

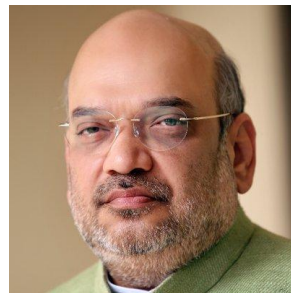


Current Affairs Today – 28.03.2020

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CURRENT AFFAIRS: NATIONAL

HighLevel Committee chaired by Home Minister approves over Rs. 5,751 crore to eight States for calamity damage relief



- The **High Level Committee**, HLC under the Chairmanship of **Home Minister Amit Shah** has approved additional Central assistance of over **5 thousand 7 hundred 51 crore rupees** under **National Disaster Response Fund**, NDRF to eight States, which were affected by floods, landslides, cyclone, drought last year
- The approved additional Central assistance to eight States from NDRF subject to the adjustment of 50 per cent of balances available in the SDRF account as on 1st April of the financial year.
- Over 953 crore rupees given to Bihar of which 400 crore rupees already released on account basis, over 460 crore to Kerala, over 177 crore rupees to Nagaland, over 179 crore to Odisha, over 1758 crore rupees to Maharashtra, nearly 1120 crore rupees to Rajasthan, over 1090 crore rupees to West Bengal for floods, landslides, cyclone, drought (kharif) during 2019 and over 11 crore rupees to Karnataka towards additional assistance under Animal Husbandry sector for drought (rabi) of 2018-19.
- During the 2019-20, till date, Centre has already released over **10 thousand 937 crore rupees** to **29 States** including erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir as Central share from **State Disaster Response Fund** and additional assistance of over 14 thousand 108 crore rupees to 8 States under NDRF.

About Home Ministry

- The Ministry of Home Affairs or Home Ministry is a ministry of the Government of India. As the interior ministry of India, it is mainly responsible for the maintenance of internal security and domestic policy.
- Union Minister of Home Affairs : Amit Shah.
- Ministry executive: Ajay Kumar Bhalla, IAS, Home Secretary
- Headquarters: New Delhi

DST launches nationwide exercise to map & boost Covid19 solutions with R&D, seed & scale up support



सत्यमेव जयते
Department of Science and Technology (DST)

DST

- Rising to the National call to combat the public health crisis arising out of Covid19 pandemic, the **Department of Science & Technology (DST)** is synergising and consolidating various activities carried out by the **Ministry of S&T** and its network of autonomous institutions and scientific bodies across the country.
- The solutions and novel applications to address Covid19 pandemic related challenges are being taken up through a three pronged approach. These include (a) extensive mapping of solutions requiring R&D support, startups with viable products requiring facilitation and manufacturing support; (b) identification of market deployable products requiring seed support and (c) support for solutions already in market but requiring substantial scale up to augment their manufacturing infrastructure and capabilities.
- DST has set up a “**Covid19 Task Force**” for mapping of technologies from R&D labs, academic institutions, startups and MSMEs. The capacity mapping group has representatives from **DST, DBT, ICMR, MeitY, CSIR, AIM, MSME, Startup India** and **AICTE**. The aim is to identify the most promising startups that are close to scaleup, who may need financial or other help or connects based on its projected demand to rapidly scaleup.
- DST through the synergetic approach involving scientific and research institutions, researchers, scientists, incubators, startups and tech companies is geared to address the challenges arising out of Covid19 pandemic.

About Department of Science and Technology (DST) :

- The Department of Science and Technology is a department within the Ministry of Science and Technology in India.
- Headquarters location: New Delhi
- Founded: May 1971
- Minister **Dr. Harsh Vardhan** is head of the department,
- **Ashutosh Sharma** is its present secretary

CURRENT AFFAIRS: INTERNATIONAL

Donald Trump signs \$2 trillion coronavirus bill, largest ever US stimulus



- **US President Donald Trump** signed into law the historic **\$2 trillion rescue package** to help the Americans and secure the country's economy ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic that has infected nearly 100,000 people across the nation.
- The legislation among other things gives \$3,400 for most of the American families of four, and billions of dollars' worth of financial assistance to small and medium businesses, and big corporations like Boeing.
- The hard-won plan will provide a massive injection of loans, tax breaks and direct payments to large corporations, small businesses and individuals whose revenue and income have plummeted under “social distancing” restrictions meant to slow the virus' spread.

- The US has become the worldwide epicenter of the epidemic, with more than 97,000 people infected, surpassing China.
- The package provides roughly **\$500 billion** in loans and other assistance for major companies, including **\$62 billion** for the airline sector, as well as cities and states struggling with virus-related financial burdens.

IMF is Launching a Tracker of Policies Governments are Taking in Response to COVID-19



- Governments around the world are taking decisive steps to limit the **human** and **economic impact** of **COVID-19**. Many countries have taken extraordinary monetary and fiscal policy measures.
- IMF launching a policy tracker to help our member countries be more aware of the experiences of others in combating the pandemic, and in adapting various policies and practices to their unique circumstances and needs. Sharing knowledge about COVID-19 enables all to tackle the crisis more effectively, stated IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.
- This **policy tracker** summarizes the key economic responses as of March 24, 2020. The tracker is not meant for comparison across members, as policy responses vary depending on the nature of the shock and country-specific circumstances. The tracker focuses on discretionary actions that supplement existing social safety nets and insurance mechanisms.
- The initial policy tracker includes **the G20 and European Institutions**. More countries will be added soon, and information will be updated on a regular basis.

About IMF:

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an international organization consisting of 189 countries working to foster global monetary cooperation secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world.
- Managing Director: Kristalina Georgieva
- Chief Economist: Gita Gopinath
- Headquarters: Washington, D.C. U.S

CURRENT AFFAIRS: BANKING AND FINANCE

Loans and EMIs to be cheaper as SBI to cut repo rate by 75 basis points





- **State Bank of India, SBI** stated that it has decided to pass on the entire **75 basis points repo rate** cut announced by the Reserve Bank of India.
- The new rates, to be effective from **1st of April**, will be applicable for its borrowers availing loans based on External Benchmark-linked lending rate, EBR and Repo-Linked Lending Rate, RLLR.
- The bank stated in a statement that equated-monthly installments on eligible home loan accounts, linked to EBR or RLLR will get cheaper by around **52 rupees per one lakh rupees on a 30-year loan**

About SBI:

- Chairperson: Rajnish Kumar
- Headquarters: Mumbai
- Tagline :Pure banking, nothing else” “With you- all the way” “A bank of the common man” “The banker to every indian”

CURRENT AFFAIRS: BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

Alphabet to donate \$800 mn in response to coronavirus outbreak

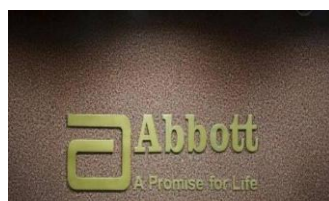


- **Alphabet Inc** will donate more than **\$800 million** (645 million pounds) in funds towards producing medical supplies used to fight COVID-19, and in ad credits to government and health organizations and businesses, Chief Executive Officer Sundar Pichai stated
- The company is working with Magid Glove and Safety to produce 2 million to 3 million face masks, and will financially support efforts to boost the production capacity for lifesaving medical devices and personal protective equipment, Pichai stated.
- The rapid outbreak, which has killed nearly 25,000 people globally, has strained healthcare systems around the world and led to a shortage of medical equipment including face masks and ventilators.
- The company will provide **\$340 million** in Google ad credits to small and medium businesses active on its platform and **\$250 million** in ad grants for the World Health Organization and many government agencies.

About Alphabet:

- Alphabet Inc. is an American multinational conglomerate headquartered in **Mountain View, California**. It was created through a restructuring of Google on October 2, 2015, and became the parent company of Google and several former Google subsidiaries
- CEO: Sundar Pichai

Abbott launches 5-minute Covid-19 test for use almost anywhere



- **Abbott Laboratories** is unveiling a **coronavirus test** that can tell if someone is infected in as little as 5 minutes, and is so small and portable, it can be used in almost any health-care setting.



- The medical-device maker plans to supply 50,000 tests a day starting April 1, stated John Frels, vice president of research and development at Abbott Diagnostics. The molecular test looks for fragments of the coronavirus genome, which can be detected in as little as five minutes when it's present at high levels. A thorough search to definitively rule out an infection can take up to 13 minutes, he stated.
- The U.S. has struggled to supply enough tests to detect the coronavirus, even as the outbreak threatens to overwhelm hospitals in New York, California, Washington and other regions. After initially restricting testing to high-risk people, and problems with a test designed by the Centre's for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. regulators have rushed out diagnostics made by the world's leading commercial-testing companies.
- The technology builds on Illinois-based Abbotts ID Now platform, the most common point-of-care test currently available in the U.S., with more than 18,000 units spread across the country. It is widely used to detect influenza, strep throat and respiratory syncytial virus, a common bug that causes cold-like symptoms.

About Abbott

- Headquarters: Chicago, Illinois, United States
- CEO: Miles D. White

CURRENT AFFAIRS: STATES

Mumbai Metro Line-III gets Rs 2,480 crore loan from JICA



- **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** has signed an agreement with the central government to provide an official development assistance (ODA) loan of **39,928 million yen (around Rs 2,480 crore)** for **Mumbai Metro Line-III**.
- The ODA loan agreement was signed between the finance ministry and Katsuo Matsumoto, the chief representative of JICA in India.
- With a total of 33.7 km, entailing 26 stations, the Line-III or the Colaba-Bandra-SEEPZ line is planned to connect southern part of the city with the major activity areas like Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), the airport, Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation area and SEEPZ area. The fully underground project is scheduled for completion by 2021.
- Overall, JICA has so far extended concessional ODA loans worth over **1 trillion yen** (around Rs 60,000 crore) for the development of metro systems in **New Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai** and **Ahmedabad**.

Rajasthan government hikes dearness allowance for employees, pensioners to 17 per cent





- The **Rajasthan government** increased the **dearness allowance** for its employees to **17 per cent** from the existing **12 per cent**. The revised allowance will be effective from July 1, 2019, according to an order of the finance department.
- About 8 lakh employees and 4.40 lakh pensioners will be benefited from this increase. The state government will incur an additional financial burden of about **Rs 3,417 crore** in 2020-21.
- The amount of increase in dearness allowance (DA) for the period from July 1, 2019, to February 2, 2020, shall be credited to the general provident fund account of the employees in April 2020 and cash payment shall be admissible from March 1.
- As per the order, the arrear of DA from July 1, 2019, to February 29, 2020, to the employees recruited to the civil services on or after January 1, 2004, and who are governed by the Contributory Pension Scheme shall be paid in April 2020 and cash payment shall be admissible from March 1, 2020.

About Rajasthan:

- Governor: Kalraj Mishra
- Capital: Jaipur
- Chief minister: Ashok Gehlot

Jaipur's Sawai Man Singh hospital tests serving robot



- The **Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Government Hospital** in Jaipur is conducting a series of trials on a **humanoid robot** to check if could be pressed into service for delivering medicines and food to the **COVID-19** patients admitted there, helping to keep the doctors and nursing staff at a safe distance to protect them against the dreaded coronavirus.
- Dr.Meena stated that since there were higher chances of the medicos and paramedical staff being infected with the virus despite wearing protective gear like masks and gloves, it would be a good idea not to get in touch with the patients frequently and instead use robots for rendering some of the essential services.
- A Jaipur-based entrepreneur, manufacturing robots indigenously at his assembling unit, has offered to supply them free of cost to the hospital as part of a **corporate social responsibility (CSR)** initiative to help out both the patients and the staff. The robot sent to the hospital is battery-operated and has a life span of four to five years.
- The **humanoid robot**, which uses artificial intelligence and Internet of Things (IoT), has been designed with a tray which can be used for carrying medicines, food and other objects to the assigned patients. It can navigate its own way without the instructions to follow lines on the floor.

CURRENT AFFAIRS: APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATION

Yes Bank Board Of Directors Reconstituted; Administrator Prashant Kumar Named As MD & CEO



- **Yes Bank** revealed that its Board of Directors had been reconstituted. This has been done as per the '**Yes Bank Limited Reconstruction Scheme, 2020**' notified by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
- **Prashant Kumar**, the RBI-appointed administrator of the bank has been named as **the new Managing Director and CEO of Yes Bank**. Apart from **R Gandhi and AnanthGopalakrishnan** who were appointed by the RBI, other members on **the Board of Directors** include **Sunil Mehta as non-executive Chairman** and **Mahesh Krishnamurti and AtulBhedaas non-executive Directors**.
- Meanwhile, **Partha Sengupta and Swaminathan Janakiraman** have been nominated by the State Bank of India on the **Board of Directors**.

About YES Bank

- Headquarters- Mumbai
- CEO- Prashant Kumar
- Tagline- Experience our Expertise.

Shilpa Shetty Kundra partners with Fit India



- **Fit India**, has partnered with **Bollywood actor and fitness icon Shilpa Shetty Kundra** to provide her premium 21-Day Weight Loss Programme, including diet tips, free of cost on the **Shilpa Shetty App (SS App)**, during the 21-day lockdown owing to Covid-19.
- The **Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju** launched the programme through his social media handles and shared the link to the App that everyone can access.
- The decision taken by Shilpa Shetty to allow the Indian and global audience to access her fitness programme for free, is commendable.

CURRENT AFFAIRS: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ULA's Atlas 5 launches AEHF-6 communications satellite in its first mission for U.S. Space Force





- A **United Launch Alliance Atlas 5 rocket** lifted off from Space Launch Complex-41 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, carrying a \$1.4 billion **Advanced Extremely High Frequency (AEHF-6) communications satellite** for the U.S. Space Force.
- This was the **sixth and final satellite of the AEHF** constellation that provides secure, jam-proof voice and data communications for U.S. national leadership, military forces and **international partners Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Australia**.
- All six were manufactured by Lockheed Martin.
- This was ULA's 138th launch, the 83rd of the Atlas 5 rocket since 2002 and the 11th in the 551 configuration. The mission also marked the 500th flight of the Aerojet Rocketdyne RL10 engine that powers the Centaur upper stage. Aerojet also provided the five AJ-60A solid rocket boosters.

Facebook launches messenger chatbot to share authentic information on Covid-19



- Social media firm **Facebook** stated it has launched a **Messenger Chatbot** to help people access authentic information about Covid-19 as well as bust myths and fake news around it. Messenger is Facebook's direct messaging platform.
- Together with the **Ministry of Health** and **MyGov**, Facebook has facilitated Corona **Helpdesk Chatbot** on the Messenger platform.
- Facebook users can start accessing corona **Helpdesk Chatbot** and reach out to the Ministry of Health for authentic news, official updates, precautionary measures and emergency helpline numbers through this chatbot.
- Depending on the question, users will receive verified information in the form of a video, infographic or text. This combined effort by The Ministry of Health, MyGov and Facebook will help contribute to the safety and well-being while providing information from reliable and credible sources.
- Recently, Facebook owned messaging platform WhatsApp also launched a helpline in partnership with the Ministry of Health and MyGov to raise awareness and answer questions about the COVID-19 pandemic.
- WhatsApp users across the country can reach out to the Ministry of Health on +91 9013151515 for credible information and to verify any uncertain information on precautionary measures or treatment practices.

About Facebook:

- CEO: Mark Zuckerberg
- Headquarters: Menlo Park, California, United States
- CFO: David Wehner

IIT Gandhinagar launches Project 'Isaac' to engage students in creative projects during Corona lockdown



- **Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar** (IITGN) has launched **Project Isaac** to engage its students in creative projects to enhance their **critical skills** while they are confined to their homes because of Corona virus.
- The project is inspired by **Sir Isaac Newton**, who was similarly sent home by Trinity College, Cambridge, because of the Great Plague of London in 1665. During this year, Newton, then a 22-year-old college student developed some of his most profound discoveries, including early calculus, as well as his theories of optics and gravity.
- As part of the project, four different competitions are being organized by **IIT, Gandhinagar** to cultivate new skills among students regarding writing, painting, coding, music, creative expression, and so on. Students can take part in competitions online. Nearly 40 per cent of IITGN students are already participating in various activities, which are entirely voluntary.
- **Project Isaac** is a model for academic institutions worldwide to explore ways to engage students in the midst of the pandemic.

CURRENT AFFAIRS: DEFENCE

In a first, India, France conduct joint patrols from Reunion Island



- **India and France**, For the first time, have conducted **joint patrols from the Reunion Island**, signalling New Delhi's intent to engage with **friendly foreign partners** in expanding its footprint in the Indian Ocean, focusing on the stretch between the East African coastline and the Malacca straits.
- India has so far carried out **Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT)** only with maritime neighbours and had rejected a similar offer by the US.
- The Indian Navy conducted a joint patrol with the French Navy last month from the Reunion Island. The patrol was conducted by a **P-8I aircraft** with French Navy personnel onboard
- Currently, under the 'Neighbourhood First' policy and broader maritime cooperation, the Indian Navy undertakes **joint EEZ surveillance with Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius** and **CORPATs with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia**.
- The joint patrols, along with other activities, are part of the Navy's increasing engagement in the Indian Ocean Region through capacity-building and joint activities for improving **MDA and interoperability**.

Other Exercise Between India and France

- Shakthi- Military Exercise
- Garuda- Air Exercise
- Varuna- Naval Exercise

About France

- Capital– Paris
- Currency- Euro
- Prime Minister -Edouard Philippe
- President- Emmanuel Macron

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Indian Army launches 'Operation Namaste' to help govt fight COVID-19



- **Army Chief General MM Naravane** launched '**Operation Namaste**' to combat the spread of **COVID-19**.
- His troops, deployed on the Line of Control or Line of Actual Control, to not worry about their near and dear ones and cancellation of leaves as a similar situation had been observed during Operation Parakram and the force had come out successfully from it and will execute Operation Namaste too successfully.

About Indian Army:

- Founded: 1 April 1895, India
- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Commander-in-Chief: President Ram Nath Kovind
- Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) :General Manoj Mukund Naravane

CURRENT AFFAIRS: OBITUARY

Padma Vibhushan awardee SatishGujral passes away



- Renowned **artist and architectSatishGujral** passed away at the age of 94.
- A recipient of the Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian award of India, in 1999.
- Gujral, a well-collected artist, was one of the few who have consistently dominated the art scene in India for the entire post-independent era.

Chief of Brahma KumarisDadiJanki passes away



- **RajyoginiDadiJanki**, the chief administrator of **Brahmakumari** spiritual organisation passed away.
- Dadi Janki was running the international spiritual institution spanning across 140 countries. Millions of people are associated with this organisation and she was the guardian of 46 thousand sisters of the body. The



organisation, which teaches Rajyoga meditation and teaching, is operating 8,000 service centers spreading over 100 countries.

Former Union Minister & SP leader Beni Prasad Verma passes away



- Former **Union Minister** and **Samajwadi Party** leader **Beni Prasad Verma** passed away in Lucknow. He was 79. Verma was born on February 11, 1941 in Sirauli in Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh.
- He was a founding member of the **Samajwadi Party**. In 1996, Verma became the Independent Minister of State for Communications. He was also given the charge of Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs. Verma was a Lok Sabha member from 1996 to 2014.

DAILY CA 27th MAR

- **World Theatre Day** is celebrated on **27 March**.
- Election Commission allows use of **indelible ink** for stamping '**home quarantined**'
- **DST** sets up **COVID-19 Task Force** for mapping technologies
- **India** proposes online platform for **SAARC** to jointly combat coronavirus
- Centre announces relief package worth **Rs 1.7 lakh crore** for poor
- **AIIMS** sets up **Task Force** to develop management protocol for COVID-19
- **G20 countries** pledge \$ **5 trillion funds** in the world economy
- **RBI** cuts repo rate by **75 basis points**
- **RBI** offers **Rs 11,722 cr** to banks through repo auction
- **Andhra Bank** opens Covid-19 **emergency credit line**
- **Relief Packages** for **CORONA outbreak** from different States
- **Bengal** releases **helpline number** for children suffering from stress amid lockdown
- **ITC** sets up **₹ 150 crore Covid Contingency Fund**
- **CRISIL, ICRA** lower GDP's growth forecast for FY21
- **Moody's** slashes India GDP growth in 2020 to **2.5%**
- **SIDBI** to provide loans up to **Rs 50 lakh** to MSEs manufacturing medical supplies to fight COVID-19
- **NTPC** concludes acquisition of govt's stake in **THDC, NEEPCO** at **Rs 11,500 cr**

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- **IRS officers KM Prasad and SK Gupta** appointed **CBDT board members**
- **IIT Delhi** makes **anti-infection fabric** to curb hospital infections
- **National Book Trust** of MHRD Launches **#StayHomeIndiaWithBooks** initiative
- Renowned chef **Floyd Cardoz** passes away
- Veteran photographer **Nemai Ghosh** passes away

DAILY CA 28th MAR

- **High Level Committee** chaired by **Home Minister** approves over **Rs. 5,751 crore** to eight States for calamity damage relief
- **DST launches** nationwide exercise to **map & boost Covid19** solutions with R&D, seed & scale up support
- **Donald Trump** signs **\$2 trillion** coronavirus bill, largest ever US stimulus
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