

# WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS: 22<sup>ND</sup> TO 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019

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## NATIONAL NEWS:

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- To educate a generation of students on the "usefulness" of Genomics, the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** has been undertaken an indigenous genetic mapping effort.
  - Under the Project, nearly 1,000 rural youth from the length and breadth of India will have their genomes sequenced by the CSIR.
  - **Genome sequencing** refers to figuring out the order of the DNA nucleotides, or bases, in a genome.
- The Haj quota for India has been Increased from **one lakh seventy five-thousand to Two Lakh. This Order is issued by Saudi Arabia.**
  - The GST on Haj pilgrimage has been reduced from 18 per cent to 5 per cent this year, which will ensure that about Rs 113 crore will be saved by pilgrims during the 2019 Haj.
- Election Commission of India Has Launched a mobile App named "**Voter Turnout**" for the voters to see the realtime availability of voter turnout during the election season in the country.
- NITI Aayog has agreed to the proposal of the Dental Council of India which had sought to allow dentists to practice as general physicians after a bridge course.
  - A bridge course of 3 years post Bachelor of Dental Science (BDS).
  - The admission would be either through a common entrance exam or through cumulative marks secured in the BDS course, or even a combination.
  - The syllabus curriculum, scheme of examination, method of evaluation, degrees and registration all these criteria will be the same as recommended for MBBS.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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- The Mountain Agung in the Indonesia has erupted again, spewing volcanic ash into the sky to a height of 2km.
- In Guizhou of China, a union of five tea-growing and consuming countries **Asian Tea Alliance** was Launched.
- The ban on import of Milk and milk products from China is extended by Government. The ban was first imposed in September 2008 and extended subsequently from time to time due to the Melamine a toxic Chemical used for making plastics and fertilisers.
- **A special commemorative stamp** is released by **Indonesia** on the theme of Ramayana to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of its diplomatic ties with India.
  - The stamp is designed by renowned Indonesian sculptor Padmashri Bapak Nyoman Nuarta.
  - The stamp features a scene from Ramayana in which Jataayu valiantly fought to save Goddess Seeta.
- **World's First Floating NPP Akademik Lomonosov has Successfully Tested by Russia.**
  - Akademik Lomonosov was built at a shipyard in St. Petersburg since 2008 and was last summer towed around Scandinavia to Murmansk where the uranium fuel elements were loaded into the two reactors and testing now has been going on for nearly a year.
- **Etihad** to become the **first airline in the Gulf region** to operate a flight EY484 without any single-use plastics on board, in a bid to raise awareness about pollution on Earth Day (April 22).

- As a result of planning the Earth Day flight EY484, Etihad additionally committed to remove up to 20% of the single-use plastic items on board by June 1.
- An Announcement was made by **UN's International Labour Organization (ILO)** that **Qatar** will officially abolish its Exit Visa system for all foreign workers by the end of 2019.
  - Amnesty International (human rights group) report accused that Qatar, which will be hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup was failing to implement reforms and stop widespread labour abuse.

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## BANKING

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- A new product - '**Cyber Defence Insurance**' is launched by SBI General Insurance to protect businesses from financial and reputational losses due to cyber attacks.
  - This offers protection against the growing threat of cyber breaches like hacking attacks, identity theft, disclosure of sensitive information and business interruption.
- RBI Divests its entire stake in the **National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD)** and **National Housing Bank** for Rs 20 crore and Rs 1,450 crore respectively.
  - The decision to divest its entire stake was taken based on the recommendations of the second Narasimham Committee.
  - The Government now holds a 100 per cent stake in both NHB and NABARD.
  - The RBI in 2010 divested 71.5% of 72.5% of its shares in NABARD and the remaining were divested in February 2019.
  - Similarly, RBI which held 100% in NHB, divested its stake on 19 March 2019.
- Banks and Institutions are asked by RBI to disclose the non-performing assets (NPA) stemming from their exposure to troubled infrastructure conglomerate Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Limited (IL&FS) and its group entities in their upcoming results announcements.
  - An account becomes non-performing if repayment is due for more than 90 days.
  - Banks have to set aside capital as provisions for NPAs.
- Minimum subscription requirement as well as defined trading lots for REITs and InvITs are **Reduced by SEBI**.
  - SEBI has come out with its guidelines titled "Guidelines for Determination of Allotment and Trading Lot Size for Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs)"
- **HDFC** got the Approval from **RBI** for acquiring **9.9 per cent stake in Bandhan Bank** following the **Gruh Finance deal**.
  - Gruh Finance, the affordable housing finance arm of HDFC Ltd, was taken over by Bandhan Bank in a share-swap deal in January.
- Merger of private sector lender IndusInd Bank with Bharat Financial Inclusion (BFIL), a microfinance company is Approved by **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)**.
- 'Green Car Loan' is launched by SBI to encourage customers to buy electric vehicles (EVs) in the country.
  - The interest rates on the loan will be 20 basis points (0.2 per cent) lower than SBI's existing auto loans.

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## INDEX AND RANKING

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- **131-foot-tall Waterfall** opened for the general public at **Singapore's Changi Airport**.
- This is the **world's tallest indoor waterfall**.

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## IMPORTANT DAYS

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## Weekly Current Affairs: 22nd to 29th April 2019

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- Every Year 21st April is Observed as **Civil Services Day**. But this Year it was not observed on 21st April 2019 due to **Lok Sabha elections**.
- The 49th annual Earth Day was Observed on 22nd April 2019 with the theme '**Protect Our Species**'.
- National Panchayati Raj Day is celebrated every year in India on 24th April.
- **English Language Day** is Observed on **23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019** to commemorate both the birthday and date of death of **William Shakespeare**.
- **World Book day** is Observed on **23rd April 2019**.
- **World Immunization Week 2019** is being observed from **24-30 April**.

## APPOINTMENTS

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- **Volodymyr Zelenskiy** is set to become the **new president of Ukraine**.
  - He is a **Ukrainian comedian** who played president in a TV series.
  - The capital of Ukraine is **Kyiv** and its currency is **Ukrainian Hryvnia**.
- **Ravinder Kumar Passi** Appointed as Chairman of **Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH)**.
  - EPCH was established under Companies Act in the year 1986-87 and is a non-profit organisation.
- Dena Bank's former Managing Director **Karnam Sekar** is **Appointed as New MD and CEO** of Indian Overseas Bank (IOB)

## AWARDS AND HONOURS

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- **London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)** has announced the creation of the **Amartya Sen Chair in Inequality Studies**, named in honour of the India-born economist, philosopher and Nobel laureate, who was Professor of Economics at LSE from 1971-82.
  - Amartya Sen was awarded Noble Prize in the year 1998 for his works in Welfare Economics.
- **Best Cinematography Award** won by **Bhayanakam (Malayalam film)** at Beijing International Film Festival 2019.
  - The Film is directed by **Jayaraj** and cinematography of the film was done by **Nikhil S Praveen**.
- **Benny Antony**, Joint Managing Director of Kochi-based Arjuna Natural Ltd, has been Awarded with the **National Intellectual Property Award for 2019**.
  - He is the inventor of BCM-95, the world's leading patented turmeric extract formulation, with over 80 international patents to his credit.
- **Swacchta Pakhwada Award** won by **All India Radio and Children's Film Society of India**
- **Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize 2019** was Awarded to **Author Rana Dasgupta** for his 2010 novel '**Solo**' which is a tale of estrangement and the ultimate failure of material existence.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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- The first molecule of Universe which is **Helium Hydride** that was formed from stray atoms in the universe have been Detected by NASA Scientists.
  - Scientists for long had held that around 100,000 years after the big bang, helium and hydrogen combined to make a molecule called helium hydride for the first time.

## DEFENCE

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- A guided missile destroyer '**Imphal**' Launched by Indian Navy at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders under 'Project 15B'.
  - Project 15B or Project 15 Bravo is a project under which a class of stealth guided missile destroyers are built.
  - Warships built under Project 15Bravo, with a length of 163 metres and 17.4 metres at the beam and a displacement of 7.300 tonnes, are propelled by four gas turbines to achieve speeds in excess of 30 knots.
- **Indian Army** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Limited** to build four underground tunnels.
  - Three tunnels will be built along the Chinese border and one tunnel will be built along the Pakistan border.

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## SPORTS

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- The Cricket team of United States has sealed the one-day international status for the first time with a third straight victory at the World Cricket League Division 2 event in Namibia.
  - United States Cricket Team beat Hong Kong by 84 runs in the WCL Division 2 to attain one-day International (ODI) status.
- Indian Athlete PU Chitra won gold in women's 1500m at the Asian Athletics Championships in Doha.
  - **23-year-old Chitra clocked 4:14.56s** to become the first Indian athlete to defend her Asian Athletics Championships in the 2019 meet.
  - With her medal haul, India picked up four medals on the fourth and final day of the competitions, to end at fourth place in the medal tally.
  - India bagged **17 medals overall**, including 3 gold, 7 silver and 7 bronze medals.
- Indian Boxer **Amit Panghal** won gold medal at the **Asian Boxing Championships in Bangkok**.
  - Boxer Amit Panghal picked up his second successive gold medal of the year, claiming the top honours in the 52-kilogram category.
  - National champion Deepak Singh and Kavinder Singh Bisht in 56 kg category signed off with silver medals after close losses.
- The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup was held at Beijing, China. Indian Shooter Abhishek Verma has won the 10m Air Pistol gold medal.
  - He clinched the top spot with a total score of 242.7