

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-MARCH 28, 2022

NATIONAL

- On March 27, Prime Minister Narendra Modi – addressed the country in the 87th episode of his radio speech ‘Mann Ki Baat’



- ✓ During his speech, the PM pointed out that India has achieved the export target of \$400 billion due to the “hard work” of farmers, artisans, weavers, engineers, small entrepreneurs and the MSME sector.
- ✓ Exports of leather products from Hailakandi in Assam, handloom products from Osmanabad, fruits and vegetables from Bijapur and black rice from Chandauli are increasing, said the PM
- ✓ In this regard, the PM said that the first consignment of millets grown in Himachal and Uttarakhand was exported to Denmark.
- ✓ Further, Bainganapalli and Subarnarekha mangoes from Krishna and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh were exported to South Korea, while world-famous Apricot of Ladakh has reached the markets of Dubai and bananas are being shipped from Tamil Nadu to Saudi Arabia.
- ✓ Moreover, Jackfruit from Tripura was exported to London by air and, for the first time, king chillies from Nagaland were dispatched to London.

- ✓ Similarly, the first consignment of Bhalia wheat was exported from Gujarat to Kenya and Sri Lanka
 - ✓ PM Modi also said that the Ayush manufacturing industry has grown exponentially from Rs 22,000 crore six years ago to Rs 1,40,000 crore
 - ✓ Referencing the Government e-Market (GeM portal), the PM said that during the past year, the government had purchased items worth over one lakh crore rupees through the portal.
 - ✓ Mentioning that World Health Day will be observed on April 7, the PM said that like most people he was astonished to see the agility of the 126-year-old guru and Padma awardee from Varanasi, Baba Sivanand
 - ✓ The Prime Minister also praised the work of Swachhagrahis (cleanliness warriors) – Chandrakishore Patil from Nashik who cleans trash from the banks of Godavari and Rahul Maharana of Puri who collects plastic waste from pilgrimage sites in the city
 - ✓ He also mentioned about Mupattam Sri Narayanan of Kerala, who started a project called ‘Pots for water of life’ and distributed earthen pots so that animals and birds do not face water problems during summer
 - ✓ The PM quoted Arun Krishnamurthy from Chennai, who has cleaned 150 ponds and lakes, and Rohan Kale of Maharashtra, who is running a campaign to preserve hundreds of step-wells in Maharashtra
 - ✓ PM Modi further said that the government will celebrate the birth anniversary of Mahatma Phule on April 11 and that of Babasaheb Ambedkar on April 14
 - ✓ The first episode of Mann Ki Baat was broadcast on October 3, 2014.
- **The Centre - has told the Supreme Court that states can grant minority status to Hindus if they are not in a majority and are unable to avail of several Central schemes meant for the minorities.**
- ✓ The Centre’s affidavit maintained that notification of any community specific to a state as a minority comes under the purview of the state concerned
 - ✓ To illustrate this, the Centre pointed out that the Maharashtra government notified Jews as a minority community in 2016 and the Karnataka government notified Urdu, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Tulu, Lamani, Hindi, Konkani and Gujarati languages as minority languages
 - ✓ The central government filed its affidavit in response to a petition by Delhi BJP leader Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay
 - ✓ The petitioner has challenged the validity of Section 2(f) of the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) Act, 2004
 - ✓ The Section 2(f) of the NCMEI Act empowers the Centre to identify and notify minority communities in India.
 - ✓ Further, under Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, the Centre had in 1993 notified five communities — Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians — as minorities.

- ✓ The petition stated that Hindus are merely 1% in Ladakh, 2.75% in Mizoram, 2.77% in Lakshadweep, 4% in Jammu and Kashmir, 8.74% in Nagaland, 11.52% in Meghalaya, 29% in Arunachal Pradesh, 38.49% in Punjab, and 41.29% in Manipur.
 - ✓ The subject of identification of minority communities is in the Concurrent List of the Constitution
 - ✓ Hence, both the Centre and the states have the power to legislate to confer minority status on certain religious or linguistic communities which are in minority in the country or a particular state.
- **After a two-year gap, the 43-day annual Amarnath Yatra - will commence on June 30, with strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols**
 - ✓ This was announced by the Jammu and Kashmir administration on March 27
 - ✓ In 2020 and 2021, the annual pilgrimage was conducted symbolically with just the priests taking the holy mace to the Amarnath shrine .
 - ✓ This year, the Yatra would begin from both routes — the Pahalgam track in Anantnag district and the Baltal route in Ganderbal district.
 - ✓ The board has fixed the daily pilgrim cap at 20,000 (10,000 per route), excluding devotees travelling by helicopter.
 - ✓ The online registration for pilgrims will begin on April 11.
 - **The latest genome sequencing by CSIR-Neeri - has found Omicron sub-variant BA.2 (Clade 21L) as the dominant variant in Covid positive samples collected from Vidarbha and Tamil Nadu .**
 - ✓ Clade is a genotypic term and used in scientific terminology to understand the characteristics of a variant.
 - ✓ Currently, the BA.2 belonging to Clade 21L is seen as dominant in most parts of the world
 - ✓ Omicron belongs to Clade 21M, thus its sub-variants are further classified as BA.2 (21L) and BA.1 (21K).
 - ✓ Until recently, Omicron lineages belonging to Clade 21M were majorly seen in samples processed at the Neeri lab.
 - ✓ The Neeri study showed the percentage share of BA.2 (Clade 21L) at 77.58% and B.1.1.529 (Clade 21L) at 22.41%.
 - ✓ This was the 15th series of genome sequencing undertaken at Neeri since early January.
 - ✓ The latest batch comprised 58 SarsCov2 samples from six districts of Vidarbha and Tamil Nadu collected between March 15 and 25.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India and Maldives - signed agreements for cooperation in education, health and capacity-building during foreign minister S Jaishankar's ongoing visit to the country**



- ✓ Jaishankar also handed over India's expanded coastal radar system, comprising 10 radar systems, to Maldives for strengthening security in the region.
 - ✓ He described the radar system as a product of MEA-Navy partnership for regional security and an example of India's 'SAGAR' and 'Neighbourhood First' policies.
- ✓ India and Maldives also inaugurated the National College of Policing and Law Enforcement, an India-funded project.
 - ✓ This was the first college of this capacity, dedicated to the training of the police and the law enforcement, to be built in the Maldives.
 - ✓ It is also the largest grant project funded by the Indian government in the Maldives, barring the Greater Male connectivity project
- ✓ Further, both the countries signed agreement for connectivity between India's National Knowledge Network and the Maldives' Higher Education Network.
 - ✓ Under the agreement, 1500+ Indian Institutes, Universities and centres of learning from Singapore, Europe and the US are connected to Maldives via India's National Knowledge Network
 - ✓ In this regard, the peering agreement was signed between the Maldives' National Centre for Information Technology (NCIT) and National Informatics Centre (NIC).
 - ✓ A peering agreement is an agreement between two network administrators to share data routing responsibilities across multiple networks.
- ✓ National Knowledge Network is a multi-gigabit national research and education network
 - ✓ It has been developed to provide a unified high speed network backbone for educational and research institutions in India.
 - ✓ The network is managed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is in the Maldives for a two-day visit from March 26 to March 27 after he got an invite from his Maldivian counterpart, Abdulla Shahid

- **The details of the free trade agreement (FTA) between India and UAE, CEPA - were unveiled on March 27 during commerce & industry minister Piyush Goyal's visit to the Emirates**
- ✓ Accordingly, India is set to lower import duty on dates, metals, cement, cooking gas and crude oil from the UAE as part of the FTA that is expected to be implemented from May.



- ✓ India will lower tariffs on all but 1,157 items, or 9.7% of the products, while UAE will exclude 0.7% of the goods from the trade agreement.
- ✓ India intends to remove import duty on almost two-thirds of its products under the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the UAE.
- ✓ In contrast, its trade partner will immediately lower tariffs on over 80% of the goods.
- ✓ Further, India will eliminate tariffs on another 18% goods over the next five to seven years with the concession to be extended to another 2% products in 10 years.
- ✓ The FTA is likely to benefit about \$26 billion worth of Indian products that are subjected to 5% import duty by the UAE.
- ✓ Overall, the UAE is offering duty elimination on over 97% of its tariff lines which account for 99% of Indian exports to the Emirates in value terms.
- ✓ The immediate duty-free access for Indian goods is expected to benefit gems and jewellery, textiles, agricultural & fish products, leather, footwear, sport goods and pharma.
- ✓ For the first time, there is a separate section of pharma to facilitate the export of Indian generic medicines.
- ✓ These drugs are expected to get automatic registration and marketing authorisation in the UAE for products with regulatory approvals from the US, Australia, the EU, Canada, Japan and the UK.
- ✓ **Meanwhile, Information & broadcasting minister Anurag Thakur launched an international project by name 'Training for Emirates Jobs And Skills' (Tejas)**
- ✓ The new project aimed at creating pathways to enable the Indian workforce to be equipped with the skills needed to meet market requirements in the UAE.
- ✓ Tejas aims at creating a 10,000-strong Indian workforce in the UAE during the initial phase

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **Wings India 2022, Asia's biggest civil aviation show - concluded at the Begumpet Airport on March 27, 2022**



- ✓ Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia inaugurated the aviation exhibition on March 24
- ✓ Asia's largest event on civil aviation, Wings India 2022, was jointly organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and FICCI
- ✓ A total of 125 international and domestic exhibitors, over 5,000 business delegates and 60,000 general visitors participated in the show
- ✓ The theme of the event is 'India@75: New Horizon for Aviation Industry'
- ✓ The Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru has been adjudged as the 'Best Airport' under the General Category at the Wings India 2022 Awards
 - ✓ It has also won the 'Aviation Innovation' Award from Minister of Civil Aviation, Jyotiraditya Scindia
 - ✓ Bengaluru airport was recently conferred with the 'Voice of the Customer' recognition from Airports Council International (ACI) and the Customer Obsession Award from the Confederation of Indian Industry
- ✓ The Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) has bagged the 'Covid champion' award at Wings India 2022
 - ✓ The airport operator was selected for the successful implementation of a meticulous project named 'Mission Safeguarding' during the pandemic time to ensure safe travel at Kochi Airport
 - ✓ CIAL handled 4.3 million passengers during 2021 and became the third largest airport in the country in the international sector.
- ✓ Meghalaya has been conferred with the 'Most Proactive State' award under 'Regional Connectivity Scheme-Priority Areas' for initiatives in promoting UDAN connectivity.
- ✓ The next Wings India show will be held at Begumpet Airport, from March 14 to 17, 2024.

DEFENCE

- **The Army version of the next-generation medium range surface-to-air missiles (MRSAMs) - was tested twice from the Chandipur integrated test range off the Odisha coast on March 27, 2022.**



- ✓ The MRSAM was developed jointly with Israel to destroy hostile aircraft, helicopters, cruise missiles and drones at a range of 70km
- ✓ The flight tests of the MRSAM were conducted as part of the 'live firing trials' against high-speed aerial targets.
- ✓ The first launch was to intercept a medium-altitude target at a long range and the second was to prove the capability against a low-altitude target at short range.
- ✓ The missiles intercepted the aerial targets and destroyed them completely, registering direct hits at both the ranges
- ✓ The Army's MRSAM system, which was tested in a deliverable configuration, includes multi-function radar, mobile launcher system and other vehicles.
- ✓ The Navy and IAF have already begun inducting their MRSAMs, while the trials for the Army are currently underway.
- ✓ MRSAMs, also called the next-generation Barak-8 systems, are developed jointly by DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)

SPORTS

- **P V Sindhu – won the Swiss Open Super 300 badminton tournament in Basel, Switzerland on March 27**
- ✓ Playing her second successive final in the tournament, Sindhu, a double Olympic medallist, defeated fourth-seeded Thai Busanan Ongbamrunphan in straight sets for her maiden Swiss Open title at the St. Jakobshalle.
- ✓ With this, Sindhu becomes the second Indian woman to win the Swiss Open after Saina Nehwal, who won it in 2011 and 2012.
- ✓ Sindhu had lost to Rio Olympic gold medallist Carolina Marin of Spain in the final in the last edition.



- ✓ It was Sindhu's 16th win over Busanan in 17 meetings, having lost to the Thai only once — at the 2019 Hong Kong Open
- ✓ This is the second title for PV Sindhu in Basel, where she won her maiden World Championships title in 2019.
- ✓ This is also the second title of the 2022 season for Sindhu after she won the Syed Modi India International in January.
- ✓ PV Sindhu is a two times Olympics medal winner having won the silver in the 2016 Rio Olympics and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
- ✓ Meanwhile, HS Prannoy lost his match against Indonesia's Jonatan Christie in the men's singles final.
- ✓ Christie, 24, won his first title since the 2019 Australian Open while Prannoy's last title came at the 2017 US Open.

