as set out by the 1992 verdict by a nine-judge bench**
- ✓ A five-judge Constitution bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, L Nageswara Rao, S Abdul Nazeer, Hemant Gupta and S Ravindra Bhat decided to revisit the verdict in view of subsequent constitutional amendments and changed social dynamics
 - ✓ The bench is examining the validity of the Maharashtra government's decision to grant reservation to Marathas
 - ✓ The bench agreed to expand the ambit of the proceedings to settle the 50% ceiling and larger constitutional questions pertaining to reservation and issued notices to all states and Union territories.

- ✓ The Indra Sawhney vs Union of India case verdict, delivered almost three decades ago, tried to strike a balance between promotion of social justice and the right to equality by fixing a cap of 50% on reservation.

7 STATES HAVE BREACHED CAP

“Reservation being extreme form of protective measure... should be confined to minority of seats. Even though the Constitution does not lay down any specific bar... the principle of balancing equality ordains reservation, of any manner, not to exceed 50%
 —9-member SC bench on Nov 16, 1992 in Indra Sawhney judgment

➤ Since the 1992 order, seven states till now have passed laws breaching the 50% ceiling on reservation:
Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Haryana, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh

➤ Apex court was hearing challenge to Maharashtra govt's decision to extend quota to Marathas by disregarding 50% cap

- ✓ Though the court in its verdict, known as the 11-judge Mandal Commission judgment, had said that 50% was a rule which could be breached under extraordinary circumstances, it has so far enforced the ceiling.
- ✓ The bench framed six questions to be adjudicated by it and asked all parties to formulate their submissions on these aspects.
- ✓ The bench will also examine Article 338B, Article 342(A) read with Article 366(26c) of the Constitution which were inserted by the Constitution (102nd Amendment) Act, 2018.
- ✓ The amendment deals with the constitutional status of the National Commission for Backward Classes.
- ✓ The court will also decide the power of state legislature to enact a legislation determining socially and economically backward classes and conferring benefits on the said community under its enabling power.

INTERNATIONAL

- **On March 7, Switzerland - has voted to ban the full facial coverings such as burqa and niqab in almost all the public places, without any exceptions**
- ✓ The proposal was passed following a public referendum which was supported by around 51.21% of voters.
- ✓ A total of 1,426,992 voters were in favour of the ban, while 1,359,621 were against, on a 50.8 percent turnout.
- ✓ According to a 2019 Federal Statistical Office survey, 5.5% of the Swiss population were Muslims, mostly with roots in the former Yugoslavia.
- ✓ Within Europe, Switzerland's neighbours France and Austria have banned full face coverings, alongwith Belgium, Bulgaria and Denmark.

- ✓ This proposal of banning the full-face coverings in public was tabled by groups like right-wing Swiss People's Party.
- ✓ However, the full-face covering will be allowed at the places of worship and other such sacred sites
- ✓ Earlier, France became the first European country that banned burqas and niqabs in public places in the year 2011.
- ✓ The European Court of Human Rights had upheld this ban in the year 2014.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The Indian space agency, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in collaboration with the US space agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) - has completed the development of Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)**
- ✓ The SAR has the capability of producing extremely high-resolution images for joint earth observation satellite mission.
- ✓ The NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) is a joint collaboration for the dual-frequency L-Band and S-Band SAR for the earth observation.
- ✓ NISAR is the first satellite mission which will use two different radar frequencies called L-band and S-band.
- ✓ These radar frequencies will be used to measure the changes in Earth's surface with an accuracy of less than a centimetre.
- ✓ This mission will be launched in the year 2022 from the Sriharikota spaceport of ISRO in Andhra Pradesh.
- ✓ The payload was shipped from the Ahmedabad-based Space Applications Centre (SAC) to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) of NASA.
- ✓ NASA is providing the L-band SAR for the mission, while ISRO is providing the S-band radar, spacecraft bus, launch vehicle and other launch services associated with the mission
- ✓ SAR is a sophisticated information-processing technique that is used to produce high-resolution images.
- ✓ S-band SAR payload was flagged off by Secretary of the Department of Space & ISRO Chairman, K Sivan on March 4, 2021.
- ✓ The space agencies, NASA and ISRO have signed a deal to develop and launch the NISAR satellite on September 30, 2014.
- ✓ NISAR mission will capture the details of highly spatial and temporally complex processes such as ecosystem disturbances, ice sheet collapses and natural hazards like volcanoes, landslides, earthquakes and tsunamis.
- ✓ The mission will also provide information regarding the biomass, natural hazards, groundwater and sea level rise.

