

M A R C H 2 0 2 1

**MONTHLY UPDATES ON
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WILEY

NATIONAL

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has flagged off the 91st anniversary of **Dandi March** on March 12 in Ahmedabad. The Salt March, which took place from March to April 1930, was an act of civil disobedience led by Mahatma Gandhi to protest the British rule in the country.



It was a non-violent protest against the British monopoly on the production of salt. Led by **Gandhi**, 78 people started the 24-day march on March 12 and reached Dandi on April 5, 1930. After making salt at Dandi, Gandhi headed to Dharasana Salt Works, 40 km south, but was arrested on May 5. The event is kicked off from Mahatma Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram and this event is also the part of the State government's programme to mark 'Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav'.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the Kindle version of Swami Chidbhavananda's **Bhagavad Gita** via video conferencing. The event has been organised to commemorate the sale of over 5 lakh copies of the Swami Chidbhavanandaji's Bhagavad Gita.



Swami Chidbhavanandaji is the founder of Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam Ashram at Thirupparaithurai, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu. He noted that Swami Vivekananda's Madras lectures inspired Swami Chidbhavananda Ji to

put the nation above everything else and serve the people.

- The Government of India has set up a 259-member high-level national committee, to be headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to commemorate 75 years of India's independence. The committee will provide policy direction and guidelines for the formulation of programmes for the commemoration of the **75th anniversary of Indian Independence**, at the national and international levels.
- The Heritage Foundation, a US Conservative think-tank, recently launched the **Economic Freedom Index**. In the index, **Singapore** has topped the global ranking for the second consecutive year. The index was prepared by covering 184 countries this time for the period of July 2019 to June 2020. The overall score of the Singapore was increased by 0.3 points to 89.7. The score was increased primarily because of the improvement in score for the government spending. The score obtained by Singapore is well-above the regional and the world averages. Hongkong was not considered to prepare this year's index for the first time which has topped the list for 25 years out of 26 years before this year's index. Hong Kong was kept outside, because, the Special Administrative Region & the economic policies of the country now come under the direct control of Beijing.

ECONOMY

- The Government of India has notified comprehensive amendments to the **Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017**, for better resolution of policyholders' complaints regarding insurance service deficiencies, in a timely, cost-effective and impartial manner. It will help in facilitating the resolution of the complaints with respect to the deficiencies in insurance services in a cost-effective and impartial manner on time. The Ombudsman mechanism was administered by the Executive Council of Insurers which is now renamed as the Council for Insurance Ombudsmen. Earlier, the scope of complaints to Ombudsmen was limited to only disputes, but now it has been enlarged to include deficiencies in service on the part of insurers,



agents, brokers and other intermediaries. The insurance brokers have also been brought within the ambit of the Ombudsman mechanism. Now, the Ombudsmen has been empowered to pass awards against insurance brokers as well. A complaints management system will be created to enable policyholders to track the status of their complaints online and the Ombudsmen can use video-conferencing to hear the cases.

- ⊙ The Heritage Foundation, a US Conservative think-tank, recently launched the **Economic Freedom Index**. The index was prepared by covering 184 countries this time for the period of July 2019 to June 2020. This is the first time the index has been published since the COVID-19 pandemic overturned lives as well as global economies and the scoring reflects a small extent how governments have responded to the health crisis. In the index, Singapore has topped the global ranking for the second consecutive year followed by New Zealand and Australia. In the 2021 Index, India came in around the middle of the pack among Asia-Pacific countries ranking 26th out of 40 countries, scoring 56.5 points. Globally, the Foundation rates India's economy as the 121st freest.
- ⊙ The **Axis Bank** has launched the **WhatsApp Banking** with the objective of helping and addressing the banking needs of its customers. The WhatsApp Banking will help the customer to use the bank anywhere and anytime on the chatting app. In order to avail the WhatsApp Banking services, the customers are required to initiate a chat with designated Axis Bank number and ask for the details. This service will allow the customers to ask the information with respect to their account balance, credit card payments, recent transactions, fixed & recurring deposit details.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- ⊙ **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has joined hands with **Indian Institute of Space Science & Technology (IIST)** for futuristic research orbit. Partnership between ISRO and IIST is similar to partnership between Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and US Space Agency NASA for futuristic research orbit. JPL is funded by NASA while managed by California Institute of Technology (Caltech).

- ⊙ Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman, has launched Central Scrutiny Centre (CSC) and Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) **Mobile App**. These tech-enabled initiatives were developed by Ministry of Corporate Affairs to strengthen vision of **Digitally Empowered India**. These two initiatives will help in creating a new corporate and investor friendly ecosystem. The ministry of corporate affairs will bring in more tech-enabled services to attain ease of doing business and ease of living for people. According to Finance Minister, Ministry of Corporate affairs has been engaged in digitisation, automation and improvement in order to extend support to society, economy, corporates and professionals. She also added that, around 1.38 lakhs companies have been incorporated as opposed to 1.16 lakhs companies last year by Central Registration Centre as of February 2021. Thus, registration has increased by over 17%.
- ⊙ **Russia** has successfully put **38 satellites** for 18 countries into orbit from Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The Russian Space Agency, Roscosmos, published a video showing its Soyuz rocket was launched against the grey and cloudy skies. The rocket successfully placed satellites (into orbit) from countries including Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Italy, Germany and Brazil. The launcher also launched 'Challenge-1 satellite', which is the first satellite completely made in Tunisia, created by Telnet Telecommunications group.
- ⊙ The Minister for Electronics and IT, Ravi Shankar Prasad, in a written reply to Rajya Sabha has said that India has developed its first indigenously developed App Store called **Mobile Seva Appstore**. The app store hosts some 965 live apps of several domains and categories of public services. This Indian App Store will be available for free of cost in the initial phases. The minister further highlighted that, while the government is encouraging the private players to host apps, it is also showing its interest to develop and strengthen its own mobile app store. This reply was given by the minister on the question, whether absence of India's own digital store and its dependence on external app stores of Google and Apple is creating problems for the India's digital ecosystem or the ministry is considering having its own digital store for self-reliance.



- © **The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has launched the sounding rocket called **RH-560**. The rocket was launched in order to study 'attitudinal variations' in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics. The RH-560 rocket was launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) Sriharikota Range (SHAR). ISRO highlighted that the sounding rockets are one or two-stage solid propellant rockets. These rockets are used to probe the upper atmospheric regions and conduct the space research. The rockets would also serve as easily affordable platforms which can test or prove the prototypes of new components or subsystems for use in the launch vehicles and satellites. ISRO had started launching the indigenously made sounding rockets from the year 1965.
- © Sports Ministry has decided to extend **Khelo India Programme** from 2021-22 to 2025-26. Ministry has also furnished Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) memorandum to Ministry of Finance to extend the annual event. As per the memorandum to Finance Ministry, an amount of 8,750 crore has been estimated as a financial implication of new Khelo India Scheme. This programme is being extended after considering how this initiative has played a significant role in building a sporting culture across the country.
- © The Indian wrestler, **Vinesh Phogat**, has won the gold medal in women's 53-kg category. She won the medal at XXIV Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial in Kyiv, Ukraine.

SPORTS

- © India's ace shuttler PV Sindhu has won a silver medal in the BWF Swiss Open Super 300 in the final of the women's singles event held at Basel, Switzerland. The World No. 7 Sindhu lost to World No. 3 and reigning Olympic champion Carolina Marin.



Men's Singles: Viktor Axelsen (Denmark) beat Kunlavut Vitidsarn (Thailand).

Women's Singles: Carolina Marin (Spain) beat PV Sindhu (India).

Men's Doubles: Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen (Denmark) beat Mark Lamsfuss-Marvin Seidel (Germany).

Mixed Doubles: Thom Gicquel-Delphine Delrue (France) beat Denmark pair, Mathias Christiansen-Alexandra Boje.



After winning the wrestling match, she made a winning return to her first competitive outing played after the lockdown imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Now the 26-year-old wrestler will be back into action in the first ranking tournament of the season from March 4 to March 7, 2021 in Rome.

- © The Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting said that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is associating with **IIT Bombay** to form a **Centre of Excellence** in gaming and other related areas. This announcement was made while addressing a virtual exhibition and prize announcement of **Khel Khel Mein** which is a Pan Maharashtra toy or game project design competition. The minister highlighted that the Central government is at an advanced stage of preparation. This centre of excellence (CoE) in gaming will come into effect when the new session will begin in 2021.

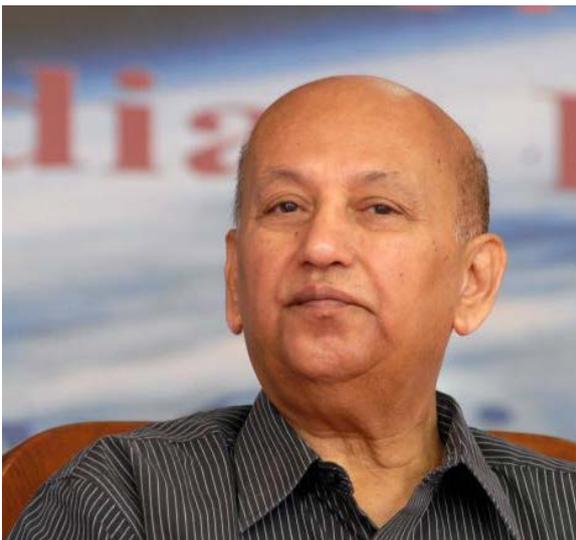
PERSONS IN NEWS

- © The Indian Boxer, **Mary Kom**, was appointed as the chairperson of the International Boxing Association (AIBA) champions and veterans committee on March 3, 2021.



AIBA President Umar Kremlev stated that he is confident that Mary Kom will make significant contribution towards the success of this committee with her vast knowledge and experience. This committee was established in December 2020. It comprises of the most respected boxing veterans and champions from across the world who have achieved some significant goals and are ready to share their experience.

- © The tech giant **Google** is celebrating the 89th birthday of renowned Indian professor and scientist Udupi Ramachandra Rao on March 10, 2021 through its **Google Doodle**.



The doodle features a sketch of Professor Rao and having a background of Earth and shooting stars to mark his contributions in the space

arena. Professor Rao was an Indian space scientist who also worked as the chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation. Also, he was the Chairman of Governing Council of Indian Institute for Space Science and Technology (IIST) at Thiruvananthapuram, Physical Research Laboratory at Ahmedabad and Nehru Planetarium at Bengaluru. He is remembered as the 'India's Satellite Man'. Professor Rao was awarded with the Padma Bhushan by Government of India in the year 1976, and he was conferred with the Padma Vibhushan in the 2017. Professor was inducted into Satellite Hall of Fame, Washington in March 2013 at the ceremony organised by the Society of Satellite Professionals International. Thus, he became the first Indian to be inducted into Satellite Hall of Fame.

PLANS AND POLICIES

- © **Uttar Pradesh** government has announced to start an affordable **rental housing scheme** for students, urban migrants and poor people living in cities. Uttar Pradesh cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath proposed for Affordable Rental Housing and Complexes (ARHC) scheme. Under state government's ARHC scheme; beneficiaries include poor migrants, students, urban migrants, low-income groups including factory workers, people from economically weaker section (EWS) and people associated with hospitality. Preference will be given to people from widows, working women & minorities, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes. Preference will be subject to provisions made by state government. This scheme will be implemented under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) to promote participation of private and public institutions to construct, operate and maintain rental housing complexes for the beneficiaries.
- © Power and new and renewable energy minister, Raj Kumar Singh, launched **Gram Ujala scheme** on March 24, 2021 in Varanasi. Gram Ujala scheme offers world's cheapest LED bulbs across rural areas at ₹10. This scheme is financed on the basis of carbon credits. It will claim carbon credits under 'United Nations' Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)'. Carbon credits will contribute to rupees 60 per piece while



₹10 will be paid by rural consumer Under the scheme, incandescent and compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) bulbs will be taken back from the rural customers.

- ⊙ Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment aims to launch **Poshan Abhiyan** for the Elderly to provide them **nutrition support**. Under the mission, supports will be provided to indigent elders who are not staying in Old Age Homes and are victims of malnutrition. Mission will focus on procuring healthy food material which are available locally to serve hot-cooked mid-day meals. Scheme will be implemented by 'Gram Panchayats and Urban Municipalities'. 'Senior Citizens Welfare Fund' will be utilized to fund & implement the mission.
- ⊙ The Jal Shakti Ministry has signed a pact with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the government of Denmark to bring the tap water connections to the 11 water-scarce districts of the Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions in Uttar Pradesh under the Jal Jeevan mission. The project will comprise of the supports like capacity building, creation of village action plans, grassroot water quality monitoring methods and community mobilisation. All these supports will be facilitated by UNOPS. The project has set a million-dollar budget for the year 2021. However, the project will be scaled up in the year 2022.
- ⊙ Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to launch the **Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign** in the virtual mode. The campaign is being launched on the occasion of World Water Day on March 22, 2021. The campaign will be implemented under the theme— **Catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls**. On the occasion, the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh & Uttar Pradesh will sign a historic Memorandum of Agreement to implement the **Ken Betwa Link Project** in the presence of Prime Minister. This will be the first project of **National Perspective Plan** for interlinking of the rivers.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

- ⊙ The 63rd edition of the annual **Grammy Awards** ceremony was held in Los Angeles. The 2021 Grammy awards recognized the best recordings, compositions, and artists of the eligibility year,

between September 1, 2019, to August 31, 2020. The award is presented by The Recording Academy to recognize achievements in the American music industry. Beyonce received the most nominations with nine, as well as the most awards with four.

Here is the list of winners of Grammy Awards 2021:

Category	Winner
Album of The Year	'Folklore' by Taylor Swift
Record of The Year	'Everything I Wanted' by Billie Eilish
Best New Artist	Megan Thee Stallion
Best Rap Album	'King's Disease' by Nas
Best R&B Album Winner	'Bigger Love' by John Legend
Best Rap Song	'Savage' by Beyoncé, Shawn Carter, Brittany
Best Country Album	'Wildcard' by Miranda Lambert
Song of The Year	'I Can't Breathe' by Dernst Emile II, H.E.R. and Tiara Thomas
Best Rock Album	'The New Abnormal' by The Strokes
Best Rock Song	'Stay High' by Brittany Howard, songwriter (Brittany Howard)
Best Dance/Electronic Album	'Bubba' by Kaytranada
Producer of the Year, Classical	David Frost
Best Music Video	'Brown Skin Girl' by Beyoncé, Blue Ivy & WizKid
Best Country Song	'Crowded Table' by Brandi Carlile, Natalie Hemby & Lori McKenna
Best Folk Album	All the Good Times
Best Comedy Album	'Black Mitzvah' by Tiffany Haddish

- ⊙ **Sahitya Akademi** announced its **annual Sahitya Akademi Awards** in 20 languages. Seven books of poetry, four novels, Five short stories, two plays, and one each of memoirs and epic poetry in 20 Indian languages. The awards for Malayalam, Nepali, Odia and Rajasthani will be announced later. The political-writer M Veerappa Moily, poet Arundhathi Subramaniam will be bestowed with the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020.

Sahitya Akademi Award

The complete list of winners in different language and genre categories is given in the table below.

Language	Title and Genre	Name of the Author
Assamese	Bengsata (Short stories)	Apurba Kumar Saikia
Bengali	Eka Eka Ekashi (Memoirs)	Mani Shankar Mukhopadhyay
Bodo	Gwthenay Lamayao Gwdan Agan (Short stories)	Dharanidhar Owari
Dogri	Baba Jitmal (Play)	Gian Singh
English	When God Is a Traveller (Poetry)	Arundhati Subramaniam
Gujarati	Banaras Diary (Poetry)	Harish Meenakshru
Hindi	Tokeri Mein Digant 'Their Gatha' (Poetry)	Anamika
Kannada	Sri Bahubali Ahimsadigvijayam (EPIC POETRY)	M. Veerappa Moily
Kashmiri	Tilasm-e-Khanabadosh (Short stories)	Hiday Koul Bharti
Konkani	Yugaparivarathanancho Yatri (Poetry)	RS Bhaskar
Maithili	Gachh Roosal Achhi (Short Stories)	Kamalkant Jha
Manipuri	Malangbana Kari Hai (Poetry)	Irungbam Deven
Marathi	Udya (Novel)	Nanda Khare
Punjabi	Aam Khass (Short stories)	Gurdev Singh Rupana
Sanskrit	Vaishali (Novel)	Mahesh Chandra Sharma Gautam
Santali	Gur Dak Kasa Dak (Poetry)	Rupchand Hansdah
Sindhi	Jehad (Plays)	Jetho Lalwani
Tamil	Sellaatha Panam (Novel)	Imaiyam
Telugu	Agniswaasa (2015-17) Poetry	Nikhileswar
Urdu	Amawas Mein Khwab (Novel)	Hussain-ul-Haque

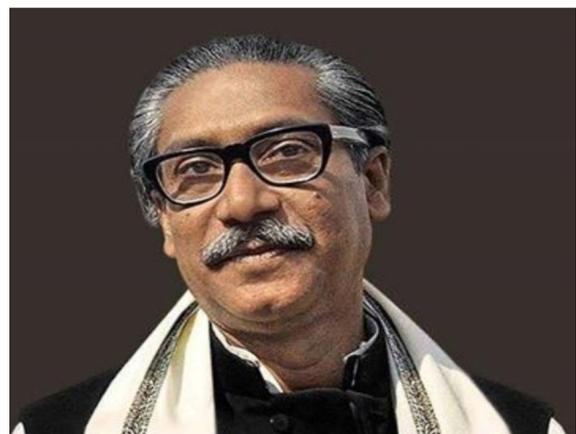
© The winners for the **67th National Film Awards 2021** were announced on March 22, 2021. This award ceremony was delayed by a year amid the covid-19 pandemic otherwise, every year, it is organised on May 3. However, the ceremony was not organised in the year 2020. The winners were finally announced on March 22 during a press conference at the National Media Centre in New Delhi. In the year 2021, there were a total of 461 films in the Feature Film category and

220 films in the Non-Feature Film category. The entries were from the 13 states in the most film-friendly states.

The winners of the 67th National Film Awards are listed below.

Category	Winner
Most film-friendly state award	Sikkim
Best Book on Cinema award	'A Gandhian Affair: India's Curious Portrayal of Love in Cinema' by Sanjay Suri
Best Film Critic	Sohini Chattopadhyay
Best Narration award (Non-features film category)	Wild Karnataka by Sir David Attenborough
Best Editing award	'Shut Up Sona' by Arjun Gourisaria
Best Audiography	Radha (Musical), Allwin Rego and Sanjay Maurya
Best On-Location Sound Recordist award	Rahas (Hindi) by Saptarshi Sarkar
Best Cinematography award	Sonsi by Savita Singh
Best Direction award	Knock Knock Knock (English/Bengali) by Sudhanshu Saria
Best Short Fiction Film award	Custody
Special Jury Award	Small Scale Societies
Best Animation Film award	Radha (Musical)

- According to the Ministry of the culture, Government of India has conferred the **Gandhi Peace Prize** on **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** for 2020.



He was the first President and also became Prime Minister of Bangladesh, later. He is called as **Father of the Nation** or **Mujib**. He was

assassinated on August 15, 1975. The peace prize for the year 2019 was conferred on the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman.

The peace prize was conferred ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Dhaka on March 26, 2021. He will be attending the celebrations of the golden jubilee of the independence and birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

- © Bangladesh has announced the names of nine individuals and one organization who will be conferred with the **Highest Civilian Award** of the Bangladesh called **Independence Award** for the year 2021. As per the announcement, four individuals have been selected posthumously under the category of freedom fighters with respect to their contribution to the liberation war of Bangladesh. These four individuals include, A K M Bazlur Rahman, Brig. Gen. Khurshid Uddin Ahmed, Ahsan Ullah Master and Akhataruzzaman Chowdhury Babu. Apart from them, Dr. Mrinmoy Guha Niyogi was selected for contributing to science and technology. Mahadev Saha have been selected for award for his contributions in literature. Ataur Rahman and Gazi Mazharul Anwar will be honoured with the award for their contribution in Culture while, Dr. M Amzad Hossain was nominated for the award for his social & public service. Among the various organisations, 'Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council' was nominated for the award for 'Research & Training'.

