



WEEKLY G.K.

02 March– 08 March, 2020

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National News

1. The month-long Ekushey book fair ended in Dhaka.

- The month-long Ekushey book fair ended in Dhaka. Large crowds gathered at the exhibition ground in Dhaka to visit the fair and buy books on the concluding day of the largest and longest book fair of Bangladesh.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had inaugurated the book fair on February 2. The organising committee of the book fair said that this year a total of 4919 new titles were released.
- Kotha Prakash publications received the Chittaranjan Saha Memorial Award for publishing the highest number of quality books. On the birth centenary year of the country's founding president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, also known as Bangabandhu, this year's fair was dedicated to him.

2. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla launched "Suposhit Maa Abhiyaan" in Kota.

- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has launched the 'Suposhit Maa Abhiyaan' in his constituency Kota. Under this Abhiyan, 1,000 pregnant women would be given food items for one month.
- At the same time, the health of the child, including medical examination, blood tests, medicines, delivery, would be covered.
- It is a campaign to preserve and maintain the health of our future generations.

3. Indian Railways launches its First 'Restaurant on Wheels'.

- Indian Railways has launched its first "Restaurant on Wheels" at the circulating area of Asansol railway station for the use of passengers as well as the general public.
- The Restaurant on Wheels was developed by refurbishing two over-aged MEMU coaches.
- This unique effort will not only improve the facilities at Asansol station but will also generate non-fare revenue earnings approximately Rs 50 lakh in the next five years.

4. Kerala High Court banned all forms of strikes in schools and colleges.

- The Kerala High Court recently passed an order and banned all types of political movements in the college and school premises.
- Banning various forms agitations like gherao and sit-in on the campuses, the High Court also said no one can be persuaded to participate in such protests.

5. UP cabinet renamed Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Urdu, Arabi-Farsi University in Lucknow.

- The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet has approved a proposal to change the name of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Urdu, Arabi-Farsi University in Lucknow.
- The Cabinet has decided to rename the university as Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Languages University. For this, the State University Act – 1973 will be amended.

6. 11th National Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) conference 2020 held in New Delhi.

- A 3-day long 11th National Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Conference -2020 based on the theme 'Empowering Youth for Technology Led Farming' was held in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar.
- The conference, organized by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), focused on technology-led farming and youth entrepreneurship through agriculture.
- The conference saw the participation of all the KVKs across India. A number of Krishi Vigyan Kendra publications and different products developed by the KVKs were also launched during the conference. There are a total of 717 KVKs spread across the country, since the creation of the first KVK at Puducherry in 1974.

7. Centre declared National Chambal Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh as eco-sensitive zone.

- The government of India declared the National Chambal Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh as an eco-sensitive zone (ESZ).
- The Sanctuary is the home of Gangetic dolphins and 75 per cent population of critically endangered species gharial.
- It also harbours 180 species of migratory birds and freshwater Gangetic Dolphins.

8. Financial Assistance to Kaziranga National Park under Tiger Project and CAMPA.

- Rajya Sabha Member of the ruling party replied about the financial assistance being provided to the Kaziranga National Park, Assam
- The Rajya Sabha MP Kamakhya Prasad Tasa said that Rs 94,46,585 and Rs 51,24,670 were sanctioned for Kaziranga National Park during the financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- The funds were sanctioned under CAMPA. Apart from this, funds were also transferred under Project Tiger Scheme.

9. According to INCB Report 2019 India is among top suppliers of pharma drugs used in trafficking.

- In accordance with the "Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2019", by International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) released by United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), India is named among the top manufacturers of illicit and licit drugs that are smuggled to other countries.
- India has not submitted Form P of INCB which is used to report annual statistics on the manufacture, trade and consumption of substances controlled under the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971. Other countries that did not comply are Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Japan, Luxembourg and Spain

10. Pune to host 108th Indian Science Congress in 2021.

- This will be the fourth time that the city will host the prestigious meet in the last 100 years. The event, set to be held at Symbiosis International University's Lavale campus.
- The theme of this event will be 'Science and Technology for Sustainable Development with Women Empowerment'. Dr Vijay Laxmi Saxena has been elected general president of the Indian Science Congress, 2021.
- The science congress had commenced in 1914 from then Calcutta with 105 members. Currently, the association has more than 60,000 members from various streams of science like agriculture, archaeology, biochemistry, earth system science among others.

11. 68th All India Police Athletic Championship kick starts in Haryana.

- 68th All India Police Athletic Championship-2019 began at Bhanu in Panchkula District of Haryana.
- Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijiju declared the meet open at Basic Training Centre of ITBP.
- Mr Rijiju said that with an aim to bring India in top 10 in the Olympics scheduled in 2028, the government has identified 15,000 plus children and started their training across 284 Sports Authority of India (SAI) training centres across the country.

12. CM Trivendra Singh Rawat announced Gairsain to be summer capital of Uttarakhand.

- The Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Trivendra Singh Rawat made a major announcement during the Uttarakhand budget session. The CM declared Gairsain as the summer capital of Uttarakhand during the budget session.
- CM said that Dehradun doesn't serve the status of Uttarakhand's permanent capital now Gairsain will serve the purpose and issue of permanent state capital will be solved.

- The name Gairsain is derived from local language Gair (at some depth) and Sain (rolling plains). In 1960, Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali proposed Gairsain as the capital state of Uttarakhand

13. All level crossings on National Highways to be replaced by bridges, underpasses under Setu Bharatam scheme.

- The Indian Government has targeted to replace all level crossings on National Highways with road over bridges or under bridges under the Setu Bharatam scheme before the end of the year 2020.
- The Setu Bharatam Scheme is being implemented by the Union Road Transport and Highways Ministry to ensure a smooth flow of traffic on the national highways and reduce road accidents by at least 50 percent by 2020.
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways had signed an MoU with the Railways Ministry to replace all level crossings with road over bridges or road under bridges.
- The Setu Bharatam scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 4, 2016 for building rail over bridges and underpasses for safe and smooth travel on national highways.

14. Thinlas Chorol sets up first women's travel company in Ladakh.

- The International Women's Day will be celebrated on the 8th of March. In Ladakh, a young woman Thinlas Chorol has introduced a woman trekking guide in the male dominated trekking industry.
- To train the other women as trekking guides, she setup the first women's travel company fully operated by women only. Every trekking season from April to September, she trains 20 to 30 rural women to work as trekking guides.

15. Western Railway announces bonus of 5% for every recharge to R-Wallet.

- As an incentive to promote mobile ticketing, Western Railway had announced a bonus of 5 percent for every recharge to the R-Wallet until 24th August 2020. The existing bonus scheme, which expired last week, has been extended to encourage more and more users to use mobile ticketing.
- Western Railways has said that passengers are requested to patronize the use of UTS Mobile Ticketing App and avail the enhanced benefits attached with their use.
- The Western Railway is one of the 18 zones of Indian Railways and is Headquartered in Churchgate, Mumbai.

16. Indian Army's International Seminar "Pragyan Conclave 2020" begins in New Delhi.

- The Indian Army's International Seminar "Pragyan Conclave 2020" has begun at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi and has been organised by Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS).
- The seminar united the national and international experts to discuss the complex topic of 'Changing Characteristics of Land Warfare and its Impact on the Military'.

International News & Foreign Affairs

1. US and Taliban signed a peace deal for the phased withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan.

- The US signed a historic peace deal with the Taliban in Doha to end America's presence in Afghanistan in a phased manner. India attended the historic event as Observer.
- India has been an important stakeholder in the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan. The landmark peace deal will see a phased withdrawal of thousands of US soldiers from Afghanistan.
- It was more than 18 years ago that the United States had ordered an attack on the Taliban following the tragic 9/11 happening in America. Ahead of the signing of the deal, the US and the Taliban had agreed to a seven-day cooling-off period which passed off peacefully.

2. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights filed plea in Supreme Court on CAA(Citizen Amendment Act).

- United Nation Human Rights Commission moved to Supreme Court on the matter of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The commission has filed a case challenging CAA.

- India believes that the CAA is an internal matter of the country. Also, according to India, CAA is constitutionally valid.
- The Citizenship Amendment Act was passed in 2019. The act amends Citizenship Act 1955. It seeks to give nationality only to 6 religious communities (Hindus, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Sikhs) if they entered India before 31 December 2014. It does not include Muslims. Also, the act does not include other refugees such as Rohingya from Myanmar and Tamils from Sri Lanka.

3. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has claimed victory in Israel's general elections.

- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has claimed victory in Israel's general election, with partial results putting him ahead of main rival Benny Gantz.
- With 90% of votes counted, his Likud party and its right-wing allies were on course to win 59 seats, Israeli media reported. However, that would leave them two short of a majority.
- Mr Netanyahu nevertheless declared the outcome "the biggest win of my life". Mr Netanyahu, 70, is Israel's longest-serving prime minister. He is seeking a record fifth term, having been in office from 1996 to 1999 and again from 2009.

4. Luxembourg became the First Country in the World to provide Free Public Transport .

- Luxembourg in Europe has become the first country to make all forms of public transport free. It is the second smallest country in the European Union.
- Around 0.2 million passengers travel to Luxembourg from its neighbouring countries such as Belgium, France and Germany for work.

5. Sri Lanka will lead science, technology and innovation sector in BIMSTEC.

- Sri Lanka will lead the science, technology and innovation sector in the BIMSTEC and a facility for technology transfer is planned to be opened in the future.
- This was agreed during the 20th Session of the senior officials' meeting chaired by Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary Ravinatha Aryasinha in Colombo. Sri Lanka, will also appoint a Director to the BIMSTEC secretariat in June.
- Sri Lanka is mandated to lead the sector on Science, Technology and Innovation under which cooperation in Technology, health and human resource development is also included. Bangladesh was mandated to lead Trade, Investment and Development, Bhutan – Environment and Climate Change, Myanmar – Agriculture and Food Security, India – Security (Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime, Disaster Management & Energy), Nepal – People to people contact (culture, tourism, forums of Think Thanks, Media etc) and Thailand – Connectivity.

New Appointments and Person in News

1. Muhyiddin Yassin sworn in as Malaysia's new Prime Minister.

- Muhyiddin Yassin sworn in as Malaysia's new Prime Minister. The King has appointed seasoned politician Muhyiddin Yassin as the new Prime Minister.
- The appointment came after this week's shock resignation of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, a move that plunged the country into crisis following a weekend of political wrangling and the collapse of the ruling alliance.
- The announcement came hours after Mahathir struck a new deal to work with his former ruling alliance led by rival Anwar Ibrahim.

2. Sudhanshu Pandey appointed as new CMD of MMTC(Metals and Minerals Trading Corporation of India).

- Sudhanshu Pandey, Additional Secretary at the Department of Commerce, assumed additional charge as CMD (Chairman & Managing Director) of MMTC (Metals & Minerals Trading Corporation). He was the successor of Ved Prakash. Pandey currently discharges functions as the Chief Negotiator of India.

- Sudhanshu Pandey is an IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officer & has experience of over 32 years in different senior positions in state governments, the Centre and also Indian delegate in Germany.
- He also served many high-level government and trade delegations to various countries.

3. Indian-American Seema Verma appointed as member of the White House Coronavirus Task Force.

- Indian-American Seema Verma has been appointed as one of the key members of the White House Coronavirus Task Force constituted by US President Donald Trump.
- The Task Force has been created to combat the deadly disease that has claimed six lives in the country and infected over 90 others.
- The task force is led by Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar, and is coordinated through the National Security Council.

4. Sanjay Kumar Panda appointed as India's Ambassador to Turkey.

- The Ministry of External Affairs announced Senior diplomat Sanjay Kumar Panda has been appointed as India's Ambassador to Turkey. He succeeds Sanjay Bhattacharya.
- Sanjay Kumar Panda is a 1991 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer. He is presently Consul General, Consulate General of India, San Francisco.
- He is appointed to the post when India- Turkey relations are under strain.

5. Ajay Bhushan Pandey appointed as the new Finance Secretary.

- The Government of India appointed the current Revenue Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey as the new Finance Secretary.
- Pandey replaces current Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment.
- Pandey, a 1984 batch Indian Administrative Service officer of Maharashtra cadre, had earlier worked as chief executive officer of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), the organization behind the Aadhaar.

Banking

1. RBL Bank tied-up with Zomato to launch co-branded credit card powered by Mastercard.

- RBL Bank (formerly known as Ratnakar Bank), an Indian private sector bank, has entered into a partnership with Online food ordering and delivery app Zomato to launch co-branded credit cards, powered by Mastercard, for Zomato users.
- It will be the first of its kind co-branded credit card, available in two variants – Edition Classic and Edition Card. It will offer benefits such as Zomato Gold membership, cash back as well as airport lounge access.
- In the Edition card variant, customers get 10% cashback to their Zomato wallet for payments made via Zomato. In addition, they will also get 2% Edition Cash for all online transactions, 1% on offline purchases and 2000 bonus Edition cash (1 Edition cash is equivalent to Rs. 1) for spending more than Rs 5 Lakh.

2. Paytm Insurance Broking secured brokerage Insurance licence from IRDAI.

- Indian digital payments platform Paytm's subsidiary, Paytm Insurance Broking, has received the brokerage licence from the Insurance Regulatory and Authority of India (IRDAI).
- Paytm will now offer insurance in various categories namely automotive, health and life. In addition to this, Paytm customers can also get policy management and claim settlement at select merchant points. Paytm Insurance Broking aims to support its 16 Million merchant partners to sell its innovative insurance products all over India. Also it aims to expand the outreach of its products in a hassle-free manner and empower the merchant by providing an alternate income source.

- Paytm has already partnered with 20 insurance companies and is now planning to get an additional 30 companies in future.

3. Finance Minister introduced bill to amend Banking Regulation Act.

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced bill in Parliament to amend banking regulation law to regulate cooperative banks. It aims to prevent frauds as that seen at Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Banks (PMC).
- The Banking Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2020 intends to regulate 1,540 cooperative banks with total savings of Rs 5 lakh crores. It also aims to protect the small depositors that struggle a lot during frauds like that of PMC. The withdrawal limit of PMC banks was limited to Rs 1000 during the crisis. This had put several customers in an insecure environment.

4. Supreme Court lifts RBI's ban on dealing in cryptocurrency.

- The Supreme Court lifted the RBI ban on trading in virtual currencies such as Bitcoin. The order comes as a major relief for the traders in this sector. The apex court read out its judgement while hearing a plea from the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IMAI) challenging the RBI ban.
- The IMAI petition claimed that by banning virtual currencies, RBI had effectively banned legitimate business activity through virtual currencies.

5. RBI Deputy Governor N.S. Vishwanathan resigned ahead of retirement.

- N.S Vishwanathan, one of the Reserve Bank of India's deputy governors, who is due to retire on July 3, 2020, has announced his resignation due to health problems.
- He was first appointed as the Reserve Bank's deputy governor for a three-year term in 2016, following which he was reappointed for one year.
- He completed the Master of Economics from Bangalore University, joined RBI in 1981 and his areas of expertise include regulation and supervision of banks, currency management, foreign exchange, non-banking finance companies and cooperative banks and human resources management.

6. Cabinet approves merger of 10 PSBs into 4 PSBs from 1st April 2020.

- Union Cabinet has approved the merger of 10 PSBs into 4 from 1st April 2020. As per the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the exercise of consolidation of 10 public sector banks (PSBs) into four is on course and the merger will come into effect from the new financial year 1st April 2020.
- As per the plan, PSBs will be merged into:
 1. United Bank of India and Oriental Bank of Commerce will be merged with Punjab National Bank
 2. Syndicate Bank will be merged with Canara Bank
 3. Allahabad Bank will be amalgamated with Indian Bank
 4. Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank will be consolidated with Union Bank of India

Science Tech & Defence

1. NASA reported Pollution Levels in China dropped greatly by March 4, 2020 due to Corona Virus.

- NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) reported that Nitrous Oxide pollution in China has declined greatly between January and February 2020.
- According to the report, nitrous oxide pollution has declined by more than 100 tonnes of carbon-dioxide.
- The report says that every year, after New Year Celebrations, air pollution in china peaks to its highest. However, this year, due to economic slowdown caused by the fear of virus, the pollution was at its minimal. This was mainly because of closure of several businesses and factories all over China.

Important Days

1. Janaushadhi Week celebrated from March 1 to 7.

- Janaushadhi week is being celebrated across the country from the 1st of this month through more than 6200 Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras. Jan Aushadhi Kendra owners are organising different types of activities for making awareness about health and hygiene.
- Free distribution camps for Suvidha Sanitary Napkins were held at about 2000 places and more than 50,000 Sanitary Napkin packets were given free of cost to the women. Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana is a noble initiative of the Government which is now making an impact on masses in its endeavor to provide quality medicines at an affordable price.
- The total sales in the financial year 2019-20 till February have crossed 383 crore which led to total savings of about 2200 crore rupees of common citizens.

Sports

1. Rafael Nadal wins the Mexican Open title after beating Taylor Fritz.

- In Tennis, World Number 2 Rafael Nadal captured his first title of the year, defeating unseeded Taylor Fritz in straight sets, 6-3, 6-2, in the final of the ATP Mexico Open.
- Nadal, playing in his first tournament since losing in the quarter-finals at the Australian Open last month. Nadal ceded the world number one ranking to Novak Djokovic after the Australian Open, where the Serbian player won a record eighth title.
- In the women's final, seventh-seeded Heather Watson captured her first WTA title in three years by grinding out a 6-4, 6-7, 6-1 win over Canadian teen Leylah Fernandez.

2. Dutee Chand clinches Gold in 100 meters race at Khelo India University Games in Bhubaneswar.

- India's fastest woman Dutee Chand clinched gold in the 100 meters race while long-distance runner Narendra Pratap Singh bagged his second title at Khelo India University Games in Bhubaneswar.
- Representing Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology, Dutee Chand raced ahead of her competitors to bag gold with a timing of 11.49 seconds.
- Savitribai Phule Pune University is leading the tally with 16 gold, 11 silver, and 8 bronze medals.

3. Badminton Asia Championship 2020 shifted to Manila from Wuhan due to Coronavirus outbreak.

- Badminton Asia confirmed that Badminton world federation (BWF) has shifted the Badminton Asia Championships 2020 to Manila, Philippines from Wuhan, China. It will be conducted in Manila from April 21 to 26, 2020.
- The Badminton Asia Championship 2020 event is shifted due to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and this championship falls within the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games Qualification window.
- The Philippine Badminton Association (PBA) successfully hosted the Asia Team Championships from Feb 11-16 2020, in Manila.

4. Mumbai will host 2023 International Olympic Committee (IOC) session .

- Mumbai will host the International Olympic Committee (IOC) session 2023 as recommended by IOC Executive Board and the decision will be approved at the 136th IOC session in Tokyo in July 2020. The IOC session was held in 1983 in New Delhi and the session is going to be held in India after 40 years.
- The Evaluation Commission had visited Mumbai in October 2019 to study the feasibility of hosting the session & the board selected Mumbai due to the quality of the facilities at the Jio World Centre, Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- The year 2023 will be significant for India as it coincides with the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence. The event will encourage and support the National Olympic Committee of India and all the National Federations to promote & strengthen Olympics sports in the country.

Obituaries

1. Olympic bronze medalist Balbir Singh Kullar passes away at the age of 77.

- Balbir Singh Kullar, former Indian hockey player and Olympic Bronze medalist passed away after suffering a cardiac arrest at his residence in Punjab. He was 77.
- He made his international debut in the Indian national Hockey team in 1963 in Lyon, France. He became renowned as an inside forward in the Indian team. He toured several nations including the Netherlands, West Germany, Belgium, England and New Zealand.
- He was a part of the Indian team that won the Olympic Bronze medal in 1968 in Mexico and the Asian Games gold in 1966 at Bangkok.
- He had later served as a national team selector for the Indian national hockey team.
- He is survived by his wife Manjeet Kaur, son and two daughters. His cremation will be carried out today, March 2.

2. Head of Bangladesh Bouddha Kristi Prachar Sangha Sanghanayaka “Suddhananda Mahathero” passed away.

- The head of the Bangladesh Bouddha Kristi Prachar Sangha Sanghanayaka Suddhananda Mahathero passed away in Dhaka.
- He was a revered figure among the Buddhists of Bangladesh. He is known for running many social service activities particularly the orphanage at Dharmarajika Buddhist Monastery which takes care of more than 350 children. The Government of Bangladesh awarded the Ekushey Award to him in 2012.



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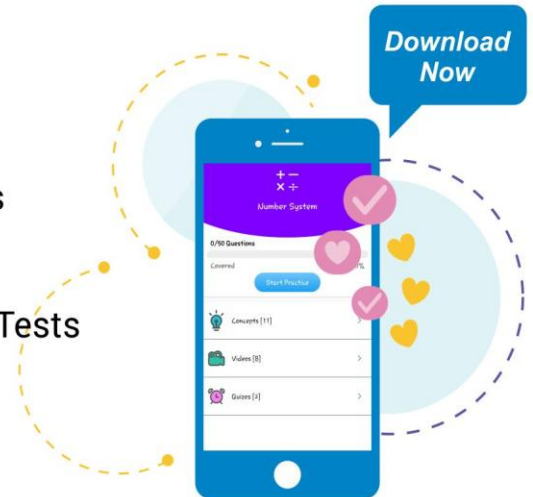
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