

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-MARCH 31, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- On March 30, Chief Minister M K Stalin – inaugurated the ‘Central Square’ developed at a cost of ₹400 crore in front of Chennai Central railway station



- ✓ Under this project, a single tunnel will be constructed connecting Chennai Central, Metro Railway Station, Ribbon Building, Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital and Park Railway Station.
- ✓ The facility, close to Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. M.G. Ramachandran Central Railway Station, is aimed at serving as a multi-modal hub, connecting various transport hubs
- ✓ White canopies, pergolas, lush green landscaping, seating area, water fountains and walkways and a new subway were part of the Central Square project.
- ✓ The facilities integrate different modes of transport and enable seamless movement of passengers
- ✓ A 31-storey commercial complex called Central Plaza has been set up under the Central Square project, with all amenities of a hotel, a shopping mall, an amusement park, hotels and a three-storey underground parking lot holding about 2,000 vehicles

- ✓ The Central Square project is implemented by Chennai Metrorail with financial assistance from the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority.

NATIONAL

- **On March 30, the PM-led Cabinet Committee on Security - cleared the first-ever contract for 15 light combat helicopters (LCHs) for the IAF and Army at a cost of Rs 3,887 crore**
- ✓ Besides, Rs 337 crore was also sanctioned for upgrading the existing infrastructure.
- ✓ The Light Combat Helicopter Limited Series Production (LSP) is an indigenously designed, developed and manufactured state-of-the-art modern combat helicopter containing around 45% indigenous content by value.
- ✓ This will be progressively increased to more than 55% in the series production version.
- ✓ The LCH can perform roles of Combat Search and Rescue, Destruction of Enemy Air Defence, Counter Insurgency operations against slow-moving aircraft and Remotely Piloted Aircraft, high altitude bunker-busting operations, counter-insurgency operations in the jungle and urban environments
- ✓ The state-run Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) produces the helicopter.
- ✓ According to the defence ministry, 10 helicopters will be allotted for the Indian Air Force and remaining five will be for the Indian Army.
- ✓ The LCH is the lightest attack helicopter in the world, designed specifically to meet the Indian army's requirements.
- ✓ The 5.8-tonne, twin-pilot helicopter can operate at altitudes of 20,000 feet, higher than any other attack helicopter in the world.
- ✓ The LCH also had the distinction of being the first attack helicopter to land at forward bases in the Siachen Glacier-Saltoro Ridge region, 4,700 meters above sea level with a 500-kg load
- ✓ It is an ideal weapons platform for supporting the army in areas like Galwan and Daulat Beg
- ✓ Two light combat helicopters were earlier deployed in eastern Ladakh in 2020 to flight-evaluate them
- ✓ Such LCHs also figured in the defence ministry first negative arms import list or "positive indigenisation list" announced in August 2020
- ✓ Under the list, the acquisition of 101 weapon systems and platforms from abroad will be progressively banned in the 2020-25 timeframe to support the domestic defence production sector.
- **On March 30, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) – extended the deadline up to March 31, 2023 to undertake the Aadhaar-PAN linking process without rendering the Permanent Account Number (PAN) invalid**

- ✓ However, the agency decided to levy a penalty of Rs 500-1,000 for missing the earlier deadline of March 31, 2022
- ✓ In this regard, the CBDT has made amendments to Section 234H of the Income Tax Act
- ✓ Accordingly, an individual who does not link their PAN with Aadhaar by March 31, 2022 but completes it within three months — that is, by June 30, 2022 — will pay a penalty of Rs 500.
- ✓ If he is unable to do so even by June 30, the penalty would be doubled to Rs 1,000.
- ✓ The CBDT has, however, clarified that the non-linked PAN will continue to be functional till March 31, 2023 for all income tax procedures such as returns filing, processing of refunds, etc.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Pakistan's National Assembly - is set to vote on a no-confidence motion against PM Imran Khan on March 31 amid accusations over 'economic mismanagement' of the nation**

ONLY 3 PMs HAVE LASTED MORE THAN 4 YEARS

Not counting the caretaker PMs, 19 different people, including Imran Khan, have served as Pakistan PM. Three-time PM Nawaz Sharif, at more than 9 years, has spent the longest time in office with Benazir Bhutto the only other PM to have served for more than one term. Apart from Sharif, only Liaquat Ali Khan, the first PM, and PPP's Yousuf Raza Gillani, have spent more than four years in office in a single term. The highly volatile political atmosphere in Pakistan and the overriding influence exerted by its military have seen governments dismissed by presidents while the army has seized power on multiple occasions.

Time Spent In Office



➤ The tenure of PMs in Pakistan, like in India, is of 5 years. The shortest stint — of 13 days in 1971 — belongs to Noor-ul-Amin



Loss of the backing of the Pakistan army, led by Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa (left), is seen as a key factor behind the pressure on Imran Khan

How Their Terms Ended



- ✓ Shehbaz Sharif, the opposition leader in the National Assembly or lower house of the parliament, tabled the no-confidence motion against Khan on March 28
- ✓ The opposition submitted the motion in the national assembly on March 8

PAKISTAN

Premiers who never make it to the finish line

No prime minister in the country's history has ever **completed a full five-year term**. Only three prime ministers have made it to the four-year mark and only two elected assemblies have completed their terms.



- ✓ As per the constitution, the assembly has to carry out the vote within three to seven days maximum after the motion has been tabled.
- ✓ In case the opposition secures 172 votes in a no-confidence vote, it can oust the prime minister and dissolve the cabinet.
- ✓ If the opposition prevails, it will be that rare case of a Pakistani PM being ousted by a no-confidence vote in a country where none of them has completed a full term.
- ✓ The Parliament will then hold a vote to elect a new prime minister until a general election is conducted.
- ✓ Earlier, on March 29, Muttahidda Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P), the key ally of Tehreek-e- Insaf walked out of the coalition to join the opposition

- ✓ MQM-P's decision effectively ended Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf's majority in the lower house of Parliament
 - ✓ This leaves the coalition government with 164 lawmakers, eight short of the 172 required for Imran Khan to stay in government.
 - ✓ Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e- Insaaf (PTI) emerged as the single-largest party in the 2018 polls, securing 176 votes in the 342-seat house
 - ✓ Although no-confidence motion was tabled against two prime ministers in Pakistan before, no premier has been removed through the motion in the country's history till now.
 - ✓ In 2006, a no-confidence motion was brought against former Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, which he survived
 - ✓ Prior to that, Pakistan's first no-confidence motion was brought against former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in 1989, which was also survived by her.
- **A private island in the South Pacific country known as Vanuatu - is being named after Satoshi Nakamoto, the pseudonymous developer of bitcoin**



- ✓ Satoshi has created and deployed bitcoin's original code and authored the bitcoin white paper
- ✓ A Bitcoin-based destination, Satoshi Island, was conceived in 2017 and will become reality in 2023.
- ✓ Satoshi Island is reportedly being "created to be the first real world crypto economy, running exclusively on cryptocurrency and blockchain technologies."
- ✓ Offering futuristic modular homes, the houses in the 32 million square feet destination is under construction.
- ✓ The private island can accommodate up to 21,000 crypto investors as residents.
- ✓ Owned by Satoshi Island Holdings Limited, the aim is to offer a community in the new Bitcoin City, to all crypto investors and professionals in the cryptocurrency capital
- ✓ With an expense of US\$130,000 in the form of NFTs, crypto investors can earn permanent citizenship.

- ✓ All ownership of assets on the island will be represented with Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), powered by blockchain.
- ✓ In this new Bitcoin city located between Australia and Fiji, every transaction is meant to be paid in cryptocurrencies only.
- ✓ It is believed that about 50,000 investors have already applied for permanent citizenship.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **On March 30, Prime Minister Narendra Modi – addressed the 5th BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Summit through video conferencing**



- ✓ Prior to the Summit, preparatory meetings at the Senior Official and Foreign Minister levels were held in Colombo on 28-29 March in the hybrid mode.
- ✓ The ongoing Summit is being organised by Sri Lanka, the current chair for BIMSTEC.
- ✓ The summit was held with the theme "Towards a Resilient Region, Prosperous Economies, Healthy People"
- ✓ The main outcome of the Summit was the adoption and signing of the BIMSTEC Charter, which formalizes the grouping into an organization made up of member states that are littoral to, and dependent upon, the Bay of Bengal.
- ✓ A 'Master Plan for Transport Connectivity' was also adopted to govern connectivity-related activities in the region.
- ✓ India will provide \$1 million in financial aid to augment the operational budget of the Bimstec secretariat, said the PM.
- ✓ The PM asserted that it is necessary to make early progress on the proposal of Bimstec free trade agreement (FTA) to enhance mutual trade among member states.
- ✓ The PM also said the collective is aiming to extend and expand the scope of the BIMSTEC scholarship programme offered by the Nalanda International University

- ✓ During the summit, three BIMSTEC agreements representing progress being achieved in ongoing cooperation activities were signed:
 - ✓ BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters;
 - ✓ BIMSTEC Memorandum of Understanding on Mutual Cooperation in the field of Diplomatic Training and
 - ✓ Memorandum of Association on Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility
 - ✓ BIMSTEC is a regional multilateral organisation wherein member states are located along the Bay of Bengal's coastline and neighbouring territories, working towards a regional unity.
 - ✓ The seven-member grouping includes India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan
 - ✓ This is the 25th year of the establishment of BIMSTEC, which was set up in 1997
 - ✓ With 21.7% of the world's population and combined GDP of USD 3.8 trillion, the BIMSTEC has emerged as an engine of economic growth in the region
- **US President Joe Biden - will host leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Washington for a special summit soon**



- ✓ Biden made the announcement during a joint news conference with the visiting Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore at the White House on March 29
- ✓ The exact dates of the summit have not been announced yet
- ✓ Biden joined ASEAN leaders in a virtual summit in October, the first time in four years the US had engaged at top level with the ASEAN bloc
- ✓ Singapore is the second largest Asian investor in the US, and the US is the largest investor in Singapore
- ✓ Biden's announcement indicates the importance he attaches to his Indo-Pacific policy amidst China's aggressive moves in the strategically vital region.
- ✓ Beijing claims almost all of the 1.3 million square mile South China Sea as its sovereign territory
- ✓ It has key sea lanes through which nearly \$5 trillion in global trade travels annually.
- ✓ China has been building military bases on artificial islands in the region also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

- ✓ Beijing has banned commercial activity like fishing or mineral exploration by countries like Vietnam and the Philippines, claiming that the ownership of territory belonged to China for hundreds of years.
- ✓ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, established in 1967, is a political and economic union of 10 member states in Southeast Asia

DEFENCE

- **The Indian Army variant of the Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) system – has successfully completed its ‘development trials’ on March 30**



- ✓ The DRDO has flight-tested two more rounds at the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, off the Odisha coast
 - ✓ During the flight tests, the next-generation MRSAM achieved direct hits against high-speed aerial targets
 - ✓ Performance of all weapon system components including missile, weapon system radar and command post have been validated during these trials
 - ✓ On March 27, 2022, the missile system was successfully flight tested twice against high-speed aerial targets for different ranges as part of the live firing trials.
 - ✓ The MRSAM is developed jointly by DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Israel to destroy hostile aircraft, helicopters, cruise missiles and drones at a range of 70-km
 - ✓ The MRSAM will now undergo “user trials” before being inducted by the Army.
 - ✓ The Navy and IAF have already begun to induct their MRSAMs.
- **The maiden edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Maritime Exercise 2022 (IMEX-22) - was conducted at Goa and in Arabian Sea from March 26 to 30, 2022**
 - ✓ The aim of the exercise was to enhance interoperability in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations among member navies.
 - ✓ The exercise witnessed participation of 15 out of the 24 member nations of IONS
 - ✓ The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), established in 2007, is a premier forum for cooperation and collaboration among navies of littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region



- ✓ IMEX – 22 comprised a harbour phase at Marmugao port, Goa from 26 to 27 March 22 followed by a sea phase in the Arabian Sea from 28 to 30 March 22.
- ✓ The participation in the exercise included warships, Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft and helicopters from the Navies of Bangladesh, France, India and Iran
- ✓ 22 Observers from 15 IONS member navies, namely Australia, Bangladesh, France, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Qatar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, UAE and UK also participated in the exercise.
- ✓ India, Bangladesh, Maldives, Seychelles, Pakistan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Oman, France, UAE, Mauritius, Kenya, South Africa, Mozambique, Eritrea, Tanzania, Australia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Myanmar, Timor Leste, and Thailand are the member of IONS.

AWARDS

- **Professor Wilfried Brutsaert - is awarded the Stockholm Water Prize 2022, for his important contribution in understanding the effects of climate change on our planet**



“Unseen water is not only unseen but has historically been unmeasured. It is very timely to focus on the unmeasured components of the hydrologic cycle.”

PROFESSOR EMERITUS
WILFRIED H. BRUTSAERT
Stockholm Water Prize Laureate 2022



Photo: Cornell University

- ✓ Professor Brutsaert is the Professor Emeritus of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Cornell University, New York
- ✓ He has also been praised for his major approaches to understanding changes in groundwater storage.

- ✓ Known as Mr. Evaporation, Professor Brutsaert is a leading expert on terrestrial evaporation and the author of “Evaporation into the Atmosphere”, considered to be the standard work on the topic.
- ✓ Originally from Ghent, Belgium, Professor Brutsaert has spent over 50 years on the faculty of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Cornell University, and has also worked in Japan, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, and China.
- ✓ The Stockholm Water Prize is awarded by SIWI in cooperation with the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences
- ✓ This prize is widely considered to be the Nobel Prize for Water.
- ✓ The award will be presented by His Majesty the King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, during the World Water Week (23rd August to 1st September)
- ✓ He will be receiving a glass statue along with 1 million Swedish krona which is equivalent to around USD 104,000.

CHANGES TO COME INTO EFFECT FROM APRIL 1 – A REPORT

CRYPTO TAX TO COSTLIER MOTOR INSURANCE: HERE ARE CHANGES THAT KICK IN FROM APR 1

Several regulations are expected to roll in from the first day of fiscal 2022-23, even as some of the special dispensations allowed during the pandemic come to an end. TOI lists some key rules that will impact individuals & businesses...

FOR INDIVIDUALS

Aadhaar | Not linked PAN with Aadhaar by March 31, 2022? You will face ₹500 penalty during April-June, ₹1,000 till March 2023

KYC Norms | Accounts held with RBI- & Sebi-regulated financial entities must be compliant with KYC norms with updated address & ID proof by March 31 (banks were asked not to take action during the pandemic)

I-T Returns | Final day for filing pending returns is March 31 – the last chance for those who missed the December 31, 2021 due date for filing original returns for AY 2021-22

Crypto Tax | New crypto tax law imposing a 30% tax rate on income from the transfer of virtual digital assets comes into effect. Also, crypto losses cannot be used to offset gains

Motor Insurance | After a 2-year hiatus, third-party motor insurance will become dearer. While costs for petrol & diesel vehicles will rise, electric vehicles get cheaper cover

PO A/cs | Post office deposits must be linked to a savings account, either with the post office or any bank, to receive interest

FOR BUSINESSES

MF Industry | Mutual funds to implement Sebi's new risk management framework. This prescribes systems, procedures & practices in various areas

Emissions | Stricter pollution norms come into effect from April 1, requiring carmakers to cut carbon emissions by around 13% to 113gm/km

Invoicing | It will be mandatory for businesses with a turnover of over ₹20cr (up from ₹50cr earlier) to adopt e-invoicing

A/c Audits | Accounting software used by companies must record audit trails and logs of each transaction

Luxe Car Prices | Mercedes-Benz & Audi have already announced higher prices from April 1. More luxury carmakers may follow suit

Related-Party Norms | Sebi's revised norms for disclosure of related-party deals come into play. Large companies will have to take shareholder permissions for such deals

– Sindhu Hariharan

THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE BILL, 2022 – A REPORT

New law will change how India collects and uses prisoner data

The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill, 2022, which was introduced in Lok Sabha on Monday, proposes to collect and share more information – including biometrics – about suspects, undertrials and convicts

1. Biometric data collection allowed

IDENTIFICATION OF PRISONERS ACT, 1920

Authorises taking of measurements – including fingerprints, footprints and photographs – of convicts and others, including those ordered to give security for good behaviour.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (IDENTIFICATION) BILL, 2022

Authorises taking of measurements – including fingerprints, palm-prints, footprints, photographs, iris and retina scan, physical and biological samples, behavioural attributes, including signatures, handwriting or any other examination referred to in sections 53 and 53A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 – of convicts and other persons, including those ordered to give security for good behaviour.

2. Nature of offence immaterial

IDENTIFICATION OF PRISONERS ACT, 1920

Measurements for identification may be taken if a person is convicted of or arrested in relation to any offence punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term of 1 year or upwards, or convicted of an offence that would render the person liable to enhanced punishment on a subsequent violation.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (IDENTIFICATION) BILL, 2022

Does away with minimum 1-year rigorous imprisonment condition; any person who has been convicted of an offence punishable under any law, or ordered to give security for good behaviour for maintaining peace, shall, if required by a police officer, have his measurements taken. However, biological samples may be collected only for offences against a woman or child, or for any offence punishable with imprisonment not less than 7 years.



3. Head constables wield power

IDENTIFICATION OF PRISONERS ACT, 1920

Officer ordering measurement should be at least a sub-inspector.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (IDENTIFICATION) BILL, 2022

Head constable may order measurement.

4. Records remain for 75 years

IDENTIFICATION OF PRISONERS ACT, 1920

States/UTs to maintain and retain records of measurements.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (IDENTIFICATION) BILL, 2022

National Crime Records Bureau shall collect records of measurements from states, UTs and other law enforcement agencies. It will store, preserve and destroy the records at national level. It will also process such records with relevant crime and criminal records, and share and disseminate such records with any law enforcement agency. Records shall be retained in digital or electronic form for 75 years from the date of collection.

5. Deletion of records made harder

IDENTIFICATION OF PRISONERS ACT, 1920

Records of measurements and photographs may be destroyed or returned to the person if he is released without trial or discharged or acquitted by any court, unless the court of the district magistrate or sub-division officer directs otherwise.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (IDENTIFICATION) BILL, 2022

Records may be destroyed only if the person is released without trial or discharged or acquitted by the court, after exhausting all legal remedies, unless the court or magistrate directs otherwise. This means measurements may be retained during the pendency of appeal.

US, UK ALREADY COLLECT BIOMETRICS

India is not the only large democracy trying to authorise the collection of biometrics from people who are arrested or detained in a case, but not convicted yet.

Police in the UK, for example, collect biometric data when a person is arrested. This includes photographs of the face, fingerprints, and DNA from a mouth swab or head hair root. They may also swab the skin on the hands and the arms of the accused. However, to collect blood and urine samples, or dental impressions, UK police need permission from the suspect and a senior police officer. These permissions are not needed in cases of drink or drug driving.

In the US, federal and state laws differ to some degree on biometrics, but the collection of information beyond photographs and fingerprints is catching on.

US federal law has “required” collection of DNA samples from convicts since 2004, and from “individuals who are arrested, facing charges, or convicted” since January 2009. Also, a suspect’s “failure to cooperate in such collection is independently a federal crime”.

The 2022 manual of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department says, “All individuals over the age of 14 arrested and booked for any crime, with or without a warrant, shall be fingerprinted.” However, suspects arrested for serious crimes must give a DNA sample.

In New York City, the police fingerprint and photograph suspects at the station. In Washington state, the rules are open-ended. At their discretion, police officers may record “in addition to photos and fingerprints, the palm-prints, sole-prints, toeprints, or any other identification data of all persons whose photo and fingerprints are required or allowed to be taken”. ^{TNN}