

**March – 23**

## **TNPSC BITS**

- ❖ Tamil Nadu government has instructed government-funded schools to begin the admission process for the next academic year from April 1, 2019.
  - This step is taken to encourage more admissions in Govt schools and complete admissions at the same time as other private institutions.
- ❖ Pakistan commemorates the passing of the Lahore Resolution on March 23, 1940, when the Muslims of the Sub-continent set the agenda of a separate homeland for themselves. It is celebrated as Pakistan Day. It is also the Republic Day of Pakistan. In 1956, on this same day, Pakistan became the first Islamic Republic by adopting the first constitution of Pakistan.

## **TAMIL NADU**

### **Drought-hit 24 Districts**

- ❖ Due to the widespread Northeast monsoon failure, the Tamil Nadu government has declared 24 districts as drought-affected.
- ❖ 38 blocks in seven districts have also been declared drought-affected.

### **Solar-powered Desalination plant**

- ❖ A team of Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) has set up the country's first solar-powered desalination plant in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The experimental project is funded by the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- ❖ The freshwater generated by the plant has only 2 ppm of dissolved salts. For drinking, WHO recommends water with 500 ppm.
- ❖ So, it is mixed with local municipal water before distribution to the public.

## **NATIONAL**

### **India's first forest-certification scheme**

- ❖ India now has a globally recognized forest-certification scheme developed specifically for Indian forests.

- ❖ Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF), an Indian non-profit organization will be the nodal agency in India.
- ❖ It will set the standards for India's forests, forest products, and sustainable management.



- Market-based Instrument for differentiating sustainable managed forest products (voluntary green label)
  - Consistent with ISO 14001 but goes further
  - Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification was initiated in 1992 after the Rio world environmental summit in lieu of an international forestry convention such as UNFCCC (climate change), CBD (biodiversity), etc.
  - Multiple schemes evolved: SFI, PEFC, CSA, ATO, national in Indonesia, Brazil, Malaysia
- ❖ Several developed countries have put trade restrictions on the import of non-certified timber, non-timber forest products, and wood-based goods into their countries.
  - ❖ So, getting sustainable forest management certificates has become mandatory for exports.

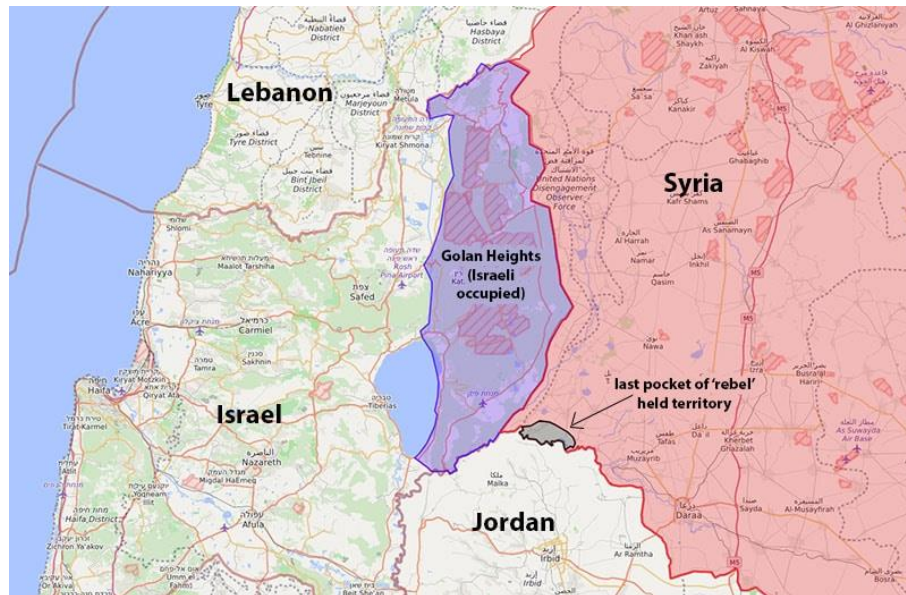
## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Report on Russian meddling in US Elections**

- ❖ Former FBI Director Robert Mueller submitted his report into a two-year investigation of Russian meddling in 2016 election for selecting the next USA president.
- ❖ These investigations were started as America suspected Russian meddling in 2016 US Presidential Elections and possible collusion by Trump team members.
- ❖ The final report has been submitted by Robert Mueller which may be helpful to impeach President Trump.

## Golan Heights

- ❖ US President Donald Trump has backed Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights region.
- ❖ This is a departure from the earlier stand of US where it treated Golan Heights as occupied Syrian territory.
- ❖ Until 1967, Golan Heights was part of Syria.
- ❖ Israel occupied the Golan Heights during the Six Day war (Third Arab Israeli war) held in 1967.
- ❖ Then in 1981 Israel annexed the region unilaterally.
- ❖ This unilateral annexation was not recognized by the international community.



- ❖ Israel justifies its annexation of Golan Heights on the grounds that this region acts as a buffer zone between its country and Syria.
- ❖ Golan heights region is also important for its water resources and naturally fertile soil.

## New Zealand bans assault weapons

- ❖ New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern imposed an immediate ban on assault weapons following the Christchurch massacre that claimed the lives of at least 50 people.

- ❖ All high-capacity weapons, assault rifles, and military-style automatic weapons are banned in New Zealand.

## STATES

### Campus Ambassador

- ❖ 12 Campus Ambassadors have been appointed to woo young voters in Assam ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.
- ❖ They would carry out various awareness activities like street plays, poster making, VVPAT demonstration in educational institutes.

## PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

### Judge Neomi Rao

- ❖ Neomi Jehangir Rao, a prominent Indian-American lawyer, has been sworn in as US Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia.
- ❖ She is the second Indian origin American after Srinivasan, to be a part of the powerful court considered next only to the US Supreme Court.

## SPORTS

### Special Olympics 2019

- ❖ India created history by clinching 368 medals, including 85 gold, at the Special Olympics World Summer Games which was held at Abu Dhabi, UAE.
- ❖ A total of 284 athletes from India participated in the event, which featured over 7,000 sportspersons from 170 countries in various sports disciplines.
- ❖ In this Special Olympics women cyclist, Manimeghlai and Shruti, winning gold and silver medals respectively in 500-metre event.
- ❖ Special Olympics is the world's largest humanitarian sporting event which focuses on the empowerment of 'People of Determination' with intellectual disabilities through the power of sport.

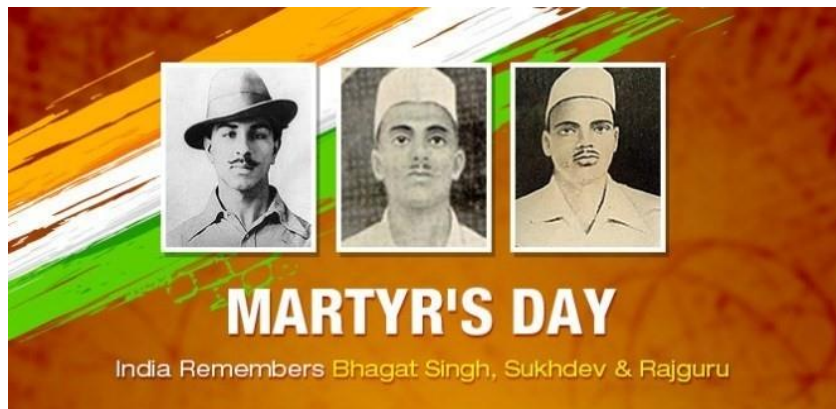
## IMPORTANT DAYS

### World Water Day - 22 March

- ❖ World Water Day is celebrated every year on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- ❖ The theme for World Water Day 2019 is 'Leaving no one behind'.
- ❖ Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water for all by 2030.
- ❖ In the year 1992, March 22 was first officially added in the schedule 21 of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development as World Water Day.
- ❖ The World Water Development Report is also released by the UN every year.
- ❖ World Water Day is coordinated by UN-Water in collaboration with governments and other partners.
- ❖ UN-Water is the UN's inter-agency collaboration mechanism for all freshwater related issues.

### Martyrs Day – March 23

- ❖ March 23 is observed as Martyrs Day, also known as Shaheed Diwas or Sarvodaya Day.



- ❖ It is celebrated as a tribute to martyrs Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru.
- ❖ The trio fought for the freedom of India from the colonial rulers and sacrificed their lives on March 23, 1931, when they were hanged to death by the British.
- ❖ They assassinated a British Police Officer to avenge for the lathi charge against Lala Lajpat Rai and his followers, who were protesting against the Simon Commission.

- ❖ The case under which these martyrs were tried was later known as the Lahore Conspiracy Case.

### **World Meteorological Day – March 23**

- ❖ Every 23 March, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) commemorates World Meteorological Day.
- ❖ The WMO became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1951.



- ❖ This year the theme of WMO is “The Sun, The Earth and The Weather”.
- ❖ Its top priorities are to protect lives, livelihoods, and property from the risks related to weather, climate and water events.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Cheapest and Expensive Cities**

- ❖ The weekly magazine The Economist’s Intelligence Unit conducted Worldwide Cost of Living Survey.
- ❖ Paris, Singapore, and Hong Kong are the most expensive cities in the World while Delhi, Chennai, and Bengaluru are among the cheapest places to live.



**THE 10 MOST EXPENSIVE  
CITIES IN THE WORLD**

Country	City	Rank
Singapore	Singapore	1
France	Paris	2
Switzerland	Zurich	2
Hong Kong	Hong Kong	4
Norway	Oslo	5
Switzerland	Geneva	6
South Korea	Seoul	6
Denmark	Copenhagen	8
Israel	Tel Aviv	9
Australia	Sydney	10

**THE 10 CHEAPEST  
CITIES IN THE WORLD**

Country	City	Rank
Syria	Damascus	133
Venezuela	Caracas	132
Kazakhstan	Almaty	131
Nigeria	Lagos	130
India	Bangalore	129
Pakistan	Karachi	127
Algeria	Algiers	127
India	Chennai	126
Romania	Bucharest	124
India	New Delhi	124

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit's Worldwide Cost of Living 2018 report

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