DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 23-03-2022

NATIONAL NEWS

M Tech Programe in Industrial AI

- **Tata Consultancy Services** has partnered with **IIT Madras** to launch an M Tech program in Industrial Artificial Intelligence for working professionals.

- The 18-month-long course designed in consultation with TCS, will be offered by IIT M in a completely online live teaching mode through virtual classrooms.
- The new M Tech in Industrial AI program is expected to help scale up capability across the Indian workforce in this important area, expand the knowledge ecosystem in AI and machine learning, drive innovation using these technologies, and position India as a global innovation powerhouse.

Indian Potash Limited with Israel Chemicals

- Indian Potash Limited signed an agreement with Israel Chemicals Limited (ICL) for the supply of Muriate of Potash (MOP) for the next five years from 2022 to 2027.
- **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers (MoC&F)**, Mansukh Mandaviya signed the agreement in Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi.
- Israel Chemicals Limited has agreed to supply 6 to 6.5 LMT of Muriate of Potash annually to India.

Narasingapettai Nagaswaram Gets GI Tag

- The **nadaswaram or nagaswaram** is a wind instrument made of wood and metal that is found in both classical and folk traditions hand crafted in **Narasingapettai Village in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu** got the Geographical Indications (GI) Tag.
- A major portion of Narasinghapettai Nagaswaram is made from the traditional wood “acha” which is atleast 100 years old. It has a length of 2.5 feet.
- The application forthe GI tag for the Narasinghapettai Nagaswaram was filed on behalf of the Thanjavur Musical Instruments Workers Cooperative Cottage Industrial society.
- The nagaswaram being used by artists is called “pari nagaswaram’.
- Geographical Indications Registry granted the tag under the category musical instruments of class 15.

India’s First Green Hydrogen Microgrid

- The **NTPC-Simhadri plant in Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh** region will develop a project of standalone fuel cell based 50 kW microgrid pilot project with green hydrogen

production using electrolyser.
- The project will be India's first green hydrogen-based energy storage project.
- Through the project, NTPC will further strengthen its footprint in green and clean fuel.
- The hydrogen would be produced using the advanced 240kW solid oxide electrolyser by taking input power from the nearby floating solar project.
- The hydrogen produced during sunshine hours would be stored at high pressure and would be electrified using a 50kW solid oxide fuel cell.
- The system would work in a standalone mode.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Cold Response 2022

- **Cold Response 2022** is planned to conduct a **Multilateral Military exercise** combining Army, Navy and Air Force from 14 March to 01 April, 2022.
- It is conducted by **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) at Norway.**
- It is a bi-annual exercise aimed to test how Norway would manage allied reinforcements on its soil, in line with Article 5 of NATO charter which requires member state to come to the aid of another member state under attack.
- NATO is an international military alliance between 30 European and North American countries.
- Cold Response would allow participation of around 30,000 troops, 220 aircraft and 50 vessels.

BANKING

Financial Assistance to Odisha

- The **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** has sanctioned financial assistance of **Rs 4,013 crore to Odisha.**

- It is the highest in the country for critical rural infrastructure development under the **Rural Infrastructure Development Fund** during 2021-22.
- The RIDF is classified under three broad categories namely Agriculture, Social and Rural connectivity.
- About Rs. 2568 crore is allocated for construction of rural roads and bridges.
- The drinking water sector has also been given importance through financial assistance of Rs 840 crore for nine Mega Piped Water Supply Projects aimed at providing clean, treated and safe drinking water at doorstep to approximately 17 lakh rural population in the state.
- Financial assistance of Rs 605 crore has been extended for various infrastructure development in agri allied and irrigation sector.
- With this sanction the total has crossed Rs. 32, 100 crore for Odisha since the inception of the RIDF.

Equitas Small Finance Bank and Equitas Holdings

- The board of Equitas Small Finance Bank (ESFB) has approved a new scheme of amalgamation between Equitas SFB and Equitas Holdings Ltd.

- The structure was voluntarily created to meet the RBI's norms regarding promoter holdings in ESFB.

- The Reserve Bank of India had also given promoters an option to exit after completing the five-year lock-in period post incorporation as small finance bank (SFB).

SPORTS

Youngest Female Swimmer to Cross Palk Strait

- A 13-year-old Jiya Rai, **Maharashtra** girl has set a new record by swimming across the **Palk Strait** from Talaimannar in Sri Lanka to Dhanuskodi in Tamil Nadu.

- She covered a distance of 29 km in 13 hours and 10 minutes.

- Jiya Rai is the daughter of a senior sailor of the Indian Navy, Madan Rai
- She has become the youngest and fastest female swimmer in the world to swim across the Palk Strait.
- The event was conducted by the Para-Swimming Federation of India (PSFI) with cooperation from many agencies including the Swimming Federation of India, Sports Development Authority, Tamil Nadu and the Autism Society of India.
- The Goa Shipyard Ltd. provided the swimmer financial sponsorship for the event.
- She is the recipient of "Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Purashkar (PMRBP) - 2022 the highest honour given to citizens below 18 years.

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

Global House Price Index 2021

- Property consultant **'Knight Frank'** released the report 'Global House Price Index 2021'.

- **India is placed at 51st** position. It has improved its rank by five spots as it was placed at 56th position in 2020.
- India witnessed a 2.1 percent annual appreciation in housing price rates during the October-November (Q4) of 2021 against (Q4) of 2020.

- **Turkey was placed at the top** position with highest annual price growth rate by 59.6 percent in Q4 2021.
- Malaysia, Malta and Morocco were placed at the bottom as they show decline in prices.
- The Index tracks nominal and real price growth in local currencies. The ranking on the price movement have been accounted based on the nominal price growth change.

ACQUISITATION & MERGERS

PhonePe Acquired GigIndia

- **PhonePe**, a digital payment company has acquired **100% Stack in GigIndia,** the country's leading network for freelance micro-entrepreneurs.

- As a part of the acquisition, GigIndia which has 1.5 Mn entrepreneurs, and over 100 enterprises as customers, will integrate with PhonePe.
- The acquisition is aimed to strengthen its offering to corporate and enterprise partners.
- PhonePe has a network of over 27 million merchant outlest across India and 365 million registered users.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

President of Turkmenistan

- **Serdar Berdimuhamedov** was sworn in as Turkmenistan's new **president of Turkmenistan.**

- He succeeds Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, who is the father of Serdar. Gurbanguly is the former president of Turkmenistan who became president in 2006 and served till 2022.
- Presidential elections in Turkmenistan are held every seven years.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Water Day

- World Water Day is celebrated every year on **22 March.**
- It is celebrated to highlight the significance of water.
- The theme of the day 2022 is **"Groundwater, Making the Invisible Visible".**
- This year, the focus is on groundwater, an unseen resource with a visible influence everywhere.

- World water day aims to ensure safe water supplies for all of the world's people.
- The day was first celebrated in the year 1993 by the United Nations General Assembly.

World Puppetry Day

- World Puppetry Day was celebrated every year on **21 March.**
- On this day, Sangeet Natak Akademi is organizing a puppet festival **"Putul Utsav"** in five cities in India under the Ministry of Culture.
- Theme of the festival is **"Azadi ke Rang, Putul Ke Sang".**
- It was first celebrated in the year 2003 by the Union International de la Marionnette also known as International Puppetry Association.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

A new Book by Richa Mishra

- Indian journalist and reporter Richa Mishra authored a new book titled **"Unfilled Barrels: India's oil story".**
- The book was published by Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt. Limited.
- This book highlights the need of producing own oil and gas and also the book reminds the story of India's upstream (Oil and Gas) sector.

OBITUARY

Ex-Prime Minister of Mali Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga

- Former Prime Minister of Mali, **Maiga** passed away in Bamako, Mali. He was at the age of 67.
- He served as the PM of Mali for the tenure of 2 years.
- He was born on 08 June 1954 in Gao, Mali.
- He was a journalist and also, he served as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defense.
- He was the leader of the Alliance for Solidarity party in Mali.