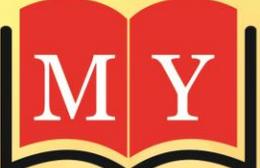


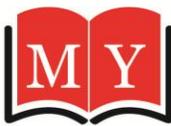
# Weekly Current Affairs

## 17 March – 23 March, 2019

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- Current Affairs bulletin
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- Debates & discussions
- Success Stories
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## National News

### 1. National convention of 'War Decorated India' commences in Chandimandir

- ✦ Several living gallantry award winners and relatives of the deceased awardees attended the two-day National Convention of War Decorated India (WDI), which began at Western Command Headquarters in Chandimandir.
- ✦ Among Victoria Cross awardees, the relatives of Late Naib Subedar Nand Singh (Sikh Regiment), Late Subedar Ram Sarup Singh (1 Punjab) and Late Badlu Ram (Cavalry) were felicitated.
- ✦ Among Param Vir Chakra awardees, relatives of Late Col. Hoshiar Singh (Grenadiers) and Late Subedar Joginder Singh (Sikh Regiment) were felicitated.

### 2. Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant to head transformative mobility panel

- ✦ Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant will head the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage, which is being set up to promote clean and sustainable mobility initiatives in the country.
- ✦ The Union Cabinet on March 7 had approved setting up of the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage.
- ✦ The panel will also propose and recommend policy guidelines and government interventions and possible strategies for holistic, sustainable and transformative mobility and energy storage in India.

### 3. 3rd Indo-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction held in New Delhi

- ✦ About 140 delegates from Japan and India attended the 3rd Indo-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Delhi.
- ✦ The 3rd workshop was organised with an objective of enhancing collaboration between research institutes, cities and the private sector in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction.
- ✦ This emphasised on the collaboration between India and Japan should be strengthened in the areas of Early Warning Systems, build-back-better, capacity development, Science & Technology application and institution strengthening.

### 4. 'i-help' initiative launched in Assam

- ✦ The 'i-help' initiative to promote digital electoral literacy in Assam has been launched in view of the forthcoming Lok Sabha poll.
- ✦ The 'i-help' is a joint initiative of the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and Common Service Centres (CSC).
- ✦ This particular initiative will fill the digital divide and fulfill the objective of turning the General Election more inclusive and participatory.

### 5. India's deepest shaft cave discovered in Meghalaya

- ✦ Barely a year after the discovery of the world's longest sandstone cave Krem Puri in Mawsynram region of Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district, now a cave with the deepest shaft in the country has been discovered.
- ✦ The discovery was made during the 28th edition of the annual 'Caving in the Abode of the Clouds Expedition'.
- ✦ The milestone of this year's expedition was the 503 km of cave passage explored and mapped in Meghalaya.

## International News & Foreign Affairs

### 1. Fifa slaps lifetime ban on Ecuador football head Luis Chiriboga over bribery

- ✦ Fifa slapped a lifetime ban on the disgraced former head of Ecuador's football federation, Luis Chiriboga, after finding him guilty of taking bribes.
- ✦ Chiriboga was one of the executives arrested in 2015 amid a massive US-led crackdown on corruption in world football.
- ✦ After finding him guilty, Fifa's ethics judges banned Chiriboga from all football-related activities for life and fined him 1 million Swiss francs

### 2. India & Afghanistan Signed an MOU On Digital Education Initiatives

- ✦ The Ministry of Human Resource Development has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Afghanistan government to work on digital education initiatives.
- ✦ This MOU include many prominent programs developed by Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).
- ✦ Afghanistan President: Ashraf Ghani

### 3. Paris, Hong Kong join Singapore as the world's most-expensive cities

- ✦ According to the annual Worldwide Cost of Living survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit, the title of most expensive city is shared by Paris, Hong Kong, and Singapore—the first time in the survey's 30-year history that three cities are in the top spot.
- ✦ The report looks at 133 cities and the cost of 160 items, such as food and drink, utility bills, rent, and transportation. Using New York as a benchmark, it determines whether prices for these items have gone up or down.
- ✦ The survey will help the companies to calculate cost of living allowances and build compensation packages for business travelers and expatriates.

**4. Finland is the happiest nation, India slips 7 spots, ranks 140th**

- ✦ Indian figures at 140th place, seven spots down from last year, on UN World Happiness Report- 2019.
- ✦ The list is topped by Finland for the second year in a row.
- ✦ The report was released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations on March 20, which was designated as the World Happiness Day by the UN General Assembly in 2012.

**5. International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure-2019 concludes successfully**

- ✦ The two-day International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDRI) successfully concluded.
- ✦ In his special address, the Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission of India, Shri N. K. Singh called for collective action on resilient infrastructure so that people-centric solutions are found.
- ✦ The need and practical issues concerning finance and insurance for infrastructure were also discussed during the workshop.

**6. SpiceJet joins global airlines' grouping IATA**

- ✦ SpiceJet has joined global airlines' grouping IATA as a member, becoming the first Indian low-cost carrier to get the membership.
- ✦ The International Air Transport Association (IATA) represents more than 290 airlines, including Air India, Jet Airways and Vistara.
- ✦ SpiceJet has become the first Indian low-cost carrier to join the IATA as a member.

**7. Fitch cuts India GDP growth forecast for FY20 to 6.8% from previous 7%**

- ✦ Fitch Ratings cut India's economic growth forecast for the next financial year starting April 1, to 6.8 per cent from its previous estimate of 7 per cent, on weaker than expected momentum in the economy.
- ✦ The rating agency has also cut growth forecasts for FY20 and FY21 to 7 per cent from 7.3 per cent and 7.1 per cent from 7.3 per cent, respectively.
- ✦ Fitch said, it's benign oil price outlook and expectations of accelerating food prices in the coming months should support rural households' income and consumption.

## **Banking**

**1. SBI ICICI HDFC remain D-SIBs**

- ✦ SBI, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank continue to be in the Reserve Bank of India's list of Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) for 2018.
- ✦ D-SIBs are required to maintain higher capital as compared to other banks.

- ✦ The additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) requirement for D-SIBs has already been phased-in from April 1, 2016, and will become fully effective from April 1, 2019.

## **2. SBI launches cardless ATM withdrawal with YONO Cash**

- ✦ India's largest bank State Bank of India (SBI) announced the launch of YONO Cash using which customers can withdraw money from ATMs without using a card.
- ✦ SBI chairman Rajnish Kumar said the new initiative will address concerns over using debit cards at ATMs for cash withdrawals by eliminating the possible associated risks.
- ✦ SBI customers can initiate the cash withdrawal process on the YONO app and set a six-digit pin for the transaction.

## **3. IBBI, SEBI sign MoU for better implementation of IBC**

- ✦ The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- ✦ The IBBI and the SEBI seek effective implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code) and its allied rules and regulations, which have redefined the debt-equity relationship and aims to promote entrepreneurship and debt market.
- ✦ The MoU was signed by Shri Anand Baiwar, Executive Director, SEBI, and Shri Ritesh Kavdia, Executive Director, IBBI, at Mumbai.

## **4. ICICI Lombard partners with MobiKwik for cyber insurance cover**

- ✦ ICICI Lombard General Insurance, a leading non-life insurance company, has entered into a strategic partnership with MobiKwik, a digital financial services platform, to provide cyber insurance cover for the latter's mobile wallet users.
- ✦ The relationship aims to provide protection against unauthorised and fraudulent transactions online, across bank accounts, debit/credit cards and mobile wallets.
- ✦ MobiKwik users can enroll under this insurance product at the time of loading money into their wallet or in a standalone format, as per their wish.

## **5. SBI inks pact with Bank of China for business opportunities**

- ✦ The country's largest lender SBI has signed a pact with the Bank of China to boost business opportunities.
- ✦ This MoU will facilitate the clients of both the banks to access banking products and services of each other, which will lead to a mutually beneficial relationship.
- ✦ Both banks' clients will be able to use the vast combined network to expand their businesses abroad.

## **6. ADB to Invest \$50 Million in Avaada Energy for Expansion of Solar Projects in India**

- ✦ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced that it will invest \$50 million in Indian renewable energy independent power producer Avaada Energy Private Limited.
- ✦ Avaada aims to use the capital to expand its solar energy generation capacity in India.
- ✦ Avaada is a developer of utility-scale, rooftop, and off-grid solar projects. The company has secured power purchase agreements of about 1,700 megawatts.

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

### **1. Pramod Sawant sworn in as Goa Chief Minister**

- ✦ Pramod Sawant (45), former Speaker of Goa legislative Assembly and MLA from Sankhelim in North Goa was sworn-in as 11th Chief Minister of Goa, succeeding Manohar Parrikar
- ✦ He was given the oath of office and secrecy at Raj Bhavan near here by Goa Governor Mridula Sinha.
- ✦ Along with the Chief Minister, Sudin alias Ramkrishna Dhavlikar of Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and Vijai Sardesai of Goa Forward Party were sworn in as Deputy Chief Ministers.

### **2. Santosh Jha Appointed Next Ambassador of India to Republic of Uzbekistan**

- ✦ Shri Santosh Jha presently Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Washington, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- ✦ A press release from the Ministry of External Affairs stated that Jha, an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of the 1993 batch, was expected to take up the assignment shortly.

### **3. Kotak Mahindra Bank elevates KVS Manian, Gaurang Shah as board directors**

- ✦ Kotak Mahindra Bank has appointed KVS Manian and Gaurang Shah as whole-time directors for a three-year term effective from the date of approval from the Reserve Bank of India.
- ✦ Manian is currently working as the president - corporate, investment bank. Shah is the president- group chief risk officer of the bank.
- ✦ The appointment of KVS Manian and Gaurang Shah is also subject to shareholders' approval.

### **4. Pinaki Chandra Ghose set to be India's first Lokpal**

- ✦ Former Supreme Court judge and current member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Pinaki Chandra Ghose, is likely to be India's first Lokpal.

- ✦ Other members of the committee are Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan and eminent jurist Mukul Rohatgi.
- ✦ Mr. Ghose was appointed as judge of the Calcutta High Court in 1997 and went on to become Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh before his elevation to the Supreme Court in 2013.

#### **5. Mukesh Ambani became the world's richest sports team owner**

- ✦ Ambani- the 13th richest person on earth is also the richest sports team owner according to Forbes' The World's Richest Sports Team Owners 2019 list.
- ✦ Ambani's fortune jumped from \$40.1 billion in 2018 to \$50 billion in 2019 as he climbed up six spots, from 19th to 13th on the Forbes World's Billionaire list.
- ✦ The top 20 owners in the list of richest sports team owners comprise of 13 rising fortunes, two static and five decliners.

#### **6. Kazakhstan President resigns after nearly 30 years in power**

- ✦ Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev has announced his resignation after nearly 30 years in power.
- ✦ The 78-year old leader had ruled the country since it emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.
- ✦ The announcement came less than a month after the President sacked his government, citing a lack of economic development despite the country's vast energy resources.

#### **7. Mumbai social worker Gauri Sawant becomes first transgender election ambassador**

- ✦ The Election Commission of India has appointed transgender social activist Gauri Sawant, as one of the 12 election ambassadors from Maharashtra.
- ✦ According to the Election Commission, Gauri Sawant's appointment would help in more people from this category getting registered during the final phase of voters enrollment.
- ✦ Election Commission has nominated the renowned sportsmen, film-makers, literary personalities of the respective constituencies as the goodwill ambassadors to induce more voters to vote in the Lok Sabha elections.

#### **8. Phone pe appointed Aamir Khan as Brand Ambassador**

- ✦ PhonePe, India's fastest growing payments platform announced appointed of Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan as its brand Ambassador.
- ✦ PhonePe is also an official co-presenting sponsor for the television broadcast of VIVO IPL 2019, and will be launching a series of new TV ads featuring Aamir Khan during this season.
- ✦ PhonePe stands for innovation and trust and has been instrumental in simplifying digital payments for millions of Indians in a very short span of time.

## Science Tech & Defence

### **1. IIT Kharagpur to Adopt Amazon Web Services Educate Programme To Accelerate Cloud Learning and AI Skills**

- ✦ The Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur will adopt Amazon Web Services (AWS) Educate programme to help students gain cloud computing skills including hands-on experience in artificial intelligence (AI)
- ✦ The programme offers a robust set of no-cost tools, resources and AWS Promotional Credits for students and educators to boost their cloud skills and experience.
- ✦ As part of AWS Educate, the students will gain access to 12 Cloud Career Pathways covering topics that are in demand by employers, such as machine learning, cybersecurity.

### **2. Indian Army Holds Military Exercise With 17 African Nations**

- ✦ The Indian Army began a 10-day military exercise with armed forces of 17 African nations at Aundh in Maharashtra, reflecting the growing strategic ties between India and the Africa continent.
- ✦ The inaugural ceremony of the exercise held at the Aundh military station was attended by defence attaches and other senior officials of the participating nations.
- ✦ The countries participating in the inaugural edition of the Africa-India Field Training Exercise (AFINDEX) include Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Benin.

### **3. WhatsApp and NASSCOM Foundation collaborate for digital literacy in India**

- ✦ WhatsApp and NASSCOM Foundation have come together to impart digital literacy training to help tackle the challenge of misinformation.
- ✦ This partnership aims to reach approximately 100,000 Indians with training to spot false information and provide tips & tricks to stay safe on WhatsApp.
- ✦ The curriculum will be disseminated in multiple regional languages to address the diversity of India.

### **4. Mobile app developed by IIPHG, PHFI to combat exam pressure**

- ✦ A mobile application to cope with exam related stress and anxiety for students and their parents has been developed by Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar, Gujarat, (IIPHG) in collaboration with National Mental Health Program.
- ✦ The mobile application is called 'Conquer Exam, Be a Warrior.'
- ✦ It is designed to provide assistance to empower students to do the best use of their ability and knock the exams season with help of parents.

### 5. 33rd Edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (Ind-Indo Corpat) Commences at Port Blair

- ✦ Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Sultan Thaha Syaifuddin and Maritime Patrol Aircraft CN-235 led by Cmde Dafit Santoso arrived at Port Blair.
- ✦ The ship and aircraft from both the countries would undertake patrolling on the respective sides of 236 nautical miles long International Maritime Boundary line.
- ✦ It is also a part of the Indian Government's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), for assisting countries in the Indian Ocean Region.

### 6. Mi Pay a UPI Based Payments app launched by Xiaomi in India

- ✦ Xiaomi launched 'Mi Pay' in India. They are calling it the 'UPI app for Xiaomi users.'
- ✦ Xiaomi has tied up with ICICI Bank for the role of the payment service provider while the NPCI monitored Unified Payments of India (UPI) will be the digital wallet interface.
- ✦ Xiaomi has also assured that the data will be stored in encrypted form and will be secure.

### 7. CBSE launches new 'Shiksha Vani' app to upload podcast on Class 10, 12 exam evaluation process

- ✦ The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) launched a new podcast app 'Shiksha Vani' earlier this week. This app will disseminate crucial information to students and parents in a timely manner.
- ✦ The CBSE board also mentioned that its first episode, on the evaluation process of Class 10 and 12 board examinations, has been released on the platform.
- ✦ This episode is helpful for all the students, as when the examinations proceed, the episode helps students understand how their completed papers will be evaluated.
- ✦

## Important days

### 1. Global Recycling Day 2019: "Recycling into the Future"

- ✦ Global Recycling Day is held on 18th March every year, with an aim to change the mindset of governments, businesses, communities and individuals around the world, to see recyclables as resource – not waste.
- ✦ As part of this year's Global Recycling Day on March 18, the theme "Recycling into the Future" will focus on the power of youth and education in ensuring a brighter future.

- ✦ In honor of this year's theme, through its youth outreach program, ISRI offers a number of free resources to teachers to educate children on the science of recycling.

## 2. International Day of Happiness 2019 celebrated on March 20

- ✦ International Day of Happiness 2019 was celebrated on March 20
- ✦ United Nations has celebrated the International Day of Happiness as a way to recognize the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world.
- ✦ Happier Together is the theme for International Day of Happiness 2019.

## 3. World Water Day observed on 22 March

- ✦ World Water Day celebrated annually on March 22.
- ✦ An international day to celebrate freshwater was recommended at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro.
- ✦ The theme for World Water Day 2019 is 'Leaving no one behind'.

# Sports

## 1. first Indian athlete to qualify for Tokyo Olympics K T Irfan becomes

- ✦ National record holder KT Irfan became the first Indian from athletics to qualify for the next year's Olympics while finishing fourth in the 20 km event of the Asian Race Walking Championships in Nomi, Japan.
- ✦ The Olympics qualification period for all other athletics events will start from May 1 this year and will run till June 29, 2020.
- ✦ No other Indian from athletics has so far qualified for Tokyo Olympics.

## 2. India to host U-17 Women's World Cup in 2020

- ✦ India will host the U-17 Women's World Cup in 2020, International Football Federation (FIFA) President Gianni Infantino announced.
- ✦ This will be the second FIFA tournament India will be hosting, after the U-17 Men's World Cup in 2017
- ✦ The U-17 women's tournament began in 2008, when New Zealand hosted it. Spain is the current champion and they had beaten Mexico 2-1 in the final in Uruguay last year. The tournament in India will be the seventh edition.

## 3. Diksha Dagar becomes second Indian to win Ladies European Tour title

- ✦ Diksha Dagar became only the second Indian woman to win on Ladies European Tour after clinching the South African Open, eking out a one-shot victory with a bogey-free final round, in Cape Town.

- ✦ Dagar, 18, was trailing by two shots, but pipped the much-experienced Lee Anne Pace with a three-under final round.
- ✦ A left-hander, Diksha is well-known for brand of aggressive and fearless golf. Her brother, Yogesh, who is also deaf, also plays golf and has been playing in age-group events.

#### 4. India Beat Nepal To Win 5th Successive SAFF Women's Championship

- ✦ India continued their dominance at the SAFF Women's Championship with the team lifting their fifth straight title with a 3-1 win over Nepal in the final.
- ✦ Indian Midfielder Indumathi Kathiresanand Nepali forward player Sabitra Bhandari became the top scorers in the match with four goals each.
- ✦ This win has extended India's run in the tournament history to 23 games.

## Awards

#### 1. Journalist and author Raghu Karnad wins \$165,000 Windham-Campbell Prize

- ✦ Delhi-based journalist and author Raghu Karnad was announced as one of eight recipients of Yale University's Windham-Campbell Prize this year, in London.
- ✦ One of the world's most lucrative literary awards, the prize is open to English language writers from across the world, with each winner receiving \$165,000 to support their writing.
- ✦ Past winners of the prize include Jerry Pinto, Maya Jasanoff, Teju Cole and Geoff Dyer.

## Obituaries

#### 1. Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar passes away

- ✦ Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar had passes away at the age of 63
- ✦ Manohar Parrikar (13 December 1955 – 17 March 2019) was an Indian politician and leader of Bharatiya Janata Party who was the Chief Minister of Goa from 14 March 2017 till his death. Previously he was Chief Minister of Goa from 2000 to 2005 and from 2012 to 2014.
- ✦ Parrikar led a coalition government, which is supported by the Goa Forward Party (GFP), the Maharashtravadi Gomantak Party (MGP), and three independent lawmakers in Goa.

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