

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS: JANUARY 2019 WEEK II

NATIONAL EVENTS

- Khelo India Youth Games 2019 are being held at Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Pune.
- The Lok Sabha has passed the 124th Constitutional Amendment Bill to provide reservations to the 'Economically Weaker Sections' of society. The Bill **amends Article 15** of the Constitution to provide reservations to economically weaker sections for admission to educational institutions including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions. The Bill also **amends Article 16** of the Constitution to provide reservations to people from economically weaker sections in government posts. The Bill caps the reservation to economically weaker sections at 10%.
- The World Economic Forum has recognised Tata Steel's plant at IJmuiden in the Netherlands as Manufacturing Lighthouse with state-of-the-art production facilities which successfully adopt and integrate the cutting-edge technologies of the future and drive financial and operational impact.
- The Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). It is a five-year action plan with a tentative target of 20-30% reduction in concentrations of PM10 and PM2.5 by 2024, with 2017 as the base year.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India has launched an online campaign Web-Wonder Women to discover and celebrate the exceptional achievements of women, who have been driving positive agenda of social change via social media
- The operational guidelines of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) prescribed the timeline of two months of completion of Crop Cutting Experiments/harvesting period for settlement of claims by insurance companies. Provision of 12% interest rate per annum to be paid by the Insurance Company to farmers for any delay in settlement of claims beyond 10 days of prescribed cut off date for payment of claims. State Governments are required to pay 12% interest rate for delay in the release of the State share of Subsidy beyond three months of prescribed cut off date/submission of requisition by Insurance Companies.
- The Union Minister of Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar has announced an increase of around 5,000 seats in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas across the country. The increase in the number of seats was part of the Government

efforts to increase the access to quality education for students, especially from rural areas.

- The Airports Authority of India has banned the single-use plastic items at its 129 airports across the country.
- The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare is implementing the scheme of Rashtriya Gokul Mission to conserve and develop indigenous bovine breeds in a focused and scientific manner.
- The Government has set up a committee headed by former Union tourism secretary M.P. Bezbaruah to review the implementation of clause 6 of the Assam Accord.
- Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App has been launched by the North Central Railway (NCR) to help the devotees arriving in Allahabad for the Kumbh Mela.
- The Ministry of Human Resource Development has launched 70-Point Grading Index to assess the quality of school education in the states.
- The Minister of State (I/C) for Youth Affairs and Sports Col Rajyavardhan Rathore (Retd) launched the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 as part of the National Youth Day celebrations. The theme of the National Youth Parliament festival is “Be the Voice of New India” and “Find solutions and contribute to policy”.
- The Atal Tinkering Lab Handbook Nayee Dishayen, Naye Nirman, Naya Bharat was released by the NITI Aayog’s Atal Innovation Mission.
- The National Wildlife Board has given its approval for the Trishna Gas project of ONGC which falls in the Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary in the Gomati district of Tripura.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a commemorative coin and stamp on Guru Gobind Singh to mark the 350th birth anniversary. . The front side of the coin bears the rupee symbol and denominational value ‘350’ in international numerals below the Lion Capital. The reverse side bears the picture of “Takht Shri Harimandir Ji Patna Sahib” in the centre and the years ‘1666’ and ‘2016’ in international numerals will be on the left and right periphery of the coin.
- The data from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has revealed the the facts about the implementation status of AMRUT Yojana. With only a year to the deadline, only 20 per cent of the total projects were completed utilising 3 per cent of the total funds approved. States like Bihar and Assam were not able to complete even a single project. Tamil Nadu topped the list by completing 378 projects. Tamil Nadu was the only State to have completed more than 300 projects.
- The India Manufacturing Barometer 2019 Report has been prepared by Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in association with PwC. India would witness faster growth in the next 12 months driven by expanding domestic market, technology and increased spending. India’s economy is projected to grow anywhere between 7.3 – 7.7 per cent and the domestic market would be a major demand driver for India.

- The Defence India Startup Challenge has been launched by the Defence Innovation Organisation to boost innovations under the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) scheme. The initiative has been launched with support from the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, Atal Innovation Mission and NITI Aayog.
- The Ministry of Industries and Commerce had initiated the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) to assist the organic producers to tap the market which is growing steadily in the both in domestic and export segments.
- Norway Prime Minister Erna Solberg arrived in New Delhi for a three-day state visit to India at the invitation of the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

- The Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) of the United States Chamber of Commerce has launched a new innovation initiative Fair Value for Innovation at the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi. The initiative, titled "Fair Value for Innovation", will examine economic underpinnings that would enable breakthrough innovation, and explore how policymakers can harness innovation capital in India and around the globe through research, advocacy, partnerships, and programs.
- The Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Plaza (SIDCOP) has been launched by the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) in association with Municipal Governments of Guiyang and Dalian. The initiative aims to bring Indian IT companies and Chinese enterprises closer to each other on a single AI enabled platform. This platform will be managed by a joint venture comprising of one Indian and Chinese company.
- China has passed a new law to regulate Islam and make it more compatible with socialism by "Sinicizing Islam".
- Nicolas Maduro was sworn in as Venezuela's President for the 2nd term for a new 6-year term.
- Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen appointed 71 years old Su Tseng-chang as the new Prime Minister of Taiwan

STATE EVENTS

- The Government of Chhattisgarh has withdrawn the general consent accorded to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to probe the cases in the state.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Gangajal Project which aims to improve water supply to the city of Agra.
- The Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Pema Khandu inaugurated India's longest single-lane steel cable suspension bridge over Siang River in Upper Siang district of

Arunachal Pradesh. The bridge is 300-metre-long and is also known as Byorong bridge.

- The ruling party of Sikkim, Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) has assured the implementation of the Universal Basic Income in Sikkim by 2022. If things go as per plan, Sikkim would become the first state in the country to implement the Universal Basic Income (UBI).
- The High Court of Kerala has set a seven-day notice period for political parties and individuals to call for hartal and general strike in the State.
- The Chief Minister of Sikkim Pawan Kumar Chamling has announced the One family one job scheme to provide employment to the youth of Sikkim.
- The government of Odisha has launched the scheme Ama Ghare LED to provide LED bulbs at free of cost to about 95 lakh families in the state.
- The Uttar Pradesh Governor Shri Ram Naik inaugurated the Sanskriti Kumbh at Prayagraj. The Sanskriti Kumbh celebrates the conglomeration of Spiritual Consciousness and Cultural Heritage of India in the main premises of Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj. It is being organised by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative.
- The government of West Bengal has decided to exit from the Centre's ambitious Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana.

BANKING AND FINANCIAL AWARENESS

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has made changes with the Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) to allow charitable institutions, Central Government entities and state government entities to deposit gold under GMS. Now the entities allowed to deposit gold under the scheme include Resident Indians (Individuals, HUFs, Proprietorship & Partnership firms), Trusts including Mutual Funds/Exchange Traded Funds registered under SEBI (Mutual Fund) Regulations, Companies, charitable institutions, Central Government, State Government or any other entity owned by Central Government or State Government
- The GST Council meeting on January 10 has taken the some important decisions: The exemption limit for Goods and Services Tax (GST) registration has been increased to Rs 40 lakh from the current Rs 20 lakh to ease the cost of compliance for small taxpayers or micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). This exemption limit has been doubled to Rs 20 lakh for North-Eastern and hilly states. The increased exemption limit of Rs 40 lakh is applicable for those businesses who deal in goods and also do intra-state trade and not for those who do inter-state transactions. The small States such as Puducherry which have a small assess base have been given the option to 'opt in' or move to a lower exemption and registration limit. The threshold limit for the compensation scheme under which small traders

and businesses pay a 1 per cent tax based on turnover has been increased to Rs 1.5 crore. Kerala has been allowed to levy a 1 per cent calamity cess on the intra-state sale of goods and services for a period of up to two years to mobilise revenues to meet the cost of rehabilitating parts of states that were ravaged by floods.

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI), under the relevant provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, imposed a penalty of Rs 3 crore on Citibank India for non-compliance in criteria for directors of the bank.
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved Iran's Pasargad Bank to open branches in Mumbai for easing trade related transactions.
- Jana Small Finance Bank has launched a new Current Account with Auto-Sweep facility that will enable bank's existing and potential new customers to auto sweep-in and sweep-out the idle funds in the current account to Sweep Fixed Deposit and earn high interest.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

- Writer Namita Gokhale was awarded in the 'Best Book of Fiction Written by a Woman Author' category at the inaugural edition of Bhopal Literature and Art Festival (BLF). She has won the Sushila Devi Literature Award for her novel "Things to Leave Behind".
- National award-winning filmmaker Buddhadeb Dasgupta was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award, in the name of late Satyajit Ray, by the West Bengal Film Journalists Association (WBFJA) in Kolkata.

SPORTS

- Gurgaon's 8-year-old Kartik Singh won the under-8 category Junior world title at the Kids' Golf World Championship organised by US kids Golf in Malaysia to become the youngest Indian to win the title
- Virat Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri received honorary membership of the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) for their contribution to the sport of cricket.
- M C Mary Kom attained the first position in the latest women ranking released by the International Boxing Association (AIBA) in the Light Fly 45-48 kilograms category with 1700 points.
- Confederation of African Football's (CAF) Executive Committee announced that Egypt will host African Cup for the fifth time in 2019.

SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES

- The first India-Central Asia Dialogue is to be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on January 12 and 13. The Dialogue will be co-chaired by External Affairs Minister (EAM) Sushma Swaraj and the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Abdulaziz Kamilov.
- The 25th edition of the Partnership Summit was inaugurated by Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu in Mumbai. The Partnership Summit is being organized by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, State Government of Maharashtra and Confederation of Indian Industry.
- The Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg along with Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu inaugurated India-Norway Business Summit 2019 in New Delhi.
- 2+2 Inter-Sessional meeting between the United States and India which focused on the progress of defence and foreign policy issues between the two countries took place in New Delhi.
- The three-day 6th annual 'Women of India Organic Festival' commenced at Leisure Valley, Sector-10, Chandigarh. It has been organized by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- The one-day Global Skill Summit 2019 was held in Ranchi, Jharkhand. The theme of the Summit was: 'Skilling Youth, Enabling Youth'.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNS

- Pranav R Mehta, President of the National Solar Energy Federation of India has become the President of the Global Solar Council.
- The appointment of Kumar Rajesh Chandra as the Director General of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) has been approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.
- Gita Gopinath has joined the International Monetary Fund as its Chief Economist. She is the first woman to occupy the post of Chief Economist of IMF.

IMPORTANT DAYS

- 10th January is celebrated as World Hindi Day to create awareness about the language of Hindi across the World and to present Hindi as an international language.
- India celebrates National Youth Day on January 12 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.
- India celebrates Pravasi Bhartiya Divas on 9 January to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. 9th January also commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai in 1915. The Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) will be held at Varanasi on January 21 and

would be formally inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22. The theme of the PBD 2019 is “Role of Indian Diaspora in building a New India.”

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- The researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) have recreated space fuel by simulating interstellar conditions in the laboratory.
- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of USA has discovered a new planet. It is the third new planet discovered by the NASA mission- Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS). The new planet HD 21749b is outside our solar system and orbits a dwarf star 53 light years away.

MOUS AND AGREEMENTS

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between Indian Highways Management Company Limited (IMHCL) and leading Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) like BPCL, HPCL and IOCL for sale of FASTags through their petrol pumps.
- The Union Cabinet has approved India’s Currency Swap Agreement with Japan. The \$75-billion bilateral currency swap arrangement is a milestone in mutual economic cooperation and special strategic and global partnership between two countries.
- Indian Army and Punjab National Bank (PNB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Defence Salary Package.
- IRCTC tied up with Bharti AXA General insurance company to provide free travel insurance to the air travellers. This insurance is applicable to only those who book ticket in the official website of air ticketing irctc, IRCTC Air – air.irctc.co.in.

REPORTS AND INDICES

- The Henley Passport Index was released recently. It measures the access each country’s travel document affords. The Index is based on the data provided by the International Air Transport Authority (IATA) and covers 199 passports and 227 travel destinations. Japan retained its top spot as the world’s most travel-friendly passport due to the document’s access to 190 jurisdictions. India jumped two positions from 81st in 2018 to 79th this year.
- The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has released the Democracy Index which ranks 167 countries by 60 indicators across five broad categories. The index classifies each country either as a full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime or authoritarian. Only 4.5% of the world’s people live in a full democracy. Australia and New Zealand are the only “full democracies” in the entire Asia-Pacific region.

India was at the 41st place with a score of 7.23/10 and was placed in the flawed democracies category.

- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has released the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018. The report draws information from 142 countries, examining trafficking trends and patterns. Regions of Asia and the Americas witnessed the largest increase in the numbers of victims detected.
- The Central Statistics Office (CSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has released the first advance estimates of National Income for 2018-19.
- The Indian economy is expected to grow at 7.2 per cent in the financial year 2018-19 which is higher than the 6.7 per cent GDP growth in the previous financial year 2017-2018. The Real GVA (Gross Value Added) is expected to grow at 7 per cent in the current fiscal as against 6.5 per cent in 2017-18.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

- Malala yousafzai, the youth icon of the world and the Noble Prize winner has come up with the new book, "We Are Displaced" about my Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World .

COMMITTEES

- Market regulator SEBI has set up a Research advisory committee(RAC) that will help and analyse the new methods of policy making for the development of capital market.The committee formed will be headed by Sankar De
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted a high-level committee under Nandan Nilekani to suggest measures to strengthen the safety and security of digital payments in the country.
- Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi is to head the seven-member committee to look into revenue shortfall being faced by the states after the GST roll-out, and suggest steps for augmenting collections