

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-MARCH 26, 2022

TAMIL NADU

- ✓ On March 24, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin - arrived in Dubai on a four-day visit to the UAE
- ✓ Consul General of India in Dubai Aman Puri received the Chief Minister on his arrival
- ✓ Industries Minister Thangam Thennarasu and senior officials of the Tamil Nadu government are accompanying the Chief Minister on his trip.
- ✓ This is his first official visit abroad after he assumed office as Chief Minister in May 2021
- ✓ On March 25, the Chief Minister met UAE minister for economy Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri and minister of state for foreign trade Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi at the Dubai International Financial Centre



- ✓ During the meeting, the leaders discussed about making investments in Tamil Nadu in various sectors
- ✓ Food processing, renewable energy, garments and textiles, gems and jewellery and engineering are the identified sectors that have a potential to strengthen trade between UAE and Tamil Nadu.

- ✓ The talks centered around promotion of collaboration between MSMEs in UAE and Tamil Nadu, collaboration in innovation and startup ecosystem and promotion of trade between UAE and Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ The chief minister also requested the UAE ministers to depute a delegation of investors to Tamil Nadu to start businesses.
- ✓ The UAE ministers urged the TN government to give greater publicity to the provisions of the CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) which would make exporting to the UAE much more attractive for Indian businesses and manufacturers.
- ✓ India and UAE signed the CEPA last month, which is aimed at boosting the trade between two countries to \$100 billion in the next five years
- ✓ Further, UAE's minister of economy Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri had asked the chief minister to depute a delegation of trade and commerce to meet him during his scheduled visit to Mumbai and New Delhi in May.
- ✓ The chief minister presented the UAE minister a book, "Journey of a Civilisation: Indus to Vaigai"
- ✓ Industries minister Thangam Thennarasu, Additional chief secretary to Industries department, S Krishnan and Indian Ambassador to UAE, Sunjay Sudhir were present during the discussion
- ✓ A team from Guidance, the nodal agency instrumental in bringing investments into Tamil Nadu, was also present.
- ✓ Later in the day, the Chief Minister inaugurated the Tamil Nadu pavilion in Dubai Expo 2022, a global event, alongside UAE minister of tolerance and commissioner general of Dubai Expo, Sheik Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan



- ✓ Tamil Nadu week will be observed at the Dubai Expo for one week from March 25 to 31
- ✓ The six-month-long Dubai Expo that commenced in October last year, witnessed the participation of as many as 192 countries
- ✓ Fifteen states and nine central ministries from India are participating in this expo, which will be ending on March 31, 2022.

- ✓ In his four-day long tour at the UAE, Chief Minister inaugurated the Tamil Nadu Theater at the Indian Arena at the Dubai Expo.

STATES

- **On March 25, Yogi Adityanath - sworn in as the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh for a second consecutive term at the Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow**
- ✓ He was administered oath by UP governor Anandiben Patel



- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah and BJP president Amit Shah were present during the ceremony
 - ✓ Anurag Thakur, Dharmendra Pradhan, Rajnath Singh, Piyush Goyal, Bhupendra Yadav, Smriti Irani, and Hardeep Singh Puri, among others, were also present.
 - ✓ Chief Ministers of several BJP-ruled states were also present at the event, along with union ministers, industrialists, and ministers of other states.
 - ✓ Keshav Maurya has been sworn in as the deputy chief minister for the second time, while Brajesh Pathak has been sworn in as the second deputy chief minister, replacing Dinesh Sharma
 - ✓ Apart from the two deputy CMs, 16 Cabinet ministers also took oath during the swearing-in ceremony
 - ✓ Yogi Adityanath has become the first chief minister of Uttar Pradesh to return to power after completing a full tenure of five years.
 - ✓ In the recently concluded Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, BJP secured 255 seats, well past the required mark of 202 to win the right to lead the 403-seat assembly.
 - ✓ The BJP-led NDA secured 274 seats out of 403, becoming the first party in over three decades to form a government for a second consecutive time in the state
- **On March 25, Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann - said that all the MLAs and ex-MLAs in the state will get pension for only one term, irrespective of them winning several times.**
 - ✓ He also said that there will be a deduction in the allowances that are given to the families of the MLAs.

- ✓ An MLA gets a pension of ₹75,000 per month for one term and gets an additional 66% of the pension amount for each subsequent term.
- ✓ More than 250 former MLAs are getting pension at present.
- ✓ A few days ago, SAD patriarch Parkash Singh Badal, who is an 11-time legislator, had said he will not accept pension as an ex-MLA
- ✓ Mann, who took oath as the chief minister of Punjab last week, has announced several reforms in the state
- ✓ AAP won 92 seats out of the total 177 constituencies in the recently held Punjab assembly elections

NATIONAL

- **India's anti-trust agency Competition Commission of India (CCI) - has ordered a fresh investigation against American tech giant Google for its alleged "abuse of dominance in news aggregation"**
 - ✓ The complaint was filed by Digital News Publishers Association, which promotes and protects the interest of digital news publishers.
 - ✓ In this regard, the CCI has ordered an investigation by its Director General into complaints against Google for alleged abuse of its dominant position in the online news media market.
 - ✓ The CCI has directed the DG to complete the investigation and submit the report in 60 days from the date of receipt of the order.
 - ✓ The CCI had also said that it is of prima facie view that Google has violated provisions of Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2002 which pertains to abuse of dominant position.
 - ✓ The INS alleged that the producers/publishers of news which are made available in digital format are not being paid a fair value for their news content
 - ✓ The association said that a majority of the traffic on news websites comes from online search engines (more than 50%), wherein Google is claimed to be the most dominant search engine.
 - ✓ It said news media houses are completely kept in the dark on the total advertising revenue collected by Google and what actual percentage of the advertising revenue is being transferred to media organizations
 - ✓ Several countries, including Australia, France and Spain, have passed legislation requiring tech companies, including Google, to adequately compensate content producers for using their content and search results
- **The government – has decided to allow drug companies an increase in prices of essential medicines in line with the change in the annual Wholesale Price Index (WPI).**
 - ✓ The annual change in WPI as notified by the government works out to 10.77% during the year 2021, as per the drug prices regulator National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority

- ✓ Accordingly, prices of essential medicines including painkillers, anti-infectives, cardiac and antibiotics are expected to go up from April 2022
- ✓ Prices of over 850 formulations across major therapies are expected to go up by at least 10%
- ✓ This is a first-ever instance when the increase is more than that allowed for non-scheduled drugs.
- ✓ Non-scheduled drugs are those which are outside price control and are allowed an annual increase of 10% every year.
- ✓ Generally, the increase in prices due to the annual change in WPI has been marginal, ranging from 1 to 2% over the last few years.
- ✓ The NPPA will notify the ceiling prices of the scheduled formulations over the next few days.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Bharti Enterprises-led OneWeb - has entered into an agreement with Elon Musk's SpaceX to resume satellite launches in low Earth orbits**
- ✓ OneWeb's regular launches were being conducted with Russian rocket Soyuz, which is operated by Roscosmos – the Russian state-owned space agency.
- ✓ On March 4, OneWeb had to abandon its planned launch of 36 satellites from Russia's Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan following the Russia-Ukraine war.
- ✓ British satellite internet service provider, OneWeb is a satellite Communications Company backed by Sunil Mittal's Bharti Group having around 32% stake and the UK government, which has around 19.8% stake
- ✓ But since the UK government has a stake in OneWeb, Russian space agency Roscosmos had demanded the withdrawal of the UK from the project, and OneWeb signs an agreement stating that their satellites would not be used for military purposes
- ✓ Russia has been served with sanctions from the US, the UK and the European Union for invading Ukraine.
- ✓ The deal with SpaceX will allow OneWeb to complete its remaining satellite launches from Texas, US and the first launch with SpaceX is anticipated in 2022
- ✓ The company is building a constellation of 648 low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellites, of which 428 satellites, or two-thirds of the constellation, have already been deployed in orbit
- ✓ OneWeb has bagged the crucial GMPCS (global mobile personal communications by satellite services) licence from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), India
- ✓ This paves the way for the LEO satellite operator to launch internet from space services in India later this year.
- ✓ OneWeb and Hughes Network Systems have signed a strategic six-year pact to provide satellite broadband services in the country.

- ✓ The services will be provided by Hughes Communications India (HCIPL), which is a joint venture between Hughes and Bharti Airtel.
- ✓ The deal follows the memorandum of understanding signed by the companies in September 2021.
- ✓ OneWeb, which will offer broadband via a constellation of 648 satellites, was rescued from bankruptcy by the British government and Bharti group in 2020
- ✓ Eutelsat Communications and SoftBank Group Corp are among other investors in the firm.
- ✓ SpaceX's Starlink too uses low earth orbit satellites to provide internet access to regions that are underserved or hard to reach for other service providers.
- ✓ Satellite communications is extremely useful for providing broadband services in remote, hilly, and inaccessible regions.
- ✓ It is also the only medium through which communication can be established in disaster zones when normal communication gets affected

DEFENCE

- **India – has exported ₹11,607 crore worth of arms in the ongoing financial year, till now**
 - ✓ This is approximately six times, when compared with the arms exports in 2014
 - ✓ Till March 21, the value of defence exports is ₹11,607 crore in 2021-2022 from ₹1,941 crore in the 2014-2015 fiscal
 - ✓ This was announced by junior defence minister Ajay Bhatt in a written reply in Lok Sabha.
 - ✓ Among the measures taken, the minister said that the corporatisation of the mammoth Ordnance Factory Board and its 41 factories into seven defence PSUs will also help in boosting exports
 - ✓ The government has set an ambitious annual export target of \$5 billion (₹36,500 crore) by 2025.
 - ✓ A major export deal signed in January this year was the \$375 million (₹2,770 crore) contract to export BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines
 - ✓ This is expected to pave the way for more such deals with other ASEAN countries like Indonesia and Vietnam
 - ✓ India is also in discussions with several countries, including Saudi Arabia and UAE, to export the BrahMos missiles, which have a strike range of 290-km, as well as the Akash air defence missiles, which have an interception range of 25-km.
- **On March 25, the defence ministry - signed a ₹887 crore contract with Larsen & Toubro to construct two multi-purpose vessels at its Kattupalli shipyard for the Navy.**
 - ✓ The deal for the vessels was signed in the presence of Navy vice chief Vice Admiral S N Ghormade and director-general acquisitions Pankaj Agarwal.

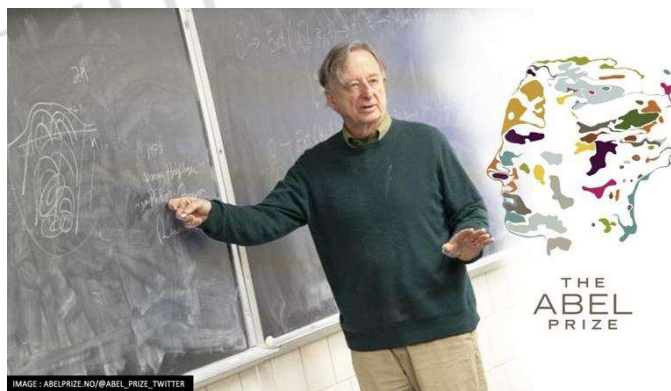
- ✓ The vessels are expected to be delivered from May 2025 onwards to the Navy



- ✓ The MPVs, the first of its kind platform for the Navy, will provide a cost-effective solution to meet a variety of requirements
- ✓ It will be useful in maritime surveillance and patrol, launching and recovery of torpedoes, and operation of various types of aerial, surface and underwater targets for gunnery and anti-submarine warfare firing exercises.

AWARDS

- **American mathematician, Dennis Parnell Sullivan - has been announced as the winner of the Abel Prize 2022.**
- ✓ The Prize was given to him "for his groundbreaking contributions to topology in its broadest sense and in particular its algebraic, geometric and dynamical aspects"



- ✓ Sullivan will receive an award of 7.5 million Norwegian kroner (nearly US \$860,000), funded by the Norwegian government
- ✓ Sullivan is currently serving as a professor of mathematics at Stony Brook University in New York
- ✓ Topology is a branch of mathematics that considers two objects of different shapes equivalent if they can be deformed into one another through shrinking, stretching and similar forces

- ✓ This stream of mathematics is comparatively new as it was born in the late 19th century
- ✓ The study of topology has been remarkably important in the field of mathematics and other fields such as economics, data science and physics.
- ✓ The annual award for mathematics is named after the great Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel.
- ✓ Abel Prize is given to a person by the King of Norway, who has done a remarkable job in the field of mathematics.
- ✓ This award is equivalent to 'Nobel' Prize in the field of Mathematics, as there is no Nobel Prize for mathematics
- ✓ The Fields Medal is another annual award that is sometimes considered the 'Mathematics Nobel' but is only awarded to those below 40 years of age
- ✓ The first Abel Prize was an honorary award to Atle Selberg in 2002, the 200th birth anniversary of Niels Abel
- ✓ The first actual prize was given in the year 2003 to French mathematician Jean-Pierre Serre for his contribution to topology, algebraic geometry and number theory.
- ✓ S. R. Srinivasa Varadhan, an Indian-American citizen, was conferred the Abel Prize in the year 2007

SPORTS

- **The 15th edition of Indian Premier League – TATA IPL 2022 will begin at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on March 26, 2022**

New Teams, New Captains, More Games | IPL 15 Begins With Red Hot CSK-KKR Clash

Revamped with 10 teams, IPL-15 begins today. Holders Chennai Super Kings – under new captain Ravindra Jadeja – will face-off with Shreyas Iyer-led Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai. **TOI** takes a look at the season

- **First IPL to be staged without MS Dhoni as CSK captain**
- **Jadeja will skipper** a side for the **first time after playing 200 IPL games, a record**
- **Two new teams | Lucknow Supergiants and Gujarat Titans**
- **After a two-year gap, the entire IPL is scheduled in India**
- **25% crowd capacity allowed for the initial games**
- **Each team will play 14 league games for a total of 70 games before playoffs.** The **10 teams** have been **split into two groups** based on titles won and/or number of appearances in final

➤ **FULL COVERAGE | PAGE 9**



SET FOR A NEW CHALLENGE:
Ravindra Jadeja during a training session in Mumbai

QUICK FACTS

Matches to be played	Venues
70	4

NUMBERS

1 Jadeja is the only all-rounder to score 2,000-plus runs and bag 100 wickets in IPL: 2,386 runs (ave 27.11) and 127 wickets (ave 30.04) in 200 matches

5 IPL titles won by Mumbai Indians, the most (2013, 2015, 2017, 2019 & 2020)

- ✓ The first match will be played between the defending champion Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders in Mumbai
- ✓ With the Covid situation under control, IPL is being held in India in its entirety after a gap of two year with at least 25% capacity of crowd allowed in stadiums this season.
- ✓ With the addition of two new teams — Lucknow Super Giants and Gujarat Titans — the IPL will have 10 teams this time
- ✓ The number of games has been increased to 74 from 60 with the addition of new teams, extending the IPL window to over two months.
- ✓ Totally, 70 league matches will be played across stadiums at Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra.
- ✓ Out of this, a total of 55 games will be held at three venues of Mumbai and the remaining 15 in Pune.
- ✓ The final match of the tournament is likely to be played in Ahmedabad on 29 May.
- ✓ In the last 14 seasons, the most successful team in the league has been Mumbai Indians, who have lifted the IPL trophy on five occasions
- ✓ The second best has been Chennai Super Kings, who have now won four IPL trophies

➤ **Indian contingent - ended the Dubai 2022 World Para Athletics Grand Prix and 13th Fazza International Para Athletics Championships in Dubai with a total of 14 medals.**

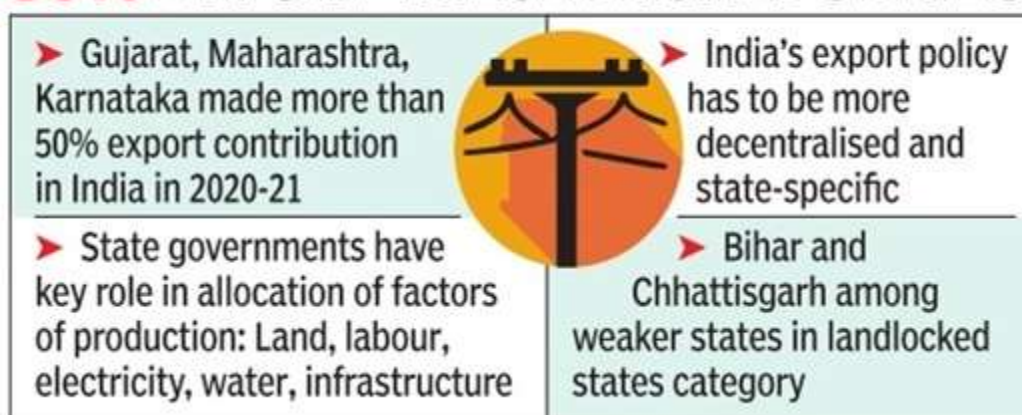
- ✓ Overall India won five gold medals, six silver and three bronze to claim eighth place in the medals table.
- ✓ Colombia finished on top with 25 medals including 12 gold, followed by Algeria (16) and Thailand (30) with 11 and 8 gold medals respectively.
- ✓ A 29-member Indian team, led by Paralympian Dharambir, took part in the championships that began on March 21 and concluded on March 24
- ✓ Sprinter Pranav Prashant Desai won India's first gold medal in the men's 200m T64 final and later followed it up with another gold in the 100 m men T63/64 final
- ✓ Other gold medalists include high jumper Ramsingbhai Govin Padhiyar, long jumper Someswara Rao and javelin thrower Mohit
- ✓ Among other events, Switzerland wheelchair racing legend Marcel Hug broke the world record en route winning the men's wheelchair 5000m T54 gold.
- ✓ Around 500 para-athletes from 43 nations participated in the event, in which four world records and 20 continental records were set

RANKINGS

- **Gujarat - has emerged as the top state in the Niti Aayog's 2021 export competitiveness index (EPI) for the second time in a row followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka.**

- ✓ All three states have performed consistently across various indicators, thus consolidating solid scores.
- ✓ These states are among the top states in the export contribution of more than 50% in India in 2020-21.
- ✓ Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana contribute 75% of India's overall exports, according to the final EPI report released on March 25.

50% EXPORT VALUE FROM 3 STATES



- ✓ NITI Aayog released an Export Preparedness Index (EPI) starting last year to enhance a sense of competition between states and encourage them to adopt export promotion policies.
- ✓ Under the category of landlocked states, Haryana has emerged as a top performer.
- ✓ Bihar and Chhattisgarh are some of the weaker states in this category
- ✓ Amongst Himalayan states and city-states, Uttarakhand and Delhi are the top-performing states.

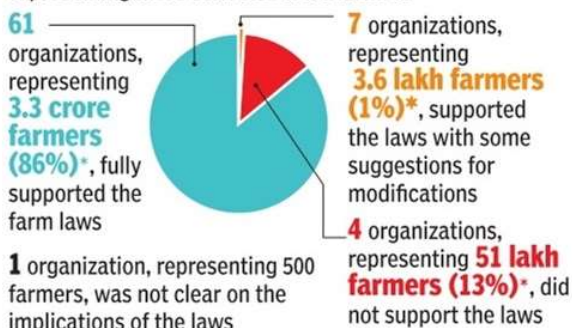
SC-APPOINTED COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON FARM LAWS

- **The Supreme Court-appointed committee on Farm laws - had advised against the repealing of the three contentious farm laws that were rolled back by the Centre last year**
- ✓ The committee report had remained in a sealed cover before the Supreme Court so far
- ✓ The report of the Supreme Court-appointed committee on the controversial farm laws was made public for the first time by one of the committee members Anil Ghanwat
- ✓ Pune-based farmer leader, Anil Jaysingh Ghanwat is the president of the Swatantra Bharat Party and the Shetkari Sanghatana
- ✓ As per the report, a majority 85.7% of stakeholders are in favour of farm laws while only 13.3% are against it.

KEY MESSAGES FROM THE REPORT

Response of farm groups through interaction

Committee interacted with 73 farmer organizations, representing more than 3.83 crore farmers



* Approx. percentage of total no. of farmers represented by 73 farmer organisations

(Farmers' organizations protesting at the periphery of Delhi during 2020-21 did not join the discussions despite repeated invites sent to them)

Other respondents: 19,027

It includes

Individual farmers

5,451

FPOs

929

Farmer unions

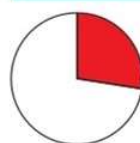
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Other stakeholders

Overall results:

Around two-thirds of the respondents supported the farm laws

12,496



Only **27.5%** of respondent farmer/farmer groups sell their produce at MSP

(This is concentrated mostly in Chhattisgarh, Punjab and MP)



BROAD RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

On MSP: Demand for legalizing the MSP is not based on sound logic and is infeasible to implement

On farm laws (now repealed):

- Repeal or a long suspension of the farm laws would be unfair to the 'silent' majority who support the farm laws
- States maybe allowed some flexibility in implementation and design of the laws
- Alternative mechanisms for dispute settlement, via Civil courts or arbitration
- mechanism, may be provided to stakeholders
- An Agriculture Marketing Council on lines of the GST Council to be created to monitor and streamline the implementation of the farm laws
- Govt. should take urgent steps towards strengthening agricultural infrastructure



Only **42.3%** of the farmer groups sell their produce in the APMC mandis (state-regulated Agri markets)

(It is concentrated mostly in Punjab and Haryana where more than 70% respondents sell in APMC mandis)

- ✓ The committee "interacted directly", either through video conferencing or physically, with only 73 of the 306 farmer bodies (24%) which it had invited for consultation.
- ✓ Out of 73 farmer organisations that made submissions to the committee, 61, representing 3.3 crore farmers, had fully supported the new farm laws
- ✓ The committee also claimed that of the 19,207 representation / suggestions it received as online feedback on its portal, two-third supported the farm laws
- ✓ The expert committee held a total of eleven meetings with various stakeholders that include farmers' unions, industry bodies, private markets, state agriculture marketing boards, state governments, professionals and academicians etc.
- ✓ The three laws were — The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act.
- ✓ On November 19, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has repealed all three farm laws after the massive year-long protest by farmers in Delhi.

- ✓ The legislations had come into force in June 2020 and were repealed in November 2021.
- ✓ The apex court appointed the committee in January 2020, while the committee submitted its report on March 19, 2021
- ✓ Pramod Kumar Joshi, agricultural economist and former director for South Asia, International Food Policy Research Institute and Ashok Gulati, agricultural economist and former chairman of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices are the other two members of the committee.
- ✓ Bhupinder Singh Mann, president, Bharatiya Kisan Union, and All India Kisan Coordination Committee was also initially part of the committee but resigned later.

