

Maharashtra Weekly Current Affairs 18 to 24 March 2024

Maharashtra State News

Ordnance Factories Day

- Ordnance Factories Day is celebrated on **March 18th every year in India.**
- It commemorates the **establishment of the first Ordnance Factory in Cossipore, Kolkata, in 1801.**

About:

- The day highlights the **contributions of the Ordnance Factories Board (OFB) to India's self-reliance in defense equipment.**
- The OFB is a crucial organization **under the Ministry of Defence.**
- It is responsible for manufacturing a **wide range of weaponry and ammunition for the Indian Armed Forces.**
- Often referred to as the "Fourth Arm of Defence", the OFB plays a vital role in national security.

Theme:

- Ordnance Factories Day 2024 theme is **"Operational Efficiency, Readiness, and Mission Accomplishment in the Maritime Domain".**

RRP Electronics to set up first semiconductor plant in Maharashtra

- RRP Electronics has **typed up with a consortium of European companies to set up a one-of-its-kind semiconductor facility in Maharashtra.**

Key Points:

- The company, which will **invest ₹5,000 crore over the next five years**, plans to lay the foundation stone in its new premises of **25,000 sq ft on March 23.**
- In the **second phase, it will invest another ₹5,000 crore.**

About:

- RRP Electronics will **fast-track the work on the project and commence the Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Testing (OSAT) with adequate support of technology partners.**
- The facility will also have an **R & D centre to incorporate the latest developments in the field.**

- The company will also **seek support from the Maharashtra Government to set up the unit comprising multi lines of OSAT fab foundry and manufacturing.**

Maharashtra to vote in five phases for first-time ever

- For the **first time ever, Lok Sabha elections to the 48 seats in Maharashtra will be held in five phases beginning on April 19 and ending on May 20th** when the six seats in Mumbai go to the polls.

Key Points:

- In **2019**, the polls were conducted over **four phases** while in **2014**, there were **three phases.**
- The **first phase will begin in the Vidarbha region.**
- The **by-poll for the Akola West assembly seat will also be held during the second phase of voting.**
- The decision about the **number of phases has been taken by the Election Commission of India (ECI).**

Maharashtra becomes first Indian state to buy land in Kashmir to construct 'Bhawan' for tourists

- Maharashtra is set to become the **first Indian state to buy land in union territory Jammu and Kashmir in order to construct a tourist facility for the state's people.**

About:

- The Maharashtra Bhawan will come up on **2.5 acres of land at Ichgam, near Srinagar airport.**
- The **Jammu and Kashmir government has approved the transfer of land to the Maharashtra government for ₹8.16 crore.**
- The process to **purchase land was initiated after Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde visited the union territory last year in June and met Governor Manoj Sinha.**

Global Recycling Day

- **Global Recycling Day is an annual event on March 18 that helps to acknowledge that recycling is a key part of a circular**

economy that helps to protect the environment and Earth's natural resources

History:

- It was the brainchild of the Bureau of International Recycling, with the first announcement coming in 2015 by its president, Ranjit Singh Baxi.
- The inaugural celebration followed a few years later in 2018.
- The day is now recognized by the United Nations as well.

About:

- The year 2024 marks the 7th Global Recycling Day
- Global Recycling Day 2024 focuses on the theme #RecyclingHeroes.

Survey to identify divyangs in 30 districts of state

- The Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) welfare department of the state ordered a survey to identify divyangs in different districts of MH.
- A total of 21 disabilities have been identified based on which the population of divyangs will be recorded.
- While sanctioning Rs 25 lakh for the survey work, additional secretary Adhikrao Budhe has asked for accomplishing the survey work within the next two months.

About:

- The exercise will be carried out as per enabling provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPWD Act)
- It was passed by the Parliament in the year 2016 and implemented from 2017.

MH allocates Rs 50 crore for establishment of welfare board for auto, taxi drivers

- The state government has announced the establishment of a welfare board for auto rickshaw and metered taxi drivers
- The state allocated Rs 50 crore for the purpose.
- The welfare board will have the headquarters in Mumbai.

Key Points:

- In addition to the establishment of a welfare board, drivers and their relatives can also

avail benefits from extended schemes under the welfare board.

- Schemes such as health insurance, scholarships for the drivers' children, and financial insurance up to Rs 50,000 will be listed under the welfare board.

Schools in Maha to be graded from A+ to C

- The state education department has ordered that schools in Maharashtra, like higher educational institutions, will now be given grades from A+ to C to indicate the quality of education being imparted by them.
- The schools will have to display these grades and the state, too, will develop a dedicated website of aggregated data on these gradings so that the information is easily accessible to parents.
- Furthermore, schools will have to be evaluated (graded) periodically based on their performance under various parameters such as basic infrastructure, teaching-learning standards, safety and security of children, and campus inclusiveness and gender equality

Key Points:

- The state school education department has introduced the School Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (SQAAC).
- This framework outlines a set of parameters for evaluating schools.
- By acting as a benchmark, SQAAC helps schools identify areas of strength and weakness, ultimately guiding them towards continuous improvement.
- This aligns with the National Education Policy's (NEP) emphasis on enhancing educational quality.

VU collaborates with IIT-B to set up innovation cell

- Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) has collaborated with the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B) to establish an innovation cell.
- This cell will focus on fostering a culture of creativity and entrepreneurship among students and faculty at both institutions.
- The innovation cell will provide resources and support for developing new ideas and bringing them to market.

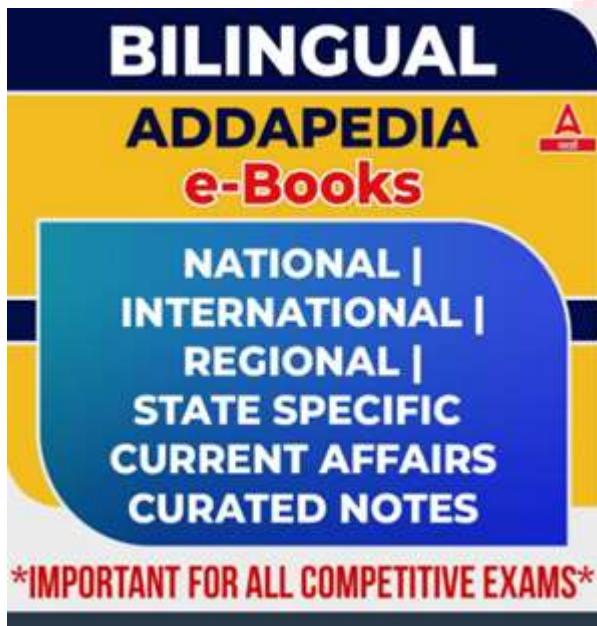
- It is expected to play a key role in driving technological advancements and creating new businesses.

International Day of Happiness

- Every March 20th, the world celebrates the International Day of Happiness.
- It was established by the United Nations in 2012
- It recognizes happiness as a fundamental human goal and the importance of well-being for all.
- It highlights the link between happiness, sustainable development, and a balanced approach to economic growth.
- The world first celebrated the International Day of Happiness on March 20th, 2013.

Theme 2024:

- This year's theme is- "Reconnecting for Happiness: Building Resilient Communities".



Maharashtra introduces dress code for school teachers; t-shirts, jeans not allowed

- The Maharashtra government introduced a new dress code for teachers in the state.
- T-shirts, jeans, and shirts with designs or pictures are no longer allowed.

About:

- Schools have the flexibility to choose specific colors, but recommendations include light-colored shirts and dark

trousers for male teachers and sarees or salwar kameez for female teachers.

- This dress code applies to all schools, including private institutions.
- Also, the government also allows teachers to use the prefix "Tr" before their names, similar to doctors and lawyers.

AI-based chatbot to help power consumers

- Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co Ltd (MSEDCL) has launched a chatbot service, 'Urja', based on artificial intelligence (AI) to help consumers with grievance redressal, bill payment and new connection.
- The service is available on MSEDCL's website www.mahadiscom.in and will soon be on the mobile phone application as well.
- The chatbot will come handy as many consumers face issues with the services provided.

Cabinet okays AI use by cops, ₹23cr for 'MARVEL' project

- The state cabinet approved a proposal for the use of artificial intelligence in the police force.
- A special purpose vehicle (SPV) is to be set up for the creation of artificial intelligence in the police force.
- To be called Maharashtra Advanced Research and Vigilance for Advanced Law Enforcement (MARVEL), govt will invest Rs 23 crore in the project and partner with Indian Institute of Management, Nagpur, and Pinaka Technologies.

World Oral Health Day

- World Oral Health Day is observed annually on March 20th
- This day raises awareness about the critical role oral hygiene plays in overall health.
- This day aims to empower individuals with the knowledge and tools to maintain good oral health through:
 - Brushing and flossing regularly
 - Limiting sugary drinks and unhealthy foods
 - Scheduling regular dental checkups

Theme:

- The 2024 theme is "A Happy Mouth is a Happy Body"

- It emphasizes the **connection between oral health and well-being**.

International Day of Forests

- The **International Day of Forests is celebrated every year on 21st March**
- This day is **dedicated to raising awareness about the vital role forests play in our lives**.

About:

- **International Day of Forests was established by resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on November 28, 2013.**

Key points:

- Forests are viewed as the **lungs of the planet**.
- Trees **filter the air by decreasing CO2 and helping maintain a balance in the environment**.
- They are fundamental for **sustaining life on the planet and play a significant part in battling climate change**.
- In any case, the danger of **deforestation and degradation threatens the survival of forests around the world**.

Theme:

- This year's theme is **"Forests and Innovation: New Solutions for a Better World."**
- It highlights the **critical role of innovation and technology in protecting our forests**.

43 Maharashtra colleges get a grant of Rs 5 cr each, 2 from Mumbai

- **43 institutions in the state will receive the grant of Rs 5 crore each under the Pradhan Mantri Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA).**
- Dadar's Kirti College and Chembur's Vivekanand Education Society's College of Arts, Science and Commerce are among them
- Additionally, four districts have been identified for gender inclusion and equity initiatives, for which almost Rs 10 crore each have been allocated.

About:

- PM-USHA is a **centrally sponsored scheme that aims to provide strategic funding to eligible state higher educational institutions**.

- The scheme was **launched in 2013 and is currently in its second phase**.

The objectives of PM-USHA are to:

- Improve the quality of teaching-learning processes in order to produce employable and competitive graduates, post-graduates and PhDs.
- Increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education.
- Promote equity and inclusion in higher education.
- Strengthen the research and innovation ecosystem in higher education institutions.

Maha govt sanctions ₹2cr for Belagavi, Bidar

- Maharashtra govt has sanctioned a **special fund of Rs 2 crore** for various works in the border districts- Belagavi and Bidar.
- The fund has been sanctioned to various **organizations and trusts**.
- **Rs 25 lakh each** has been sanctioned to construct Maharashtra sanskritik bhavans in Nippani and Bidar towns
- Also, **Rs 25 lakh** has been sanctioned for the construction of a community hall at Raghunath Maharaj Education Institute in Bidar.
- Another **Rs 25 lakh** has been allotted to Satyam Shivam Sundaram Development Association in Bidar.
- Funds were also approved for various **service organizations to set up libraries, build classrooms and halls and purchase medical vans**.

MH Govt offers free shooting at Government locations; introduces single-window clearance for filmmakers

- The Maharashtra government has **introduced two new initiatives to promote filmmaking in the state**
- These initiatives are expected to **make Maharashtra a more attractive destination for filmmakers and boost the state's film industry**.

Initiatives

Free Shooting at Government Locations:

- Filmmakers can now shoot at government locations for free.

- This will help reduce production costs and provide filmmakers with more diverse shooting locations.

Single-Window Clearance:

- The government has also introduced a single-window clearance system for filmmakers.
- This will streamline the permission process and make it easier for filmmakers to get the approvals they need.

World Sparrow Day

- World Sparrow Day is celebrated on **March 20th every year**
- It is **dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of conserving sparrows and other common birds in urban environments.**

About:

- The **Nature Forever Society of India, along with other organizations around the world, started World Sparrow Day in 2010.**
- The idea hatched during a casual discussion at the **Nature Forever Society in India, founded by conservationist Mohammed Dilawar.**
- Inspired by **efforts to save the house sparrow, they proposed a day to raise awareness about the decline of these common birds.**

Theme 2024:

- The theme for World Sparrow Day 2024 is **"I Love Sparrows"**.
- This theme highlights the special connection between humans and sparrows.

IUCN: Endangered

World Water Day

- **World Water Day is an annual United Nations observance day held on 22 March**
- It **highlights the importance of freshwater and advocates for the sustainable management of freshwater resources.**

About:

- **The first World Water Day was celebrated in 1993**
- **The theme for the first World Water Day in 1993 was 'Water for Life.'**

Theme 2024:

- This year's theme is **"Water for Peace."**
- It highlights the **potential of water as a resource for cooperation and stability.**

- By managing water resources sustainably and ensuring equitable access, we can foster peace and prosperity for all.

SDG:

- **Clean water and sanitation is SDG 5 out of 17 SDGs.**

41% water in Maharashtra's dams

- Despite recent rains, Maharashtra's dams **only hold around 41% of their total water storage capacity.**
- This marks a significant **decline from the 56.5% capacity recorded last year** at the same time.
- This is a significant concern, as **over 70% of the state's talukas are facing drought conditions.**
- The arid **Marathwada region, known for its water scarcity, is particularly hard-hit, with dam water storage plummeting to 21.3% of capacity compared to 46% during the same period last year.**

ICMAI Sambhajnagar chapter wins award at national level

- The **Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICMAI), local chapter, has won the award for the best chapter of the year for 2022-23.**
- This prestigious recognition was presented at the **Western India Regional Cost Conference-2024 held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.**
- The chapter's dedication to **servicing students, members, and the wider community for the past 35 years in the Marathwada and Khandesh regions was highlighted.**
- Their efforts to **promote the cost and management accountancy profession and raise awareness about career prospects in both government and private sectors were acknowledged.**

BMC gets a new municipal commissioner

- **IAS Bhushan Gagrani was appointed the new Municipal Commissioner of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)**
- This appointment follows the **Election Commission of India's directive for the Maharashtra government to fill the position.**

- Gagrani, previously serving as Additional Chief Secretary in the Chief Minister's Office, brings experience in urban development to the role.

Pune Auto Expo to showcase vintage vehicles used in World War II

- The upcoming Pune Auto Expo, happening April 18th to 21st at Creaticity in Yerwada, will feature a special exhibit: vintage vehicles used in World War II
- This "Vintage and Classic" pavilion promises a unique opportunity to see these historic machines alongside other classic cars from Pune's past.
- Motorcycles such as the Norton 500 and vintage editions of Volkswagen, which played crucial roles during the 1930s-1940s war period, will be exhibited in Pune next month.
- The expo will also boast vintage cars once owned by prominent figures.

'Nagmoney 2024' to bring alive history through coins

- The Numismatic Research Institute (NRI) Nagpur is once again organizing a three-day 'All India Competitive Numismatic Exhibition' called 'Nagmoney 2024' at Ramgopal Maheshwari Sanskrutik Sabhagruha on Jan 26, 27, and 28.
- The Institute aims at preserving the ancient heritage, culture and history through the medium of coins to make people aware of the importance of Numismatics

Did you Know?

- Numismatics is the study of coins

Martyrs' Day

- In India, March 23rd is commemorated as Martyrs' Day, also known as Shaheed Diwas.
- This day specifically honors the sacrifices of three legendary freedom fighters: Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru.

About:

- These three revolutionaries were hanged by the British Raj in 1931 for their role in resisting British rule.

- Martyrs' Day serves as a day to remember all those who fought and died for India's freedom.
- It's a time to express gratitude for their sacrifices and reflect on the importance of freedom.

Note:

- January 30th is also celebrated as Martyr's day.
- It commemorates the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the "Father of the Nation," in 1948.

Climate change risk: Study

- A recent study suggests temperatures during Holi could soar above 40°C due to climate change.
- This rise in scorching temperatures is a significant increase compared to the 1970s.

About:

- In the 1970s, only three states in India had a more than 5% chance of seeing temperatures cross 40 degrees Celsius during Holi—Maharashtra, Bihar, Chhattisgarh.
- Today, that number has expanded to include six more states, including Rajasthan, Gujarat, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh.
- The state with the highest probability of crossing 40C in late March is Maharashtra, with a 14% likelihood.
- The analysis by Climate Central highlights a troubling trend: hotter springs with summers arriving earlier and lasting longer.
- This finding underscores the urgency of addressing climate change to protect traditional celebrations and public health.

Note:

- The warming trends were detected in a new analysis from US-based Climate Central (an independent group of scientists & communicators) that looked at monthly average temperatures in the months of March and April since 1970.

JSW Energy buys Rel Power's wind assets for ₹132cr

- In a move to expand its renewable energy portfolio, JSW Energy, through its

subsidiary **JSW Renewable Energy**, has agreed to purchase a **45 MW wind power project** from **Reliance Power** for **₹132 crore**.

- The project is located in **Vashpet, Maharashtra**, and has a **power purchase agreement with Adani Electricity**.
- This acquisition strengthens JSW Energy's position in the renewable energy sector and aligns with India's growing focus on sustainable power generation.
- The funds from the sale will be used by Reliance Power to repay debt

World Poetry Day

- **World Poetry Day** is celebrated annually on **March 21st**
- It is a day to **celebrate the beauty and significance of poetry**.
- It was **established by UNESCO in 1999**

It aims to:

1. **Promote linguistic diversity:**
 - Poetry uses language in creative ways, highlighting the richness of different cultures and languages.
2. **Support endangered languages:**
 - World Poetry Day brings attention to languages at risk of disappearing, ensuring their voices are heard.
3. **Honor poets and revive traditions:**
 - It's a day to recognize the contributions of poets and encourage the oral tradition of poetry recitals.
4. **Make poetry accessible:**
 - World Poetry Day promotes the reading, writing, teaching, and enjoyment of poetry for everyone.

Theme:

- The theme for World Poetry Day 2024 is **"Standing on the Shoulders of Giants."**

World Down Syndrome Day

- **World Down Syndrome Day** is celebrated annually on **March 21st**
- It is a day to **raise awareness about Down syndrome and celebrate the contributions of people with Down syndrome**.
- The date, **3/21**, reflects the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome that causes Down syndrome.
- This day was **officially recognized by the United Nations in 2012**.

About:

- Down's syndrome is a **genetic disorder** caused when **abnormal cell division** results in **extra genetic material from chromosome 21 (trisomy 21)**.
- This extra copy **changes how a baby's body and brain develop**.
- It can cause **both mental and physical challenges during their lifetime**.

Theme:

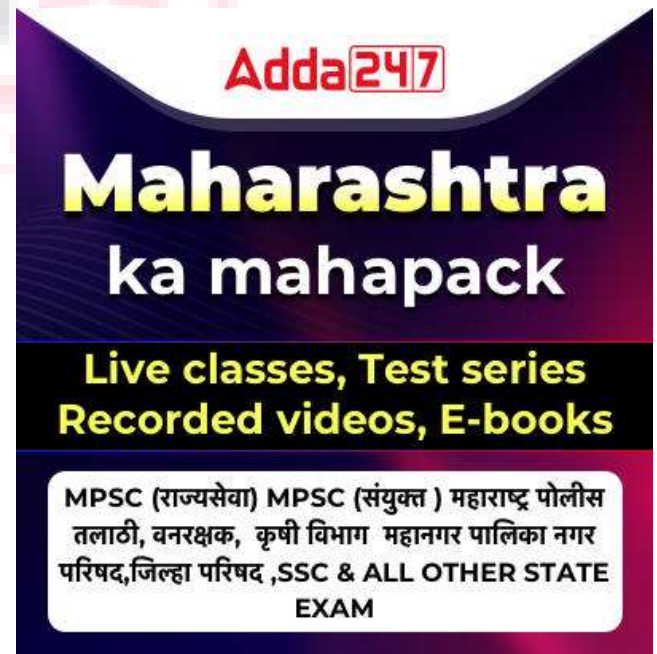
- This year's theme is **'End The Stereotypes'**.

World Meteorological Day

- **World Meteorological Day** is celebrated on **March 23rd every year**.
- It marks the anniversary of the establishment of the **World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1950**.
- The day highlights the importance of weather and climate information for **society's safety and well-being**.

Theme:

- This year's theme is **"At the Frontline of Climate Action."**
- It **emphasizes the crucial role of weather observation, forecasting, and climate science** in understanding and addressing climate change.



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