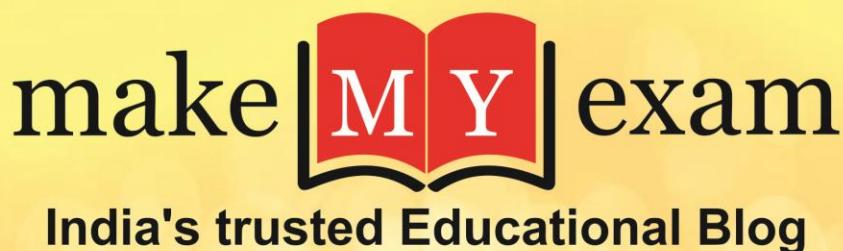


Weekly Current Affairs

03 March – 09 March, 2019



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National News

1. Textile Ministry launches scheme to develop knitting and knitwear sector

- ⊕ The Union Textile Ministry has launched a comprehensive Scheme for the development of the knitwear sector under PowerTex India.
- ⊕ Apart from financial incentives the two key interesting elements are Yarn Bank and financial assistance for the solar energy scheme. The scheme was launched simultaneously in three major clusters, Tirupur, Ludhiana and Kolkata.
- ⊕ The yarn bank scheme for knitting and knitwear units will provide an interest-free corpus fund of a maximum of up to Rs 2 crore per yarn bank to a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

2. Cabinet approves 'Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN yojana' for financial support to Integrated Bioethanol Projects

- ⊕ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the 'Pradhan Mantri Jaiv Indhan- Vatavaran Anukool fasal awashesh Nivarjan (JI-VAN) Yojana' for providing financial support to the Integrated Bioethanol Projects.
- ⊕ The scheme aims to incentivise 2G Ethanol sector and support the industry by creating a suitable ecosystem for setting up commercial projects and increasing Research & Development in this area.
- ⊕ The Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana will be supported with the total financial outlay of Rs 1969.50 crore for the period 2018-19 to 2023-24.

3. PM launches One Nation, One Card in Ahmedabad for Mobility Single Card for seamless travel

- ⊕ Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched One Nation, One Card for transport mobility at a function in Ahmedabad.
- ⊕ The Indigenous Automatic Fare Collection System based on One Nation One Card Model i.e. National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) is the first of its kind in India.
- ⊕ The customer may use this single card for payments across all segments including metro, bus, suburban railways, toll, parking, smart city and retail.

4. President gives assent to Ordinance allowing voluntary use of Aadhaar

- ⊕ President Ram Nath Kovind has given his assent to an ordinance that allows voluntary use of Aadhaar as ID proof for obtaining mobile SIM cards and opening bank accounts.
- ⊕ The ordinance was necessitated because the Rajya Sabha could not approve a Bill after its passage by the Lok Sabha.
- ⊕ The amendments also make it clear that anyone not offering Aadhaar cannot be denied any service, be it opening of a bank account or obtaining a mobile phone SIM card.

5. Ayushman Bharat and Uber ink partnership to facilitate free healthcare for drivers

- ⊕ A ride-sharing company has partnered with the government's flagship healthcare insurance scheme, Ayushman Bharat, to facilitate free healthcare for several drivers associated with the firm.
- ⊕ The National Health Authority (NHA), the apex body implementing the Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) has inked an MoU with Uber.
- ⊕ According to the agreement, Uber, under its Uber CARE initiative for driver and delivery partners, will facilitate the setting up of common service centres (CSC's) at Partners Seva Kendras across India.

6. 'Azaadi Ke Diwane' museum inaugurated at Red Fort

- ⊕ Union Minister Mahesh Sharma inaugurated 'Azaadi Ke Diwane' museum, dedicated to the unsung heroes of the country's freedom struggle, on the Red Fort premises.
- ⊕ Built by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the museum is the fifth in a series of recently inaugurated ones — the others being the Subhash Chandra Bose and INA museum, the Yaad-e-Jallian museum.
- ⊕ This new museum 'Azaadi ke Diwane' is started in the series of Kranti Mandir to inspire the younger generation and let them know the cost of freedom that the great fighters achieve by sacrificing their lives.

7. Tripura government launches Notun Disha initiative to provide training to teachers

- ⊕ Tripura government has announced to distribute laptops to 800 school teachers under the Notun Disha (new direction)initiative.
- ⊕ The Notun Disha is a one-month project to provide training to teachers.
- ⊕ Notun Disha' is aimed at making the students efficient and capable in all subjects from the 3rd to 8th standard

8. Assam's hailakandi became the top aspirational district

- ⊕ According to the Delta ranking report released by NITI Aayog, Assam's Hailakandi has become the top aspirational district among the 112 aspirational districts of the country.
- ⊕ Hailakandi in Assam has made a giant leap from 52nd position to no. 1 position on the basis of its performance during November-December 2018 and January 2019.
- ⊕ For securing the first rank as an aspirational district, Hailakandi will be given an allocation of Rs. 10 crore.

9. Uttar Pradesh to get Highways Projects Worth Over Rs one Lakh Crore

- ⊕ Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh will inaugurate and lay the foundation stones for National Highways projects worth Rs 1,10,154 crore in Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh.
- ⊕ He will also inaugurate/lay foundation stone for several works under Namami Gange programme worth over Rs 1969.57 crore.
- ⊕ He will also lay the foundation stone for construction of Amethi Bypass and widening and construction of important sections of highways in the State.

10. Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates BOLD-QIT project in Assam

- ⊕ Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the project BOLD-QIT on India-Bangladesh border in Dhubri District of Assam.
- ⊕ Border Security Force, BSF is responsible for safeguarding of over four thousand kilometer long International Border with Bangladesh. At various places, it is not possible to erect Border Fence due to the geographical barriers.
- ⊕ The implementation of this project will not only help BSF to curb all types of cross border crimes but also provide respite to the troops from round the clock human surveillance.

11. CM Mamata Banerjee announces plan to launch scheme to help youth set up business

- ⊕ Chief minister Mamata Banerjee unveiled a new scheme to encourage entrepreneurship among youths.
- ⊕ Youths who have passed out of ITI or other polytechnic institutes will be eligible to get financial support from the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) department.
- ⊕ Under YuvaShree Arpan, 50,000 youths will receive financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh each for setting up an enterprise. The YuvaShree I scheme is implemented by the state labour department.

12. Income Tax exemption limit on gratuity doubled to Rs 20 lakh

- ⊕ Income Tax exemption limit on gratuity has been doubled to Rs 20 lakh from the existing Rs 10 lakh, a move that will benefit employees who are not covered by the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972.
- ⊕ The latest enhancement of tax exemption limit on gratuity follows a government notification issued on March 29, 2018, under which the ceiling was increased from Rs 10 lakh to 20 lakh effective March 29, 2018.
- ⊕ Gratuity is the monetary benefit provided by the employer to his/her employee for the services rendered by him during the period of employment.

13. Uttarakhand CM launches free milk scheme for anganwadi children

- ⊕ Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat launched the Mukhyamantri Anchal Amrit Yojana in Dehradun under which 2.5 lakh children at 20,000 Anganwadi kendras in the state will be given 100 ml milk twice a week for free.
- ⊕ Flavoured, sweet, skimmed milk powder will be made available to the 20,000 Anganwadi kendras across the state under the Amrit Yojana.

International News & Foreign Affairs

1. India tops Global Consumer Confidence Survey

- ⊕ The global consumer confidence in India is at peak. This was revealed in the latest Conference Board Global Consumer Confidence Survey, which is conducted in collaboration with Nielsen.
- ⊕ The survey which was conducted over the internet, polls more than 32,000 consumers in 64 countries across Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and North America.
- ⊕ The main indicators measured by Conference Board CCI are optimism towards job prospects, health of personal finances and spending intentions in the next 12 months.

2. US, South Korea Call Off Foal Eagle and Key Resolve Exercises

- ⊕ The United States and South Korea, announced the inauguration of a new exercise known as Dong Maeng.
- ⊕ The exercise was announced as a modification of the springtime exercises the allies have held in recent years known as Key Resolve and Foal Eagle.
- ⊕ The Dong Maeng exercise will run from March 4 to March 12 and focus primarily on “strategic, operational, and tactical aspects of general military operations on the Korean Peninsula.

3. Over 1,000 People Set Guinness World Record In Yoga In Hong Kong

- ⊕ Over a thousand yoga enthusiasts attempted to do the Virabathrasan for three minutes at one place, setting a Guinness World Record in Yoga.
- ⊕ The record is a first of its kind in the history of Hong Kong, beating the previous record of 387, when more than 1011 yoga practitioners attempted the Virabathrasan.
- ⊕ The previous record was of 387 people.

Banking

1. Asian Development Bank To Lend \$926 Million For Mumbai Metro Rail Project

- ⊕ Marking its single largest infrastructure loan ever, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$926 million loan agreement with India to operationalise two lines for the Mumbai metro rail system.
- ⊕ It aims to ease the distress of millions of commuters each day and help provide a cleaner and less congested city
- ⊕ The project will fund 63 six-car trains, signalling and safety systems and help establish a new dedicated metro operations organisation to manage the entire metro network in Mumbai.

2. RBI imposes Rs 11 crore fine on 4 banks for delayed implementation of Swift operations

- ⊕ The RBI has imposed a total monetary fine of Rs 11 crore on four banks - Karnataka Bank, United Bank of India, IOB and Karur Vysya Bank - for non-compliance of directions on Swift messaging software.
- ⊕ While the RBI imposed a Rs 4 crore penalty on Karnataka Bank, it slapped a fine of Rs 3 crore each on United Bank and Indian Overseas Bank.
- ⊕ The Reserve Bank of India has levied an aggregate penalty of Rs 40 million on the bank for delayed implementation of four of the Swift related operational controls.

3. Government of India and World Bank Sign \$250 Million Agreement for the National Rural Economic Transformation Project

- ⊕ The World Bank and the Government of India signed a \$250 Million Agreement for the National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP) which will help women in rural households shift to a new generation of economic initiatives.
- ⊕ A Key Focus of the Project will be to promote women-owned and women-led farm and non-farm enterprises across value chains; enable them to build businesses that help them access finance and generate employment.
- ⊕ The Project will continue to give technical assistance, skills building and investment support to strengthen women-owned and women-led producer.

4. LIC Housing Finance partners with IMGC for loan scheme

- ⊕ LIC Housing Finance has announced a tie-up with India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation (IMGC) to offer a special loan scheme under which borrowers can repay the amount till the age of 75 years.
- ⊕ IMGC will provide LIC Housing Finance with mortgage guarantee which is a financial product that will compensate financial institutions for any losses that may arise on the mortgage loans due to default.

- + This strategic partnership will help LIC Housing Finance attract more home loan borrowers, combat NPAs and increase market penetration.

5. SBI, Hitachi arm to roll out digital payments platform

- + State Bank of India (SBI) and Hitachi Payment Services Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hitachi Ltd, launched their merchant-acquiring joint venture.
- + The joint venture (SBI has a 74 per cent stake, and the balance is with Hitachi Payment Services) will facilitate expansion of the digital payments landscape in India via its digital payments platform.
- + This will offer innovative products to suit the requirements of all segments of merchants by leveraging the brand value and vast distribution network of SBI, and bring Artificial Intelligence and other technological capabilities of Hitachi to SBI Payment Services.

6. RBI eases business guidelines for white label ATMs

- + RBI has eased business guidelines for white label ATMs allowing companies that manage these machines to source cash directly from the central bank, offer non bank services like bill payments and advertise even non financial products in their premises.
- + White label ATM Operators (WLAO), can now source cash directly from RBI offices and currency chests, and will no longer be dependent on sponsor banks for procurement of cash.
- + The RBI has allowed the operators to source cash from any scheduled bank including rural and cooperative banks.

7. United Bank of India signs Bancassurance deal with HDFC Life to serve its large customer base

- + United Bank of India, one of India's premier Nationalized Banks signed a Bancassurance deal with HDFC Life Insurance Company.
- + United Bank has a strong presence in rural and semi-urban areas with over 2,000 branches and offices while HDFC Life is India's largest non-bank promoted private life insurer.
- + This corporate-agency partnership is significant as United Bank of India undertook a rigorous selection process and evaluated 18 private Life insurers and finally selected HDFC Life.

New Appointments & Person in News

1. Hasmukh Adhia Appointed as Non-Executive Chairman of Bank of Baroda

- + Former finance secretary Hasmukh Adhia was appointed as the non-executive chairman of Bank of Baroda.

- ⊕ Adhia, a 1981-batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre who was known to be close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, retired in November 30, 2018.
- ⊕ As per the Scheme of Amalgamation, shareholders of Vijaya Bank will get 402 equity shares of Bank of Baroda for every 1,000 shares held.

2. Controversial Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahad al-Sabah re-elected Asian Olympic chief

- ⊕ Kuwait's Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah was re-elected president of the powerful Olympic Council of Asia
- ⊕ An IOC member, stepped down from his position in the global Olympic body in November because of his forgery accusation in a criminal court against the Kuwaiti and four others.
- ⊕ Sheikh Ahmad, considered a major powerbroker in world sport, won a new five-year term until 2024.

3. Kallas wins Estonia election - set to become first female PM

- ⊕ Kaja Kallas, the leader of the Reform Party has been appointed as the first female Prime Minister of Estonia.
- ⊕ Kallas' party won 28.8 percent of the vote and 34 of the 101 seats in Estonia's parliament, closely followed by Ratas' Center party.

4. Subhash Chandra Garg designated as Finance Secretary

- ⊕ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved designating Garg as the Finance Secretary.
- ⊕ Garg, 58, a 1983 batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre, has been working as the Secretary in Department of Economic Affairs since June 2017.
- ⊕ As per the convention, the senior-most among the five secretaries in the Finance Ministry is designated as the Finance Secretary.

5. Kummanam Rajasekharan resigns as Mizoram Governor

- ⊕ Kummanam Rajasekharan, the Governor of Mizoram, has resigned and the President of India has accepted his resignation. Kummanam, the former Kerala State BJP president, had been sworn in as Mizoram Governor on May 25, 2018.
- ⊕ President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Jagdish Mukhi, Governor of Assam, to discharge the functions of the Governor of Mizoram, until regular arrangements for the office of the Governor of Mizoram is made.
- ⊕ Kummanam contested the Assembly elections in 2016 from the Vattiyoorkavu constituency in Thiruvananthapuram.

6. Tamil Nadu's 16-year-old, P Iniyan, becomes India's 61st chess Grandmaster

- ⊕ India got its 61st Grandmaster when P Iniyan defeated GM Fedorchuk at the ongoing Noisiel Open in France.
- ⊕ The victory saw the 16-year-old from Erode cross the 2500-point in ELO ratings.

- Iniyan had bagged his third and final GM norm at the 41st International Barbera del Valles chess tournament at Barcelona in July last year.

Science Tech & Defence

1. ISRO launches 'Young Scientist Programme' for school children

- The Indian Space Research Organisation has launched a special programme for school children called Yuva Vigyani Karyakram or Young Scientist Programme.
- ISRO has come up with this young scientist programme to 'catch them young'. The residential training programme will be conducted during the summer holidays. It will be held for a duration of around two weeks.
- The programme aims at imparting basic knowledge on space technology, space science and space applications to the younger ones with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of space activities.

2. Bharat Electronics launches SWAGAT - Automatic Fare Collection Gating System

- BEL is taking up the large-scale manufacturing and deployment of the System at its manufacturing facilities.
- Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), a defence public sector undertaking, presented SWAGAT - the Automatic Fare Collection Gating System.
- SWAGAT is an initiative steered by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in collaboration with BEL and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) with the support of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) and State Bank of India (SBI).

3. Soumya Swaminathan named Chief Scientist at WHO

- Soumya Swaminathan, a Deputy Director-General of the World Health Organisation has been named Chief Scientist of the WHO.
- The new division is being seen as the fifth pillar to strengthen the WHO's core scientific work, ensure quality and consistency of norms and standards.
- As Deputy Director-General Programmes (DDP), she was one of the three DDGs assisting WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Important days

1. World Wildlife Day 2019 Observed on 3 March

- ⊕ World Wildlife Day is observed on 3rd March every year to spread awareness about wildlife.
- ⊕ This date was designated as the World Wildlife Day on 20 December 2013 at the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
- ⊕ World Wildlife Day is an opportunity to celebrate the many beautiful and varied forms of wild fauna and flora and to raise awareness of the multitude of benefits that conservation provides to people.

2. International Women's Day observed on 8 November

- ⊕ International Women's Day observed on 8 November every year to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women
- ⊕ The theme for International Women's Day (8 March) this year, "Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change", puts innovation by women and girls, for women and girls, at the heart of efforts to achieve gender equality.
- ⊕ Achieving a gender-equal world requires social innovations that work for both women and men and leave no one behind.

Books & Authors

1. FM Arun Jaitley releases the book 'Mann Ki Baat – A Social Revolution on Radio'

- ⊕ Shri Arun Jaitley, Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs, released a book titled 'Mann Ki Baat – A Social Revolution on Radio' in a function organized in National Media Centre, New Delhi.
- ⊕ The book is based on 50 episodes of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's heart to heart talk with the citizens of India broadcast on All India Radio.
- ⊕ The book has been collated by BlueKraft Digital Foundation, a not for profit organization, and brought out by Rupa Publication, India, a reputed publishing house.

Sports

1. Federer claims the 100th ATP title of his career

- ⊕ Roger Federer claimed the 100th ATP title of his career by beating 20-year-old Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4 6-4 in the final of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships.
- ⊕ The 20-times Grand Slam champion became the second man in the Open Era to claim 100 titles after American Jimmy Connors who won 109.
- ⊕ Swiss Federer also avenged his shock defeat by Tsitsipas in the Australian Open fourth round in January.

Awards

1. DRDO chief Satheesh Reddy conferred Missile Systems Award by AIAA

- ⊕ India's aerospace scientist and Chief of the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO), G Satheesh Reddy, has been conferred the Missile Systems Award 2019 by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.
- ⊕ Satheesh is the first Indian to win the award, which recognises his leadership role in the Indian missile programme.
- ⊕ AIAA is the world's largest and reputed aerospace technical society.

2. Bharti AXA General wins 'Assocham Non-Life Insurer of The Year Award'

- ⊕ Bharti AXA General Insurance has been conferred with the 'Non-Life Insurer of The Year Award 2019' by the Assocham, one of the apex trade associations of India.
- ⊕ The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) honored Bharti AXA General Insurance with this recognition for its excellence and contribution to the non-life insurance sector during the recently-held Insurance Leaders Meet 2019 and Excellence Awards in Kolkata.
- ⊕ The company has achieved significant distribution scale with a sharp focus on profitability. It posted its maiden profit in the first nine months of the current financial year 2018-19.

3. Abhinandan Varthaman To Be Awarded Bhagwan Mahavir Ahimsa Puraskar

- ⊕ Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman will be the first recipient of the 'Bhagwan Mahavir Ahimsa Puraskar' instituted by the Akhil Bharatiya Digambar Jain Mahasamiti.
- ⊕ Abhinandan Varthaman spent nearly 60 hours in Pakistani captivity after his MiG-21 Bison fighter went down. He had hit a Pakistani F-16 before he was forced to eject and landed across the Line of Control.

- ⊕ The award, instituted this year, carries a cash prize of Rs. 2.51 lakh, a memento and a citation and will be presented to Abhinandan Varthaman on April 17, coinciding with Mahavir Jayanti.

4. Indian Bank receives Best Bank Award

- ⊕ Public sector Indian Bank has bagged the Best Bank Award from the Tamil Nadu government for meeting the needs of women's self-help groups (SHGs).
- ⊕ At a function in Salem recently, Chief Minister of the state K Palaniswami handed over the award to the executive director of the bank M K Bhattacharya.
- ⊕ Salem district collector Rohini and senior officials of the bank were present on the occasion

5. President Presents Swachh Survekshan 2019 Awards

- ⊕ Indore has been awarded the cleanest city in the country in the Swachh Survekshan 2019 (SS 2019) awards while Bhopal has been declared as the cleanest capital.
- ⊕ Ujjain has bagged the award for being the cleanest city in the population category of 3 lakh to 10 lakh. The awards were presented by the President.
- ⊕ The Swachh Survekshan exercise was started with the objective of inculcating a spirit of healthy competition among cities in their race towards becoming India's cleanest cities.

6. Bhubaneswar's Biju Patnaik International Airport wins the prestigious ASQ award

- ⊕ The Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Bhubaneswar has won the 2018 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) award as the leading airport in size and region.
- ⊕ The award is accorded on the basis of independent survey amongst passengers on various parameters of security, safety, experience, ambience, ease of availability and cleanliness, Hota stated.
- ⊕ Chandigarh Airport, Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Airport in Indore, SM Badaruddin II Airport in Indonesia, SS Kasim II Airport in Indonesia and Yichang Sanxia Airport in China were also chosen for the award.

Obituaries

1. Russian Nobel Prize winner for physics Alferov dies aged 88

- ⊕ Zhores Alferov, a Russian scientist who won a Nobel prize in physics, has died.
- ⊕ The physicist was also a Communist deputy in the lower house of parliament, where Alferov had been a deputy since 1995.
- ⊕ In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Alferov noted that physics had brought both benefits and disasters to mankind in the 20th century and warned that the mass media could be abused in the wrong hands.



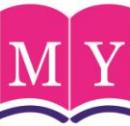
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