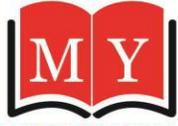


# Weekly Current Affairs

## 10 March – 16 March, 2019

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## National News

### 1. Marayur jaggery finally gets Geographical Indication tag

- ✦ The Marayur jaggery has finally got the geographical indication (GI) tag, making it safe for consumption while rejuvenating the traditional way of production and ensuring a safe market in future.
- ✦ It has been a long-term demand of farmers in Marayur and Kanthallur grama panchayats, where jaggery is produced without adding any chemicals.
- ✦ It has high sweetness with less saltiness, high content of iron and less sodium.

### 2. Government achieves 87 per cent of 8 crore free LPG connections target

- ✦ The government gave out the 7-crore free cooking gas (LPG) connection as the scheme to make available cleaner fuel in every household kitchens runs ahead of schedule.
- ✦ PMUY was launched on May 1, 2016, with a target to give 5 crore connections to women member of poor households by March 2019.
- ✦ Under the scheme, the government provides a subsidy of Rs 1,600 to state-owned fuel retailers for every free LPG gas connection that they give to poor households.

### 3. PM Modi Inaugurates Pt Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology at Greater Noida

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology, at Greater Noida.
- ✦ Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage in India.
- ✦ The state-of-the-art institute, built at an estimated cost of Rs. 289 crore is spread over 25 acres.

### 4. CII releases roadmap for 8% growth in coming years

- ✦ Industry lobby CII released a 'Suggested Election Manifesto' for political parties to achieve an average growth rate of 8 per cent per annum in the next five years.
- ✦ It covers a range of subjects including agriculture, education, health, infrastructure, manufacturing, technology as well as environment.
- ✦ The CII has shared the manifesto with all the major political parties, national and regional, for their consideration and inclusion in their party manifesto.

### 5. Govt Approves A National Mission On E-Mobility To Boost EV Manufacturing

- ✦ The Centre formed the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage for a Phased Manufacturing Program (PMP), aimed at localising the production of electric vehicles (EV) and its components within the country.

- ✦ The announcement comes less than a week after the Indian government launched the FAME II scheme to boost the adoption of clean energy vehicles.
- ✦ The CEO of government think-tank NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant, has been appointed to lead the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee of the mission who will recommend and drive the strategies for transformative mobility in India.

#### **6. Centre allows state governments to put enemy properties to 'public use'**

- ✦ The Centre has allowed state governments to put to "public use" some enemy properties that were left behind by people who migrated to Pakistan since the Partition and to China after the 1962 Sino-Indian war.
- ✦ The move comes amid the central government's efforts to sell more than 9,400 enemy properties, worth over Rs 1 lakh crore, and Rs 3,000 crore worth of enemy shares.
- ✦ "The estimated value of all enemy properties is approximately Rs 1 lakh crore," Union Minister of State for Home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir had told the Rajya Sabha last year.

#### **7. Madhya Pradesh Governor passes ordinance to increase OBC quota**

- ✦ Madhya Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel has approved an ordinance to increase reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) from 14 per cent to 27 per cent.
- ✦ The Chief Minister had also assured that 10 per cent reservation for the economically weaker section in the general category will also be implemented in the state.
- ✦ State Minister for Law and Legal Affairs P C Sharma has announced the ordinance. The ordinance got its approval just before Lok Sabha election model code of conduct picks on.

#### **8. India, Bangladesh Jointly Inaugurate 4 Projects**

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated four projects, via video conferencing, in the areas of transport, health and education.
- ✦ Both leaders unveiled "e-plaques" for the supply of buses and trucks, inaugurated 36 community clinics, 11 water treatment plants and the extension of the National Knowledge Network to Bangladesh.
- ✦ In the years ahead, Prime Minister Modi visualised a fully-integrated neighbourhood in which transport and energy links are restored or built anew to permit easy movement of goods, services and people.

#### **9. Ethiopian Airlines crash: India bans Boeing 737 MAX 8 planes**

- ✦ Joining an ever-growing list of countries, India has decided to ban Boeing 737 MAX 8 planes following the Ethiopian Airlines crash that killed 157 people
- ✦ Current Indian airlines that operate these aircraft are SpiceJet that has twelve of these planes in its fleet and Jet Airways that has five.

- ✦ These planes will be grounded till appropriate modifications and safety measures are undertaken to ensure their safe operations.

#### 10. 12 states ban e-cigarettes, health ministry urges all to follow

- ✦ 12 states in India have banned Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS).
- ✦ States of Punjab, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Jharkhand have taken steps to ban the use of ENDS.
- ✦ Naming 'e-cigarette' is a tactic used by the industry to fool public by giving it a tubular shape and putting a red LED at the tip which lights up when the tube is sucked to mimic cigarette smoking.

#### 11. President Kovind inaugurates Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

- ✦ President Ramnath Kovind today inaugurated the Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Grambharti near Gandhinagar in Gujarat.
- ✦ He also presented the 10th Biennial National Grassroots Innovation Awards on this occasion.
- ✦ Mr. Prakash Singh Raghuvanshi of Uttar Pradesh got life time achievement award for his innovations in new varieties of agriculture crops.

#### 12. IIT Kharagpur Inks MoU with C-DAC for High Performance Computing Facility & Data Center

- ✦ The IIT Kharagpur has signed a MoU with Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) to set up a Petaflop high performance computing facility and data center funded under the National Supercomputing Mission.
- ✦ PetaFlop is the measurement of computing power based on the frequency of mathematical calculations that can be done per second.
- ✦ With the growing importance of high performance computing in newer research areas in cancer, data protection etc, such facilities as the one being built at IIT Kharagpur will become a core factor in various research domains.

## International News & Foreign Affairs

#### 1. India launches 3rd IT corridor in China

- ✦ India has launched its third IT corridor in China that will facilitate partnerships between Indian and Chinese companies.
  - ✦ The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) entered into a partnership with China's Xuzhou city from Jiangsu Province in China to help develop the IT corridor.
  - ✦ The primary aim of this IT corridor will be to facilitate partnerships between Indian and Chinese companies.
- India launches 3rd IT corridor in China.

## 2. India, ASEAN clock fastest growth for e-commerce, digital trade sectors

- ✚ India and 10-member ASEAN are among the fastest growing economies in the world with even faster growth rates for e-commerce and digital trade sectors.
- ✚ By 2021, global e-commerce sales are expected to reach 4.5 trillion dollars, up from 1.3 trillion dollars in 2014.
- ✚ The e-commerce market in India is estimated to reach 165.5 billion dollars by 2025 while the ASEAN is estimated to reach a volume of 90 billion dollars.

## 3. UN-founded University For Peace Confers Honorary Doctorate On Vice President Venkaiah Naidu

- ✚ Vice President Venkaiah Naidu conferred with an Honorary Doctorate by the University for Peace founded by the United Nations Organisations (UNO) for his contribution "to the Rule of Law, democracy and sustainable development in India".
- ✚ He received the degree of "Doctor Honoris Causa" from the Dean of the University for Peace in Costa Rica .
- ✚ The University of Peace aims to be a forward-thinking, transformational and inspirational educational institution dedicated to the goals of quality teaching, research and service for serving humanity in building a peaceful world.

## 4. Japan announces Rs 22 lakh for Kolkata museum

- ✚ The Japanese government announced a donation of some Rs 22 lakh (\$31,800) to the Rabindra Bharati Museum here in a bid to strengthen historical and cultural ties with India.
- ✚ Tagore, Asia's first Nobel Prize recipient, visited Japan in 1916, 1924 and 1929, renewing relations between the countries as India's leading cultural ambassador.
- ✚ Japan Currency- Japanese Yen, Capital- Tokyo

## 5. HGS, NASSCOM Foundation launch centre to train differently-abled persons

- ✚ Hinduja Global Solutions (HGS) has teamed up with NASSCOM Foundation, to launch a centre of excellence in Bengaluru for training differently-abled persons.
- ✚ The centre will train a minimum of 100 PwDs making them industry-ready over the next 12 months with a goal to place at least 50 per cent of them in companies already sensitised for hiring them.
- ✚ This is third such centre set up under the partnership, after Noida and Delhi.

## 6. UK issues new 'black hole' coin in honour of Stephen Hawking

- ✚ The UK's Royal Mint unveiled a new commemorative 50 pence coin inspired by the late legendary British physicist Stephen Hawking's seminal work on black holes.
- ✚ Edwina Ellis, who designed the unusual coins, explained her inspiration behind it.

- ✦ The coin, on sale in silver and gold forms for a price range between 55 and 795 pounds on the Royal Mint's website, is a nod to Hawking's research into black holes.

### 7. Retail inflation increases to 2.57% in February 2019

- ✦ Retail inflation jumped to a four-month high of 2.57 per cent in February due to costlier food articles
- ✦ In the fuel and light category, the rate of price rise slowed to 1.24 per cent from 2.20 per cent in January.
- ✦ The retail inflation number for February 2019 is the highest since October 2018 when it stood at 3.38 per cent.

### 8. Russia releases coin commemorating annexation of Crimea

- ✦ Russia's central bank has issued a new coin featuring the Crimea, or Kerch Strait, Bridge to commemorate Crimea's "reunification with Russia".
- ✦ Two million new five ruble (about \$0.08, €0.07) coins were pressed which also show an outline of the peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014.
- ✦ This is second commemoration of Crimea, the first being a 200 ruble note released in 2015 and depicted the desire of the people of Russia to see these symbols on notes.

### 9. India gets first TIR shipment via Chabahar Port from Afghanistan

- ✦ The first shipment on 'Transports Internationaux Routiers' (TIR) from Afghanistan to India through Iran Chabahar Port arrived at the port of Nhava Sheva, Mumbai .
- ✦ The convention allows goods to be outlined in a TIR carnet and sealed in load compartments. Customs verify the carnet and check the seals, with no need for physical checking of the contents, enabling shipments to pass through countries without being opened at borders.
- ✦ This enables a facilitative and non-intrusive environment for multi-modal transport of goods through several countries.

### 10. Vienna Ranked Best City In The World To Live In For 10th Year Running

- ✦ Vienna has been ranked the most liveable city in the world for the 10th year in a row.
- ✦ The Austrian capital topped the new Mercer Quality of Living Survey, whose 2019 ranking was dominated by European cities. Thirteen out of the world's 20 best places to live are in Europe.
- ✦ Mercer's annual index ranks 231 cities around the world on factors including political stability, crime, personal freedoms, healthcare, education, housing, recreation and public transport.

## **Banking**

### **1. HDFC just became the third Indian company after Reliance and TCS to achieve a market value of more than ₹6 trillion**

- ✦ On 13th March, HDFC Bank became the third Indian company after Reliance Industries (Rs. 8.52 trillion) and TCS (Rs. 7.49 trillion) to achieve a market value of Rs. 6 trillion, owing to a sudden upsurge in its share prices.
- ✦ HDFC Bank has been on a remarkable run as of late. The shares of the bank have risen in each of the last five trading sessions, capping a 6% jump to a record high of ₹2,227.40.
- ✦ The bank started as housing finance company in 1977, before commencing operations as a scheduled commercial bank in 1995 as part of the RBI's drive to liberalise India's banking sector.

### **2. SEBI lifts foreign investment cap on corporate bonds**

- ✦ Markets regulator Sebi withdrew the 20 per cent limit on investments by Foreign Portfolio Investors in corporate bonds of an entity.
- ✦ To give effect to the directions of the RBI, the regulator said provisions of its June 2018 circulars with respect to exposure of more than 20 per cent "stands withdrawn with immediate effect.
- ✦ In a notification, the regulator said the restriction is being withdrawn in accordance with a circular issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

### **3. SBI launches doorstep banking for senior citizens, differently-abled**

- ✦ Public lender State Bank of India launched 'Doorstep Banking' for senior citizen customers over 70 years of age, differently-abled customers and infirm customers including visually impaired customers.
- ✦ Eligible customers can avail these services with a nominal fee of Rs 100 per transaction for financial transactions and Rs 60 per transaction for non-financial transactions.
- ✦ Doorstep Banking Services are available to fully KYC compliant account holders, with a valid mobile number registered with the bank and residing within 5 km of radius from their home branch.

### **4. RBI categorises IDBI Bank as private sector lender**

- ✦ RBI categorises IDBI Bank as private sector lender.
- ✦ This follows Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) acquiring 51 per cent of the total paid-up equity share capital of the bank.
- ✦ In April 2005, IDBI Bank was categorised under a new sub-group, 'other public sector banks,' by the RBI.

## **New Appointments & Person in News**

### **1. Manpreet Vohra appointed as the next India's Ambassador to Mexico**

- ✚ Manpreet Vohra, presently Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) here, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Mexico.
- ✚ Mexico-Capital – Mexico City, Currency – Mexican peso

### **2. 116-year-old Japanese woman honored as world's oldest person alive by Guinness World Records**

- ✚ A 116-year-old Japanese woman who loves playing the board game Othello is being honored as the world's oldest living person by Guinness World Records.
- ✚ Tanaka was born January 2, 1903, the seventh among eight children. She married Hideo Tanaka in 1922, and they had four children and adopted another child.
- ✚ The previous oldest living person was another Japanese woman, Chiyo Miyako, who died in July at age 117.

### **3. A K Misra Appointed as Chairman of Agricultural Scientific Recruitment Board**

- ✚ Shri Aditya Kumar Misra has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Agricultural Scientific Recruitment Board (ASRB), as per sources.
- ✚ Aditya Kumar Misra, who is a veterinary scientist specializing in economically significant diseases of goat is the acting Vice Chancellor of the GB Pant University of Agriculture & Technology.
- ✚ The former chairman Gurbachan Singh took voluntary retirement in May 2017, has been working without a chairman since then.

### **4. Dipa Karmakar Gets a Barbie Modelled After Her, Complete With Bronze Medal**

- ✚ Dipa Karmakar, who became the first Indian female gymnast to win a bronze medal at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, was recently honoured by Barbie for “breaking boundaries to inspire” the next generation girls.
- ✚ Karmakar was immortalised with a doll wearing a red leotard along with a bronze medal.
- ✚ The doll brand, which was launched in 1959, has transformed from featuring “pretty” dolls to Barbie being a surgeon, a news anchor, an astronaut and a president among other roles.

### **5. Dr AK Mohanty takes over as BARC Director**

- ✚ A distinguished Scientist and Director of physics group of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Dr AK Mohanty took over as BARC Director.
- ✚ He took over from the charge from Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary to the Government of India Mr NK Vyas.

- ✦ While taking over as Director-BARC, Dr Mohanty has expressed gratitude towards his predecessors in Physics Group who have helped him in understanding finer nuances of low and high energy nuclear physics.

### 6. Rahul Bajaj resigns as Bajaj Finserv Chairman

- ✦ Bajaj Finserv Chairman and Non-Executive Director Rahul Bajaj has resigned and will take over as the Chairman Emeritus.
- ✦ The board of directors has appointed Nanoo Pamnani as Independent Non-Executive Chairman of the company in place of Rahul Bajaj, with effect from May 17, 2019.
- ✦ The company has also approved reappointment of independent directors D J Balaji Rao, Nanoo Pamnani and Gita Piramal for a second term of five years.

## Science Tech & Defence

### 1. PINAKA guided weapons system successfully test fired

- ✦ Defence Research and Development organisation, DRDO successfully test fired the PINAKA guided WEAPON rocket system from Pokhran range in Rajasthan.
- ✦ The weapon system is equipped with state-of-the-art guidance kit comprising of an advanced navigation and control system.
- ✦ The indigenously developed Guided PINAKA by DRDO will significantly boost the capability of the artillery to make precision hi

### 2. After 8 years at top, India drops to No 2 in arms import

- ✦ After having cut down on imports of weapons and military equipment, India has dropped down to be the second largest importer of weapons.
- ✦ The five biggest exporters in five-year block period 2011-2015 were the US, Russia, France, Germany and China.
- ✦ Last year (for the period 2013-17), India accounted for 13 per cent of all imports and was the world's largest importer.

### 3. INDO-OMAN Joint Ex Al Nagah 2019

- ✦ Indo Oman Joint Exercise Al Nagah III 2019, a joint military exercise between Indian and Royal Army of Oman (RAO), at HQ Jabel Regiment, Nizwa, Oman with a brief but impressive opening ceremony that saw the unfurling of the national flags of both countries.
- ✦ Ex Al Nagah 2019 will contribute immensely in developing mutual understanding and respect for each other's military as also facilitate in tackling the worldwide phenomenon of terrorism.
- ✦ Both sides will jointly train, plan and execute a series of well-developed tactical drills for neutralization of likely threats that may be encountered in such a scenario.

#### 4. United States to set up six nuclear power plants in India

- ✚ US reaffirmed its strong support of India's early membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group. This commitment was made at the 9th round of the India-US Strategic Security Dialogue held in Washington DC
- ✚ India and US also exchanged views on a wide range of global security and nonproliferation challenges.

#### 5. Pakistan Successfully Test-fires 'Smart Weapon' From JF-17 Fighter Jet

- ✚ Pakistan Air Force has announced successfully test-firing an indigenously developed "smart weapon" from a JF-17 Thunder fighter jet to provide it a very potent day and night capability to engage a variety of targets with pinpoint accuracy.
- ✚ The successful trial has provided JF-17 Thunder a very potent and assured day and night capability to engage variety of targets with pinpoint accuracy.
- ✚ The JF-17, which was previously referred as FC-1 Xiaolong, a single-engine multi-role light fighter was being jointly produced by Pakistan with China for several years with engines supplied by Russia.

#### 6. President Kovind confers 3 Kirti Chakras and 15 Shaurya Chakras to Armed Forces Personnel

- ✚ President Ram Nath Kovind conferred three Kirti Chakras and fifteen Shaurya Chakras to Armed Forces Personnel for displaying conspicuous gallantry, indomitable courage and extreme devotion to duty.
- ✚ The President also conferred fifteen Param Vishisht Seva Medals, one Uttam Yudh Seva Medals and twenty-five Ati Vishisht Seva Medals to senior officers of the Armed Forces for distinguished service of an exceptional order.
- ✚ One of the Param Vishisht Seva Medal was conferred on Army Chief General Bipin Rawat.

## Important days

#### 1. World Kidney Day 2019: kidney Health for Everyone Everywhere

- ✚ The World Kidney Day 2019 was observed on March 14, 2019, the second Thursday of March, with an aim to raise awareness of the importance of our kidneys.
- ✚ The theme of World Kidney Day 2019 was "Kidney Health for Everyone Everywhere".
- ✚ The theme calls for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for prevention and early treatment of kidney disease.

**2. World Consumer Rights Day 2019 observed on 16 March**

- ✦ World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated every year on 15 March as part of an initiative by Consumer International, a membership organisation for consumer groups around the world.
- ✦ The day is celebrated every year, to celebrate consumer rights and build a world where everyone has access to safe and sustainable products and services.
- ✦ The theme for World Consumers day 2019 is "Trusted Smart Products"

## Sports

**1. World Fame 100: Virat Kohli only Indian in top 10, MS Dhoni in 13th spot**

- ✦ This year's ESPN World Fame 100 list, an annual list of the most famous athletes on the planet, placed the Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo at the top spot, followed by basketball player LeBron James and FC Barcelona captain Lionel Messi.
- ✦ Kohli bagged the seventh position and is the only Indian athlete in the top 10, whereas Dhoni is placed in the 13th spot.
- ✦ There were only three women in the list- Serena Williams (17), Maria Sharapova (37) and Sania Mirza (93), making the latter the only Indian woman athlete to feature in the list.

**2. Abu Dhabi 2019 Special Olympic World Games kicks off**

- ✦ Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan announced the start of the Special Olympics World Games 2019 at a marvelous opening ceremony in Abu Dhabi.
- ✦ With great joy and pride, thousands of athletes stepped on the stage, danced and waved to the cheering audiences.
- ✦ Several new records have already been set in Abu Dhabi according to the organizing committee. For the first time there are 200 delegations taking part with 195 of them competing while five observing.

## Awards

**1. India Bags First Prize at The International 'Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019'**

- ✦ India Bags First Prize at The International 'Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019' In 'TV Cinema Spot' Category at ITB

- ✦ The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has won the First Prize in the category of TV Cinema Spot at the prestigious international Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019
- ✦ The Golden City Gate Tourism Multi-media Awards are given annually in various categories related to the Tourism and Hospitality sectors. The 'Golden City Gate' is a creative multi-media international competition for countries, cities, regions and hotels.

## 2. Acko Awarded the Coveted Golden Peacock Award for Innovative Product

- ✦ ACKO General Insurance a new-age digital insurance company, was awarded the coveted Golden Peacock Innovative Product Award – 2019, for their contextual micro insurance product -“Ola Ride Insurance”.
- ✦ Established by the Institute of Directors, India in 1991, The Golden Peacock Awards for Corporate Leadership and Excellence are now regarded as a benchmark of business excellence, both locally and globally.
- ✦ The Golden Peacock Innovative Product/Service Award is designed to encourage systemic innovation in an organization to develop products and services that are aligned with the current market demands.

## 3. Indian social entrepreneur wins Commonwealth award

- ✦ A social entrepreneur from Tamil Nadu bagged the Commonwealth Youth Award for the Asian region from among hundreds of nominations for his technology-based food rescue organisation.
- ✦ Padmanaban Gopalan, founder of No Food Waste, was named the winner of the award worth 3,000 pounds at a ceremony at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.
- ✦ The awards recognise their outstanding initiatives in line with the SGDs with a focus on poverty, gender, clean water, education, health and climate change.

# Obituaries

## 1. Olympic Cycling Medalist Kelly Catlin Dead At 23

- ✦ Olympic cycling medalist Kelly Catlin died in her dorm at Stanford University, an abrupt end to the 23-year-old's accolade-filled life.
- ✦ Kelly Catlin was most known as being a member of the U.S. women's pursuit team that earned a silver medal during the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

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