

## Current Affairs Today – 20.03.2020

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### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: DAYS**

#### **International Day of Happiness**



- **International Day of Happiness is observed every year on 20 March**
- Since 2013, the United Nations has celebrated this day to recognise the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world.
- The theme of 2020 is '**Happiness for all**'

#### **World Sparrow Day**



- **World Sparrow Day** is a day designated to raise awareness of the house sparrow and then other common birds to urban environments, and of threats to their populations, observed on **20 March**.
- The **theme** for **World Sparrow Day** is "**I LOVE Sparrows**".
- The day initiated by the Nature Forever Society of India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France) and numerous other national and international organisations across the world.

#### **World Frog Day**



- **World Frog Day** is an annual holiday celebrated on **March 20th**.
- The **World Frog Day** has been in celebration since the year 2009.
- The Day is created with an intention to save the different varieties of frogs from being extinct. Frogs are **tailless amphibians** whose origin dates back to nearly 256 million years ago

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS : NATIONAL**

#### **Govt creates WhatsApp Chatbot for queries on Novel Coronavirus**



- The government has created **WhatsApp Chatbot** for queries on Novel Coronavirus COVID-19. National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority, NPPA stated, the WhatsApp Chatbot is called **MyGov Corona Helpdesk**.
- It stated people can just save the number 9013151515 on WhatsApp and get an automated response on queries related to Corona

## Indian Railways to electrify all broad gauge routes by December 2023, bets on renewable energy

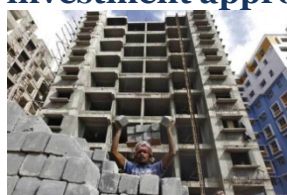


- **Indian Railways** to electrify all broad gauge routes by **December 2023**, bets on renewable energy.
- In the year **2023-2024** (till the month of December 2023), a target of electrifying **4,310 km** of broad gauge route has been planned Hence, Indian Railways has planned to electrify a total of **28,810 km** of broad gauge route. Railway Ministry has planned to electrify the remaining broad gauge routes on the network by the month of December **2023**
- The planning for the electrification of the remaining broad gauge routes of Indian Railways network is as follows:
  - In the year 2019-2020, a target of electrifying 6,000 km of broad gauge route has been planned
  - In the year 2020-2021, a target of electrifying 6,000 km of broad gauge route has been planned
  - In the year 2021-2022, a target of electrifying 6,000 km of broad gauge route has been planned
  - In the year 2022-2023, a target of electrifying 6,5000 km of broad gauge route has been planned
  - In the year 2023-2024 (till the month of December 2023), a target of electrifying 4,310 km of broad gauge route has been planned
- Hence, Indian Railways has planned to electrify a total of 28,810 km of broad gauge route.
- Additionally, in a bid to reduce the fuel burden of the Indian Railways network, the Railway Ministry has planned to install land based solar power plants across the country, over the unutilized railway land. This will be done to meet the energy requirements for both, non-traction as well as traction purposes

### About Indian Railways:

- Founded: 8 May 1845
- Headquarters: New Delhi, India
- Piyush Goyal (Minister of Railways)
- Suresh Angadi (Minister of State for Railways)
- Vinod Kumar Yadav (Chairman, Railway Board)

## Government says Rs 6.16 lakh crore investment approved under PMAY(U)



- An investment of **Rs 6.16 lakh crore** has been approved so far under the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)** and the committed central assistance is **Rs 1.65 lakh crore**, Union minister **Hardeep Singh Puri stated**.
- The Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs also told Lok Sabha that no data regarding property-less people is maintained by the ministry.
- **PMAY(U)** seeks to provide all weather pucca houses to beneficiaries in economically weaker sections in urban areas.
- According to him, poverty alleviation is also a focus area. The total investment approved under PMAY(U), so far, is Rs 6.16 lakh crore with committed central assistance of Rs 1.65 lakh crore, he stated.
- Housing sector contributes significantly to the country's Gross Domestic Product with direct impact on employment generation, he added

#### About PMAY:

- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana is an initiative by Government of India in which affordable housing will be provided to the urban poor with a target of building 20 million affordable houses by 31 March 2022.
- Launch year: 2015
- Launched by (prime minister): Narendra Modi
- Ministry: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- Minister : Hardeep Singh Puri

## CURRENT AFFAIRS : INTERNATIONAL

### UAE suspends all types of labour permits



- The **UAE Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization** has suspended the issuance of all types of **labour permits**, including for drivers and domestic workers, effective from i.e 19th March 2020, until further notice.
- The decision however, exempts intra-corporate transfer and EXPO 2020 permits. The UAE government stated the move has been taken in coordination with the National Emergency and Crisis and Disasters Management Authority as part of the precautionary measures taken by the UAE to curb the spread of COVID-19

#### About UAE:

- Capital: Abu Dhabi
- Currency: United Arab Emirates dirham
- President: Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan

### India gets \$1-million materials requests from SAARC nations



- The Ministry of External Affairs stated that requests for material assistance received by India from the **SAARC** nations in the forms of masks, gloves and disinfectants have crossed **\$1 million**, in the wake of the outbreak of **Covid-19**. While materials have already been sent to Bhutan and the Maldives, deliveries to other nations will start soon.
- Additional secretary and coordinator for Covid-19 Dammu Ravi stated the special control rooms set up by the MEA are being further strengthened to enhance efficiency of the response to specific issues of specific countries. The control rooms have been equipped with dedicated helplines that are operating 24×7 to respond to the concerns in a secure and timely manner.
- These control rooms are staffed by 25-30 people working in 8-hour shifts to deal with the issues. The control rooms have attended to 1,355 calls and 522 emails since the evening of March 17.
- MEA's chief spokesperson Raveesh Kumar stated after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's video conferencing with Saarc leaders, cooperation is being done in a coordinated manner and a video conference with health professionals from these countries to discuss the best practices is being planned in a week's time. Besides, a group of secretaries is engaged in daily monitoring

#### About SAARC:

- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of states in South Asia. Its member states are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
- Founded: 8 December 1985, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Headquarters: Kathmandu, Nepal
- Secretary-General: Esala Weerakoon

### CURRENT AFFAIRS : BANKING AND FINANCE

#### Fitch cuts India's GDP growth forecast as coronavirus strikes



- **Fitch Ratings** cut India's growth forecast to **5.1 per cent** for **FY 2020-21**, saying the coronavirus outbreak is likely to hit business investment and exports.
- Fitch had in December 2019 projected India's growth at **5.6 per cent** for **2020-21** and **6.5 per cent** in the following year.
- Supply-chain disruptions are expected to hit business investment and exports. GDP growth to remain broadly steady at 5.1 per cent in the fiscal year 2020-2021 following growth of 5.0 per cent in 2019-2020, Fitch stated.
- For 2021-22, Fitch projected India's growth to be 6.4 per cent.

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- The outbreak of the virus is hitting sentiment, while local governments have rolled out measures to contain the spread of the virus, such as closing schools, cinemas and theatres.
- While India's linkages with China (e.g. trade and tourism) are modest, manufacturers in India are heavily reliant on key Chinese intermediate inputs – especially of electronics and machinery and equipment, Fitch stated.
- The WHO has declared coronavirus pandemic. Over 2 lakh people have been infected globally and the disease caused by it – COVID-19 – has claimed over 9,000 lives. In India, there are about 195 positive cases and 4 deaths so far from the deadly virus

#### About Fitch ratings:

- Fitch Ratings Inc. is an American credit rating agency and is one of the "Big Three credit rating agencies", the other two being Moody's and Standard & Poor's. It is one of the three nationally recognized statistical rating organizations designated by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in 1975
- Headquarters: New York, United States
- CEO: Paul Taylor

#### ICICI Lombard launches a dedicated insurance cover for coronavirus



- Private sector non-life insurance company **ICICI Lombard** has launched a focused policy for **coronavirus (COVID-19)**, which will pay the entire sum insured irrespective of hospitalisation expenses.
- If a policyholder tests positive for COVID-19 at any of the Government-authorised centres, the company will pay out the entire sum insured, in a lump sum in the event of a first diagnosis of COVID-19 during the policy period, subject to an initial waiting period of 14 days, the company stated in a regulatory filing.
- The scope of the cover shall be within the geographical boundaries of India and restricted to Indian nationals only, it stated, adding the policy has been launched in group insurance mode.
- The health cover comes with a premium of **Rs.149** and provides a sum insured of **Rs.25,000**

#### About ICICI Lombard:

- Headquarters: Mumbai
- CEO: Bhargav Dasgupta

#### Bank of America joins S&P, in cutting India GDP forecasts



- **Bank of America** Securities became the latest global financial agency to slash India's GDP growth estimates for the next financial year 2020-21, pointing out that a global recession was now almost certain.
- BofA Securities' forecast cut comes just two days after it had made a similar move. While the agency had slashed India GDP growth estimates to just **5.1 per cent for FY21**.



- BofA's forecast cut follows similar actions taken by S&P Ratings and Moody's Investor Services earlier . While the former had cut its 2020 forecast to **5.2 per cent** from its earlier estimate of **5.7 per cent**, Moody's had slashed it to **5.3 per cent** from **5.4 per cent**

#### About Bank of America:

- The Bank of America Corporation is an American multinational investment bank and financial services company headquartered in Charlotte, with central hubs in New York City, London, Hong Kong, Minneapolis, and Toronto
- CEO: Brian Moynihan
- Headquarters: Charlotte, North Carolina, United States

## CURRENT AFFAIRS : BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

### Paytm Payments Bank to now issue Visa debit cards



- **Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL)** announced that it will now start issuing **Visa debit cards** to its customers. With this partnership, Paytm is targeting to issue over **10 million new digital debit cards** in **FY 20-21**. The bank, known for introducing **neo-banking** in the country, is already the largest issuer of **RuPay Debit Cards** and has the fastest growing bank account base.
- Paytm Payments Bank will issue **Visa virtual debit cards** to its customers, which will enable them to transact at all merchants accepting payments through cards.
- For the first time, the bank's customers will also be able to make international transactions using their Visa debit cards.
- Soon, the customers will also have an option to request for a physical card. This will enable customers to make contactless payment through their **chip-inserted cards**.
- With over **57 million digital debit cards**, the payments bank now has a debit card in every district of India

#### About Paytm Payments bank:

- Headquarters : Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India
- Vijay Shekhar Sharma (CEO) and (President)
- Ajay Shekhar Sharma (Vice president)

### Cashfree launches digital payments solution for businesses



- **Digital payments platform, Cashfree**, has launched UPI Stack for Businesses, allowing businesses to collect and disburse UPI payments.

- The product will be available through every **UPI app**, across both web and mobile (Android & iOS) platforms. Software developers will also be able to implement a desired payment flow for preferred platforms and collect payments via all UPI-based apps, the company stated.
- Cashfree's move is in line with the new provision in the Income Tax Rules that mandates businesses with a turnover of over **Rs. 50 crore** should provide facilities to accept payments through prescribed electronic modes, including UPI

#### About cashfree:

- Founded: 2015
- Headquarters location: Bengaluru
- Founder : Akash Sinha

## CURRENT AFFAIRS: STATES

### J&K announces Rs 5L free health insurance for residents



- In a major relief to the people of **Jammu & Kashmir**, the **LG Girish Chander Murmu** accorded sanction to roll out the Jammu & Kashmir Health Scheme to provide free of cost **Universal Health Coverage to all residents of the Union Territory in convergence with Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY**.
- At present, 5.95 lakh families are eligible for benefits under Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY. Around 15 lakh additional families will be covered under the Jammu & Kashmir Health Scheme.
- Under this Universal Health Coverage, the beneficiaries shall be entitled to free health insurance cover of **Rs 5 lakh per family per year** on floater basis and there is no restriction on family size, age or gender.
- All employees, pensioners and their family members are also covered under the scheme.  
The employees shall continue to get Rs 300 per month as medical allowances for OPD (Outpatient Department) treatment.

#### About Jammu & Kashmir (J&K)

- Capital- Srinagar (Summer), Jammu (Winter).
- Lieutenant Governor- Girish Chander Murmu

### Uttarakhand Government Abolishes Quota In Promotion For Govt Employees



- **Uttarakhand government** abolished reservation in promotion in the state government jobs.
- The **Trivendra Rawat** government took the major decision on completion of three years of its tenure.
- Following the state government's order, the employees from the General-OBC categories ended their strike.
- The state government also issued orders regarding departmental promotion committee (DPC).

#### About Uttarakhand

- Capital– Dehradun

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- Chief Minister– Trivendra Singh Rawat
- Governor– Baby Rani Maurya

### Goa govt launches chatbot to create awareness about coronavirus



- **Goa Health Minister Vishwajit P Rane** has launched a chatbot **Cobot-19** to create **awareness about coronavirus among the citizens.**
- The first state in the country to take up an initiative at this scale and our aim is to resolve the confusion caused by countless advisories from different sources as well as rumors.
- The Chatbot has been developed in association with **Portea Medical and Verloop.**
- Cobot-19 will act as a one-stop source of information for citizens of Goa on COVID-19 and its various aspects

#### About Goa

- Capital– Panaji
- Chief Minister– Pramod Sawant
- Governor– Satya Pal Malik

### J&K govt constitutes commission for welfare of socially, educationally backward classes



- **Jammu and Kashmir** government has constituted a commission for socially and educationally backward classes in the union territory. It will look into the issues of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the J&K.
- Justice **GD Sharma** has been appointed as **chairperson**, and former **IFS Rup Lal Bharti** and **IPS officer Munir Ahmed Khan** as members of the commission.
- The commission will determine the criteria to be adopted in considering any section of the people in Jammu and Kashmir as Socially and Educationally Backward Class

#### Recent news about J&K:

- Jammu Kashmir Statehood to be restored soon
- “Global Investor Summit” for the first time in Jammu and Kashmir; Road Shows to attract investments
- Minister of North East Development chairs Ujh (National) Multipurpose Project, Jammu Kashmir
- Chilai-Kalan: 40-day period of extreme cold begins in Kashmir
- MSME Minister launches ‘Khadi Rumal’ stitched by militancy affected women of J&K

### CURRENT AFFAIRS: APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATION

#### Former SBI chief Arundhati Bhattacharya resigns from Crisil board





- **Arundhati Bhattacharya**, the past chairman of State Bank of India, has **submitted her resignation** as **independent director of the Crisil** effective April 15.
- Bhattacharya has indicated that the reason for her resignation is her decision to accept a full time role as chairperson and CEO in another company.
- Bhattacharya was the first woman to lead the more than two centuries-old State Bank of India, which controls over a quarter of the nation's banking system.
- She retired in 2017 after a one-year extension, spending four decades in various roles

#### About CRISIL

- Headquarters– Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- CEO– Ashu Suyash

#### Indian umpires Janani Narayanan, Vrinda Rathi named in ICC panel



- Indian umpires **Janani Narayanan and Vrinda Rathi** were inducted into the **International Panel of ICC Development Umpires**, taking the count of **women match officials** across different ICC panels **up to 12**.
- GS Lakshmi & Shandre Fritz are International Panel Match Referees and the other officials are Lauren Agenbag, Kim Cotton, Shivani Mishra, Claire Polosak, Sue Redfern, Eloise Sheridan, Mary Waldron, Jacqueline Williams from International Panel of ICC Development Umpires.

#### About International Cricket Council (ICC)

- Headquarters- Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- Chairman- Shashank Manohar.
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO)- Manu Sawhney

#### CURRENT AFFAIRS: SUMMITS AND CONFERENCE

##### Saudi Arabia to Convene Virtual G20 Leaders Summit



- **Saudi Arabia** would convene a virtual summit next week bringing together the leaders from the **Group of 20 major economies (G20)** to address the **coronavirus pandemic**.
- G20 leaders will put forward a coordinated set of policies to protect people and safeguard the global economy.

- The Summit will build on the ongoing efforts of the G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, senior health, trade, and foreign affairs officials, to further develop the precise requirements and actions needed.
- The Saudi Presidency will continue to support and coordinate international efforts to counter the impact of the pandemic, both in human and economic terms.

#### About Saudi Arabia

- Capital- Riyadh
- Currency- Saudi riyal
- The king and prime minister of Saudi Arabia- Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud

### CURRENT AFFAIRS : DEFENCE

#### Defence Ministry signs contract with Israeli firm IWI to acquire 16,479 light machine guns



- The **Defence Ministry** has signed a **capital acquisition contract** with **Israel Weapons Industries**, IWI for procurement of 16,479 light machine guns, LMGs at a cost of **880 crore rupees**. IWI, which is based out of Ramat HaSharon city in Israel, would be providing **Negev 7.62\*51 mm LMGs** to the Indian armed forces under the contract.
- The contracted Negev 7.62X51 mm LMG is a combat proven weapon and currently used by several countries around the globe. Defence Ministry stated, the LMG will greatly enhance the lethality and range of a soldier vis-a-vis the presently used weapon.
- The Ministry noted that the provisioning of the operationally urgent and very critically needed weapon will boost the confidence of the frontline troops and provide much needed combat power to the armed forces. With this, the Indian Armed Forces' long-standing requirement of a modern state-of-the-art LMG has finally fructified

#### About defence ministry:

- Minister of Defence: Rajnath Singh
- Minister of State for Defence : Shripad Yesso Naik
- Ministry executives :Ajay Kumar, IAS, Defence Secretary

### CURRENT AFFAIRS: SPORTS

#### French Open tennis tournament postponed till September



- The **French Open Tennis** has been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic and will take place from 20th September to 4th October. Organisers stated, the Grand Slam event was to have taken place from 24th May to 7th June.
- The new dates would mean the tournament would start just one week after the US Open, if that event remains in its scheduled slot

#### Mens singles

Year	Tournament	Winner	Runner-up
2020	Australian Open	Novak Djokovic	Dominic Thiem
2019	US Open	Rafael Nadal	Daniil Medvedev
2019	Wimbledon	Novak Djokovic	Roger Federer
2019	French Open	Rafael Nadal	Dominic Thiem
2019	Australian Open	Novak Djokovic	Rafael Nadal

### Tokyo 2020 Games organisers receive Olympic flame



- Organisers of the **Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games** received the Olympic flame in a scaled-down handover ceremony in the **Greek capital**, amid the coronavirus spread that has cast doubt on the July 24-August 9 global multi-billion dollar event.
- In a brief ceremony closed to spectators in Athens' **Panathenaic stadium**, site of the first modern Games in 1896, the torch was received by **Tokyo Games** representative **Naoko Imoto**. It will arrive in Japan and kick off a domestic relay on March 26

#### List of summer Olympic games venues:

2016	Rio, Brazil
2020	Tokyo, Japan
2024	Paris, France
2028	Los Angeles, USA

#### List of winter Olympic games venues

2018	Pyeongchang, South Korea
2022	Beijing, China
2026	Italy

### DAILY CA 19<sup>TH</sup> MAR

- **Global Recycling Day -18th march**
- Rajya Sabha passes **National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill 2019**
- **Sri Lanka** gets **USD 500 million loan** from **China** as financial aid



- **ECB launches €750 billion 'pandemic emergency' bond-buying scheme**
- **Nabard pegs Karnataka's credit potential at ₹2.44 lakh cr for fiscal 2020-21**
- **ADB announces \$6.5 bn package for developing member countries**
- **RBI to infuse ₹10,000-cr liquidity via OMO purchase, says financial conditions tightening**
- **YES Bank gets Rs 60k-cr line of credit from RBI to resume operations**
- **AI chat bot 'Maya', a handy tool for Clix customers**
- **TCS again overtakes Reliance Industries to become most valued firm by market capitalisation**
- **IIT-Kanpur, L&T Technology Services Sign MoU For Research In Cyber Security Programs**
- **India ranks second in probes on foreign bribery, enforcement drags globally**
- **Iraqi President Salih appoints Adnan al-Zurfi as new PM-designate**
- **Bajaj Auto board approves re-appointment of Rajiv Bajaj as MD, CEO**
- **Google Cloud appoints Karan Bajwa as India MD**
- **HSBC appoints Noel Quinn permanent chief executive**
- **Former Air India CMD Ashwani Lohani Appointed Chairman of AP Tourism Development Corporation**
- **Konark Sun Temple To Be Included In 'Iconic Sites' List**
- **World Cities Summit- Singapore**
- **WhatsApp launches COVID-19 information hub with WHO; grants \$1mn to IFCN for fact-checking**
- **Bhalchandra Mungekar's book "My Encounters in Parliament"**
- **Gadkari presents 'Invincible - A Tribute to Manohar Parrikar' to President**
- **Indian Navy sets up Quarantine Facility at Visakhapatnam**
- **DAC approves procurement of 83 indigenous Tejas fighter aircraft for Indian Air Force**
- **Roger Mayweather, legendary boxing figure passed away**

## **DAILY CA 20<sup>TH</sup> MAR**

- **International Day of Happiness- 20th march**
- **World Sparrow Day-20th march**
- **World Frog Day-20th march**



- Govt creates **WhatsApp Chatbot** for queries on **Novel Coronavirus**
- **Indian Railways** to electrify all broad gauge routes by **December 2023**, bets on renewable energy
- Government says **Rs 6.16 lakh crore** investment approved under **PMAY(U)**
- **UAE** suspends all types of **labour permits**
- India gets **\$1-million** materials requests from **SAARC nations**
- **Fitch** cuts India's GDP growth forecast as coronavirus strikes
- **ICICI Lombard** launches a dedicated insurance cover for coronavirus
- **Bank of America** joins S&P, in cutting India GDP forecasts
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- **Cashfree** launches **digital payments solution** for businesses
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