

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS: JANUARY 2019

WEEK IV

NATIONAL EVENTS

- The word Nari Shakti is chosen as the word of the Year 2018 by the Oxford dictionaries. The announcement regarding this was made in the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF).
- Bharat Parv was organised as part of Republic Day celebrations at Red Fort, Delhi to generate a patriotic fervour and promote the rich cultural diversity of the country. Bharat Parv showcases the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.
- Ministry for Science and Technology inaugurated the three Department of Science and Technology (DST) mission centres at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) at the collective cost of Rs 50 crore.
- Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) will launch a new train Samantha Express which will cover prominent places associated with Gautam Buddha and chief architect of the Constitution Dr B R Ambedkar.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the setting up of National Bench of Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal. Section 109 of Chapter XVIII Chapter of CGST Act empowers the Central Government to constitute an Appellate Tribunal known as the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal for hearing on the recommendation of Council
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana. Under the scheme, a group of Indian diaspora will be taken on a government-sponsored tour of religious places in India twice a year. People of Indian-origin aged 45 to 65 can apply can avail the benefits under the scheme.
- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Armoured Systems Complex (ASC), developed by Larsen & Toubro (L&T) at Hazira near Surat in Gujarat. This Armoured Systems Complex (ASC) is the country's first private facility where the K9 Vajra self-propelled Howitzer guns will be manufactured.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

- British government has announced South Asian Nitrogen Hub a research project to study nitrogen pollution in India and South Asia. The project led by UK's Centre for Ecology and Hydrology will partner with 50 organisations from the UK and South Asia.
- South African President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered the first IBSA Gandhi-Mandela Memorial Freedom Lecture.

- Rio de Janeiro has been recognised as ‘World Capital of Architecture’ for 2020 by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).
- The “Conference of Rulers” elected 59 years old Sultan Abdullah who is the ruler of the Malaysian state of Pahang as new King for the period of 5 years

STATE EVENTS

- Madhya Pradesh government has announced Yuva Swabhiman Yojana with an aim to provide employment for the unemployed youth from the economically weaker sections of the society. The scheme aims to provide 100 days of employment to youngsters from economically weaker sections of the society in urban areas.
- The government of Kerala has launched ‘Pravasi Dividend Pension Scheme. Under the scheme, a regular pension would be provided to Non-Resident Keralites on a one-time payment of Rs 5 lakh.
- The government of Uttar Pradesh celebrated UP Divas for the first time on 24th January 2019.
- The states of Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya celebrated their 47th Statehood Day on 21st January. The states of Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya became full-fledged states on January 21, 1972.
- The Chief Minister of Tripura Biplab Kumar Deb unveiled the official logo of Tripura Tea. The Tripura Tea logo features Neermahal, the iconic landmark of Tripura.
- The government of Odisha announced a hike of Rs 200 per month in the social security pension under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY). The Scheme was instituted by merging the two pension schemes i.e. namely, Revised Old Age Pension Rules, 1989 and Disability Pension Rules, 1985.

APPOINTMENTS

- Lakshmi Vilas Bank got approval from RBI and reappointed Parthasarathi Mukherjee as its managing director for next two years.
- Yes bank has elected Ravneet Singh Gill as the MD.

SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES

- The 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 on the ‘Regulation of Homeopathic Medical Products; Advancing global collaboration’ organised on 23-25 January 2019 at Goa.
- National Conference on Self Reliance in Defence Manufacturing is organised at Hyderabad.

- Rio de Janeiro will host the World Congress of the International Union of Architects (UIA) in July 2020. The theme of the 2020 World Congress of the International Union of Architects is “All the worlds. Just one world,”

AWARDS AND HONOURS

- No Presents Please is English Novel translated from Kannada Work of Jayant Kaikini won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2018. The novel was translated to English by Tejaswini Niranjana.
- India’s highest peacetime gallantry honour, Ashoka Chakra was awarded to Lance Naik Nazir Wani posthumously.
- The 2019 Bharat Ratna award has been conferred to former President Pranab Mukherjee, Nanaji Deshmukh and singer Bhupen Hazarika. Nanaji Deshmukh and singer Bhupen Hazarika were awarded Bharat Ratna posthumously.
- Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Aparna Kumar became the first woman Indian Police Service (IPS) and ITBP officer to successfully conquer the South Pole.
- The first Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials Research has been awarded to C N R Rao.
- ‘Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) awarded social impact award to Tetra Pak India, the world’s leading packaging and processing solutions provider under the category ‘Sustainable Environment
- Karthiyani Amma from Kerala became Commonwealth Learning Goodwill Ambassador. She was the oldest ever candidate to appear for Kerala Literacy Mission’s Akshara Laksham (Million Letters) literacy exam.
- The government formed an annual award titled Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar. This award is to be awarded every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The Award carries a certificate and a cash prize of 51 lakh rupees. For the year 2019, 8th Battalion of National Disaster Response Force located at Ghaziabad is selected for its work in disaster management.
- 27th edition of Saraswati Samman Award ceremony was held in New Delhi. Eminent Gujarati poet Sitanshu Yashaschandra was awarded for his poetry collection, ‘Vakhar,’ published in 2009.

BANKING AND FINANCIAL AWARENESS

- The Union Cabinet has approved the amendments to the framework on currency swap arrangement for SAARC member countries. The amendments incorporate a standby facility of USD 400 million. This stand-by facility enables India to provide a prompt

response to the current request from SAARC member countries for availing the swap amount exceeding the present limit prescribed under the SAARC Swap Framework.

COMMITTEES & PANELS

- Regulatory Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has set up a panel headed by Praveen Kutumbe to identify domestically systematically important insurers (SIs) and an augmented regulatory framework is logically established in this regard.

MOUS AND AGREEMENTS

- The Union Cabinet of India has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Kuwait for cooperation on the recruitment of domestic workers.
- The Swedish aerospace and defence company Saab and Airports Authority of India (AAI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to explore air traffic management (ATM) solutions for airports operating under the regional connectivity scheme, UDAN.
- In Pokhara, India and Nepal agreed to set up energy banking mechanism to make use of the surplus electricity in an essential and a useful way.
- SBI Card, the country's second largest credit card issuer and Etihad Guest, the loyalty programme of Etihad Airways have joined their hand together for a specific visa credit card to come into play for members and Indian travellers.

INDEX AND REPORTS

- The Bloomberg Innovation Index 2019 was recently released. It analyses each country in a range of areas including education, research and development, and manufacturing before coming up with a list of the 60 most innovative countries. The index is topped by South Korea for the sixth time in a row with a total score of 87.38. India stands at 54th spot in the Bloomberg Innovation Index with a score of 47.93 out of 100.
- The SBI Ecowrap report recommends the government to opt for the unconditional cash transfer to farmers to alleviate agrarian distress rather than Universal Basic Income (UBI) scheme.

DEFENCE

- Naval Air Station (NAS) Shibpur has been commissioned as INS Kohassa to enhance the operational capability of Andaman and Nicobar Command. INS Kohassa will be India's fourth air base and the third naval air facility in the Andaman and Nicobar region that

overlooks key sea lanes of communication and strategic points with more than 60,000 commercial vessels passing through each year.

- The coast guards of India and Japan undertook disaster control, search and rescue exercises off the coast of Yokohama in Japan. ICGS Shaunak is the main Indian ship taking part in the drills.
- Indian Navy undertook Sea-Vigil which is a first of its kind multi-agency drill, covering the entire Indian coastline and exclusive economic zone and involving 13 coastal states and Union Territories to check the efficacy of maritime security and surveillance.

IMPORTANT DAYS

- India celebrated 9th National Voters Day on 25th January 2019 for enhanced participation of citizens in the electoral process.
- National Girl Child Day (NGCD) is celebrated in India on January 24th with an aim to raise awareness about Child Sex Ratio (CSR) levels and promote the empowerment of girls. The theme of National Girl Child Day-2019 is “Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow”

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has launched the Kalamsat-V2 from Sriharikota space centre. It is the lightest satellite to be ever built and launched into orbit and it is also Isro’s first launch of a satellite built by a private firm. The satellite is being built by students belonging to Space Kidz India
- Facebook grants \$7.5 million to set up an Institute for Ethics in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in collaboration with the Technical University of Munich (TUM) in Germany.
- Microsoft India launched a new e-commerce platform ‘re-weave.in’ under project ReWeave to aid handloom weavers.
- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar, has developed an app Roshni that would help the Visually Impaired to recognise currency notes.