

## National Statistics Day - 29th June

The Government of India decided to celebrate the 29th of June every year as the National Statistics Day as recognition to Prof. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis for his contribution in the fields of economic planning and statistical development in the post-independent era.

### Significance of National Statistics Day

The National Statistics Day was celebrated for the first time in 2007 and the notification to this effect was published in the Gazette of India on June 5, 2007. Ever since, on this day, seminars, discussions and competitions are held to highlight the importance of official statistics in national development.

Discussed below are a few important pointers as to why National Statistics Day is celebrated:

- To popularise the use of Statistics in everyday life and sensitise the public as to how Statistics helps in shaping and framing policies
- This day marks the birth anniversary of Prof. P.C Mahalanobis whose contribution in the fields of statistics and economic planning are invaluable
- To raise public awareness, especially among the younger generation, about the role of statistics in socio-economic planning

The reports, programmes, implementation, monitoring etc. are all managed by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

### National Statistics Day 2020

Discussed below are the key points based on the National Statistics Day 2020:

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Statistics Day 2020 was celebrated virtually and was chaired by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation and Ministry of Planning, Rao Inderjit Singh
- The **theme** of the day for the **year 2020 was Sustainable Development Goal - 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages) and Sustainable Development Goal - 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)**. This theme was chosen in continuity with the Statics Day 2019 theme, which was, "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)"
- In 2019, MoSPI declared a new award, the Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis National Award in Official Statistics for recognizing outstanding achievement of official statisticians in Central Government, State Governments and Institutions. Former RBI Governor, **Dr. Chakravarthi Rangarajan won the first-ever P.C. Mahalanobis National Award** on June 29, 2020
- The Indian Statistical Services Cadre Management Portal was also launched on this day during the virtual meeting
- Also, every alternate year, the Ministry awards the outstanding contribution for high-quality research work in the field of applied and theoretical statistics benefitting the official statistical system through the Prof. C. R. Rao and Prof. P. V. Sukhatme awards. **The Sukhatme National Award was jointly presented to:**

- **Dr. Arvind Pandey, former Director NIMS, ICMR**
- **Dr. Akhilesh Chandra Kulshreshtha, Ex-Addl. Director-General, MoSPI**

## About Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis

- Mahalanobis was born to a wealthy and academically-oriented Bengali family in Calcutta on June 29, 1893
- He did his graduation in Physics and later went to London for higher studies. He completed his Tripos in physics and discovered the efficacy of statistics in solving problems in anthropology and meteorology
- A few of his major contributions were:
  - Established a Statistical Laboratory in the Presidency College
  - Established the Indian Statistical Institute in Calcutta on December 17, 1931
  - He is remembered for the Mahalanobis Distance, which is denoted as  $D^2$ . It is a multivariate distance measure that is used for comparing and grouping populations
  - His greatest contribution lay in the field of large-scale sample surveys
  - He was bestowed with multiple prizes and awards including the Weldon Memorial Prize (1944, Oxford University), Foreign Member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (1958), Srinivasa Ramanujan Gold Medal (1968), Durgaprasad Khaitan Gold Medal (1961), and the Padma Vibhushan (1968)

The Pioneer Indian statistician Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis died on 28 June 1972 in Calcutta aged 78.