

# MARCH 2019 CURRENT AFFAIRS

## 1. General Elections 2019: Latest Updates!

The Lok Sabha election 2019 schedule was announced by the Election Commission on March 10, 2019. The elections will be held in seven phases across the country starting from April 11 and the final result will be out of May 23.

As of 2019, 900 million people are registered as voters and there will be approximately 10 lakh polling stations in this Lok Sabha Elections as compared to 9 lakh polling stations in 2014. The electronic voting machines this time will also have photographs of candidates next to the symbol of the party.

## 2. India becomes 4th largest space power

Prime Narendra Modi on March 27, 2019 announced that India has established itself as the world's 4th largest space super power. The Prime Minister stated that the feat is historic, as till now, only three countries in the world – United States of America, Russia and China have achieved this.

The Prime Minister announced the success of 'Mission Shakti', in which Indian scientists successfully targeted and shot down a live satellite on a Low Earth Orbit with an anti-satellite missile (A-SAT) within a matter of just three minutes.

He announced that India has joined the elite league of space powers and the whole mission required a lot of complex scientific maneuvers and techniques, which India was able to see through successfully.

## 3. Chandrayaan-2 to carry NASA instruments; ISRO to launch 29 satellites

Chandrayaan-2, the second moon mission of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), will be carrying laser retroreflector arrays owned by the US space agency National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch 29 satellites including the primary payload EMISAT on April 1, 2019. The PSLV-C45 (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle), carrying these satellites onboard, will take off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

## 4. Jet Airways Crisis: Explained

Jet Airways Founder and Chairman Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita Goyal resigned from the board on

March 25, 2019 amid the reports of looming financial crisis in the airlines. However, the CEO of Jet Airways, Vinay Dube will stay on to steer the airline carrier out of the current financial crisis.

The board of Jet Airways accepted their resignation. Naresh Goyal is presently in London, and addressed all 23,000 employees from there. The Jet Airways was founded nearly 25 years ago by the Goyals in 1993.

Post their resignation, the Bank Led Interim Resolution Plan (BLIRP) came into effect for the revival of the airline. The board approved the invoking of entire 51 percent stake of Naresh Goyal in the airline for the conversion of USD 1 billion the outstanding debt.

### **5. What is minimum income guarantee scheme?**

The President of the Indian National Congress, Rahul Gandhi on March 25, 2019 announced a minimum income guarantee scheme for the poorest 20 per cent of Indian families if voted to power.

The announcement was made following the meeting of the Congress Working Committee. The leading opposition party claims that under the scheme, 20 per cent of India's most poor families will get Rs 72,000 yearly in their bank accounts.

The minimum income support proposal will be called 'nyay'. The scheme aims to bring justice to the poor in the country. Under the Nyay scheme, the minimum income line will be Rs 12000.

### **6. IAF inducts 4 Chinook Helicopters**

The first batch of four Boeing heavy-lift Chinook Helicopters, CH-47F (I) was inducted in Indian Air Force (IAF) on March 25, 2019 at Air Force Station, Chandigarh, in Squadron No 126 Helicopter Flight (Featherweights).

The Chinook helicopters arrived at the Mundra airport in Gujarat from the United States on February 10, 2019. These multirole helicopters will be used in life-saving role during Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) missions. They will operate alongside the Russian machines. The Indian Air Force is currently using Mi-17 and Mi-26 helicopters, which were manufactured by Russia.

The remaining eleven Chinook helicopters are expected to be delivered by 2023.

### **7. Rail Vikas Nigam Limited conducts IPO**

Miniratna Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL) came out with its first Initial public offering (IPO) on March 29, 2019. The state-owned company will not receive any proceeds from the offer as the Central Government is selling around 12 percent of its stake in the company. After the IPO, the Government's stake in RVNL will be pegged at 88 percent.

The IPO will close on April 3, 2019. After the closing of IPO, the RVNL shares will be listed on the BSE and NSE and the trading will begin within six working days from April 3, 2019.

### **8. Pinaki Chandra Ghose appointed as India's first Lokpal**

India gets its first Lokpal six years after the passage of Act, former Supreme Court judge, Pinaki Chandra Ghose was on March 19, 2019 appointed as India's first Lokpal also known as the anti-corruption ombudsman.

Ghose appointment was approved by the President Ram Nath Kovind. Currently, Ghose is serving as a Member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Besides this, the President also appointed four judicial and four non-judicial members of the Lokpal.

### **9. BJP's Pramod Sawant sworn-in as 11th Goa Chief Minister**

Goa Legislative Assembly Speaker and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, Pramod Sawant was sworn-in as the 11th Chief Minister of Goa in a late-night ceremony, hours after his predecessor, Manohar Parrikar was cremated with state honours. He was given the oath of office and secrecy by Goa Governor Mridula Sinha.

Former Goa Chief Minister and former Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, who had been battling cancer, passed away in Panaji on March 17, 2019 at the age of 63. He was accorded state funeral with 21-gun salute.

### **10. Kazakhstan renames capital Astana as 'Nursultan'**

Kazakhstan's parliament on March 20, 2019 renamed its capital Astana as 'Nursultan' in honor of outgoing leader Nursultan Nazarbayev. Nursultan stands for "Sultan of Light" in Kazakh language, while, Astana means 'capital' in Kazakh language.

Nursultan Nazarbayev resigned on March 19, 2019 after serving nearly 30 years as the leader of the oil-rich nation. Nazarbayev has been the only leader to run Kazakhstan since it emerged free from the collapse of Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

### **11. Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar passes away at 63**

Goa Chief Minister and former Union Defence Minister, Manohar Gopalkrishna Prabhu Parrikar passed away on March 17, 2019 after battling with pancreatic cancer. He was 63.

Earlier in February 2018, Parrikar was diagnosed with advanced pancreatic cancer and had been in and out of hospital in Goa, Mumbai, Delhi and New York since then. He was constantly seen wearing medical paraphernalia, a nasogastric tube. The Goa Government declared one-day holiday and seven-day mourning for Parrikar.

### **12. SpiceJet joins global airlines' grouping IATA**

*Indian budget carrier, SpiceJet on March 19, 2019 announced its membership of global airlines' grouping 'International Air Transport Association' (IATA). SpiceJet is the first Indian low-budget carrier to join the IATA, which has over 290 airlines as members including Air India, Jet Airways and Vistara.*

*IATA is Geneva-based trade association of the world's airlines formed to support aviation activity as well as help to formulate industrial policy on aviation issues.*

### **13. India to host FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2020**

*Gianni Infantino, the President of International Football Federation (FIFA), on March 15, 2019 announced that India will host the U-17 Women's World Cup in 2020. The 2020 World Cup will be the seventh edition of the U-17 Women's tournament.*

*The announcement was made during the FIFA Council meeting in Miami, USA. The U-17 Women's World Cup will be the second FIFA tournament that India will be hosting, the first was the U-17 Men's World Cup held in 2017.*

### **14. Brexit Explained: EU agrees to postpone March 29 deadline**

*The leaders of the European Union have agreed to delay the Article 50 process, postponing Brexit beyond its designated deadline of March 29. The United Kingdom will be offered a delay until May 22, if the British MPs approve the withdrawal deal negotiated with the European Union next week.*

*In a press conference with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, European Council President Donald Tusk said that British PM Theresa May has accepted an offer of two options for short delays to the date of Britain's withdrawal from the European Union.*

### **15. New Zealand Mosque Attacks: Who is Brenton Tarrant?**

*In the worst attack in the Pacific country's history, at least 49 people have been killed and over 20 injured in shootings at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. The mosques attacked were - Al Noor Mosque in central Christchurch and another one was Linwood Islamic Centre in suburban Linwood.*

*Australian citizen Brenton Tarrant of late 20s age has been charged with murder and will appear in Christchurch Court on March 16, 2019. Brenton Tarrant, a gunman in the New Zealand terror attacks, described himself as an ordinary white man who drew his inspiration from Norway mass killer 'Anders Behring Breivik'.*

### **16. West Nile Virus: All you need to know**

*As per the media reports, a seven year old boy from Malappuram District of Kerala is suffering from a West Nile Virus (WNV), a mosquito-borne disease, mostly reported in the continental United States.*

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is closely monitoring the situation and extended support to Kerala in prevention and management of West Nile Virus. Currently, there are no reports available for spread of Nile Virus in other parts of the country.

### **17. SC sets aside life ban imposed on Sreesanth**

The Supreme Court of India on March 15, 2019 set aside the life ban imposed by the Board of Control of Cricket in India (BCCI) on cricketer S Sreesanth for indulging in spot-fixing during 2013 Indian Premier League.

The judgment was delivered by a two-judge bench, comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan and KM Joseph. The bench, while partly allowing Sreesanth's appeal to lift the ban, directed the disciplinary committee of the BCCI to take a decision on his quantum of punishment within the next 3 months.

Significantly, the apex court has not disturbed the findings of guilt made by the disciplinary committee against the Kerala-based cricketer.

### **18. RBI categorises IDBI Bank as Private Sector Bank**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on March 14, 2019 categorised the IDBI Bank Limited as a 'Private Sector Bank' for regulatory purposes with effect from January 21, 2019.

The move came following the acquisition of the 51 percent of the total paid-up equity share capital of the IDBI bank by Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).

The IDBI Bank was categorised in the sub-group 'other public sector banks' by the RBI in April 2005.

### **19. Explained- Kartarpur Sahib Corridor: India, Pakistan held talks to finalise modalities for Kartarpur Corridor**

Indian and Pakistan's officials on March 14, 2019 held the first round of talks to discuss and finalise the modalities for Kartarpur Corridor at the Indian side of the Attari-Wagah border.

The corridor will facilitate visa-free travel of Indian Sikh pilgrims to the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan. Indian Government seeks to operationalise the Kartarpur Corridor by November 2019 on the occasion of the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev.

### **20. Ethiopian Airlines crash: India latest to ground Boeing 737 MAX 8 fleet**

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on March 12, 2019 midnight ordered to ground the Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft fleet in India with immediate effect following the Ethiopian Airlines crash. Taking passenger safety as its top priority, India is constantly consulting the regulators around the world, airlines, and aircraft manufacturers to ensure passenger safety.



*The Boeing 737 Max 8 fleet will be grounded until appropriate modifications and safety measures are undertaken to ensure their safe operations. With the decision, India joined the growing list of countries to have temporarily grounded the aircraft. Ethiopia, China, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and the United Kingdom had earlier decided to suspend the Aircraft. India-based operator, Spice Jet has around 12 Boeing 737 Max 8' planes in its fleet, while Jet Airways has five in the country.*

## **21. China again blocks UNSC bid to ban JeM Chief Masood Azhar for 4th time: In detail**

*Giving setback to India, China for the fourth time blocked a bid in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to designate Pakistan's Jaish-e-Mohammed's chief Masood Azhar as a "global terrorist". India termed the move of China's putting a technical hold on the proposal as "disappointing".*

*The proposal was moved by P3 countries (France, United Kingdom and United States) on February 27, 2019 to the 1267 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council in wake of Pulwama terror attack by Pakistan-based terror group JeM that killed over 40 CRPF personnel in India.*

## **22. Padma Awards 2019 announced: President confers awards to Gautam Gambhir, Prabhu Deva, Late Kader Khan among others**

*The President Ram Nath Kovind on March 11, 2019 conferred the Padma Awards 2019, one of the highest civilian awards of India, to 112 awardees.*

*This year, President Ram Nath Kovind approved conferment of 112 Padma Awards including one duo case (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one). The list comprises 4 Padma Vibhushan, 14 Padma Bhushan and 94 Padma Shri Awards, of which, 21 of the awardees are women. The list includes 11 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI, 3 posthumous awardees and 1 transgender person.*

## **23. International Women's Day 2019: President Ram Nath Kovind to present Nari Shakti Puraskar 2018**

*The International Women's Day 2019 was observed across the world on March 8, 2019 with an aim to empower women in all settings, be it rural and urban, and celebrate the activists who work constantly to assert women's rights and realise their full potential.*

*The 2019 theme 'Think equal, build smart, innovate for change' focuses on innovative ways to advance gender equality and empower women, particularly in the areas of social protection, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure.*

The 2019 International Women's Day was observed in India by the way of conferring the Nari Shakti Awards to various individuals and organisations that are working towards empowering women.

#### **24. Supreme Court approves mediation in Ayodhya land dispute case**

The Supreme Court of India on March 8, 2019 decided to refer the Ayodhya-Babri Masjid title dispute case for mediation. The apex court has formed a panel of mediators to resolve the issue, which will be headed by Supreme Court judge, Justice F M Kalifullah. The other members of the panel include spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Sankar and senior advocate Sriram Panchu.

The mediation will be held in Faizabad, newly renamed as Ayodhya and its status report will have to be submitted to the court within the time of four weeks. The mediation proceedings are to be held confidentially and the court has banned the media from reporting it.

#### **25. Swachh Survekshan 2019 Awards: Indore judged Cleanest City for third time; Bhopal Cleanest Capital**

President Ram Nath Kovind on March 6, 2019 conferred the Swachh Survekshan Awards 2019 at a ceremony in New Delhi.

Indore was adjudged as India's Cleanest City for the third consecutive year in the central government's cleanliness survey, while Bhopal was named as the 'Cleanest Capital' of India. Indore reported a 70 percent drop in vector-borne ailments in 2019, which is being attributed to Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Gujarat's Ahmedabad was named as the Cleanest Big City in the population category of more than 10 lakh people.

#### **26. One Nation, One Card: PM Modi launches mobility card for seamless travel through different metros**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 4, 2019 launched 'One Nation, One Card' Model from Ahmedabad, Gujarat for seamless travel through different metros and other transport systems.

The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs introduced the 'National Common Mobility Card' (NCMC) to enable seamless travel by different metros and other transport systems across the country besides retail shopping and purchases.

The customers can use this single card for payments across all segments including metro, bus, suburban railways, toll, parking, smart city and retail.

#### **27. PM Modi launches Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 5, 2019 launched the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan

*Yojana (PM-SYM), a mega pension scheme for unorganised sector, from Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The scheme was announced in the Interim Budget 2019.*

*The PM-SYM is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme that will benefit as many as 10 crore workers in the unorganised sector.*

*It will provide monthly pension of Rs 3000 to the employees of unorganised sector after 60 years of age.*

## **28. India strikes back: IAF jets destroy Jaish terror camps across LoC**

*In retaliation to the deadly Pulwama terror attack, the Indian Air Force fighter jets crossed the line of control in the early hours of February 26, 2019 and attacked Jaish-e-Mohammed terror camps in Pakistan occupied Kashmir.*

*The same was confirmed by the Indian Foreign Secretary, Vijay Gokhale during a press conference in New Delhi on the same day. The Foreign Secretary revealed that India has struck the biggest training camp of JeM in Balakot.*

*The Indian Air Force used Mirage-2000 jets to drop 1000 kg of laser-guided bombs causing an estimated casualty of 200-300. In the intelligence led operation, India struck the biggest training camp of Jaish-e-Mohammed in Balakot, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa.*

## **29. Oscars 2019: 'Bohemian Rhapsody' wins most Oscars**

*The 91st Academy Awards, popularly known as Oscar Awards, were conferred on February 24, 2019 (February 25 as per Indian time). 'Bohemian Rhapsody', nominated for five Oscars, won the most Oscars at the award show.*

*The 'Period. End Of Sentence', a film on menstruation set in rural India, won the Oscar in the Documentary - Short Subject category at the 91st Academy Awards. The film has been directed by Rayka Zehtabchi and produced by Indian producer Guneet Monga's Sikhya Entertainment.*

## **30. PM-KISAN: PM Modi launches 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana' from Gorakhpur, UP**

*The Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 24, 2019 launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM-KISAN) from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.*

*On the launch day itself, the first instalment of Rs 2,000 was directly credited to the bank accounts of selected beneficiary farmers. Around 12 crore farmers are expected to benefit from PM-KISAN. The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana was announced in the Union Interim Budget 2019 by Finance Minister Piyush Goyal.*



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