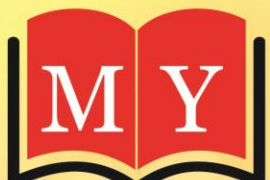


Weekly Current Affairs

31 March – 06 April, 2019

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National News

1. Punjab and Haryana High court bars stating of caste in Proceeding

- ✦ The Punjab and Haryana High Court has instructed Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh not to mention the caste of the accused, victims or witnesses in proceedings before the court.
- ✦ The court has directed the Secretaries (Home) of the governments to issue instructions to all investigating officers not to mention the caste of the accused, victims or witnesses in recovery memos.
- ✦ A Bench of Justices Rajiv Sharma and Kuldeep Singh, while passing a ruling in a murder case where the Haryana police had mentioned the caste of the accused, witnesses and the victim during the proceedings, noted that the caste system was profoundly illogical and was also against the basic tenets of the Constitution.

2. Govt leaves interest rate on small-saving schemes unchanged

- ✦ The finance minister decided to keep the interest rate unchanged on small savings schemes for the three-month period beginning April 1.
- ✦ The announcement covers small-saving schemes such as the Post Office Saving Accounts, Post Office Time Deposits, the National Saving Certificates (NSC), the Public Provident Fund (PPF), the Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP) and Sukanya Samridhi.
- ✦ The unchanged interest rate means the NSC (5 years) and the PPF (15 years) will fetch 8 per cent interest, while money deposited in KVP will double in little over nine years.

3. Agriculture institute in Malawi by India

- ✦ India on April 2, 2019 signed an agreement with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Consultancy Service (NABCONS) for setting up the India-Africa Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development (IAIARD) in Malawi, a landlocked country in southeastern Africa.
- ✦ IAIARD will develop training programs in the areas of micro-financing and agro-financing, among others. This will be the first of its kind institute developed in an African country by India.

4. Reliance Jio buys chatbot firm Haptik in Rs 700 crore deal.

- ✦ Reliance Jio has acquired a majority stake in chatbot platform Haptik in a Rs 700-crore deal, which includes a Rs 470-crore investment for future growth of the business over four-five years.
- ✦ The deal will give an exit to majority stake owner Times Internet, which is part of the Times Group that publishes this newspaper.
- ✦ Haptik Co-founders Aakrit Vaish and Swapan Rajdev will have a minority stake i.e.13% in Haptik.

International News & Foreign Affairs

1. The Eu Approved a ban on Single-Use Plastics

- ✦ The European parliament voted to support plans for the elimination of most uses of single-use plastic, ranging from cutlery and straws to coffee stirrers and plastic plates.
- ✦ It's a significant step that could encourage other governments around the globe to also commit to reducing the amount of plastics that end up in landfills, waterways, and oceans.

2. India, Chile sign MoUs

- ✦ India and Chile released a Joint Statement after extensive talks between Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and the President of Chile, Sebastian Pinera Echenique, during the former's official state visit to Chile from March 30 to April 1, 2019. This is the third leg of the President's three-nation tour which included Croatia and Bolivia.
- ✦ During the visit, President Kovind participated in India-Chile Business Forum and interacted with young scientists at the University of Chile.
- ✦ Then he held detailed discussions with the Chilean President, which led to the signing of three MoUs for cooperation in the fields of mining, culture and empowerment of persons with disabilities. The agreements aim to further enhance engagement in economic, social and cultural fields between the two countries.

3. Japan's New Imperial Era Name: Reiwa

- ✦ Japan is one of the last nations in Asia to adhere to traditional era names, in addition to the modern Gregorian calendar, each having legal status.
- ✦ Since 1868, these era names have been tied to imperial reigns and become the formal name of the Emperor after death.
- ✦ The neologism is taken from a poem in the Manyōshū, the oldest Japanese anthology of poetry, which dates back to around 760 CE.

4. US approves sale of 24 MH 60 Romeo Seahawk helicopters to India

- ✦ The Trump administration has approved the sale of 24 multi-role MH-60 Romeo Seahawk helicopters to India at an estimated cost of 2.4 billion US dollars.
- ✦ It is considered the world's most advanced maritime helicopter. The choppers will provide the Indian defence forces with the capability to perform anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare missions.
- ✦ In its notification, the State Department told the Congress that this proposed sale will support the foreign policy of the US by helping to strengthen the US-Indian strategic relationship.

Banking

1. Bank of Baroda becomes second largest PSU bank after SBI

- ✦ Bank of Baroda (BoB) became the second largest state-owned lender after merging Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank into itself as part of the first three-way amalgamation.
- ✦ The consolidated entity started its operation with a business mix of over Rs 15 lakh crore of balance sheet, with deposits and advances of Rs 8.75 lakh crore and Rs 6.25 lakh crore, respectively.
- ✦ Government has also infused Rs 5,042 crore into Bank of Baroda by way of preferential allotment of equity shares.

2. Reliance Mutual Fund customers can now carry out voice-based transactions

- ✦ Customers of Reliance Mutual Fund can now carry out voice-based financial transactions, with Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management (RNAM) partnering with internet major- Google.
- ✦ For the first time in India, Reliance Mutual Fund for its customers is introducing a conversational interface that would help customers shop with the fund just by listening and speaking to your smartphone or digital device through a series of voice commands.
- ✦ In the first phase, the functionality would be launched in Reliance Simply Save app for the customers and then subsequently in Google Assistant platform for access by all existing and potential investor.

3. Vijay Chandok appointed as MD and CEO of ICICI Securities

- ✦ ICICI Securities appointed Vijay Chandok as an additional director and as a Managing Director and CEO of the company.
- ✦ The board of directors of the company have approved the appointment of Vijay Chandok as an additional director and as a Managing Director and CEO of the company with effect from May 7, 2019.
- ✦ He is also on the boards of ICICI Bank UK PLC and ICICI Bank Canada.

4. RBI cuts repo rate by 25 bps to 6% for second time in row

- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday cut the repo rate by another 25 basis points to 6 per cent.
- ✦ The move will cheer markets and investors and is the second consecutive rate cut by the RBI.
- ✦ It has also maintained the policy stance neutral and lowered the retail inflation and GDP forecasts.

5. RBI makes NPA divergence rule easier for banks

- ✦ Reserve Bank of India has made life a little bit easier for banks by tweaking the bad loan divergence rule.
- ✦ Banks' disclosure of divergence practice mandated by RBI aims at improving transparency in asset classification and preventing under-reporting of bad loans.
- ✦ Earlier, the public financial statements with material divergences in banks' asset classification and provisioning from RBI rule did not depict the true and fair view of the financial position of the bank.

New Appointments & Person in News

1. Rima Das becomes Ambassador of Toronto International Film Festival's 'Share Her Journey'

- ✦ Rima Das joins Toronto International Film Festival's Share Her Journey as their official ambassador.
- ✦ TIFF launched the 5-year campaign in 2017 with a view to increase participation, skills, and opportunities for women behind and in front of the camera.
- ✦ The woman behind 'Village Rockstars', India's Official Entry to Oscars 2019 would like to see more and more women in the industry break the glass ceiling.

2. Algeria's President Abdelaziz Bouteflika resigns

- ✦ Algeria's President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced on April 1, 2019 that he will resign from his position before his mandate expires on April 28, 2019. The move follows mass protests by the citizens of the nation who called for the 82-year-old to step down after almost 20 years in office.
- ✦ Bouteflika had come under mounting pressure to step down since he decided to seek a fifth term despite rarely being seen in public after suffering a stroke in 2013. The Algerian leader said last month he would pull out of the race and postponed April elections, in moves that angered protesters who saw it as a ploy to extend his two decades in power.
- ✦ On April 2, the nation's armed forces chief of staff General Ahmed Gaid Salah, who was appointed by Bouteflika in 2004, said the president should either resign or be declared medically unfit to govern by parliament using its constitutional powers.

3. Google India Head Rajan Anandan Resigned

- ✦ Rajan Anandan, vice president for Google India and South East Asia, and essentially heading Google in India, is leaving the company after an eight-year stint. Anandan had joined Google from Microsoft India in 2010.
- ✦ Vikas Agnihotri, who is currently serving as Google's country director for sales, will take on the interim responsibility until the company finds a new managing director.

Science Tech & Defence

1. GAIL, BHEL sign pact for development of solar power projects

- ✦ State-owned gas utility GAIL India Ltd has signed an agreement with Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) for cooperation in the development of solar power projects.
- ✦ BHEL shall also provide operation and maintenance services during the initial period upon becoming successful bidder.
- ✦ BHEL is one of the few companies in the world, and only company in India, having the capability to manufacture the entire range of power plant equipment.

2. Four Indigenous 'Dhanush' Howitzers Inducted Into Indian Army

- ✦ In a major fire-power boost for the country, four indigenous 'Dhanush' Howitzer guns were inducted to the Indian Army at a ceremony held at the Ordnance factory in Jabalpur.
- ✦ The Dhanush guns have been tested to withstand extreme conditions like rainfall and snow, and have also been built for use in multiple terrains, from plains, to sand and especially in hilly areas.
- ✦ The Dhanush gun system is based on designs of the Bofors howitzer which was inducted in the Army in 1980s and would be the third type of artillery gun to be inducted into the force after the K-9 Vajra and the M-777 ultra-light.

3. ISRO's PSLV C45 places DRDO defence satellite EMISAT along with 28 nano satellites in orbit

- ✦ ISRO's PSLV C45 lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, carrying India's EMISAT defence satellite along with 28 nano satellites of global customers.
- ✦ As the 27-hour countdown concluded, the nearly 50-metre tall rocket, a new variant of ISRO's trusted work horse PSLV-QL, blasted off from the second launch pad at the spaceport of Sriharikota at 9:27 am.
- ✦ The mission marks several firsts to the credit of the space agency as it would manoeuvre satellites in various orbits and orbital experiments, including on maritime satellite applications.

4. Rear Admiral Suraj Berry takes over as Command of Eastern Fleet

- ✦ Rear Admiral Suraj Berry, NM, VSM took over as the Command of Eastern Fleet, the Sword Arm of the Eastern Naval Command from Rear Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi.
- ✦ The Eastern Fleet under him also participated in various bilateral exercises, most notable being INDRA-18 with the Russian Federation Navy, JIMEX-18 with the Japanese Navy and the 25th edition of SIMBEX with the Republic of Singapore Navy.
- ✦ Rear Admiral Tripathi has been placed in the select list for promotion
- ✦ to Vice Admiral and is headed to New Delhi as the Assistant Director-General, Project Seabird. (ANI).

5. PSLV-C45 successfully launches EMISAT and 28 customer satellites

- ✦ India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C45) successfully launched EMISAT and 28 international customer satellites from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR in Sriharikota.
- ✦ This flight marked the first mission of PSLV-QL, a new variant of PSLV with four strap-on motors.
- ✦ PSLV-C45 lifted off at 9:27 Hrs (IST) from the Second Launch Pad and injected India's EMISAT into a 748 km sun-synchronous polar orbit, 17 minutes and 12 seconds after liftoff.

6. Shanghai becomes world's first district with 5G coverage

- ✦ Shanghai claimed it has become the world's first district using both 5G coverage and broadband gigabit network as China seeks to establish lead over the US and other countries in the race to develop next generation cellular mobile communications.
- ✦ 5G is the next generation of cellular technology with download speeds that are 10 to 100 times faster than 4G LTE networks.
- ✦ The 5G stations are being installed in different parts of China, including Tibet, as part of Huawei's plans to lead the 5G trials despite the opposition.

7. Bilateral Maritime Exercise 'AUSINDEX-19' begins

- ✦ The third edition of bilateral maritime exercise 'AUSINDEX-19' began on 2 April between India and Australia at Visakhapatnam.
- ✦ The objective of this exercise is to 'strengthen and enhance mutual cooperation and interoperability between the Indian Navy and Royal Australian Navy, providing opportunities for interaction and exchange of professional views between the personnel of the two navies'.
- ✦ The third edition would involve exercises in all three dimensions with focus on Anti-Submarine Warfare Systems (ASW). This year, the number of participating units of both the navies in the bilateral exercise is the highest till date.

8. China Launches Its 2nd Generational Data Relay Satellite, Tianlian II-01

- ✦ China has successfully launched the first of its new-generation data relay satellite, Tianlian II-01 into orbit that will provide data relay, measurement, and control services for its manned spacecraft.
- ✦ It was launched by a Long March-3B carrier rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest China's Sichuan Province.

Important days

1. International Mine Awareness Day 4 April

- ✦ On 8 December 2005, the General Assembly declared that 4 April of each year shall be observed as the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.
- ✦ It called for continued efforts by States, with the assistance of the United Nations and relevant organizations, to foster the establishment and development of national mine-action capacities in countries where mines and explosive remnants of war constitute a serious threat to the safety.
- ✦ 2019 Theme: "United Nations Promotes SDGs – Safe Ground – Safe Home".

Sports

1. Lucky Hamilton grabs first win after Leclerc's Ferrari faces engine trouble

- ✦ Five times world champion Lewis Hamilton took a lucky Bahrain Grand Prix win for Mercedes after engine trouble in the dying stages denied Ferrari's Charles Leclerc a first Formula One victory.
- ✦ The luckless Leclerc had looked like becoming Ferrari's youngest ever race winner, at 21, after starting on pole position and leading comfortably.
- ✦ The race finished with the field following the safety car, deployed as marshals removed Daniel Ricciardo's stranded Renault.

2. India retains ICC Test Championship mace

- ✦ India have retained the ICC Test Championship Mace and won the purse of USD 1 million for a third successive year on April 1, 2019. India won this award after finishing at the top of the MRF Tyres ICC Test Team Rankings on the cut-off date of April 1, while New Zealand have ensured second place.

- ✦ International Cricket Council chief executive Manu Sawhney congratulated the Indian team while reiterating the importance of Test cricket and looking forward to the start of the ICC World Test Championship later this year.
- ✦ New Zealand finished second after series win over Bangladesh; South Africa and Australia finish third and fourth, respectively.

Awards

1. Dr Rajendra Kumar Joshi Conferred With Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award in Switzerland

- ✦ Dr Rajendra Kumar Joshi, has been awarded with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award for his contributions in the field of science, education and medicine, promoting the honour and prestige of India.
- ✦ Dr Joshi, who belongs to Rajasthan, is a scientist of Indian origin and is based in Switzerland.
- ✦ The theme of 2019 Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention was 'Role of Indian Diaspora in building New India.'

2. PM Modi Awarded Zayed Medal, UAE's Top Civilian Honour

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded Zayed Medal, the United Arab Emirates' highest civilian award, on Thursday as a mark of appreciation for his efforts to boost bilateral ties between the two nations.
- ✦ The 'Order of Zayed' is the highest civil decoration instituted by the UAE.
- ✦ It consists of a collar cantered by a medallion bearing the name 'Zayed' who is the founding father of the United Arab Emirates.

LIST OF ALL INDIA TOPPERS FROM IBT

SUBHOJIT CHAKRABORTY SBI PO - 2016 Roll No.: 38407295966	SACHIN ZANWAR SBI PO - 2018 Roll No.: 2550139022	SHALINI SINGH IBPS PO - 2017 Roll No.: 1580179828	LOVE GUPTA SSC CGL - INSPECTOR Roll No.: 2201295176	MOHA VASHISTHA SSC CGL - INSPECTOR Roll No.: 3840729596	AASTHA SIHAG SSC CGL - INSPECTOR Roll No.: 2201399971
 	 	 	 	 	 