



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAR 25, 2019

TAMIL NADU

- **Bharathidasan University – received a funding of Rs 8.5 crore for tracing the history of Poompuhar**
- ✓ The fund was provided by the department of science and technology (DST)
- ✓ The university's Department of remote sensing will be the lead agency to carry out the inter-disciplinary research to trace out the life history of the ancient port city
- ✓ The study will be done in association with other universities including AMET University, National Institute of Ocean Technology, Chennai and Gandhigram Rural University, Dindigul.
- ✓ The port city, also known as Kaveripoompattinam, was established by the Chola dynasty at the mouth of river Cauvery during the Tamil Sangam era (300 BC – AD 300)
- ✓ It had trade links with Asian, Arabian and Mediterranean countries
- ✓ The city had elaborate narrations in Sangam and post-Sangam literature like Silappathigaram and Manimegalai
- ✓ It became suddenly defunct during AD 1100

NATIONAL

- **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) - has added 3 new 'skill' subjects, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE), and Yoga in the school curriculum for academic session 2019-20**
- ✓ AI will be introduced as an optional sixth subject for Class IX whereas ECCE and Yoga are being introduced as elective subjects at senior secondary level

INTERNATIONAL

- **Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe - has laid the foundation stone on a new \$3.85bn oil refinery in Hambantota in the country's Southern Province**



- ✓ It is jointly funded by Oman and Singapore-registered Silver Park International, a company owned by India-based Accord Group
 - ✓ The project is believed to be the single largest foreign investment in Sri Lankan history
 - ✓ Accord Group's subsidiary will hold a stake of 70% in the oil refinery while Oman's oil ministry will take the remaining 30% stake
 - ✓ The project will come up at the investment zone next to a port that Sri Lanka has leased out to a Chinese state-run firm for 99 years in 2017
 - ✓ The oil storage tanks are expected to be completed within two years while the refinery will run by 2023, exporting nine million tonnes of petroleum annually
- **US-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian democratic forces - declare victory over Islamic State (IS) in Syria**
 - ✓ On March 23, the forces had liberated the last ISIS stronghold in the eastern village of Baghouz in Syria, putting an end to the 'caliphate' of IS terror group
 - ✓ At the height of its power in 2014, Islamic State ruled over almost 8 million people across 88,000 sq km, or a third of both Syria and Iraq
 - ✓ It generated billions of dollars from oil, extortion, robbery and kidnapping.
 - ✓ In December 2017 the Iraqi government declared victory over IS

- ✓ In December 2018, US president Donald Trump ordered the withdrawal of all 2,000 US troops in Syria, claiming they had defeated IS
- **Donald Trump, United States President - ordered the withdrawal of additional large-scale sanctions on North Korea**
- ✓ President Trump's move came after his second summit with Kim held in February 2019 in Hanoi, Vietnam
- ✓ Trump walked out of that summit after refusing to agree to North Korea's demands of lifting all sanctions
- ✓ The US Treasury Department had announced sanctions on Chinese shipping companies doing business with North Korea recently on March 21
- **Oman - signed an agreement with the United States on March 24, 2019, allowing American ships and warplanes to take advantage of its ports and airports**
- ✓ The agreement will allow the US forces to take advantage of the facilities offered at some of Oman's ports, particularly the Duqm port
- ✓ The Duqm port is located in southern Oman on the Arabian Sea and around 500 kilometres from the Strait of Hormuz
- ✓ The Strait of Hormuz is crucial to global energy supplies, with about a third of the world's seaborne oil passing through it every day
- ✓ The United States has a number of military bases across the Gulf with the largest in Qatar with about 10,000 troops.
- **UAE - has launched the 'Lose to Win' Programme**
- ✓ It aims to assist the overweight employees in shedding extra kilos and adopt a healthy lifestyle
- ✓ It has been initiated by the Ministry of Health and Prevention of UAE, comprising of nutritionists and health educators from the Ministry
- ✓ In the current edition, the programme focuses on the employees of the Ministry of Infrastructure Development

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Indian Oil Corporation Limited - were awarded the exploration rights for Abu Dhabi Onshore Block 1**
- ✓ The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) signed agreements awarding the exploration rights to the consortium of two Indian oil companies
- ✓ The approval regarding the same was accorded by Abu Dhabi's Supreme Petroleum Council.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **NITI Aayog - organised the FinTech Conclave in New Delhi on March 25, 2019**



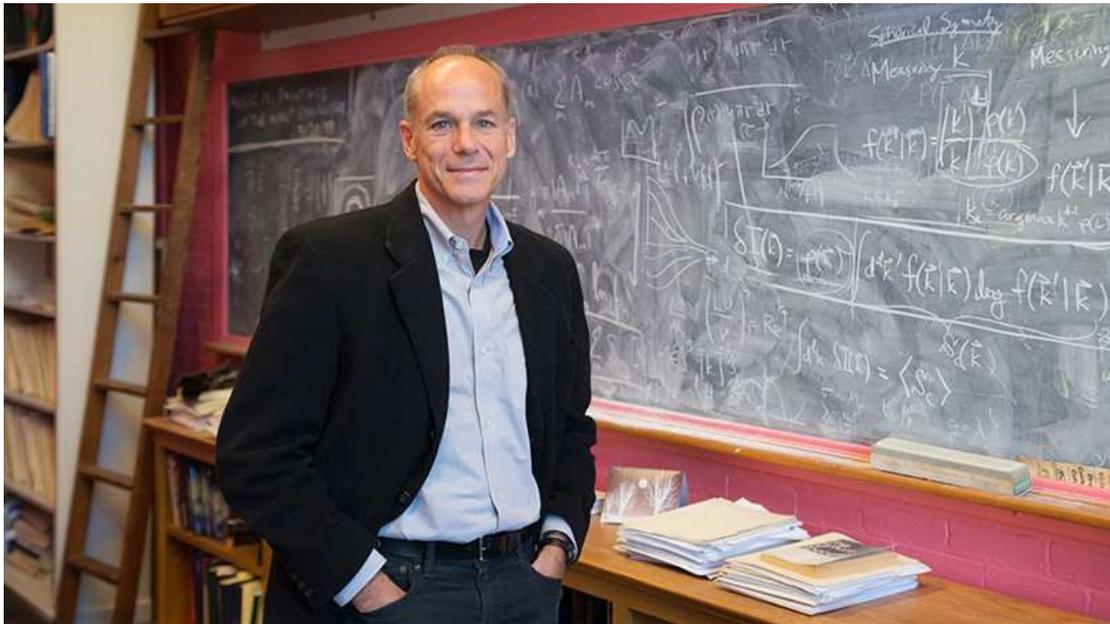
- ✓ It was inaugurated by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das and was attended by senior government officials and secretaries
- ✓ It hosted more than 300 representatives from the leading Financial Institutions including HDFC Bank, IndusInd, ICICI Bank, SBI Card, Tata Capital and FinTechs

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **ISRO – to launch EMISAT, an advanced electronic intelligence satellite, on April 1**
- ✓ It was developed by DRDO
- ✓ It will track enemy radars and sensors, can find out exact topography of enemy areas and identify the 'active' communication mobile devices in an area
- ✓ The 436-kg satellite will be placed in the 763-km orbit, to monitor hostile countries like Pakistan

AWARDS

- **Brazilian physicist and astronomer, Marcelo Gleiser - has been awarded the 2019 Templeton Prize for his work blending science and spirituality**



- ✓ Templeton Prize was established in 1972 by the late Sir John Templeton
- ✓ The Prize aims to honour outstanding individuals who has made an exceptional contribution to affirming life's spiritual dimension whether through insight, discovery, or practical works
- **Peter Tabichi, a rural teacher from Kenya - has won the prestigious Global Teacher Prize 2019 which honours the world's best teacher**



- ✓ Peter Tabichi is a maths and physics teacher at Keriko secondary school in Pwani Village in Kenya's Rift valley
- ✓ He gives away 80% of his income to help the poorest students at the poorly-equipped and overcrowded school who could not afford uniforms and books
- ✓ His students have taken part in international science competitions and won an award from the Royal Society of Chemistry
- ✓ Swaroop Rawal, an Indian teacher at Lavad Primary School, Gujarat and various other schools, was also there in contention for the award
- ✓ The US \$1 million award was constituted in the year 2015 by the Varkey Foundation, under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai

SPORTS

- **Archana Kamath - wins the Silver medal at the ITTF Challenge Oman Open**



- ✓ She had lost the Under-21 final to top-seeded Japanese Satsuki Odo
- ✓ Fourth-seeded, G Sathiyam clinched the bronze medal after losing the semifinal on March 24
- ✓ Archana won the national women singles crown at Cuttack this January

RANKINGS

- **World Economic Forum's Global Energy Transition index 2019**
- ✓ India has jumped two positions to be ranked 76th on the annual index
- ✓ Released by the Geneva-based forum on March 25, 2019, it ranks 115 economies on their ability to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability
- ✓ Sweden retained its top spot on the list, followed by Switzerland and Norway in the second and third positions respectively.

Top 10 Countries Energy Transition Index 2019¹

	Score	Rank
Sweden	74.9%	1
Switzerland	74.3%	2
Norway	73.4%	3
Finland	73.0%	4
Denmark	72.2%	5
Austria	70.7%	6
United Kingdom	70.2%	7
France	68.6%	8
Netherlands	68.5%	9
Iceland	68.5%	10

Note 1: The Energy Transition Index benchmarks countries on the performance of their energy system, as well as their readiness for transition to a secure, sustainable, affordable, and reliable energy future. ETI 2019 score on a scale from 0 to 100%.

Source: Fostering Effective Energy Transition Report 2019, World Economic Forum

- ✓ While India scored low in terms of system performance (ranking 97 and 86, respectively), it ranks considerably higher when it comes to readiness to adapt to future energy needs (45 and 61 respectively)
- ✓ Malaysia with 31st spot was the highest-ranking developing country from the Asian region, followed by Sri Lanka at 60th rank
- ✓ In Sub-Saharan Africa, Namibia (62) was the highest-ranking country, followed by Kenya (71) and Ethiopia (95)
- ✓ Among the major economies, the UK is ranked at the 7th position, Singapore at 13th, Germany at 17th, Japan at 18th and the United States at the 27th position

INTERNATIONAL DAY

- **World Tuberculosis (TB) Day – January 24**



- ✓ The observance of the day aims to raise public awareness about the devastating health and economic consequences of tuberculosis and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic.
 - ✓ Theme 2019 – 'It's time'
 - ✓ On the eve of the day, World Health Organization (WHO) launched a joint initiative "Find. Treat. All. #EndTB" along with the Global Fund and Stop TB Partnership
 - ✓ India renewed its commitments and intentions to end TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global targets
 - ✓ The Nikshay Poshan Yojana benefited 15 lakh TB patients for nutrition support with Rs 240 cores disbursed as Direct Benefit Transfer since April 2018
 - ✓ In 2017, WHO reported that 10.4 million people fell ill with TB and there were 1.8 million TB deaths in 2016
 - ✓ In September 2018, the global leaders came together and made strong commitments to end TB at the first-ever UN High Level Meeting
 - ✓ The World TB Day commemorates the event in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch discovered the cause of tuberculosis, the TB bacillus
 - ✓ Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by bacteria Mycobacterium tuberculosis (MTB), affecting the Lungs and other parts of the body
- **Shaheed Divas (Martyr's day) – March 23**



- ✓ On this day in 1931, Bhagat Singh along with his associates Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru were hanged to death for the killing 21-year-old British police officer John Sanders
- ✓ The revolutionaries had mistaken Saunders for Superintendent James Scott, who was responsible for leading a lathi charge against Lala Lajpat Rai protesting against the Simon Commission
- ✓ January 30, which marks the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, is also observed as the Martyrs Day

JET AIRWAYS CRISIS – A REPORT

- **Jet Airways Founder and Chairman Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita Goyal - resigned from the board on March 25, 2019 following reports of looming financial crisis in the airlines**
- ✓ Chief Executive Vinay Dube is expected to stay on to steer the airline out of the current financial crisis.
- ✓ Jet Airways' lenders had worked out an alternate Rs 1,500 crore 'Interim Resolution Plan' for the debt-ridden airline, which involves taking majority control and reconstituting the entire board of the country's second largest carrier
- ✓ They have asked Goyal to step down immediately and make way for a new management.
- ✓ The banks, led by State Bank of India (SBI), will convert their debt into equity and take a controlling stake in the airline for a token sum of 1 rupee.
- ✓ Jet said the banks will initiate a bidding process to sell their stake in the airline to a new investor and that the process is expected to be complete by the end of June



- ✓ Jet's lenders consortium may invoke the entire 51% stake of Naresh Goyal in the airline, and start looking for a new buyer in the weeks to come.
- ✓ Former SBI managing director & an ex Jet Airways board member Srinivasan Vishvanathan may be invited to join the airline's top leadership
- ✓ Vishvanathan was on the Jet Board as an Independent Director till August 2018 for nearly three years.
- ✓ The lenders are considering to also invite former SBI Chairman & ex CVC commissioner Janki Ballabh to the Jet Airways Board
- ✓ Saddled with more than \$1 billion of debt, Jet Airways is struggling to stay afloat, grounding around 40 flights
- ✓ In a similar situation in 2013, Abu Dhabi's Etihad Airways injected \$600 million of capital for a 24% stake in the airline and bailed it out of the financial crunch
- ✓ Jet Airways has a fleet of 119 aircraft, out of which 54 aircrafts have been grounded due to non-payment of dues and another 24 planes are not flying because of non-maintenance
- ✓ Jet Airways on January 1, 2019 informed the stock exchanges that it had defaulted on its loan repayments to banks
- ✓ The various causes for the financial crisis at Jet Airways were – Increasing cost of aviation fuel, Low-cost model leading to rising operational costs and decline in operations
- ✓ The Jet Airways was founded nearly 25 years ago by Goyal and his wife in 1993.

