

## Maharashtra Weekly Current Affairs 25 to 31 March 2024

## Maharashtra State News

**Monthly grant to World War-II veterans and war widows by Maharashtra Government.**

- The State Department of Sainik Welfare **increases the monthly grant for World War II veterans from Rs 6,000 to Rs 11,000,**
- This will benefit around **16,000 war widows and 16 veterans in Maharashtra, aged in their 90s.**
- **This amount is the highest in the country.**

**About:**

- During World War II (WWII), the **British government recruited numerous Indian soldiers to fight on various global battlefields from 1939 to 1945.**
- Post-war, these soldiers were repatriated **without receiving any financial benefits or recognition.**
- **After India's independence, they were not granted ex-servicemen status or monetary assistance.**
- Other states like Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Uttarakhand provide monthly grants ranging from Rs 6,000 to Rs 9,000 to war veterans.
- **The government has implemented the decision since January.**

**Maharashtra Cash Crop Production Triples Under High Density Planting System (HDPS)**

- Over **550 cotton farmers from Nagpur and Wardha districts achieved a threefold increase in cash crop production.**
- Implemented in Maharashtra during 2023-24, the **high density planting system (HDPS) pilot project facilitated this surge.**
- The central government offered a **₹16,000 per hectare incentive to encourage farmers to adopt HDPS, aiming to boost production.**
- Previously, Vidarbha farmers typically yielded 6-10 quintals of cotton per acre using conventional methods.
- Notably, a **30-year-old farmer from Wardha attained the highest yield of 19 quintals per acre.**

**HDPS:**

- HDPS was introduced in India by the **Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR),** and it

has shown promising results in various states, including **Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu.**

- High Density Planting System (HDPS) is an innovative cultivation method for cotton that aims to increase yield by optimizing the use of available resources such as land, water, and nutrients. The key features of HDPS include:
  - **Narrower plant-to-plant spacing**
  - **Compact cotton varieties**
  - **Higher plant population**
  - **Efficient resource use**
  - **Reduced weed pressure**

**World Tuberculosis day**

- Every year on March **24th, World Tuberculosis (TB) Day is observed worldwide to raise awareness about the devastating health, social, and economic consequences of TB,** and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic.
- This day **commemorates the date in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of Mycobacterium tuberculosis,** the bacteria that causes tuberculosis, a disease that still affects millions globally.

**It aims to:**

- **Raise Awareness:**
  - a. World TB Day serves as a platform to educate individuals, communities, policymakers, and healthcare professionals about the signs, symptoms, transmission, prevention, and treatment of tuberculosis.
- **Mobilize Resources:**
  - b. World TB Day mobilises resources from governments, international organisations, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders to support TB research, innovation, and implementation of evidence-based interventions aimed at ending the TB epidemic.
- **Empower Communities:**
  - c. Empowering communities and engaging affected individuals as advocates and agents of change are key components of TB control efforts.

World TB Day encourages community involvement, active participation,

- **Promote Partnerships:**
  - d. Collaboration and partnerships among governments, non-governmental organisations, academia, communities, and affected individuals are essential to achieve the ambitious targets set for ending TB.

**Theme:**

- The theme for World Tuberculosis (TB) Day 2024 is "Yes! We can end TB!"

### **Dr Pragma D Yadav is new director-in-charge at National Institute of One Health , Nagpur**

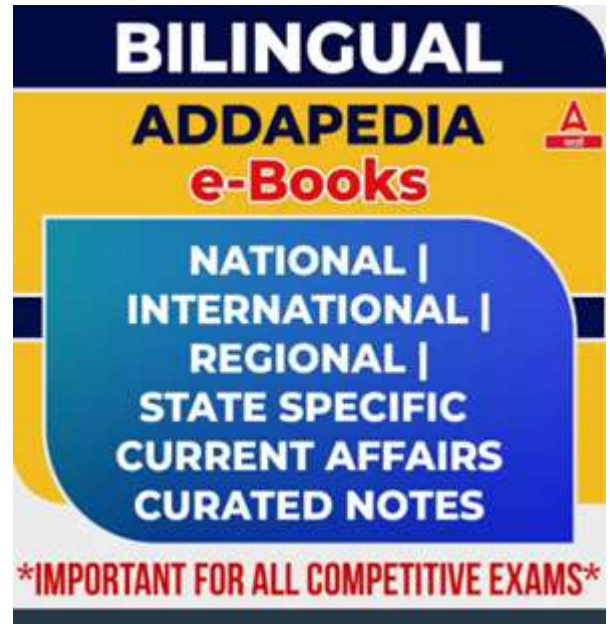
- **Dr Pragma D Yadav**, senior scientist at the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Virology, **has been appointed the director-in-charge of the National Institute of One Health, Nagpur.**

**About:**

- Dr. Yadav, renowned for research on communicable diseases and viral infections, including COVID-19, will oversee NIOH Nagpur alongside her role at ICMR-NIV Pune.
- She played a pivotal role in detecting India's first COVID-19 cases and led the team behind Covaxin, the country's first indigenous vaccine.
- Dr. Yadav will wield administrative and financial authority as Director-in-Charge of NIOH Nagpur, aligning with ICMR's efforts to enhance biosafety infrastructure nationwide through the PM-ABHIM program.

**Note:**

- The National Institute of One Health (NIOH) focuses on interdisciplinary research at the intersection of human, animal, and environmental health.
- It aims to address global health challenges, promote collaboration between sectors, and develop holistic approaches to disease prevention and control.



### **Thane's Hariyali Lake**

- **Thane's Hariyali Lake** is the source of pride for Chendani Koliwada residents.

**About:**

- **Hariyali Lake** (meaning "greenery") in Thane dries up in summer, but monsoons bring water that hides under a blanket of new plants. This seasonal cycle inspired its name.
- The lake also supports a local fishery with 10-15 fish varieties sold in Wagle Estate.
- First Indian train used Thane's Hariyali Lake for water.

**Note:**

- Under the **AMRUT 2.0** goal, beautification projects have been under progress.
- Residents are concerned about water quality during **Thane's Hariyali Lake beautification and urge better maintenance.**
- They believe the lake has potential to be a water source after proper filtration.

### **Discovery of Two Temple Bases in Ambajogai Excavation**

- The **Maharashtra Archaeology Department** made a significant discovery during excavation activities near Ambajogai in Beed district.
- Two temple bases were unearthed within the **Sakaleshwar temple premises**, also known

as the Barakhambi temple, which dates back to 1228 AD and was constructed by the Yadava dynasty.

**Key points:**

- The excavation, which commenced on March 15, involved the **creation of 14 trenches, each measuring 100 square feet.**
- **Amot Gote, Assistant Director of State Archaeology, stated that among the findings were the bases of two temples, one identified as Kholeshwar, named after a Yadava general.**
- Evidence such as bricks and sculpture fragments, including hands and feet, **indicate that the temples once possessed shikhars.**
- The project also includes plans for a survey of ancient monuments in **Ambajogai, with the intention of granting the area the status of a "heritage village."**
- Ambajogai, historically known by various names including Amrapur, **Jayantipur, and Jogaiambe, was also referred to as Mominabad during the Hyderabad Nizam Era.**
- **The town boasts other notable monuments such as Hatthikhana, Dasopant Temple, and Yogeshwari temple, enriching its historical and cultural significance.**

**Maharashtra Govt. announced 1 day paid leave for workers on poll duty**

- The Maharashtra government has announced one day of paid leave for workers, government officials, and employees on polling days within the state.
- The decision aims to facilitate the exercise of voting rights, as per a government circular issued on Tuesday.
- With elections scheduled in five phases, this initiative ensures individuals have ample opportunity to participate in the electoral process.
- Additionally, the leave provision extends to individuals residing outside their constituency, enabling them to vote in their respective areas.
- The holiday entitlement encompasses various sectors, including industrial groups, corporations, companies, institutions, as well as industrial undertakings falling under the purview of the industry department.

**Note:**

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) on **March 16 announced general elections to the 18th Lok Sabha as well as four states - Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim.**
- The Lok Sabha polls will be held in seven phases over the months of April and May, with over 90 crore eligible citizens voting for 543 seats of the Lower House. Results will be declared on June 4.

**Power Demand Peaks to 3,500 MW, Marking the Highest Yet**

- **Power demand rises in maharashtra, which is all-time highest.**

**About:**

- Peak power demand in **Mumbai surged to 3,500 MW on Tuesday, marking a notable increase.**
- Across Maharashtra, the overall peak demand exceeded **28,000 MW, making it the second occurrence within a week and the highest peak demand recorded this year.**
- The previous similar peak demand was observed on March 22.
- Sources indicate that the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL) procured power of up to **10,000 MW from the exchange at prevailing market rates.**
- However, power generation from thermal plants across the state did not surpass 7,300 MW on Tuesday.

**Note:**

- Maharashtra's largest thermal power plant is the **Chandrapur Super thermal power station.**
- It has the capacity of producing **2920 MW of power.**
- **Five generators of 500 MW capacity and two generators of 210 MW** are present at this power plant.
- Here, water is sourced from **Chargaon and Erai dams, while the fuel supply is sourced from the nearest coal mines.**

**Wind Monitoring Safety Devices to Be Installed Along Bullet Train Corridor**

An initiative has been launched to install wind monitoring safety devices, known as

anemometers, at 14 locations spanning the 508 km corridor.

About:

- The National High-Speed Rail Corridor Ltd (NHSRCL) is taking proactive measures to address strong winds along the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail corridor.
- Anemometers are devices designed to track wind speeds, ensuring enhanced passenger safety and operational efficiency once the Bullet train service commences.
- According to NHSRCL officials, Bullet trains will adjust their speed when wind speeds fall within the range of 72 to 130 kmph.
- These 14 locations include five in Maharashtra and nine in Gujarat, strategically positioned to monitor wind patterns effectively.
- In Maharashtra, installations will be situated near Desai Khadi, Ulhas River, Bangla Pada in Thane, Vaitarna River, and Dahanu.
- Anemometers serve as Disaster Prevention Systems, providing real-time wind speed data ranging from 0 to 252 kmph and covering 0 to 360 degrees.
- The Operation Control Centre (OCC) will oversee wind speed monitoring using anemometers at various locations, ensuring timely adjustments in train speeds.
- Additionally, earthquake monitoring devices will also be deployed along the route to monitor seismic activity.
- Seismometers will be strategically placed in traction sub-stations and switching posts, with six inland seismometers earmarked for installation in earthquake-prone areas across both states.

Note on Bullet Train:

- Mumbai–Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor (MAHSR) or Mumbai–Ahmedabad HSR is an under-construction high-speed rail line, which will connect Mumbai, the financial hub of India, with Ahmedabad, the largest city in the state of Gujarat. When completed, it will be India's first high-speed rail line.
- Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw addressed the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit earlier when he declared the construction on the bullet train project will be done by 2026.

## World Theatre Day

- World Theatre Day raises the importance of theatre arts, how they play an important role in the field of entertainment and the changes that theatre brings to life

About:

International Theatre Institute (ITI) was initiated in 1961 to celebrate World Theatre Day across the world and the value and importance of theatre. The goals of World Theatre Day, as with International Dance Day are:

- To highlight the importance of art forms around the world.
- To make people aware of the importance of the value of art form.
- To enable the dance and theatre communities to promote their work on a broad scale. To make opinion leaders aware of the value of these forms and support them.
- To enjoy the art form for its own sake.

Theme:

- The theme for World Theatre Day 2024 is 'Theatre and a Culture of Peace'.

## Kitchen Gardens Thrive in Over 24,000 Government Schools Across Maharashtra

- Over 24,000 govt schools in Maha run kitchen gardens

Key points:

- Over the past year, 24,741 government schools in Maharashtra have established kitchen gardens on their premises.
- Students are responsible for maintaining these gardens under the guidance of their teachers, and the produce is utilized for school meal preparations.
- A competition will be launched by the state education department to recognize the best kitchen gardens across schools statewide.
- In the 2023-24 period, 46,946 schools in Maharashtra participated in the Union government's kitchen garden scheme, with a budget allocation of approximately Rs 20 crore under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 2019.
- The Union ministry of education has provided guidelines for planning kitchen gardens, specifying suitable plants, including vegetables and fruits, for cultivation.



## Discovery of Four New Gecko Species in the Sahyadri Region.

- Researchers from Shivaji University, Kolhapur (SUK) and Thackeray Wildlife Foundation have found four new species of wild geckos in Northwest Maharashtra.
- These geckos belong to the genus **Cnemaspis** and are known for their territorial behaviour.
- They are found in a small area and prefer cooler climates, restricting their occurrence to favourable habitats.
- These newly discovered geckos have only been found within their native range during research expeditions.
- The findings have been published in the international journal **Zootaxa** under the guidance of Dr. Sunil Gaikwad.

### Note:

- Geckos are reptiles and are found on all the continents except Antarctica. These colourful lizards have adapted to habitats from rainforests, to deserts, to cold mountain slopes.

## Maharashtra ATS chief, a 26/11 hero, selected to lead NIA

- **Sadanand Date**, a 57-year-old IPS officer recognized for his pivotal role during the 26/11 attacks, has been appointed as the new director general of the **National Investigation Agency (NIA)**, the premier counter-terrorism agency in India.
- Currently serving as the director general of the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS), Date expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to join NIA, considering it an honour.
- Date led the operation to apprehend **Ajmal Kasab** and his mentor **Ismail Khan** at **Cama Hospital** during the 26/11 attacks, sustaining injuries in the process.
- Despite being wounded, Date led the covert operation in November 2012 to transfer **Kasab** from **Arthur Road Jail** to **Yerwada Jail** in **Pune**, where the terrorist was eventually executed.
- Notably, during his tenure as the **Superintendent of Police in Bhandara**, Date played a significant role in reintegrating misguided youth involved in **Naxal activities**

back into mainstream society, achieving notable success such as the surrender of a Naxal along with an AK-47, a first in the state.

## Villagers Rally Against 'Third Mumbai' Plan, Threaten Massive Protest

- Villagers in **Uran, Panvel, and Pen** areas of **Raigad** district oppose the proposed 'Third Mumbai' township.
- Submitted objections to the government, resisting land acquisition for the project.
- Threatened massive agitation involving lakhs if notification is not withdrawn.
- State government issued notifications on March 4, handing over 124 villages around **Atal Setu Mumbai Trans-Harbour Link** for development to **NTDA**.
- Villagers responded within the 30-day period given by the government.
- Initially planned a massive morcha, reduced due to code of conduct.
- Warnings of lakhs converging to protest if plan proceeds.
- **Objections submitted under "MMRDA Virodhi Shetkari Samiti, Raigad"** by gram panchayat members, social activists, and political leaders at **Konkan Bhavan** office.
- **Raised slogans against the plan and MMRDA.**

### Note on Third Mumbai:

- Urban Development Department (UDD) seeks public input on the proposed Third Mumbai from 124 affected villages.
- Third Mumbai primarily encompasses areas influenced by the newly operational **Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL)**, also known as **Atal Setu**.
- Anticipated economic growth from MTHL prompts the state government to incorporate surrounding regions into the Third Mumbai plan.
- UDD invites suggestions and objections to ensure inclusive development in the affected areas.
- MTHL's impact on regional and state-level economic development drives the government's decision to leverage its potential.

## Bombay High Court Appoints 11 Permanent Judges.

- Eleven additional judges were elevated to permanent positions at Bombay High Court.
- Swearing-in ceremony held in the Central Court Hall of the Bombay High Court building.
- High Court judges from Goa, Nagpur, and Aurangabad benches participated virtually.
- Justices Kishore Chandrakant Sant, Kamal Khata, Sharmila Deshmukh, Sandeep Marne, Gauri Godse, Rajesh Shantaram Patil, and Arif Doctor sworn in at the Principal Seat.
- Justice Valmiki S.A. Menezes sworn in at the Goa Bench.
- Justice Arun Pedneker sworn in at the Aurangabad Bench.
- Justices Urmila Sachin Joshi-Phalke and Bharat Pandurang Deshpande sworn in at the Nagpur Bench.

## Pune's Water Crisis

- Pune, facing a deepening water crisis, witnesses a concerning situation as its four main dams approach critically low levels.

### Key points:

- **Khadakwasla reservoir:** Currently holds 1.07 TMC, which is 54.39% of its total storage.
- **Panshet reservoir:** At 48.10% capacity with 5.12 TMC.
- **Temghar reservoir:** Dwindles at 9.11% capacity, holding only 0.34 TMC.
- **Warasgaon dam:** Fairing slightly better at 53.40% capacity, with 6.85 TMC of water.

### Impact:

- **Borewells in Pune have dried up due to the diminishing groundwater levels.**
- Residents face a severe water shortage, resorting to water tankers for daily needs.
- Manjri area residents bear the brunt with exorbitant charges from tanker owners, exacerbating their difficulties.

## Sinhagad Fort to Implement Plastic Ban

- The Junnar forest department has decided to ban plastic at Sinhgad Fort, following the **successful implementation at Shivneri Fort.**
- This decision, effective from June 5, aims to preserve the sanctity of the fort and protect the environment.

### About:

- **Sinhagad is an ancient hill fortress** located at around **49 km southwest of the city of Pune, India.**
- Previously known as **Kondhana**, the fort had been the site of many battles, most notably the **Battle of Sinhgad in 1670.**
- It is located in the Pune district in Maharashtra.

## Sambhajnagar District to Have 45 Model Polling Stations

- **Sambhajnagar district is set to have 45 model polling stations for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.**

### Key points:

- Among these, **18 polling stations will be exclusively managed by female staff**, while 18 will be **run by youth staff**. The remaining nine stations will be operated by **staff with Disabilities (PwD).**
- District collector Dilip Swami highlighted that **model polling stations will offer additional amenities to enhance the voting experience beyond the basic facilities available at regular polling stations.**
- Aurangabad central and Aurangabad west will each host five model polling stations, with five more in Kannad, Gangapur, Vaijapur, Sillod, Paithan, and Phulambri. Additionally, three stations will be set up in the Aurangabad east assembly segment.

## Two SUK researchers get patent for energy device

- Two researchers, **Dr. Sagar Delekar and Swapnajit Mulik, from Shivaji University Kolhapur (SUK)** were granted a patent by the government on Thursday for their energy storage device utilizing nano-composites.

### Key points:

- The device aims to enhance the capacity of supercapacitors through cathodes made from nanocomposite-based materials.
- Materials such as nickel cobaltite, cobalt oxide, and porous carbon have been utilized for these supercapacitor devices.
- The nano-composite is expected to enhance device efficiency, potentially revolutionizing the energy sector.
- Dr. Delekar highlighted the device's cost-effectiveness and its potential in energy

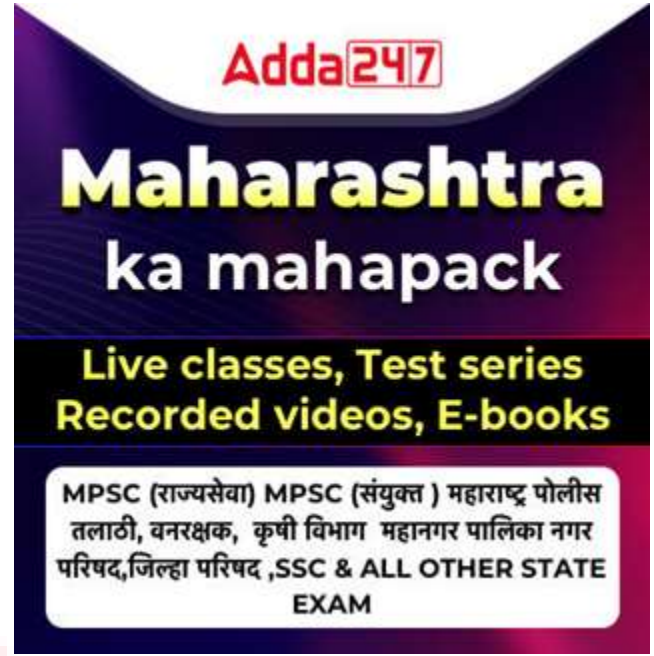
conservation, offering solutions to societal energy challenges.

### Focus on National Education Policy (NEP) in 2024-25

- Pune's steering committee, led by Nitin Karmalkar, plans **changes to the National Education Policy (NEP) in 2024-25**, focusing on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) courses.
- They aim to emphasize **ancient knowledge like mathematics, science, medicine, philosophy, arts, languages, and more.**

#### Key points:

- The **steering committee for NEP 2020** implementation in Maharashtra observed that some higher educational institutes were teaching "**religion, jingoism, and blind hero-worship**" under the IKS course subjects.
- Changes are planned to address this issue, with a focus on improving the quality of IKS courses.
- A sub-committee has been formed to **outline dos and don'ts for the IKS curriculum, ensuring it aligns with the goals of NEP 2020.**
- Nitin Karmalkar emphasized that **IKS should focus on imparting ancient knowledge of Indian civilization, such as mathematics, science, medicine, astronomy, architecture, philosophy, arts, languages, literature, and culture.**
- A new circular issued by the state's higher education department allows students to choose a maximum of three subjects in the first year of their undergraduate program and decide on their major and minor subjects in the following year.



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