
CURRENT AFFAIRS
MARCH 2023

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CONTENTS

➤ National News	3
➤ International News	6
➤ Government Schemes	8
➤ Economy And Business	9
➤ People In News/Appointments	11
➤ Days And Themes	12
➤ Obituaries (National)	13
➤ Obituaries (International)	13
➤ Ranks, Indices And Reports	13
➤ Sports News	14
➤ Events	15
➤ Awards And Honours	16

NATIONAL NEWS

Amit Shah inaugurated Phase I of Bengaluru Safe City project

- Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated Phase I of the Bengaluru Safe City project on 3rd March 2023. The project comes under Nirbhaya Scheme at a cost of over ₹ 496 crores.
- Audio–visual systems, drones, CCTVs and emergency call boxes or emergency panic buttons are installed in various parts of the city for women’s safety.
- The project will include an automatic number plate recognition system, facial recognition system, crime analytics system, mobile command centre and drones.
- A Command centre will monitor streets and receive distress calls and rush help to the rescue of women at risk.

Key Points

Union Home Minister	- Amit Shah
Karnataka’s Capital	- Bengaluru
Karnataka’s CM	- Basavaraj Bommai

Mauganj became the 53rd district of Madhya Pradesh

- Mauganj was declared as 53rd district of Madhya Pradesh.
- It will be developed by joining four tehsils of the Rewa district. The four tehsils include Mauganj, Hanumana, Nai Garhi and Deotalab.

Key Points

Madhya Pradesh’s CM	- Shivraj Singh Chouhan
Madhya Pradesh’s capital	- Bhopal

Union Ministers Mansukh Mandaviya and Ashwini Vaishnaw flag off a train dedicated to PMBJP from New Delhi

- Union Health Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya and Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw flagged off a train dedicated to the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), from New Delhi on 23rd March 2023.
- The train named, Chhattisgarh Sampark Kranti Express train has been wrapped with branding of Jan Aushadhi scheme to spread the awareness among

public about generic medicines available at Jan Aushadhi centres.

- The Government has set a target to increase the number of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendras to 10 thousand by the end of this year.
- Medicines available on Jan Aushadhi Kendra are priced 50% to 90% less than the prices of branded medicines in the open market.

Ashwini Vaishnaw released the ‘Go Green, Go Organic’ cover for Sikkim

- Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and four Sikkim ministers released a unique cover of the Department of Posts, ‘Go Green, Go Organic’ for Sikkim.
- The unique cover is a testament to the state’s achievements in organic farming and progress and a reminder of the importance of sustainable development for the entire country.
- Sikkim recognised as world’s first organic state by ‘World Book Of Records London’.

Key Points

Sikkim’s CM	- Prem Singh Tamang (since 2019)
Sikkim’s Governor	- Lakshman Acharya (since 13 February 2023)
Sikkim’s Capital	- Gangtok

Odisha CM unveiled Dakota aircraft for public viewing in Bhubaneswar

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik unveiled the renovated Dakota DC-3 aircraft of former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik for public viewing at the Bhubaneswar airport.
- The iconic Dakota Aircraft belongs to erstwhile Kalinga Airlines and was founded by Ex-Chief Minister of Odisha Biju Patnaik.
- This aircraft was used by Biju Patnaik to rescue former Indonesian Vice-President Md. Hatta and former Prime Minister Sutan Sjahrir.
- For his effort, he was given honorary citizenship of Indonesia and awarded the title of ‘BHUMI PUTRA’ by the Indonesian Government, a recognition rarely granted to a foreigner.

Key Points

Odisha's CM	- Naveen Patnaik (since 5th March 2000)
Odisha's Capital	- Bhubaneswar
Odisha's Governor	- Ganeshi Lal (since 2018)

New initiative called 'Beggar Free City' launched in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

- A new initiative called 'beggar-free city' has been started in Nagpur, Maharashtra. This is the joint venture of Nagpur City Police and Nagpur Municipal Corporation's (NMC) social welfare department.
- The NMC has made special arrangements to accommodate homeless people in the shelters owned by it. A bus and an ambulance have been kept ready to shift the beggars caught in police drive to their shelter home.

Key Points

Maharashtra's CM	- Ekanth Shinde (30th June 2022)
Maharashtra's Governor	- Ramesh Bais (since 2023)
Maharashtra's Capital	- Mumbai

Prime Minister Modi unveils world's longest railway platform Shree Siddharoodha Swamiji Hubballi Station in Hubballi-Dharwad

- Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the longest railway platform in the world in Hubballi-Dharwad, Karnataka.
- The platform is 1,507-metre-long and has been built at a cost of about ₹20 crore. With this, the platform has been registered in the Guinness Book of World Records.
- Hubballi is an important junction in Karnataka and a major hub of trade and commerce.

Key Points

Karnataka's CM	- Basavaraj Bommai (since 2021)
Karnataka's Governor	- Thawar Chand Gehlot (since 2021)
Karnataka's Capital	- Bangalore

Prime Minister Modi inaugurated 118 km long Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway project

- Prime Minister Modi inaugurated and dedicated the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway to the nation. The 118-km expressway is built at the cost of ₹8,408 crores.
- It will reduce the travel time between Bengaluru and Mysuru from around 3 hours to 75 minutes. It will act as a catalyst for socio-economic development in the region.
- The project will be developed at a cost of around ₹4,130 crores and is spread over 92 km.

Key Points

Karnataka's CM	- Basavaraj Bommai
Karnataka's Governor	- Thawar Chand Gehlot
Karnataka's Capital	- Bangalore

Asia's largest tulip garden in J&K to open to the public on 19th March

- The Indira Gandhi Tulip Garden, Asia's largest tulip garden, has been opened to the public.
- It is nestled between Dal Lake and the Zabarwan Hills in Srinagar, J&K. It has 68 varieties of tulips that will bloom in the garden.
- The garden is also known as Siraj Bagh.
- It has 1.5 million tulips of various colours and hues will have other spring flowers like hyacinths, daffodils, muscari and cyclamens on display.

Key Points

Lieutenant Governor	- Manoj Sinha
Capital	- Srinagar (Summer) and Jammu (Winters)

Centre approved ₹ 1,816 crore to 5 states as disaster relief

- The central government approved ₹1,816.162 crore of additional central assistance to Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Meghalaya and Nagaland as they faced natural disasters like floods, landslides and cloudbursts in 2022.
- A high-level committee, chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, took the decision showing the resolve of the central government.

- Additional central assistance will be provided to these states under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF).
- This additional assistance is over and above the funds released by the Centre to the States in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), already placed at the disposal of the States.

Literacy rate in India: Bihar lowest at 61.8%, Kerala highest at 94%

- According to the Ministry of Education, Bihar has the lowest literacy rate in India at 61.8%, followed by Arunachal Pradesh at 65.3% and Rajasthan at 66.1%.
- Kerala has the highest literacy rate in India at 94%, followed by Lakshadweep at 91.85% and Mizoram at 91.33%.
- The literacy rate in rural India is 67.77% compared to 84.11% in urban India.
- The Samagra Shiksha Scheme aims to provide universal access and retention in education, bridging gender and social category gaps and enhancing learning levels from pre-school to senior secondary levels.
- The central government assists states and union territories in implementing the Samagra Shiksha Scheme as a program.

Key Points

Union Minister of Education - Dharmendra Pradhan

Rajasthan CM announced 19 new districts and three new divisions

- Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot announced his government's decision to form 19 new districts and three new divisions in the state, earmarking ₹2,000 crore for development of infrastructure for them.
- This is the first time since 2008 that new districts are being carved out, taking the number of districts to 50 in the state.
- The three new divisions will be in Banswara, Pali and Sikar.

Key Points

Rajasthan's Governor - Kalraj Mishra (since 2019)
Rajasthan's Capital - Jaipur

Government to develop mega textile parks in 7 states under PM MITRA scheme

- The Central Government has announced plans to set up mega textile parks in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- The PM Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks for the Textile Industry are a step towards realising the vision of making India a global hub for textile manufacturing and exports.
- The step is inspired by the 5F vision of the Prime Minister, which includes Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign.

Key Points

Union Minister of Textiles - Piyush Goyal

Tamil Nadu's 18th wildlife sanctuary to come up in Erode

- The Tamil Nadu Government has notified Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary as the 18th wildlife sanctuary in the state.
- It is spread over 80,567 hectares in the forest areas of Anthiyur and Gobichettipalayam taluks in Erode district. It will include reserve forest areas in Anthiyur, Bargur, Thattakarai and Chennampatti.
- The animal populations would mainly comprise elephants, tigers, leopards, panthers, wild boars and deer.

Cabinet approved 4% hike in dearness allowance for central government employees

- The Union Cabinet gave its nod to raising the dearness allowance and dearness relief for its over one crore employees by 4%, taking the total to 42% from 38%.
- The total extra outgo on the exchequer would be ₹12,815.60 crores per annum to fund the hike in Dearance Allowance (DA).
- The move will benefit about 47.58 lakh central government employees and 69.76 lakh pensioners. The hike is in accordance with the accepted formula based on the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission.

Telangana government to rejuvenate 50 lakes under the 'Lakes Development Programme' in Hyderabad

- The Ministry of Municipal Administration and Urban Development of the Telangana Government has launched a programme to rejuvenate and develop 50 water bodies in and around Hyderabad.

- Minister K Taraka Rama Rao inaugurated the 'Lakes Development Programme' at Khajaguda Lake.
- Of the 50 lakes, 25 are in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits, and the remaining 25 are in Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) limits.

Key Points

Telangana's Governor - Tamilisai Soundararajan
Telangana's capital - Hyderabad

Asia's largest 4-metre Liquid Mirror Telescope Unveiled in Uttarakhand

- Dr. Jitendra Singh, the Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, inaugurated Asia's largest 4-metre International Liquid Mirror Telescope at Devasthal, Uttarakhand.
- The Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES) has declared that the 4-metre International Liquid Mirror Telescope (ILMT) is operational and can now be used to observe the deep celestial sky.
- The telescope recorded its first light in the second week of May 2022 and is located on the Devasthal Observatory campus of ARIES in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand.
- ARIES is an independent institute under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) of the Indian Government, situated at an altitude of 2,450 metres.

ISRO launched India's largest LVM3 rocket with 36 satellites

- ISRO successfully launched India's largest Launch

Vehicle Mark-III (LVM3) rocket/OneWeb India-2 Mission with 36 satellites onboard from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

- The 36 first generation satellites that weighed 5,805 kg will be placed into a 450 km circular orbit with an inclination of about 87.4 degree.
- The OneWeb Group Company has inked a contract with ISRO's commercial arm NewSpace India Ltd. to launch 72 satellites into LEO.
- The first satellite deployment collaboration between the two organisations took place in October 2022 with ISRO launching 36 satellites of OneWeb. OneWeb is a global communication network powered from space, enabling connectivity for governments and businesses.

Key Points

ISRO's headquarters - Bangalore, Karnataka
ISRO's chairman - S. Somnath

Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated Vedic Heritage portal in New Delhi

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the Vedic Heritage portal in New Delhi. The portal aims to communicate message enshrined in the Vedas.
- It will help common people to have a general understanding about the Vedas.
- The portal will be a one-stop solution for the user, who would like to search any information regarding the Vedic heritage.

Key Points

Union Culture Minister - G. Kishan Reddy

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

26% of the world's population does not have safe drinking water: UNESCO report

- 26% of the world's population does not have safe drinking water, and 46% lack access to safely managed sanitation, according to a report published by UNESCO at the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York.
- As per the report, between two and three billion people experience water shortages for at least one

month per year, posing severe risks to livelihoods, notably through food security and access to electricity.

Egypt joins BRICS bank as a new member

- Egypt officially became a member of BRICS's New Development Bank (NDB) which includes India, Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa as member countries. It is the fourth new member of the bank.
- Earlier in September, the NDB board also approved similar procedures for United Arab Emirates (UAE),

Uruguay and Bangladesh. All three countries went on to become members of the bank.

Key Points

- BRICS Headquarters - Shanghai, China
- BRICS President - Dilma Rousseff

World Bank commits \$1 billion to India for public healthcare infrastructure

- The World Bank and India signed two complementary loans of USD 500 million each to support and enhance the country's healthcare infrastructure.
- Through this combined financing of USD 1 billion, the bank will support India's flagship Pradhan Mantri-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM).
- PM-ABHIM was launched in October 2021 to improve the public healthcare infrastructure across the country.
- In addition to the national-level interventions, one of the loans will prioritise health service delivery in seven states including Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- World Bank Established - 1944
- World Bank's Headquarters - Washington, DC, U.S.
- World Bank's President - David Malpass
- World Bank's Chief Economist - Indermit Gill

IMF approves \$3 billion bailout for Sri Lanka

- The International Monetary Fund approved a nearly \$3 billion bailout for Sri Lanka. This will enable it to access up to \$7 billion in overall funding.
- The decision will allow an immediate disbursement of about \$333 million potentially helping Sri Lanka emerge from its worst financial crisis in over seven decades.
- IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said Sri Lanka also needs to undertake various reforms.

Key Points

- Sri Lanka Capital - Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte
- Sri Lanka's President - Ranil Wickremesinghe
- Sri Lanka's Prime Minister - Dinesh Gunawardena

Bangladesh commissions its first submarine base

- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the first submarine base of Bangladesh 'BNS Sheikh Hasina' at Pekua.
- The newly commissioned submarine base would help navy increase its operational capacity to secure the vast marine resources.
- The Government of Bangladesh signed an agreement with China in September 2019 for the construction of the submarine base.

Key Points

- Bangladesh's capital - Dhaka
- Bangladesh's President - Mohammad Abdul Hamid
- Bangladesh's Prime Minister - Sheikh Hasina

US recognised McMahon Line as International Border

- The United States recognises the McMahon Line as the international boundary between China and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Senator Bill Hagerty and Senator Jeff Merkley introduced this resolution in the Senate, which sees Arunachal Pradesh as an integral part of India. This resolution condemns China's military aggression in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The resolution comes following the biggest clash between the Republic of India and China in the Eastern Sector along the Line of Actual Control in six years. It also pushes back against People's Republic of China (PRC) claims that Arunachal Pradesh is PRC territory, which is a part of the PRC's increasingly aggressive and expansionist policies.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

New health programme 'Arogya Mahila' launched for women in Telangana

- Telangana's Health Minister T Harish Rao launched Arogya Mahila for the women.
- The programme was simultaneously launched in 100 hospitals across the state on the occasion of International Women's Day.
- According to a survey, 40% to 50% of women were suffering from different types of health problems. Though they suffer from health problems, a majority of the women would not approach doctors due to various reasons including poverty, or because of their busy schedules at home or because of reluctance to consult male doctors in hospitals.
- In order to provide treatment to those women, the state government was launching Arogya Mahila, wherein eight types of services would be provided to women.

Government launches DigiClaim platform for farmer insurance claims

- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launched a 'DigiClaim' platform under the national crop insurance portal for speedy disbursement of claims to insured farmers.
- Now farmers' claims will be processed directly to their respective bank accounts in a transparent and accountable manner.
- This technology has been enabled through the integration of National Crop Insurance Portal (NCIP) and Public Finance Management System (PFMS). This would directly impact the claim reversal ratio, which is expected to go down with DigiClaim.
- The farmers would be able to track the claim settlement process on their mobile phones in real-time and avail the scheme's benefits.

Government identified 1,275 railway stations under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

- The Amrit Bharat Station Scheme has recently been launched for the development of Railway stations on Indian Railways. Government has identified 1,275 railway stations under the Amrit Bharat Station scheme for the development of Railway stations.
- This scheme envisages development of stations on a continuous basis with a long-term approach.

- It also envisages improvement of building, integrating the station with both sides of the city, multimodal integration, amenities for Divyangjans, sustainable and environment friendly solutions, provision of ballast less tracks, 'Roof Plazas' as per necessity, phasing and feasibility and creation of city centres at the station in the long term.
- Budgetary funds are being used for developing stations under 'Amrit Bharat Station Scheme'. However, a miniscule number of stations are also being explored for development under Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.
- Rani Kamalapati Railway Station in the State of Madhya Pradesh has been commissioned through PPP model.

Key Points

Union Railways Minister - Ashwini Vaishnaw

Environment Minister launches Aravalli Green wall project in Gurugram

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav launched the Aravalli Green Wall Project, a major initiative to green the 5 km buffer area around the Aravalli Hill Range in four states.
- The project is a part of the Union Environment Ministry's vision to create green corridors across the country to combat land degradation and desertification.
- It covers states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Delhi – where the Aravalli hills landscape span over 6 million hectares of land.
- It involves planting native species of trees and shrubs on scrubland, wasteland and degraded forest land, along with rejuvenating and restoring surface water bodies such as ponds, lakes and streams.
- The project will also focus on agroforestry and pasture development to enhance the livelihoods of local communities.

Government of India launches National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP) for prevention and control of rabies

- The Central Government has launched the National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP) for prevention and control of rabies.

- As per information received from National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Strategies of the National Rabies Control Program are as follows:
 1. provision of rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin through national free drug initiatives
 2. training on appropriate animal bite management, prevention and control of rabies, surveillance and intersectoral coordination
 3. strengthening surveillance of animal bites and rabies deaths reporting
 4. creating awareness about rabies prevention
- The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) has also requested the concerned authorities to take appropriate action and to effectively implement the Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules, 2023 to control the dog population.
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Fisheries Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India jointly launched National Action Plan For Dog Mediated Rabies Elimination (NAPRE) from India by 2030.

ECONOMY AND BUSINESS

No sale of gold jewellery without HUID from April 2023

- The sale of gold jewellery and other hallmarked items will only be allowed with a six-digit alphanumeric HUID. This will come into effect from 1 April 2023.
- HUID stands for Hallmark Unique Identification. The Assaying and Hallmarking Centre (AHC) personally stamps the jewellery with a distinctive number.
- The decision was taken after Piyush Goyal, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, chaired a meeting to review the work of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

Nitin Gadkari unveiled the first methanol-run buses in Bengaluru

- Union Minister for Road and Transport Nitin Gadkari unveiled Bengaluru's first methanol-run buses.
- The project aims to reduce the level of emissions, and the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTTC), NITI Aayog, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Ashok Leyland are conducting the project together.
- The concept of 'Methanol Economy' is being actively pursued by China, Italy, Sweden, Israel, the US, Australia, Japan and many other European countries. 10% of fuel in China in the transport sector is methanol.
- The BMTTC is planning to launch 80 buses that will run on methanol fuel and 20 Ashok Leyland buses will also be introduced in the initial phases.
- As part of the project, the Indian Oil Corporation will provide free diesel and methanol for three months.

Ashok Leyland unveils all-women production line at Tamil Nadu plant

- Heavy commercial vehicle maker Ashok Leyland has unveiled a new production line that would

produce engines at its manufacturing facility in Hosur completely operated by women employees.

- The initiative to introduce an all-women production line is to promote women empowerment and encourage them take up roles in the manufacturing industry.
- Ashok Leyland is the flagship company of Hinduja Group.

Himachal Pradesh's Kangra tea gets European GI tag

- The European Commission (EC) has granted Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) for India's unique Kangra tea, which is grown in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district.
- The granting of PGI for Kangra tea comes at a time when the EC has been dragging its feet on granting a similar status to Basmati rice.
- India had filed for the GI tag in 2018 but the European Union (EU) wants India and Pakistan to hold talks so that the latter's Basmati rice also gets due recognition. However, Islamabad is far off from meeting the requirements.

RBI to set up Data Centre and Cybersecurity Training Institute in Bhubaneswar

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das laid the foundation stone for the establishment of a Greenfield Data Centre and Enterprise Computing and Cybersecurity Training Institute in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- The New Data Centre and the Enterprise Computing and Cybersecurity Training Institute spread over an area of 18.55 acres, when commissioned, will cater to the emerging requirements of the RBI and the overall financial sector.

RBI launched Mission 'Har Payment Digital' to promote digital payments

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched the Mission 'Har Payment Digital' on the occasion of Digital Payments Awareness Week (DPAW) 2023.
- This is part of RBI's endeavour to make every person in India a user of digital payments. DPAW 2023 will be observed from the 6th to 12th of March, 2023.
- The campaign theme is "Digital Payment Apnao, Auron ko bhi Sikhao".

Income tax dept launched a mobile app 'AIS for Taxpayer'

- The Income Tax Department unveiled 'AIS for Taxpayer' app, a mobile app to help taxpayers view their tax related information in the Annual Information Statement (AIS) or Taxpayer Information Summary (TIS).
- It will be helpful because starting from the upcoming new financial year on April 1st, Form 26AS will only display data related to tax deducted at source (TDS) and tax collection at source (TCS).
- For other details such as instalments of advance tax paid, self-assessment tax, income-tax refund, Statement of Financial Transactions (SFT) and turnover as per Goods and Service Tax (GST) return and so on, taxpayers need to refer to the AIS.
- The Annual Information Statement provides taxpayers with a comprehensive overview of their information as displayed in Form 26AS. In addition, a facility to share feedback on the displayed information is also available to the taxpayer. Each section, including TDS, SFT, and other information, displays both reported and modified values (i.e., values that have been adjusted based on taxpayer feedback).

Key Points

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Headquarters	- New Delhi
CBDT chairman	- Nitin Gupta

Government imposed surcharge for Google Pay and other payment apps

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has issued a circular in which it suggested "Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPI)" fees on merchant transactions on Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- The PPI fees would be levied on transactions above

₹2,000 on UPI. It will result in an interchange at 1.1% of the transaction value.

- However, the NPCI has clarified that there will be zero charges for the bank account to bank account-based UPI payments or normal UPI payments.
- With this addition to UPI, the customers will have the choice of using any bank account, RuPay Credit card and prepaid wallets on UPI-enabled apps.

Key Points

NPCI headquarters	- Mumbai, Maharashtra
NPCI MD & CEO	- Dilip Asbe
NPCI founded	- 2008

Government hikes wages under MGNREGA Scheme from April 1st

- The central government has notified a hike in wage rates under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) for the 2023–24 financial year.
- Haryana will have the highest daily wage at ₹357 per day and Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh the lowest at ₹ 221.
- The notification was issued under Section 6 (1) of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, which says the Centre may, by notification, specify the wage rate for its beneficiaries.
- Starting from April 1st, wage hikes ranging from ₹7 to ₹26 will be implemented.

S&P keeps India's forecast unchanged at 6% for FY24

- S&P Global Ratings kept its forecast for India's economic growth unchanged at 6% in the fiscal year starting from April 1st before rising to 6.9% in the following year.
- In the quarterly economic update for Asia-Pacific, S&P saw the inflation rate easing to 5% in 2023–24 fiscal from 6.8% in the current financial year.

RBI allows India and Tanzania to use their currency

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given the go-ahead for India and Tanzania to use their national currencies for bilateral trade settlement.
- The use of national currencies in bilateral trade settlements is expected to reduce the cost of transactions and enhance the efficiency of cross-border trade.

- This, in turn, will lead to increased trade volumes and greater economic cooperation between India and Tanzania.

BRO opens Leh–Manali highway in record 138 days

- The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has opened strategically important Leh–Manali Highway (NH 3) on March 25, 2023 in record time of 138 days. Last year it took 144 days for BRO to open the highway for traffic.
- It is a 427 km long strategic highway connecting Ladakh to the rest of India via Manali, having strategic importance for the movement of the armed forces and their supplies to forward areas in Ladakh, as well as connecting the people of Ladakh to India.

Key Points

- BRO Headquarters - New Delhi
- BRO Director General - Lt. Gen. Rajeev Chaudhary

With 15% of its pilots women, Air India has the largest number of female pilots

- 15% of its 1,825 pilots are women pilots, making it Air India an airline with the largest number of female pilots.
- Women constitute over 40% of Air India's workforce, with 275 of its 1,825 pilots being women, representing 15% of the cockpit crew strength.
- The Tata Group owns Air India, Air India Express and AirAsia India.

PEOPLE IN NEWS/APPOINTMENTS

Name	Designation
Surekha Yadav	Asia's first woman loco pilot
Sampanna Ramesh	Fastest Indian to swim across Palk Strait
Dilma Rousseff	President of BRICS bank
Manmeet Colon	Connecticut's first assistant police chief
Srikanth Venkatachari	CFO of Reliance Industries
Sumil Vikamsey	MD of Hitachi Payment Services
Sheikh Mansour	Vice President of the UAE
Jishnu Baruha	Chairman of Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC)
Sashidhar Jagdishan	Reappointed as Managing Director and CEO of HDFC Bank for three years
Sanjiva Shankar Dubey	28th Controller General of Accounts (CGA)
Conrad K Sangma	Chief Minister of Meghalaya for the second consecutive term
Dr. Manik Saha	Chief Minister of Tripura for the second time
Shalija Dhami	First woman officer in the IAF to command a missile squadron in the Western sector facing Pakistan
Colonel Geeta Rana	First woman officer of the Indian Army to command a field workshop on the forward front in Eastern Ladakh
Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf al-Sabah	Prime Minister of Kuwait
Neiphiu Rio	Chief Minister of Nagaland for a record fifth term
Rohit Jawa	CEO & MD of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL)
Sachin Tendulkar	World's First 'Hand Ambassador' by Savlon Swasth India
Siddhartha Mohanty	Interim Chairman of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)
Shreya Ghodawat	India's Ambassador of 'She Changes Climate'
Tablesh Pandey and M. Jagannath	MD of the Life Insurance Company (LIC).
Deepak Mohanty	Chairman of the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)

Name	Designation
K. Krithivasan	Chief Executive Officer of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)
G. Krishnakumar	Chairman & Managing Director of the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)
Deepak Bagla	MD & CEO of Invest India
Ratan Tata	Honorary Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AO)
Ajay Singh	President of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)
Pranav Haridasan	Managing Director and Chief Executive Office of Axis Securities
Ranveer Singh	Brand Ambassador of the Walt Disney Company India-owned channel Star Sports
Ram Chandra Paudel	President of Nepal
Tim J. Mayopoulos	CEO of Silicon Valley Bank
Xi Jinping	President of China

DAYS AND THEMES

Date	Day	Theme
7 March	Jan Aushadhi Diwas	Jan Aushadhi–Jan Upyogi
8 March	International Women’s Day	DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality
10 March	Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Raising Day	Partnership with Men and Boys to transform Social and gender Norms to End FGM
14 March	International Day of Action For Rivers	Rights of Rivers
14 March	International Mathematics Day	Mathematics for Everyone
15 March	World Consumer Rights Day	Empowering Consumers Through Clean Energy Transitions
16 March	National Immunisation Day/ National Vaccination Day	
18 March	Ordnance Factory Day	
18 March	Global Recycling Day	Creative Innovation
20 March	World Oral Health Day	Be Proud of Your Mouth
20 March	International Day of Happiness	Be Mindful, Be Grateful, Be Kind
21 March	World Down Syndrome Day	With Us Not for Us
21 March	International Day of Forests	Forests and Health
22 March	World Water Day	
22 March	Bihar’s foundation day	Yuva Shakti Bihar ki Pragati
23 March	Shaheed Diwas	
23 March	World Meteorological Day	The Future of Weather, Climate, and Water Across Generations
24 March	World Tuberculosis Day	Yes! We can end TB!
25 March	International Day of Unborn Child	The dignity and value of children yet-to-be-born
27 March	World Theatre Day	Theatre and a Culture of Peace

OBITUARIES (NATIONAL)

Name	Occupation/ Field	Place
Innocent	Actor	Malayalam
Satish Kaushik	Actor, comedian, screenwriter, director and producer	Delhi
Sameer Khakhar	Actor	Mumbai
Pradeep Sarkar	Director	Mumbai

OBITUARIES (INTERNATIONAL)

Name	Occupation/Field	Place
Walter W Cole or Darcelle XV	Drag queen	
Gordeon Moore	Co-founder Intel	United States

RANKS, INDICES AND REPORTS

India world's largest arms importer: SIPRI Report 2023

- According to the annual report of the prestigious Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India continued to be the world's largest arms importer for the last five years.
- Even though India remained the biggest importer from 2018 to 2022 its imports dipped by 11% between 2013–17 and 2018–22.
- The second biggest importer is Saudi Arabia. Russia, France and Israel were the main exporters of weapons and allied equipment to India.

India ranks 108th on Electoral Democracy Index 2023

- India ranks 108th in the Electoral Democracy Index of the V-dem Democracy report 2023.
- India has also been named in the top 10 autocratising countries in the last 10 years.
- India's ranking dipped from the 100th position in 2022 to 108th this year in the report's Electoral Democracy Index (EDI) while it was 97th in the Liberal Democracy Index (LDI).
- The Liberal Democracy Index captures both liberal and electoral aspects of democracy based on 71 indicators such as free and fair elections, political and civil rights and more.
- The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) report is based on the global dataset on democracy with over 31 million data points for 202 countries from 1789 to 2022.

Global Terrorism Index 2023

- India ranks 13th on The Global Terrorism Index (GTI). Afghanistan continues to be the most affected country by terrorism for the 4th year in a row, even though attacks and deaths decreased.
- The GTI report is produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), a think tank, using data from Terrorism Tracker and other sources.
- Terrorism Tracker provides event records on terrorist attacks since 1 January 2007. The dataset contains almost 66,000 terrorist incidents for the period 2007 to 2022.

World's Greatest Places 2023

- TIME magazine released its annual list of the 'World's Greatest Places' for the year 2023 which comprises 50 places that people can explore. The list is topped by Tampa, Florida in USA.
- Ladakh and Mayurbhanj have been selected for the list have been selected in the list for their ancient temples and adventure spots.
- The list includes 50 familiar spots which are moving towards sustainable tourism practices.

India ranks at 144th spot in 2023, sees the largest global drop

- The Passport Index published its latest update, revealing that India's Mobility Scores has fallen.

- India experienced the largest global drop on the index this year. It fell from a mobility score of 71 ahead of the pandemic in 2019, rising to 73 in 2022 as it rode the post-pandemic wave of increasing mobility. As of March 2023, its mobility score sits at 70.
- This fall comes off the back of record increases in mobility as the world and national economies reopened after the pandemic. India's ranking has fallen by six places so far this year, now individually ranked 144 in 2023 as opposed to 138 in 2022.

QS World University Ranking

- Recently, QS World University Rankings 2023 by subject were released.
- The rankings cover 54 academic disciplines, the India universities perform well in the fields of Computer Science, Chemistry, Biological Sciences, Business Studies and Physics.

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) of U.S. is ranked first followed by University of Cambridge of UK, Stanford University of U.S., respectively.

India on track to achieve energy independence by 2047

- According to the report, 'Pathways to Atmanirbhar Bharat', India can achieve energy independence through clean technology by 2047. The report highlights the steps taken by India towards the adoption of clean energy.
- This report has been published by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory along with The India Energy and Climate Center (IECC) located at UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy. It is a federally funded research and development centre.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already set a target to install 500 GW (gigawatt) of renewable energy capacity by 2030.

SPORTS NEWS

Stadium named after hockey player Rani Rampal

- The MCF Rae Bareilly has renamed the hockey stadium as 'Rani's Girls Hockey Turf'.
- Indian team's star hockey player Rani Rampal has become the first woman in the sport to have a stadium named after her, in Rae Bareilly.

Khelo India Dus ka Dum tournament to be organised to celebrate International Women's Day 2023

- The Department of Sports, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports organised the Khelo India Dus Ka Dum event from March 10 to 31, being conducted as a celebration for the International Women's Day 2023.
- This is the first time that such a sports initiative is taking place to celebrate the international event and the Union Ministry has sanctioned a total budget of ₹ 50 Lakh to conduct the tournament.

Jaipur to get India's 2nd largest cricket stadium named after Anil Agarwal

- Vedanta's Hindustan Zinc Limited (HZL) signed an MoU with the Rajasthan Cricket Association for the development of the world's third-largest cricket stadium in the village of Chonp in Jaipur.
- It will be the biggest cricket playing field in the world and will be one of the world's biggest cricket stadiums with a seating capacity of 75,000.

- It is spread over 100 acres biggest playing area and is well connected via Delhi-Jaipur Express Highway.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen won 2023 Bahrain Grand Prix

- World champion Max Verstappen had his maiden season-opening victory and first at the Sakhir circuit when he led Sergio Perez home in a dominant Red Bull one-two at the Bahrain Grand Prix.
- It was his first win in the Gulf state at the 10th attempt.

Rohan Bopanna becomes oldest tennis player to win ATP Masters

- Rohan Bopanna became the oldest tennis player ever to win the Masters 1000 title.
- He along with Matthew Ebden of Australia beat the top seeds Wesley Koolhof and Neal Skupski in the doubles final of the ATP tournament in Indian Wells, USA.

Mumbai Indian wins inaugural Women's Premier League title 2023

- Mumbai Indians were crowned champions at the inaugural Women's Premier League (WPL).
- Nat Sciver-Brunt's unbeaten 60 secured their seven-wicket victory against Delhi Capitals in the final at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai.

Runner Lashinda Demus awarded olympic gold medal over a decade later

- American runner Lashinda Demus, 40, has been honoured with an Olympic gold medal more than ten years after the 2012 London Olympics.
- After Natalya Antyukh, who had won the 400-metre hurdles gold medal initially, was found guilty of doping in Russia, the International Olympic Committee stripped her of her victory.
- The Athletics Integrity Unit disqualified Antyukh's results from July 2012 through June 2013 despite the fact that Antyukh had defeated Demus on the London track by a slim margin of 0.07 seconds thanks to historical data discovered in a Moscow testing laboratory database.

Sergio Perez won the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix 2023

- Sergio Perez earned his first win of the 2023 Formula One season with a dominant performance at the Saudi Arabia Grand Prix.

Karnataka beats Meghalaya to win Santosh Trophy after 54 years in Riyadh

- Karnataka defeated Meghalaya to win Santosh Trophy after 54 years in the 76th National Football Championships.
- They defeated first-timers Meghalaya 3-2 in a well-fought final at the King Fahd International Stadium, Saudi Arabia.

Daniil Medvedev won Dubai Tennis Championships title 2023

- Former world number one Daniil Medvedev defeated his Russian compatriot Andrey Rublev to win the Dubai Tennis Championships.

Mahindra Auto becomes title sponsor of IBA Women's Boxing Championship

- The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) has signed SUV manufacturer, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., as its title sponsor for the championships along with MC Mary Kom and Bollywood actor Farhan Akhtar as its brand ambassadors for its upcoming women's World Championships 2023.
- The tournament will begin scheduled from mid-March and will be played in the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex in New Delhi.
- India is hosting the event for the third time in its history.

India to host 2023 SAFF Championships in Bengaluru

- The 2023 edition of the SAFF Championship, South Asia's marquee international tournament, will be held in Bengaluru from June 21 to July 3, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) announced.
- India will be hosting the tournament for the fourth time and first since the 2015 edition when it was held in Thiruvananthapuram.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty win Swiss Open doubles title

- The dynamic doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty won the men's doubles title after defeating Ren Xiang Yu and Tan Qiang at the Swiss Open Super Series 300 badminton tournament on Sunday.
- The world number six and second-seeded Indian pair of Satwiksairaj and Chirag, beat their unseeded Chinese opponents 21-19, 24-22 in the final.

EVENTS

Yaoshang festival begins in Manipur

- The five-day-long Yaoshang festival, which is also known as Holi of Manipur has begun.
- The festival is celebrated every year on the full moon of Lamta (February–March) of the Meitei lunar calendar.
- Yaoshang begins just after sunset followed by Yaosang Mei thaba, also known as Burning of the Straw Hut. Children visit neighbours to ask for monetary donations, called nakatheng.

Third Divya Kala Mela inaugurated at Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh

- Governor Mangubhai Patel inaugurated the third Divya Kala Mela at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh on 12th March.
- It is 10-day fair that will enable Divyangjan to become entrepreneurs and artisans.
- The four finance corporations under the ministry, NHFDC, through various channel partners such as

NBCFDC, NSFDC and NSKDFC, provide financial assistance to artisans and other skilled beneficiaries through term loan schemes and microfinance schemes.

5th Poshan Pakhwada celebrations begins

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development celebrated the fifth Poshan Pakhwada from 20th March to 3rd April 2023 with various activities nationwide.
- The Pakhwada aims to raise awareness about the importance of nutrition and promote healthy eating habits through Jan Andolan and Jan Bhagidari.
- The theme of Poshan Pakhwada 2023 is "Nutrition for All: Together Towards a Healthy India".
- Every year, Poshan Pakhwada is celebrated in the month of March for 15 days. Similarly, the month of September is celebrated as Rashtriya Poshan Maah, across the country.

- Poshan Abhiyaan was launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 8th March 2018 with an aim to improve nutritional outcomes in a holistic manner.

NIUA to organise first Urban Climate Film Festival under U20 engagement events from March 24

- The National Institute of Urban Affairs organised the first Urban Climate Film Festival under U20 engagement events from 24 March 2023 at the M.L. Bhartia Auditorium in New Delhi.
- The festival is being organised with support from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the French Development Agency and the European Union.
- A curated selection of 11 films from nine countries will be showcased to create wider awareness of the impact of climate change on life in cities.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

- The 2023 Pritzker Architecture Prize is awarded to Sir David Chipperfield.
- The 2023 Pritzker Architecture Prize is awarded to Sir David Chipperfield on 7 March 2022. The British architect is known for his crisp, understated and elegant work.
- He has been cited as an architecture of understated but transformative civic presence.
- The prize is regarded internationally as architecture's highest honour.

Gyan Chaturvedi to be awarded Vyas Samman 2022 for 'Pagalkhana'

- Noted Hindi writer Dr Gyan Chaturvedi's 2018 satirical novel, Pagalkhana, has been selected for the 32nd Vyas Samman, 2022.
- It is an annual award instituted by the K.K. Birla Foundation in 1991. It is given to an outstanding Hindi literary work by an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years. It carries award money of ₹4 lakh.

Tamil writer Sivasankari to be awarded Saraswati Samman for memoir 'Surya Vamsam'

- Tamil writer Sivasankari will be awarded the Saraswati Samman 2022 for her 2019 memoir Surya Vamsam.

- The Saraswati Samman is an annual award instituted by the K.K. Birla Foundation in 1991. It is the highest recognition in the field of Indian literature in the country and carries a cash prize of ₹15 lakh, a plaque and a citation.

The Sangita Kalanidhi award for 2023 by the Music Academy

- Renowned Carnatic vocalist and Padma Shri awardee Bombay Jayashri has been selected for the Sangita Kalanidhi award for 2023 by the Music Academy.
- Besides Carnatic music, Jayashri is also trained on the veena, classical dance and Hindustani music.

Jammu and Kashmir's Aliya wins wildlife conservation award 2023

- Wildlife conservationist Aliya Mir was awarded Wildlife Conservation Award by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.
- The award makes her the first woman from the Union Territory to receive it in recognition of her conservation efforts in the area.
- Alia Mir is also the first woman in Kashmir to work for Wildlife SOS, a part of the Wildlife Rescue Team.

OSCARs – 2023 / ACADEMY AWARDS 2023 winners

CATEGORY	WINNER
Best Picture	Everything Everywhere All At Once
Actor In A Leading Role	Brendan Fraser (The Whale)
Actress In A Leading Role	Michelle Yeoh (Everything Everywhere All At Once)
Actor In A Supporting Role	Ke Huy Quan (Everything Everywhere All at Once)
Actress In A Supporting Role	Jamie Lee Curtis (Everything Everywhere All at Once)
Animated Feature Film	Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio
Cinematography	All Quiet On The Western Front (James Friend)
Costume Design	Black Panther: Wakanda Forever (Ruth Carter)
Directing	Everything Everywhere All At Once (Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert)
Documentary (Feature)	Navalny (Daniel Roher, Odessa Rae, Diane Becker, Melanie Miller, and Shane Boris)
Documentary (Short Subject)	The Elephant Whisperers (Kartiki Gonsalves and Guneet Monga)
Film Editing	Everything Everywhere All At Once (Paul Rogers)
International Feature Film	All Quiet On The Western Front (Germany)
Makeup And Hairstyling	The Whale (Adrien Morot, Judy Chin, and Annemarie Bradley)
Music (Original Score)	All Quiet On The Western Front (Volker Bertelmann)
Music (Original Song)	Naatu – Naatu (RRR; Music by M.M. Keeravaani; Lyric by Chandrabose)
Production Design	All Quiet On The Western Front (Production Design: Christian M. Goldbeck; Set Decoration: Ernestine Hipper)
Short Film (Animated)	The Boy, The Mole, The Fox And The Horse (Charlie Mackesy and Matthew Freud)
Short Film (Live Action)	An Irish Goodbye (Tom Berkeley and Ross White)
Visual Effects	Avatar: The Way of Water (Joe Letteri, Richard Baneham, Eric Saindon and Daniel Barrett)
Writing (Adapted Screenplay)	Women Talking (Screenplay by Sarah Polley)
Writing (Original Screenplay)	Everything Everywhere All At Once (Written by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert)
Sound	Top Gun: Maverick (Mark Weingarten, James H. Mather, Al Nelson, Chris Burdon and Mark Taylor)