

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-MARCH 20, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister MRK Panneerselvam - presented the second agriculture budget of the State for the year 2022-23 on March 19**



- ✓ This is the first full-fledged State agricultural budget since the DMK government headed by Chief Minister MK Stalin assumed office in May last year
- ✓ During his 110-minutes speech, the Minister announced a marginal increase in the budgetary allocation for agriculture and allied sectors, from Rs 32,775.8 crore in the current fiscal to Rs 33,007.7 crore for the next financial year.
- ✓ Agriculture minister MRK Paneersevlam had presented an interim agriculture budget in August last year.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu is the third state in India to file a separate budget for agriculture after Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

Highlights of the agriculture budget

- ✓ The Tamil Nadu Government will take steps to achieve 126 lakh Metric Tonne of food grains production in the year 2022-23
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government will provide free electricity to all farmers across the state and has allocated Rs 5,157.56 crore for the same
- ✓ The government has allocated Rs 2,339 crore as the State share of premium subsidy for the crop insurance scheme for 2022-23.
 - ✓ As per the Minister, Rs 2,055 crore has been disbursed to 9.26 lakh farmers as compensation for the year 2020-2021
- ✓ According to the Minister, the area of agriculture in the state had increased to 53.50 lakh acres in 2021-2022.
- ✓ “Sustainable Cotton Cultivation Mission” will be implemented at a budget of Rs.15.32 crore with Union and State Government fund, in order to enhance the cotton yield during the year 2022-23
- ✓ The budget allocated ₹300 crore in 2022-23 for the ‘Kalaigarnin All Village Integrated Agriculture Development Programme’ which was announced in the first agriculture budget.
 - ✓ The project has been designed to be implemented in village panchayats identified under the Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam every year
 - ✓ It is being implemented by the Department of Rural Development & Panchayat Raj.
 - ✓ During the first year, this project is being implemented in 1,997 village panchayats of Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam, as these two projects are converged and implemented parallelly,
 - ✓ This year’s allocation will cover 3,204 village panchayats converged with Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam
- ✓ Special measures are being taken to increase soybean cultivation in Thanjavur, Salem, Tiruvallur, Nellore and Villupuram districts of the state
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government will also allocate Rs 5 crore as additional 20% of subsidy to SC/ST farmers
- ✓ The Minister also promised that steps will be taken to reduce the negative impact of global warming on agriculture.
 - ✓ As per the sixth assessment report of the Inter-governmental Panel for Climate Change, 29 districts in Tamil Nadu are vulnerable to climate change.
 - ✓ The Minister noted that to withstand climate change, crop diversification is being encouraged.
 - ✓ Special schemes will be implemented to popularize the cultivation of millets and pulses as an alternative to water-intensive crops.
 - ✓ Schemes for establishing suitable water harvesting structures and ground water recharge systems are being introduced for increasing production on dry land

- ✓ In order to encourage and enhance millet production in Tamil Nadu, MRK Paneerselvam said that the government will implement special schemes.
 - ✓ Special package will be provided to encourage the farmers to take up alternative crops such as millets, pulses and oilseeds in Kar, Kuruvai, Sornavari season in an extent of 66,000 acres at an outlay of Rs 10 crore.
 - ✓ Two special zones will be set up for millets and a special red gram zone will be set up covering Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Tiruvannamalai and Salem districts
 - ✓ Millet festivals will be conducted in the state and districts to create awareness about millets
 - ✓ One uzHAVar sandhai in each district will be permitted to sell millets and pulses in the evening
- ✓ An industrial estate for agro products will be set up in Tiruvarur district by Tamil Nadu Small Industries Development Corporation (TANSIDCO) to ensure remunerative prices to farmers for their produce and also create employment opportunities.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu Start-up and Innovation Mission (TANSIM), in partnership with Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department, will organise a special hackathon for agriculture-related technical problems to identify start-ups who can solve their problems.
 - ✓ Agritech start-ups with commercially viable ideas will be funded with a grant of up to Rs 10 lakh
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government has allocated Rs 30.56 crore for the 'Vaazhnthu Kaatuvom' scheme which is being implemented to develop manufacturers groups and community farm schools.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AT A GLANCE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Two pesticide residue analysing labs in Chennai and Trichy to facilitate exporters ➤ Four uzHAVar sandhais in Dharmapuri, Nagapattinam, Vellore and Tirupattur ➤ Vegetable wholesale market complex in Theni, Coimbatore and Kanyakumari through PPP ➤ Spl incentive of ₹195/ tonne of sugarcane to eligible farmers ➤ Spl red gram zone: Madurai, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Tiruvannamalai and Salem ➤ Value addition and marketing centres in 38 villages, where millet mission is implemented ➤ Genetic diversity fairs in district headquarters thrice a year for farmers to showcase their unique varieties ➤ Soil test lab at Mayiladuthurai ➤ Farm mechanisation promotion at ₹150 cr
--	---

- ✓ Three new food parks will be set up in Theni, Tindivanam and Manaparai at a cost of Rs 381 crore
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government will set up 3,000 solar powered pump sets up to a capacity of 10 HP with 70% subsidy assistance at an outlay of Rs 65.34 crore during the year 2022-23 under Union and state government funds.

- ✓ Over Rs 150 crore has been allocated to procure machinery in order to overcome agriculture labour shortage.
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government will provide a subsidy of 75% for the production of value added products like Jaggery.
- ✓ A budget of Rs 3 crore will be allocated for ginger and turmeric cultivation.
- ✓ A new soil testing centre will be set up in Mayiladuthurai at Rs 75 lakhs
- ✓ An amount of Rs 12 crore will be allocated to encourage tree plantation across the state.
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu government will implement a new scheme called State Agricultural Development Plan at a budget of Rs 71 crore.
- ✓ Financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh each will be provided to around 200 unemployed agriculture or horticulture or agricultural engineering graduates for establishing agri clinic or agro based activities with a financial allocation of Rs 2 crore.
- ✓ Skill training will be imparted to 2,500 rural youth during the year 2022-23 as done during the previous year.
- ✓ The government has allocated Rs 400 crore to boost organic farming.
 - ✓ A new state agriculture development scheme has been announced with focus on organic farming
- ✓ The budget allocated ₹ 132 crore for the Chief Minister's Dry Land Development Mission.
 - ✓ The scheme will cover an area of 7.5 lakh acres in 3,000 dryland clusters to support dryland farmers to take up successful cultivation of dryland crops
- ✓ The Minister pointed out that the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) has prepared a detailed plan in its Potential Linked Credit Plan for the year 2022-2023 to provide a sum of ₹1,83,425 crore to agricultural credit.
- ✓ Coconut development scheme will be implemented at an outlay of Rs 9 crore.
- ✓ Tarpaulins will be provided to 60,000 farmers at subsidized cost at Rs 5 crore.
- ✓ Awards will be given to the best performing farmers in organic farming, innovations in local agriculture techniques and machineries and best performing exporters
- ✓ Additional subsidy of 20% will be permitted over and above the existing subsidy rate to small and marginal farmers, for which an amount of Rs.5 crore will be allocated
- ✓ In order to increase the daily income of women, the cultivation of flower crops will be increased in an extent of 4,250 acres at Rs 5.37 crore.
- ✓ Traditional revival of Horticulture crops will be implemented at an outlay of Rs 2 crore under Union and State government fund with a subsidy of Rs.8,000 per acre covering an area of 2,500 acres
- ✓ Tomato growing farmers will be encouraged to increase the cultivation during the off-season period (May, June, October, November and December) in an area of 5,000 acres by providing incentives or inputs at the rate of Rs 8,000/-per acre with a total outlay of Rs 4 crore under the Union and state government funds.

- ✓ To support women farmers and clusters in hiring simple farm tools, 736 tool banks will be established under the Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Mission.
- ✓ Nel Jeyaraman Traditional Paddy Varieties Conservation Mission is being implemented in order to preserve and restore the traditional paddy varieties of the State
- ✓ Inter-crop cultivation will be promoted in coconut, mango, guava and banana orchards in 38,000 acres

Agriculture through Technology

- ✓ Tamil Nadu government has allocated Rs 8 crore for digital agriculture
- ✓ All technologies from seed to yield can be obtained electronically through Uzhavan Mobile Application.
- ✓ The seven Agro-climatic zones, including the Cauvery delta, are to be divided into 1330 Micro Agro-climatic zones to formulate new profitable crop plan to farmers based on factors of production.

RAISING
A TOAST
FOR THE
TILLERS

The measures gave a major thrust to Union government's Digital Agriculture Mission

➤ Facilities will be made for online advance booking of seeds, planting materials, fruit plants and seedlings

➤ A mobile application will serve as a platform for agricultural labourers to register for employment

➤ Tamil Mann Valam, an exclusive portal, will offer soil fertility status. Health cards can be printed

➤ Remote sensing technology will be used to assess cropped area and yield for agriculture marketing intelligence cell to forecast price

➤ Under Kisan Drone scheme, 60 drones will be purchased with state and central funding, and farmers will be trained to use pesticide spray and survey crop growth

➤ Artificial intelligence will be applied to monitor pest and disease infestation in crop

➤ Individual farm-based crop plan, survey numbers, sub-divisions of all villages will be geo-tagged, which will be superimposed with details of land owner's basic information, soil health and cultivated crops

- ✓ Survey numbers and sub-divisions of all villages will be geo-tagged and they will be superimposed with details of land owner's basic information, soil health, cultivated crops and online land records from the revenue department.
- ✓ Artificial Intelligence technology will be applied to monitor the pest and disease infestation in crops
- ✓ Instantaneous management measures will be delivered to farmers through SMS advisories in co-ordination with Tamil Nadu e-Governance agency and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.
- ✓ The new digital technology "Internet of Things" (IoT) will be adopted in State Seed Farms and State Horticultural Farms for automated irrigation and fertigation, for offering training to farmers on this new technology
- ✓ Farmers will be imparted with training and demonstration in seven Farmers Training Centres (FTC) for the usage of drones in pesticide spray and survey of crop growth stages.

- ✓ An exclusive portal called “Tamil Mann Valam” will be launched in co-ordination with the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in which the farmers can get the soil fertility status of their lands - survey number wise – in printable format
- ✓ A gene pool will be established for revival of traditional varieties in horticultural crops, and creation of germplasm for spices in state horticulture farms

Uzhavar Sandhais

- ✓ 50 more Uzhavar Sandhais will be renovated during 2022-23 with the provision of facilities like computer and information technology equipment, electronic price display board and public address system with an allocation of Rs.15 crore.
 - ✓ 6 Uzhavar Sandhais functioning at Kothagiri, Veppanthattai, Panruti, Chidambaram, Keelpennathur and Tiruvarur will be shifted to new places of easy access to the public
 - ✓ 4 new Uzhavar Sandhais will be established in the districts of Dharmapuri, Nagapattinam, Vellore and Tirupattur at a total cost of Rs 10 crore.
- **A 700-year-old Ayyanar idol and a hero stone dating back to the 16th century AD - were discovered near Villoor in Madurai district.**



- ✓ The region was in Potpaatha Devi Sadur Mangalam block in the Veeranarayana Valanadu limits under the rule of the Pandiya dynasty.
 - ✓ The three foot in height and one-and-a-half feet in width Ayyanar idol has a heavy crown, a ‘Jada baram’ on its head and circular earrings with different types of ornaments on its neck including a ‘savadi’ and ‘sarapali’.
 - ✓ A wide, flat beltlike structure is seen separating the chest and the stomach.
 - ✓ It is seen sitting on a pedestal, with the left leg resting upon it and the right leg hanging down, and the left hand resting on the thigh.
- **The Greater Chennai Corporation – has dropped the plan to set up 1,000 Miyawaki forests across Chennai and will instead grow micro forests with native species.**
- ✓ In the last three years, the corporation has created about 50 Miyawaki forests, which will stay.
 - ✓ In 2021, then corporation commissioner G Prakash had proposed 1,000 such Miyawaki forests to be set up in Chennai.

- ✓ At present, the GCC has asked the environment department to fund the new 'micro forest' policy under the Green Tamil Nadu Mission.

SUSTAINABLE APPROACH	
Forest dept aims to develop micro forest sites across the city	
<p>What is micro forest? A small patch of land that has natural forest ecosystem where trees can grow in a sustainable manner. They will deliver all ecological services such as weather regulation, habitat for birds, animals, micro-climate regulation in the locality, water harvesting, nutrient cycle, reducing heat island effect</p> <p>➤ Native species to be planted 40</p> <p>➤ Locations identified by the civic body 400</p>	<p>Problems with Miyawaki</p> <p>➤ Plants placed densely within a few sqm area</p> <p>➤ Selection of species not based on local conditions</p> <p>➤ In Chennai, soil in north is different from that in south and central</p> <p>➤ Trees cannot play ecological services due to stress, competition and loses its natural characteristic due to lack of space</p> <p>Miyawaki forest may not be considered as a green cover if tree species are not native and not as per geography/topography of the area</p>
<p>What is Miyawaki? It is one of the methods of creating micro forests</p>	

- ✓ Under the policy, around 40 native species trees will be planted in the vacant plots, which include medians and spaces under flyovers
- ✓ TN has a forest cover of 23.7%, which is proposed to be increased to 33% in the next ten years.
- ✓ Any area of one hectare having a canopy density of 10% will be considered forest cover, including in urban spaces
- ✓ However, when the patch of land is less than one hectare, it will be considered tree cover.
- ✓ Miyawaki forests are not natural forests, as they do not have undergrowth, the girth of trees does not expand, and people cannot enter the forests.

STATES

- **India's first-ever digital water data bank 'AQVERIUM' - was inaugurated in Bengaluru by the IT Minister for Karnataka Dr CN Ashwath Narayan**
- ✓ Formed by AquaKraft Group Ventures, it is an innovative initiative aimed for better water management.
- ✓ The Digital water data bank is a curated list of water data from all institutions and sources
- ✓ It also provides details from research and analytics thereby providing fundamental reliable information for tackling water pollution.
- ✓ The digital waterbank will be based on blockchain technology
- ✓ The waterbank will be open to all, where users can create an account and report the amount of surplus water they have as savings.
- ✓ The surplus water will be converted into a token that will go on the blockchain.

- ✓ Similar to the stock market, the value of the token will increase depending on the demand and supply.
- ✓ Further, the initiative will also include the formation of a digital university, the Centre for Innovation, Sustainability & Social Entrepreneurship, to undertake skill building initiatives across the country in rural areas.
- **Telangana - becomes the first state in the country to record crop diversification patterns in the form of an index.**



- ✓ According to the crop diversification index, the state grows 77 varieties, with roughly 10 crops, predominantly grains, favored for diversification
- ✓ The index has a starting value of one, which represents the proportion of total cultivated area devoted to a single crop
- ✓ Many districts in the state have index values ranging from 0 to 5, and the higher the score, the greater the agricultural diversification.
- ✓ The score will serve as a benchmark for future agricultural diversification in the state.

NATIONAL

- **Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida - is on a two-day official visit to India from March 19 to 20.**
- ✓ Kishida participated in the 14th India-Japan Annual Summit, besides holding bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- ✓ This is Fumio Kishida's first such visit as Prime Minister and the Summit was the first meeting between the two leaders
- ✓ The previous India-Japan Annual Summit took place in Tokyo in October 2018.



- ✓ The Summit will provide an opportunity for both sides to review and strengthen the bilateral cooperation in diverse areas as well as exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.
 - ✓ During the meeting, Kishida announced a plan to invest 5 trillion yen (\$42 billion) in India over five years.
 - ✓ This follows from the Investment Promotion Partnership of 2014 when both sides agreed for JPY 3.5 trillion investment for a period between 2014-19, which was announced by the former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during his 2014 visit to India.
 - ✓ The two sides signed pacts on cyber security and announced a clean energy partnership concerning carbon reduction
 - ✓ They agreed to convene a two-plus-two meeting between their Foreign and Defence ministers at the earliest.
 - ✓ The two countries also signed pacts on loans to the tune of Rs 20,400 crore for projects in connectivity, water supply and sewerage, horticulture, healthcare, and biodiversity conservation in different states.
 - ✓ In 2020, India and Japan signed an Agreement between the two countries concerning Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services between the Armed Forces of India and The Self-Defense Forces of Japan
 - ✓ This year also marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.
 - ✓ The 2019 summit in Guwahati between PM Modi and Shinzo Abe, his then Japanese counterpart, was cancelled in the wake of protests over the amended citizenship law.
 - ✓ The summit could not be held in 2020 as well as in 2021 primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari has launched a first-of-its-kind pilot study on hydrogen-based advanced fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV) recently on March 16, 2022 in New Delhi**

- ✓ Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri and RK Singh, Minister of Power, Mahendra Nath Pandey, Union Heavy Industries Minister were present at the launch event.



- ✓ The Pilot study is conducted by Toyota Kirloskar Motor in association with International Center for Automotive Technology (ICAT)
- ✓ The project will study and evaluate the world's most advanced Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle (FCEV) Toyota Mirai which runs on hydrogen, on Indian roads and climatic conditions.
- ✓ The study seeks to provide a shift from fossil fuel and towards the conservation of our environment.
- ✓ Toyota Mirai is powered by a hydrogen fuel cell battery pack and capable of providing a range up to 650 km in a single charge, with a refueling time of five minutes
- ✓ The Toyota Mirai was launched in 2014 and was one of the world's first hydrogen fuel electric vehicles.
- ✓ Green hydrogen can be generated from renewable energy and abundantly available biomass.

INTERNATIONAL

- **On March 18, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan - inaugurated the world's longest suspension bridge over the Dardanelles strait in North western Turkey**
- ✓ With a 2,023m span, the \$2.8-billion '1915 Canakkale Bridge' cuts the travel time between Asia and Europe to just six minutes
- ✓ It has the longest main span - the distance between the two towers - of any suspension bridge in the world.
- ✓ The inauguration coincides with the 107th anniversary of Ottoman forces' naval victory against British and French troops in the Gallipoli campaign during World War I



- ✓ The bridge surpasses the previous record holder, the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge in Japan
 - ✓ The suspension bridge was built by Turkish and South Korean firms with an investment of 2.5 billion euros (\$2.8 billion).
 - ✓ The 2,023 metre (1.25 mile) length of its midspan is a reference to the Turkish Republic's 100th anniversary in 2023
 - ✓ It is the fourth bridge linking the European and Asian shores in Turkey, alongside the three built in Istanbul.
 - ✓ Work on the Dardanelles bridge project was launched in March 2017, with more than 5,000 workers involved in the construction
- **On March 19, Russia - said it had used hypersonic Kinzhal (Dagger) missiles to destroy a large weapons depot in Ukraine's western Ivano-Frankivsk region.**

Can be remotely piloted

12
times speed of sound

Name	Kh-47M2 Kinzhal or The Dagger
Speed	9,207mph, MACH 12
Range	1,240 miles
Length	26ft
Cost	£4.5m
Weight	1/2 tonne
Armed with nuclear or conventional explosives	
Onboard A.I. allows it to quickly dodge obstacles	

- ✓ It was the first time Russia had deployed the hypersonic Kinzhal system since it sent its troops into Ukraine on February 24.
- ✓ The underground depot hit by the Kinzhal system housed Ukrainian missiles and aircraft ammunition
- ✓ Hypersonics are generally defined as weapons capable of flying at speeds over Mach 5, or five times the speed of sound
- ✓ These type of missiles are at the centre of an arms race among the United States, Russia and China.
- ✓ The Kinzhal missiles are part of an array of weapons unveiled by Russia in 2018.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **A state-of-the-art centre to map the human brain with a focus on high-resolution imaging - was launched at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras on March 19.**
- ✓ The Sudha Gopalakrishnan Brain Centre aims to generate human brain data, scientific output and technology tools.



- ✓ K Vijay Raghavan, principal scientific advisor (PSA) to the government of India inaugurated the centre
- ✓ In the Centre, the researchers will study and understand the brain's anatomy that will help find better interventions and administer better drugs.
- ✓ The centre is supported by IIT-M's alumnus and Infosys co-founder Kris Gopalakrishnan and his wife Sudha Gopalakrishnan.
- ✓ Researchers will capture images of sections of human brain at a resolution of 0.5 micron (human hair is around 70 micron thick) before they are converted in to a brain map.
- ✓ The Centre's first ongoing project is titled 'Computational and Experimental Platform for High-Resolution Terapixel Imaging of ex-vivo Human Brains'
- ✓ The project focuses on high throughput light microscopic imaging of whole human brains of different types and ages
- ✓ It is supported by the office of PSA.

SPORTS

- On March 19, India's Lakshya Sen – defeated Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia to enter into his maiden final of the All England Badminton Championships at Birmingham, UK

SEN ON BRINK OF LAKSHYA

20-year-old Almora boy stuns defending champ to storm into All England finals



- Lakshya Sen beat **Lee Zii Jia** of Malaysia 21-13, 12-21, 21-19 in the semi-final
- Comes from a Kumaoni family that excels in badminton. Father Dhiren Sen is a coach, brother Chirag an international player
- Trains at Prakash Padukone's academy in Bengaluru

GIANT KILLER

- In 2022, Sen has beaten Olympic champion **Viktor Axelsen**, World champ **Loh Kean Yew**, Oly bronze medallist **A Ginting** & World bronze winner **Anders Antonsen**
- **WOMEN LOSE:** Treesa Jolly & Gayatri Gopichand lost their doubles semi-final match to a Chinese pair in straight games

INDIANS IN ALL ENG FINALS

➤ Prakash Nath: 1947	➤ P Gopichand: 2001 (won)
➤ Prakash Padukone: '80 (won)	➤ Saina Nehwal: 2015
	➤ Lakshya Sen: 2022

- ✓ With this, Sen becomes the fourth Indian male player after Prakash Nath (1947), Prakash Padukone (1980) and Pullela Gopichand (2001) to make the final of the prestigious event
- ✓ While Padukone and Gopichand are the only two Indians to have won the prestigious event, Nath had lost in the final.
- ✓ The last time an Indian reached the final of All England was Saina Nehwal in 2015 where she ended up as runners-up
- ✓ The 20-year-old Lakshya will face the winner of the other semifinal between world No. 1 Viktor Axelsen of Denmark and Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei on March 20
- ✓ Sen has won his maiden world championships bronze in December, before winning his first Super 500 title at India Open in January and finishing runner-up at the German Open last week.

- ✓ Meanwhile, Indian women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand lost their semi-finals match to the Chinese pair of Zhang Shu Xian/Zheng Yu.
- **Veteran India pacer Jhulan Goswami - becomes the second women cricketer to play 200 ODIs in the match against Australia in the ongoing ICC women's ODI World Cup 2022 on March 19.**



- ✓ Mithali Raj holds the record of playing the highest number of ODIs in women's cricket, with 230 ODIs played so far.
- ✓ Mithali is leading Team India in the current World Cup.
- ✓ Former England cricketer Carlot Edwards, who played 191 ODIs, is ranked third.
- ✓ Earlier, the 39-year-old Goswami became the first player to take 250 wickets in women's ODIs.
- ✓ Goswami had become the highest wicket-taker in the Women's World Cup after surpassing the tally of 39 wickets taken by Lynette Ann Fullston of Australia from 1982 to 1988.

RANKINGS

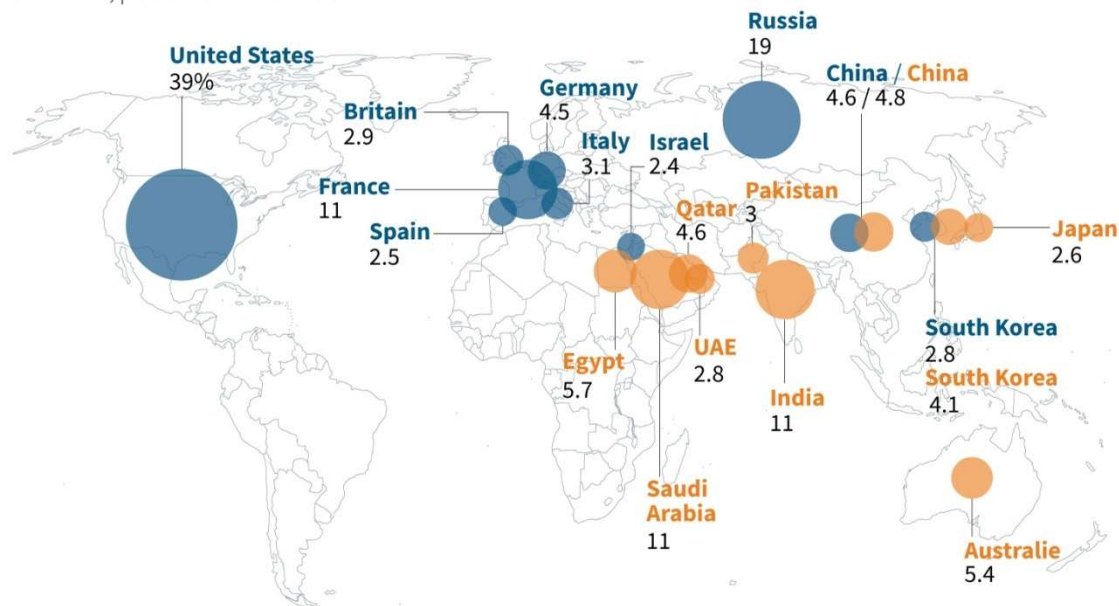
- **India and Saudi Arabia - had emerged as the largest arms importers of arms between 2017-21, each accounting for 11% of all global arms sales**
- ✓ This was revealed in the latest report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on 'Trends in International Arms Transfer, 2021'
- ✓ While India remains at the top of the list, Egypt, Australia and China were the next three largest importers with respective shares of 5.7%, 5.4% and 4.8%
- ✓ It is significant that 85% of India's imports were from just three countries - Russia (46%), France (27%), and USA (12%).
- ✓ The US, Russia and France are the world's three biggest exporters with 39%, 19% and 11% share, respectively, followed by China and Germany
- ✓ India, which was the 24th largest exporter during 2016-20, has improved its position by one place to 23rd in 2017-21

World's biggest arms exporters and importers

Analysis by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

2017 - 2021, percent of world trade

• Exporter • Importer



Source: SIPRI -- Trends in International Arms Transfers 2021

AFP

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➤ World Sparrow Day – March 20



- ✓ The day is observed every year to create awareness about the significance and importance of common house sparrows, alongwith the efforts to be taken to protect and conserve them
- ✓ The sparrows are fast becoming extinct due to urbanisation, high pollution levels, global warming and loss of ecological resources among other reasons.
- ✓ The Nature Forever Society of India and the Eco-Sys Action Foundation of France came up with the idea for World Sparrow Day.

- ✓ Nature Forever Society is a non-profit organisation founded by Mohammed Dilawar, an internationally acclaimed conservationist passionate about saving sparrows.
 - ✓ The Nature Forever Society has also built a dedicated website to raise awareness about World Sparrow Day.
 - ✓ This website has a large collection of images and information about different species of sparrows from across the world.
 - ✓ The theme for this year has not yet been declared.
 - ✓ Theme 2021 – 'I love sparrows'
 - ✓ Dilawar was behind the famous effort to protect sparrows starting in Nashik in 2008
 - ✓ For his efforts as a conservationist, he was named 'Heroes of the Environment' in 2008 by TIME Magazine.
 - ✓ The first World Sparrow Day was observed in 2010.
- **The 193-member UN General Assembly - has adopted by consensus a resolution declaring March 15 as International Day to Combat Islamophobia**
- ✓ The resolution was introduced by Pakistan on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)



- ✓ The resolution was co-sponsored by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Yemen
- ✓ March 15 marks the day when a gunman entered two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, killing 51 worshippers and wounding 40 others in the terror attack in the year 2019.