

Week 2 Current Affairs Update

8th - 15th March 2021

EVENTS

NATIONAL

HEALTHCARE

PM MODI ADDRESSED 'JANAUSHADHI DIWAS' EVENT



Date: 8th March 2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the celebration event of 'Janaushadhi Diwas' via video-conference.

Key Points:

- He dedicated 7500th Janaushadhi Kendra to North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences, Shillong, Meghalaya.
- He also participated in the interactive session of beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana, which aims to provide medicines at an affordable cost to the people.
- PM Modi addressed that these Janaushadhi Kendras not only grant medicines at an affordable price but are also a source of employment to the youth and women.
- He mentioned that more than 1000 kendras are managed by women, thus making them self-reliant.
- Also, 1st March to 7th March 2021 was observed as 'Janaushadhi Week' under the theme of 'Jan Aushadhi- Seva Bhi, Rozgaar Bhi'.

PRADHAN MANTRI SWASTHYA SURAKSHA NIDHI

Date: 12th March 2021

The Union Cabinet has approved Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN).

Key Points:

- It is approved as a single non-lapsable reserve fund. It is approved for the share of Health from the proceeds of Health and Education Cess levied under Section 136-b of Finance Act, 2007.
- The PMSSN is a non-lapsable reserve fund allotted for health in the public account. It comprises the proceeds from a share of health in the Health and Education cess.
- The revenue of this fund will be utilised for the schemes of health ministry like National Health Mission, Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres. The funds will also be used for health emergency cases.
- The PMSSN will be managed by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

‘HER CIRCLE’ DIGITAL PLATFORM



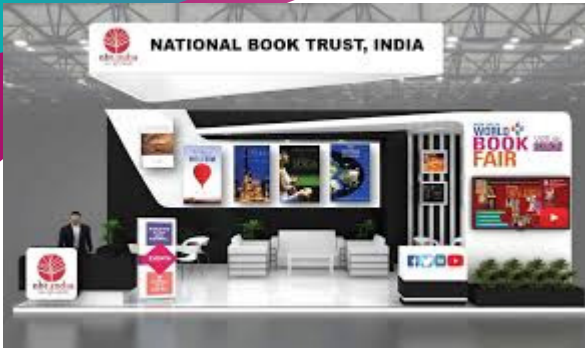
Date: 8th March 2021

To mark the celebrations of International Women's Day, Reliance Foundation Chairperson Nita Mukesh Ambani launched a digital platform named 'Her Circle'.

Key Points:

- The 'Her Circle' is a dedicated content, social media, and digital platform, launched specifically for women.
- The digital platform will help to empower the women community and will develop the sisterhood bond among them at the global level.
- The platform will be featuring experts from various domains like health, education, entrepreneurship, finance etc.
- The 'Her Circle' will also feature job opportunities for women along with various courses which the women community can learn digitally.

VIRTUAL NEW DELHI WORLD BOOK FAIR 2021



Date: 9th March 2021

Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank inaugurated Virtual New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 via video conference.

Key Points:

- This was the 29th edition of the event which was organised by the National Book Trust (NBT).
- The event is being held from 6th March to 12th March 2021 in a virtual manner due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The theme of the event: National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- At the event, the Chairman of NBT, Professor Govind Prasad Sharma and Director of NBT Yuvraj Malik were also present.

SUPER-75 SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME AND TEJASWINI SCHEME – J&K



Date: 10th March 2021

The Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir launched the 'Super-75 Scholarship Scheme' and 'Tejaswini Scheme'.

Key Points:

- The schemes aim to support the education facilities to the meritorious girls from poor families and women entrepreneurship.
- As per Super-75 Scholarship Scheme, the girls from poor financial backgrounds will be able to avail education in various streams like medicine, engineering, ITI and humanity, which will help them to contribute to nation-building and thus become self-reliant.

- The 'Tejaswini Scheme' was launched under Mission Youth of the UT. The scheme aims to strengthen the Women Entrepreneurs Ecosystem in UT.
- As per the 'Tejaswini Scheme', financial assistance of Rs 5 lakhs to the girls between the age group of 18 to 35 years will be granted to start their business.

DEFENCE

COMBINED COMMANDERS CONFERENCE 2021



Date: 9th March 2021

Union Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh participated in Combined Commanders Conference (CCC) 2021.

Key Points:

- The conference was held at Kevadia, Gujarat.
- The conference focused on the catheterisation of armed forces, making the defence sector self-reliant and combating evolving threats in the country.
- On the last day of the conference was addressed by PM Narendra Modi. While addressing the conference, he focused on developing the Indian military into a 'future force'.
- The CCC is an event of three forces of India i.e. Indian Army, the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy.
- At the conference, the exhibition of some of the innovations made by armed forces was also displayed.

INDIAN NAVY SIGNED CONTRACT WITH SURYADIPTA PROJECTS



Date: 11th March 2021

The Indian Navy has entered into a contract with Suryadipta Projects Private Limited, which is a Thane based MSME.

Key Points:

- The contract was signed to construct 11 Ammunition-Cum-Torpedo-Cum-Missile (ACTCM) barges.
- Upon signing the contract, the Suryadipa Projects will deliver ACTCM barges to the Indian Navy from 22nd May 2021.
- The barges will be developed under the classification rules of the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS).
- The contract was also signed with an aim to fulfil the motto of Atmanirbhar Bharat and the Make in India initiative of GOI.

INS KARANJ



Date: 15th March 2021

Recently, Indian Navy's third stealth Scorpene class (of Project-75) Submarine INS Karanj has been commissioned at the Naval Dockyard Mumbai.

Key Points:

- The new INS Karanj would form part of the Western Naval Command's Submarine fleet.
- The ship's name, Karanj, is believed to be derived from the Karanja island (also known as Uran Island), a town in Raigad district, which lies in the south-east of Mumbai Harbour.
- The Indian Navy has its base at Uran near Navi Mumbai.
- Project 75 is a programme by the Indian Navy that entails building six Scorpene Class attack submarines.
- It is given support by the Department of Defence Production (Ministry of Defence) and Indian Navy throughout its various phases of construction.

POLITY

AZADI KA AMRUT MAHOTSAV



Date: 9th March 2021

A National Committee has been formed to commemorate 75 years of India's independence.

Key Points:

- The committee is called Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav.
- 5 pillars have been decided for the celebration of the 75 years.
- 5 Pillars: Freedom Struggle, Ideas at 75, Achievements at 75, Actions at 75 and Resolve at 75.
- Members of the National Committee: Governors, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, political leaders, scientists, officials, media personalities, spiritual Leaders and eminent persons from other walks of life.

IT

LATERAL SURVEILLANCE: CYBER CRIME VOLUNTEERS PROGRAM



Date: 9th March 2021

Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), launched the Cyber Crime Volunteers Program with the aim to allow citizens to register themselves as “Cyber Crime Volunteers” in the role of “Unlawful Content Flaggers”.

Key Points:

- The programme targets to rope in around 500 persons to flag unlawful content on the Internet.
- It will help law enforcement agencies in identifying, reporting and in the removal of illegal/unlawful online content.
- The State Nodal Officer of States/UTs also reserves the right to take legal action against the Volunteer, in case of violation of terms and conditions of the Program.
- This form of surveillance, which enables citizens to “watch over” one another is called lateral surveillance.
- While surveillance of any kind shows an imbalance of power between the person who surveils, and the one under surveillance, lateral surveillance specifically ensures that the imbalance of power no longer exists.

MOUS & AGREEMENTS

MINISTRY OF WCD SIGNED MOU WITH INVEST INDIA



Date: 10th March 2021

The Government of India's Women and Child Development Ministry has signed an MoU with Invest India.

Key Points:

- The MoU was signed to boost the cooperation in Nutrition, Child Protection and Development, Women Empowerment and Capacity Building sectors.
- Under this MoU, Invest India will support framing policies and strategies to have a large scale impact. Invest India's DHRISHTI will analyse inputs and outputs for each research work.
- It will also provide international cooperation, impact assessment to the ministry in fulfilling the objective of the MoU.
- Both the entities will develop a participatory ecosystem to attain their objectives of MoU.

ENERGY

INDIA'S BIGGEST FLOATING SOLAR POWER PLANT



Date: 13th March 2021

Recently, the Government of India has informed that India's Biggest Floating Solar Power Plant is likely to be commissioned in May 2021.

Key Points:

- It is commissioned by the energy conglomerate National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC).
- It is being set up at Ramagundam thermal power plant reservoir near Peddapalli district of Telangana.
- It will be the single location largest floating solar plant in the country as of now.
- It has a capacity of 100 MW which is estimated to cost around Rs 423 cr will have 4.5 lakh photovoltaic panels.
- The NTPC's efforts to set up floating solar power projects are being aimed at reducing its carbon footprints and accelerate its green energy production to 30 percent of its capacity.

ECONOMY

INDIA'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES NOW WORLD'S FOURTH LARGEST



Date: 14th March 2021

India's foreign exchange reserves surpass Russia's to become the world's fourth largest.

Key Points:

- India's reserves, enough to cover roughly 18 months of imports, have been bolstered by a rare current-account surplus, rising inflows into the local stock market and foreign direct investment.
- India's foreign currency holdings fell by \$4.3 billion to \$580.3 billion as of March 5.
- China has the largest reserves, followed by Japan and Switzerland on the International Monetary Fund table.

SPACE

ISRO LAUNCHED RH-560 SOUNDING ROCKET



Date: 15th March 2021

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched a sounding rocket named RH-560 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota Range.

Key Points:

- The RH-560 was particularly launched to study altitudinal variations in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics.
- The RH-560 are one or two-stage solid propellant rockets which are used for probing the upper atmospheric regions and to perform space research activities.
- They will also be used as platforms to test the prototypes of new components or subsystems which are to be used in the launch of vehicles and satellites.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

FIRST COUNTER-TERRORISM DIALOGUE BETWEEN INDIA-NIGERIA



Date: 8th March 2021

The First Strategic and Counter-Terrorism Dialogue was held between India and Nigeria.

Key Points:

- Discussions were held on the threats and challenges faced by democratic societies from terrorism, extremism, and radicalization.
- Specific areas of cooperation were identified to enhance fight against terrorism. Nigeria is a country in West Africa bordering Niger in the north, Chad in the northeast, Cameroon in the east, and Benin in the west.
- Its southern coast is on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. It's capital is Abuja.

PM INAUGURATED 'MAITRI SETU' BETWEEN INDIA & BANGLADESH



Date: 10th March 2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated 'Maitri Setu' connecting India and Bangladesh.

Key Points:

- 'Maitri Setu' is constructed over the Feni River. The Feni River flows between the Indian boundary in Tripura and Bangladesh.
- The name 'Maitri Setu' symbolizes the friendly relations between both nations.
- Also, the PM of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina was present at the inauguration ceremony.
- The 'Maitri Setu' will prove beneficial as an important trade corridor for both nations.
- It is 1.9 km which joins Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh. It is constructed by National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. Total funds required for the construction was Rs 133 crores.

QUAD SUMMIT 2021



Date: 13th March 2021

The Quad Summit 2021 observed the participation of India's PM Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of Japan Yoshihide Suga, President of the United States Joe Biden, and Prime Minister of Australia Scott Morrison.

Key Points:

- The Quad Summit 2021 was held in a virtual mode.
- The dignitaries held discussions about the Indo-Pacific region, combating COVID19 Pandemic, maritime security, emerging technologies and climate change.
- They discussed developing cooperation to have an equitable and affordable distribution of vaccines in the Indo-Pacific region.
- They assured to make Quad a force for global good.

BRICS CGETI MEETING



Date: 13th March 2021

The first meeting of the BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) was held recently under India's Chairmanship.

Key Points:

- The theme of the meeting: 'BRICS@15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus'.
- At this meeting, India presented a calendar of events for BRICS CGETI 2021, which consisted of schedule, deliverables, and scope of the MSME roundtable conference workshop on the services statistics and BRICS Trade fair.
- Various discussions were held on proposed deliverables: Action Plan based on the document strategy for the BRICS Economic Partnership 2025, Co-operation among the BRICS on the multilateral trading system, Developing a framework to protect consumers on e-commerce, Non-tariff measures resolution mechanism, Working mechanism of sanitary and phytosanitary, Framework for genetic resources protection and traditional knowledge and professional services.

REPORTS & INDICES

ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX 2021



Date: 9th March 2021

The Economic Freedom Index 2021 was released by a US-based think tank named Heritage Foundation.

Key Points:

- The index provides a ranking for 184 countries for the period of July 2019 to June 2020.
- As per the index, India is ranked 26th out of 40 countries i.e. among Asia-Pacific Countries.
- Globally, India is ranked at 121st freest country in the index.
- The index is topped by Singapore with a score of 89.7.
- The second and third ranks are marked by New Zealand and Australia respectively.

SPACE

‘NISAR’



Date: 11th March 2021

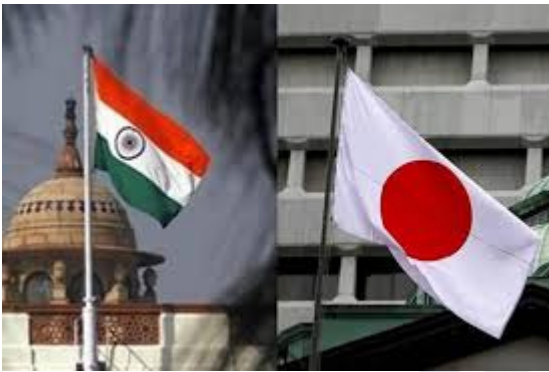
The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) completed the development of NISAR (NASA-ISRO SAR), which is a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR).

Key Points:

- The NISAR is capable of producing high-resolution images and will be used for Joint Earth Observation Satellite Mission.
- The Joint Earth Observation Satellite Mission is a mission of ISRO and NASA.

- NISAR uses dual-frequency L and S-band for its application of earth observation.
- In 2014, India and the US had signed an agreement to jointly develop the world's first earth observation satellite with two different radars. In this regard, ISRO achieved its role by developing S-Band SAR and shipping it to NASA in order to integrate with the L Band payload which is developed by NASA.
- After the integration process of radars, NASA will ship them to India where other accessories of the NISAR satellite will be developed and integrated.
- Then, ISRO will launch the NISAR satellite by using GSLV Mk-II from Sriharikota.

INDIA-JAPAN SPACE TIES



Date: 15th March 2021

Bilateral meeting between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) was held virtually.

Key Points:

- Both space agencies reviewed cooperation in earth observation, lunar cooperation and satellite navigation.
- They also agreed to explore opportunities for cooperation in space situational awareness and professional exchange programmes.
- Both agencies signed an Implementing Arrangement for collaborative activities on rice crop area and air quality monitoring using satellite data.

DEFENCE

‘DUSTLIK II’ JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE



Date: 12th March 2021

India and Uzbekistan commenced a joint military exercise called 'DUSTLIK II'.

Key Points:

- The second edition of the joint military exercise between armies of both nations is being held at Chaubatia near Ranikhet, Uttarakhand.
- The exercise is held to focus on Counter Insurgency (IC) and Counter-Terrorism, thus boosting military cooperation between both countries.
- 45 Soldiers each from both nations are participating in the 'DUSTLIK II' exercise, which is being held till 19th March 2021.
- The Rezangla Battalion 13 Kumaon will be representing the Indian side.

REPORTS & INDICES

ANNUAL DEMOCRACY REPORT



Date: 14th March 2021

Fifth annual democracy report, titled 'Autocratisation goes viral', has been released by Sweden's organisation Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute.

Key Points:

- The report summarises the state of democracies of the world against the backdrop of developments that have taken place over the past decade.
- India's position has been downgraded from "the world's largest democracy" to an "electoral autocracy".
- Reasons behind the downgrade: "muzzling" of the media, and overuse of defamation and sedition laws.
- In censorship, India is now as autocratic as is Pakistan, and worse than both its neighbors Bangladesh and Nepal.
- The use of defamation "frequently used to silence journalists" and the use of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) have placed constraints on civil society and gone against the Constitution's commitment to secularism.



PEOPLE

NATIONAL

POLITY

TIRATH SINGH RAWAT



Date: 11th March 2021

Why in news: Sworn in as Chief Minister of Uttarakhand.

Key Points:

- Tirath Singh Rawat became the new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand on March 10, 2021.
- He took the oath as CM a day after the former CM Trivendra Singh Rawat resigned from the post.
- Tirath Singh is the Lok Sabha MP from Garhwal.
- Tirath Singh Rawat was the chief of the party in Uttarakhand in 2013-15 and also an MLA from the state in the past.
- His name was picked over prominent candidates including Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Uttarakhand Minister Dhan Singh Rawat.

INTERNATIONAL

APPOINTMENTS

THOMAS BACH



Date: 11th March 2021

Why in news: Re-elected as President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)

Key Points:

- International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach was re-elected for an additional four-year term.
- Prior to that, Bach had assured that the Tokyo Olympics will definitely take place, but the question still remained on how it will be going ahead in a safe fashion.
- Tokyo Olympics is scheduled to take place from July 23-August 8, 2021. The Games were postponed last year due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The IOC President said that Tokyo remained the best prepared Olympic city ever and at this moment, they have no reason to doubt that the Opening Ceremony will take place on 23rd July.

AWARDS & HONOURS

DEEPIKA PADUKONE



Date: 12th March 2021

Why in news: WEF honours her in the 2021 Young Global Leaders List.

Key Points:

- Bollywood actor Deepika Padukone has joined the Forum of the Young Global Leaders (YGLs) for the year 2021 compiled by the World Economic Forum.
- The 2021 class of the list comprises of 112 world's most promising leaders of under the age of 40, who are involved in activities ranging from advocating for public healthcare to campaigning for inclusivity in medical research.
- The Young Global Leaders was founded in 2005 by Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the WEF.
- Its main objective is to create a world where leaders take responsibility for a sustainable future while meeting increasingly complex and interrelated challenges.
- Currently, there are 1,400 members and alumni from over 120 countries.



ISSUES

NATIONAL

TRANSPORT

MANDATORY PROVISION OF AIRBAGS



Date: 9th March 2021

Key Highlights:

- A Gazette notification has been issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways regarding mandatory provision of an airbag for passengers seated on the front seat of a vehicle, next to the driver.
- Vehicles manufactured on and after the April 1, 2021 (new models) and August 31, 2021 (existing models) shall be fitted with airbags.
- This safety feature is based on suggestions of the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety.
- It is compulsory for all existing models in the M1 category — passenger motor vehicles having not more than eight seats in addition to the driver's.
- Airbags pop up as a protective cushion between the passenger and the car's dashboard during a collision.
- In moderate to severe frontal crashes, front airbags are designed to inflate in order to prevent a person's head and chest from contacting hard structures in the vehicle.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CHINESE DAM ON BRAHMAPUTRA



Date: 8th March 2021

According to a draft of China's Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), first dams are to be built on the lower reaches of Yarlung Zangbo river.

Key Points:

- Yarlung Zangbo river is the Brahmaputra known in Tibet before it flows into India.
- The Plan specifically mentions the building of hydropower bases which will be the priority energy projects.
- This marks a new chapter in the hydropower exploitation of the river.
- Other major projects include the construction of coastal nuclear power plants and power transmission channels.
- The project is also listed along with the Sichuan-Tibet railway and the national water network.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

AIR STRIKES ON SANA'A



Date: 12th March 2021

Key Highlights:

- A Saudi-led military coalition mounted air strikes on Yemen's capital Sana'a.

- Saudi had intercepted 10 drones launched by Houthis before the strikes.
- Sana'a is the largest city and capital of Yemen.
- In the aftermath of the Houthi occupation, the capital moved to Aden – the former capital of South Yemen.
- Aden is located next to the Sarawat Mountains of Jabal An-Nabi Shu'ayb and Jabal Tiyal, considered to be the highest mountains in the country and amongst the highest in the region.
- Sana'a is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It has a distinctive architectural character, most notably expressed in its multi-storey buildings decorated with geometric patterns.



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Nurturing Ambitions

IDIEAS

NATIONAL

DEFENCE

FUEL CELL-BASED AIR INDEPENDENT PROPULSION (AIP) SYSTEM



Date: 9th March 2021

Key Features:

- The Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) System was recently developed by DRDO.
- It is an important milestone.
- The system is being developed by Naval Materials Research Laboratory (NMRL) of DRDO.
- AIP has a force multiplier effect on lethality of a diesel electric submarine.
- It enhances the submerged endurance of the boat.
- AIP also has merits in performance compared to other technologies.
- AIP of NMRL is unique as the hydrogen is generated onboard.

ENERGY

AGRICULTURE VOLTAGE TECHNOLOGY BY AGRICULTURAL MINISTRY



Date: 10th March 2021

Key Features:

- Union Minister of Agriculture informed Lok Sabha about the Agriculture Voltage Technology.
- Agri-voltaic system of 105 KW capacity was developed by ICAR-Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur.
- This technology can increase the income of farmers by generation of electricity and growing of cash crops simultaneously.
- Under component-I of KUSUM (Kisan Urja Suraksha Utthan Mahabhiyan) scheme, there is a provision for installation of agri-voltaic system in farmers' fields with a capacity ranging from 500 KW to 2 MW.
- National Solar Energy Federation of India (NSEFI) has also documented 13 operational agri-voltaic systems in India.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

'MERA RATION' MOBILE APP



Date: 13th March 2021

Key Features:

- With an aim to implement the 'One Nation-One Ration Card' system in India, the GOI has launched the 'Mera Ration' mobile app.
- The 'Mera Ration' mobile app will guide the citizens to locate the nearest fair price shop.
- This will be of high advantage to those who have moved to new areas for livelihoods.
- The app is developed by the government in association with NIC. The app will facilitate 'One Nation-One Ration Card' services among the National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries like migrant beneficiaries, FPS dealers and stakeholders.
- The app will help the user to track details of food grains entitlement and past transactions.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

‘WEAR N PAY’ – CONTACTLESS PAYMENT WEARABLE DEVICE



Date: 12th March 2020

Key Features:

- Axis Bank has launched a range of wearable contactless payment devices named ‘Wear N Pay’.
- This range of devices linked to the customers’ bank account and thus performs like a regular debit card.
- The devices are available in various forms like the band, Key chain and watch loop with the starting price of Rs 750.
- Users need to wave the device at a POS machine for transactions up to Rs 5,000 and for transactions for more than Rs 5000, a PIN is required.



Nurturing Ambitions