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**WEEKLY
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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International

Brexit deal: Brexit deal is also formally known as known formally as the 'Withdrawal Agreement'. The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) has approved the exit of Britain from the European Union on January 31, 2020, ending 47 years of membership. The vote was 621 to 49 in favor of the Brexit deal that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson negotiated with the other 27 EU leaders. UK has become the first country to ends its EU membership. UK will remain within the EU's economic arrangements until the end of the year. However, UK will not have any say in policy as it will not be a member of the EU anymore. The United Kingdom will now be required to strike a new free-trade deal with the European Union to enable a smooth transition.



Britain: Great Britain is an island in the North Atlantic Ocean off the northwest coast of continental Europe. The capital of the United Kingdom is London. The United Kingdom, made up of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, is an island nation in northwestern Europe. England. The currency used here is Pound Sterling. The Prime minister of United Kingdom is Boris Johnson.

Britain has unveiled a new 50 pence coin minted to mark Brexit (British exit). The coin bears the inscription "Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations". The first batch of coins was presented to the Finance Minister of Britain Sajid Javid, who is also Master of the Mint.



Qatar: It is a peninsular Arab country whose terrain comprises arid desert and a long Persian (Arab) Gulf shoreline of beaches and dunes. the capital of Qatar is Doha which also lies on the coast. The currency used here is Qatari riyal.

Recently, Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdelaziz Al Thani has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of Qatar. His appointment followed Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al Thani's resignation. He was appointed by Qatar's ruler Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani through a royal decree.

Sheikh Khalid is a member of the ruling Al Thani family. He worked in the Qatar Liquefied Gas Company Limited until 2002. He then worked at the office of the First Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2002 to 2006. He also served as chief of the Amiri Diwan from November 2014 until his appointment as Prime Minister.



USMCA: It refers to United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement. Recently, US President Donald Trump signed USMCA North American trade pact with Canada and Mexico into law. It was signed in a ceremony at the White House.

The USMCA was crafted over years of negotiation between the three countries. It replaces the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA. It also makes changes to e-commerce, intellectual property protection and dispute settlement for investors, as well as imposing tougher labour provisions, requiring reforms to Mexico's laws.



National

Republic Day: Republic Day is a national holiday in India. 26 January was chosen as the date for Republic day because it was on this day in 1929 when the Declaration of Indian Independence (Purna Swaraj) was proclaimed by the Indian National Congress as opposed to the Dominion status offered by the British Regime. The Constitution was adopted by the Indian Constituent Assembly on 26 November 1949 and came into effect on 26 January 1950 with a democratic government system. After, the adoption of the constitution, The Union of India became the contemporary and modern Republic of India. Dr, B. R. Ambedkar was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee.

The main Republic Day celebration is held in the national capital, New Delhi, at the Rajpath before the President of India. It is organized by the Ministry of Defence. It commences from the gates of the Rashtrapati Bhavan (the President's residence), Raisina Hill on Rajpath past the India Gate. India's Republic Day Celebrations and lasts for three days. The parade showcases India's Defence Capability, Cultural and Social Heritage.

About 12 different regiments of the Indian Army in addition to the Navy, and Air Force with their bands march past in all their finery and official decorations. The President of India, who is the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Armed Forces, takes the salute. Twelve contingents of various Para-military forces of India and police forces also take part in this parade. Republic Day Celebrations and lasts for three days.

India on 26th January 2020 celebrated its 71st Republic Day. The celebration started with a grand military parade and exhibition of its history, cultural diversity and strategic weaponry at the Rajpath, Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute at the National War Memorial and President Ram Nath Kovind unfurled the national flag along with General Manoj Mukund Naravane, Chief of the Army Staff, Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of the Naval Staff, Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria, Chief of the Air Staff.

The President of Brazil Jair Bolsonaro was the chief guest for 2020 Republic Day Celebration.

This year's Republic Day was unique for India in many different ways. For the first time, a contingent of women bikers of CRPF performed daredevil stunts and Jammu and Kashmir the new Union Territory participated in the parade. Captain Tania Shergill, the first woman parade adjutant lead the parade for the Republic Day and Dhanush artillery gun was showcased in the parade for the first time.



Padma Awards: Padma awards refers to Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri which are conferred in decreasing order of importance respectively. These awards are presented annually by the President of India on the Republic Day. The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc. Padma Vibhushan award is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service. Padma Bhushan award for distinguished service of high order. Padma Shri Award for distinguished service in any field.



These awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day and the President of India confers these awards in March / April at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

For 2020, the Government of India has announced 141 Padma Awards on the occasion of the 71st Republic Day Celebration. The list comprises 7 Padma Vibhushan, 16 Padma Bhushan and 118 Padma Shri awards. 34 awardees are women and 18 foreigners while 12 persons are awarded posthumously.

The awardees for Padma Vibhushan 2020 are former Prime Minister of Mauritius Anerood Jugnauth, Mary Kom, Chhannulal Mishra, George Fernandes (Posthumous), Arun Jaitley (Posthumous), Sushma Swaraj (posthumous) and Pejavara Adhokhaja Matha Udupi (Posthumous).

The awardees for Padma Bhushan 2020 are Muzaffar Hussain Baig, Ajay Chakraborty, Manoj Das, Balakrishna Doshi, Krishnammal Jagannathan, Former Nagaland Chief Minister SC Jamir, Uttarakhand's well-known environmentalist and social worker Dr. Anil Prakash Joshi, Dr. Tsering Landol, eminent industrialist Anand Mahindra, Prof. Jagdish Seth, Olympian badminton player PV Sindhu, industrialist Venu Srinivasan, Neelakanta Ramakrishna Madhava Menon (Posthumous), M. Mumtaz Ali, Muazzam Ali (posthumously), and former Union Minister Manohar Parrikar (Posthumous).

The awardees for Padma Shri 2020 are Jagdish Lal Ahuja Social Work Punjab, Kazi Masum Akhtar, Gloria Arieira, Khan Zaheerkhan Bakhtiyarkhan, Padmavathy Bandopadhyay, Guru Shashadhar Acharya, Dr. Yogi Aeron, Jai Prakash Agarwal, Dr. Sushovan Banerjee, Dr. Digambar Behera, Dr. Damayanti Beshra, Guru Shashadhar Acharya, Dr. Yogi Aeron, Jai Prakash Agarwal, Dr. Sushovan Banerjee, Dr. Digambar Behera, Dr. Damayanti Beshra, Pawar Popatrao Bhaguji, Himmata Ram Bhambhu, Sanjeev Bikhchandani, Gafurbhai M. Bilakhia, Bob Blackman, Indira P. P. Bora, Madan Singh Chauhan, Footballer Oinam Bembem Devi, Film Director Karan Johar, Actress Kangna Ranaut, among others.

Gol: Recently, The Union Minister of State (I/C) Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh launched the Bhuvan Panchayat V 3.0 web portal. It was launched in Anthariksh Bhavan, ISRO Head Quarters in Bengaluru.



The aim of this web portal is to enhance network application of gram panchayats and help in the village development planning process under the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. The Portal will function with the help of satellite technology developed by ISRO. Under this project, ISRO will collaborate with the gram panchayat members and stakeholders to understand their data requirements.

Bhuvan Panchayat V 3.0 web portal: The Web Geo portal is an easy to use Geo portal. It is developed for database visualization, data analytics, generation of automatic reports, model based products and services for the benefit of Gram Panchayat members and other stake holders. Bhuvan is a satellite application that is powered by ISRO. It allows users to explore 2D and 3D representation of the earth.

NDFB: It refers to National Democratic Front of Bodoland. The NDBF is an armed separatist outfit which seeks to obtain a sovereign Boroland for the Bodo people. It is designated as a terrorist organisation by the Government of India. NDFB traces its origin to Bodo Security Force, a militant group formed in 1986.



Recently, the Government of India (GoI) signed the historic agreement with the nine factions of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB). The agreement was signed in the presence of Home Minister Amit Shah and Assam Chief Minister Sarbanand Sonowal and the leaders of the NDFB. According to the agreement, the Bodoland Territorial Area District will hold special rights for the locals. However, the outsiders will have to obtain “permit” to work in the territory. The Agreement will also provide economic benefits as well as political rights to the Bodos. Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) will now be named as Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), and will have more administrative power.

Bodo Accord: This is the third agreement signed by GoI and Bodo tribes in 27 years. The first was signed with All Bodo Students Union in 1993 and the second was signed in 2003. The first agreement

resulted to the creation of a Bodoland Autonomous Council with some political powers and the second agreement resulted to the formation of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) with four districts – Udaguri, Chirang, Baska and Kokrajhar. These areas are commonly called Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD).

Indian polity

The Union Cabinet: The Union Council of Ministers exercises executive authority in the Republic of India. It consists of senior ministers, called 'cabinet ministers', junior ministers, and called 'ministers of state' and, rarely, deputy ministers. A smaller executive body called the Union Cabinet is the supreme decision-making body in India. It is led by the Prime Minister.



Recently, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi got its approval to the official amendments in the National Commission for Homoeopathy Bill 2019 for amending the Homoeopathy Central Council (HCC) Act, 1973. Currently, the Bill is pending in Rajya Sabha.

The amendments will ensure necessary regulatory reforms in the field of Homoeopathy education, enable transparency and accountability for protecting the interest of the general public and the National Commission will promote the availability of affordable healthcare services in all parts of the country.

Homoeopathy Central Council (HCC) Act, 1973: The Homoeopathy Central Council (HCC) Act, 1973 was enacted for constitution of a Central Council of Homoeopathy for regulation of education and practice of Homoeopathy, for maintenance of Central Register of Homoeopathy and for matters connected therewith. This Act has been modeled on the pattern of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956. The broad functions, constitution, regulation making powers are identical to those of the Medical Council of India. While the Act provides a solid foundation for the growth of medical education and practice in Homoeopathy, but various bottlenecks in the functioning of Council have been experienced, which has resulted in serious detrimental effects on medical education as well as delivery of quality Homoeopathy healthcare services.

Union Cabinet: Recently, the Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 drafted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971. The amended bill proposes to extend the upper limit for abortion in India to 24 weeks from 20 weeks. The Bill is set to be introduced in the ensuing session of the Parliament.

The main aim of the proposed amendments in the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill is to increase access of women to safe abortion services and taking into account the advances in medical technology. It will also ensure dignity, autonomy, confidentiality and justice for women who need to terminate their pregnancy.



Indian policy

GATI Portal: It is a Web Portal that has been created by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) on the pattern of 'PRAGATI'. It can be accessed from NHAI Website.



Recently, the Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari recently launched online Web Portal 'GATI' to monitor roads and highways projects. Its aim is to monitor daily the projects or construction-related issues on this portal raised by Contractors or concessionaires and also the problems raised in regard to the above mentioned issues by them.

The GATI portal will be reviewed by senior officials of the ministry which will bring transparency and speed up the decision making.

A total of 500 projects (including delayed ones) costing around Rs 3 lakh crore were taken up for review during the meeting.

NHAI: It stands for National Highways Authority of India. It is an autonomous agency of the Government of India. It was founded in 1988. It is responsible for management of a network of over 50,000 km of National Highways out of 1,15,000 km in India. The current chairman of NHAI is Sukhbir Singh sindhu..

MGNREGA Scheme: It refers to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. It was initially known as National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA). It was later renamed as

the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act", (MGNREGA). It is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'. This act was passed in September 2005. It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

Recently, MGNREGA Scheme made headlines as it is running out of funds. As per the reports published in the national daily, more than 96% of the sanctioned amount is already used up.



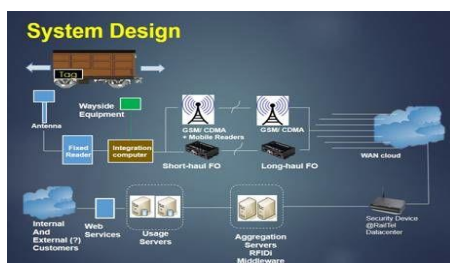
RFID Tags: It stands for Radio-frequency identification tags. The RFID is a technology where an antenna broadcasts energy to the tag, which in turn returns the modulated energy back in the form of back-scatter. RFID tag uses electromagnetic fields to track and identify various objects. Each RFID tag consists of a small radio transponder, a transmitter, and a radio receiver. The information sent by the RFID tag is decoded by a RFID reader.

The RFID tag can be affixed to any object to track and monitor assets, people and inventory. It is generally affixed to the computer equipment, cars, passenger trains or buses, books, etc. It is faster than barcodes as RFID can be read several times while barcodes can be read one at a time.

Recently, Indian Railways announced that it will equip all coaches and engines with radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags. Around 3, 50,000 passenger coaches and freight coaches of the railways will be equipped with RFID tags for their smart monitoring by 2021. This project is being taken by the Rolling Stock Department of Indian Railways (IR).

The main aim of the RFID project is to automatically and accurately track and trace rolling stock as they move across the country with a particular focus on improving their safety and reliability.

A rolling stock includes carriages, locomotives, wagons and other vehicles used in Railways.



In order to tag the rolling stocks and collect their tracking data, the Indian Railways has joined hands with GS1 India and Indian industry. The tie up has been made under "Make in India" initiative to create a new segment in the AIDC (Automatic Identification and Data Collection) industry in India uniquely suited for the Indian Railways requirements.

CRIS: It refers to Centre for Railway Information Systems. The CRIS develops and maintains information systems of Indian Railways. CRIS is headquartered in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. It was established in 1986.

India and Brazil: India inked 15 agreements with Brazil on 25th January 2020 to boost cooperation in multiple fields including bio-energy, cyber security, health and medicine, between the two countries. The MoU was signed during the talks held between India's Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro.

President of Brazil Jair Messias Bolsonaro who arrived in New Delhi on four-day state visit to India is also the chief guest at the 2020 Republic Day of India celebrations. The main focus of the talks was on boosting bilateral trade and investment as both the large economies were hit by global economic slowdown. An action plan has been finalized to further expand strategic ties between the two strategic partners.



Science and Technology

ISRO: It is the acronym for Indian Space Research Organisation. It is the space agency of the Government of India and has its headquarters in the city of Bengaluru. Its vision is to "harness space technology for national development while pursuing space science research & planetary exploration". It was founded on 15 August 1969 by Vikram Sarabhai. The Director of ISRO is Kailasavadivoo Sivan.

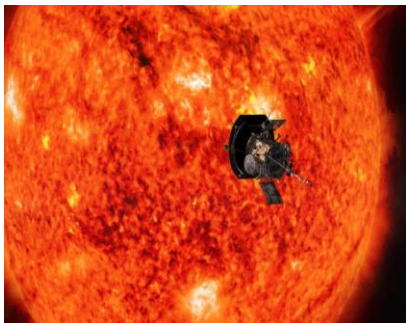


Recently, ISRO announced that it is preparing low-cost satellite launch vehicles costing around RS. 30-35 crores. These vehicles are capable of carrying satellites weighing 500 kg. The first launch from the country is expected to take place in the next four months.

An amount of 1,600 million USD has been allocated by ISRO to manufacture these satellite vehicles. 870 million USD from the allocated amount is to be used to produce PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) while the remaining is to be used for Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle. This capability will help ISRO give a big commercial boost as it will be able to cater to micro, mini and medium segments of the market.

India also aims for opportunities to join hands France Space agencies to set up a model for the Moon Programme that is currently under operation in India.

NASA: It stands for National Aeronautics and Space Administration. NASA is an independent agency of the United States Federal Government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and aerospace research. NASA was established in 1958, succeeding the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics. The founder of NASA is Dwight D. Eisenhower It is headquartered in Washington, D.C., United States.



Recently, NASA's Parker Solar Probe took one step closer to the sun when it executed its 4th flyby of our star. The Parker Solar Probe's trajectory carried the warhead within about 11.6 million miles (18.6 million kilometers) of the sun, more than 3 million miles (5 million km) closer than previous flybys. By doing so it broke its own record for the closest a spacecraft has come to the sun. The probe will continue to do repeatedly over the course of its seven-year mission.

This is the 1st such maneuver, called a perihelion, that the spacecraft has completed since swinging past Venus in December, a move that shrank the probe's orbit. The main objective of Parker Solar Probe is making a series of 24 close flybys on the sun through 2025 in order to help scientists understand how the sun works.

Innovation Festival: It is one of its kind festival that is being organized by the Arunachal Pradesh State Council for Science & Technology in collaboration with the National Innovation Foundation.



The 'Innovation Festival' kicked off at the Science Centre in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh. The main aim of the Innovation Festival is to foster the culture of innovation among all people of the state, especially in all the educational institutions. The two-day programme will witness interaction sessions, technical session and discussion among the innovators and motivation by several eminent personalities, scholars and persons from educational institutions.

Environment & Climate

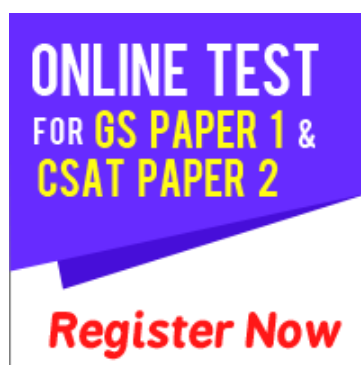
Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2020: The award which has been instituted by the Central Government is awarded to recognize the excellent work done by individuals and institutions in India in the field of disaster management. It is announced every year on January 23, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. Only Indian nationals and Indian institutions are eligible for this award. In case an institution is the winner then it shall receive a cash prize of Rs. 51 lakhs. In case an individual is the winner then the winner shall receive a certificate and a cash prize of Rs. 5 lakhs.

The Home Ministry announced the winners of Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2020 on January 23, 2020. Kumar Munnan Singh has been honoured with the award in the individual category while Disaster Mitigation & Management Centre (DMMC) of Uttarakhand was selected under 'institution category'. The DG of DMCC is Satya Narayan Pradhan.

African cheetah: The Southeast African cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus jubatus*) is the nominate cheetah subspecies native to East and Southern Africa. The Southern African cheetah lives mainly in the lowland areas and deserts of the Kalahari, the savannahs of Okavango Delta, and the grasslands of the Transvaal region in South Africa. In Namibia, cheetahs are mostly found in farmlands. It inhabits a variety of mostly arid habitats like dry forests, scrub forests, and savannahs.

Recently, the Supreme Court allowed the Centre to introduce the African cheetah to suitable habitat in India. The cat is being introduced on experimental basis. The rare Indian cheetah is almost extinct in the country, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had filed an application seeking permission for the introduction of the African cheetah from Namibia. This being done as the Cheetahs are extinct in India and the environmentalists suggest that it is essential to reintroduce them in order to maintain balance in the ecosystem.

Cheetahs are classified as "Critically Endangered" under the IUCN Red List.



Sports

Bala Devi: Ngangom Bala Devi, the current top scorer of the Indian National football team, created history by becoming the first Indian woman footballer to bag a contract with a foreign club Scottish giant Rangers FC. The 29-year-old, who joins from Manipur Police Sports Club after trials in Glasgow in November, is currently the leading goal scorer for the Indian national women's team, netting 52 in 58 outings since 2010, which also makes her the top international goal scorer in the South Asian region. She finished the top-scorer in the last edition of the Indian Women's League, scoring 25 in 7 games. She was also the top-scorer in the women's nationals last year with 21 goals. Bala has a prolific scoring record with over 100 goals in 120 games in domestic football. She has been the top scorer in the Indian Women's League for the past two seasons and has also been named as All India Football Federation (AIFF) Women's Player of the Year twice, in 2015 and 2016.



Tokyo Olympics: The 2020 Summer Olympics, officially known as the Games of the XXXII Olympiad and commonly known as Tokyo 2020 or the Recovery Olympics, is an upcoming international multi-sport event that is scheduled to take place from 24 July to 9 August 2020 in Tokyo, Japan.

Star Indian javelin thrower has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics with a throw of 87.86 meters at the Athletics Central North East meeting in South Africa. He is a 22 year old who won gold medals in the Asian Games as well as Commonwealth Games. The gold medalist breached the Olympic qualification mark of 85 meters in his fourth attempt. He did not participate in the IAAF World Championships, the Diamond League and the Asian Championships due to an elbow injury. His last major international competition was the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games where he won gold with a national record of 88.06 metres.



International World Games Association: The association is an international association. It is recognized by the International Olympic Committee. It was founded in 1980.

Indian women's team captain Rani Rampal became the first-ever hockey player to win the prestigious 'World Games Athlete of the Year' award. She was announced the winner by the World Games after 20 days of polling in January this year by sports fans worldwide.

In 2019, India won the FIH Series Finals, and Rani was named Player of the Tournament. Under Rani's leadership, the Indian women's team qualified for just the third Olympic Games in its history. The Padmashree awardee has been a member of the national team since she was a 15-years-old, and has more than 240 caps for India.



Economic

Indian Railways: Indian Railways is the largest rail network in Asia and the world's second largest has over 70,000 passenger coaches and more than 11,000 locomotives. The First train in India ran between Bombay and Thane on the 16th of April 1853. Indian Railways transports almost 2.5 crore passengers daily.



Recently, the Indian railways launched a high capacity parcel van at Delhi Safdarjung Railway Station. The Parcel van was designed and manufactured in Kapurthala Rail Coach Factory. The Speed of the train's speed is 130 km per hour. The Indian Railways has launched an exclusive Banana Container train to boost the exports of the fruit.

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), along with State Government of Andhra Pradesh and one of the largest member exporter of banana, dispatched the first shipment of 890 MTs of high quality bananas, loaded in 43 refrigerated containers, from Tadipatri, Anantpur in Andhra Pradesh to Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT) in Mumbai for export to international markets. More than 500 farmers cultivating bananas in more than 1800 hectares have been trained to boost the production and export of the fruit from Anantpur and nearby districts. Indian APEDA with the support of the State Government and exporters aims to provide a good opportunity for India to increase its share in the world trade of banana.

Economic Survey: The Economic Survey is a detailed report card on the economic performance in the year. The Survey brings out the economic trends in the country and facilitates a better appreciation of the mobilization of resources and their allocation in the Union Budget. It analyses the trends in agricultural and industrial production, infrastructure, employment, money supply, prices, exports, imports, foreign exchange reserves and other relevant economic factors that have a bearing on the Budget. It is presented in Parliament ahead of the Budget for the ensuing year.

Recently, the Economic Survey 2019-20 was tabled during the Budget Session of the Parliament on 31 January 2020 by Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Finance. The survey was prepared under the Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) Krishnamurthy V Subramanian. The theme for the survey 2020 is "Ethical Wealth Creation". The Survey 2020 focuses on the theme of Wealth Creation, Promotion of pro-business policies, strengthening of trust in the economy. The document outlines strategies for making India a \$5 trillion dollar economy by 2024-25. The survey highlighted the fact that 2.62 crore new jobs were created in rural and urban areas between 2011-12 and 2017-18 in the country. The Economic Survey on Friday projected revival of economic growth to 6-6.5 per cent in the next fiscal beginning April 1 but suggested the government to relax the budget deficit target to boost growth from a decade low. For the current fiscal, it projected a GDP growth of 5 per cent, the lowest in 11 years, and worsening job prospects. The Survey emphasized on investment-led growth by focusing on reviving the MSME sector. The Survey 2020 also throws light on new ideas like Thalonomics, Adoption of China model, Trust and others, to boost growth and accelerate wealth creation.



BSE: It refers to Bombay Stock Exchange. It was founded in 9 July 1875. It is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It is an Indian stock exchange located at Dalal Street, Mumbai. BSE provides a transparent market for trading in equity, debt instruments, equity derivatives, currency derivatives, commodity derivatives, interest rate derivatives, mutual funds and stock lending and borrowing. The current Chairman of BSE is Vikramajit Sen and the Managing Director and CEO of BSE is Ashish Kumar Chauhan.

Recently, the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) has signed a licensing agreement with Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) Futures Europe. Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) Futures Europe is an operator of global exchanges and clearinghouses.

India is one of the largest consumers and importers of crude oil in the world, and Brent crude is highly co-related with the Indian crude oil market. This agreement seeks to serve the needs and interests to the Indian energy commodities space and market participants to access Rupee-dominated Brent benchmark prices. It will also help Indian commodity markets by providing convenient and cost-effective onshore hedging products and enable the price discovery of Brent crude prices in the Indian time zone.



Places in News

Port Blair: Port Blair on South Andaman Island is the capital city of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It is an Indian territory in the Bay of Bengal.

Recently, The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched the Composite Regional Centre (CRC) in Port Blair. CRC is an initiative of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. The aim of the Central Government is to create resources and infrastructure required for developing services for persons with disabilities including human resource development and research. The centre aims at training of rehabilitation professionals and capacity building at centre, district and state levels.

The Composite Regional Centres in India are located in Kozhikode, Bhopal, Lucknow, Patna, Guwahati, Srinagar, Ahmedabad, Mandi and Suraghi (Chhattisgarh).



Telangana: Telangana is a state in India situated on the centre-south stretch of the Indian peninsula on the high Deccan Plateau. It is the twelfth largest state. Telangana is bordered by the states of Maharashtra to the north, Chhattisgarh to the east, Karnataka to the west, and Andhra Pradesh to the east and south. Chief Minister of Telangana is K. Chandrashekar Rao and the Governor of Telangana is Tamsilais Soundararajan.

Recently, world's largest meditation centre was inaugurated at Kanha Shanti Vanam in Hyderabad, Telangana. This centre which is built on 30 acres is built to mark the 75th anniversary of the formation of Shri Ram Chandra Mission (SRCM) and Heartfulness Institute.

The meditation centre has been carefully designed not just as a structure of physical importance but as an inspiration for all those who seek to better their lives through the practice of meditation. The meditation centre will have a central hall and eight peripheral halls to accommodate 100,000 meditation practitioners at a time.



Bhubaneswar: Bhubaneswar is the capital and largest city of the Indian state of Odisha. It is a centre of economic, educational and cultural importance of East India.

Recently, Indian Railways has commissioned the country's first governmental waste to energy plant in Mancheswar Carriage Repair workshop at Bhubaneswar under the East Coast Railway zone. The plant was jointly inaugurated by Rajesh Agarwal, a member of Rollin Stock and GM of East Coast Railway zone. It has been built at a cost of Rs 1.79 crore and has the capacity to dispose of 500 kg waste, including plastic and e-waste. This Waste to Energy Plant has been constructed in three months.

This waste-to-energy plant uses a patented technology called 'Polycrack' which is first-of-its-kind in Indian Railways and fourth in India. This process will produce energy in the form of light diesel oil which is used to light furnaces. Polycrack is the world's first patented heterogeneous catalytic process which converts multiple feedstocks into hydrocarbon liquid fuels, gas, carbon and water.



West Bengal: West Bengal is a state in eastern India, between the Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal. Its capital, Kolkata retains architectural and cultural remnants of its past as an East India Company trading post and capital of the British Raj. The Chief Minister and Governor of West Bengal is Mamta Banerjee and Jagdeep Dhankhar respectively.

Recently, West Bengal has become the 4th state to pass resolution demanding scrapping of CAA. The West Bengal state government had introduced the resolution in the state assembly demanding that the controversial CAA law be repealed and NPR, NRC be withdrawn.



Andhra Pradesh: Andhra Pradesh is one of the 28 states of India, situated in the south-eastern part of the country. It is the eight-largest state in India. The Chief minister and Governor of Andhra Pradesh are Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy and Biswabhusan Harichandan respectively.

Recently, The Andhra Pradesh legislative assembly unanimously passed a resolution on January 27, 2020 to abolish the state legislative council. The YSR Congress Party-led government had approved the resolution at a meeting in the state capital Amaravati. The proposal will now be sent to the centre for further action.

The Parliament of India has to vote for approving on abolishing the state Council. Article 169 of the Indian Constitution empowers Parliament to enact legislation providing for the abolition of the Legislative Council of a state, if the Legislative Assembly of the state passes a resolution to that effect.



Persons in News

Sunil Mehta: Indian Banks' Association (IBA) has appointed Sunil Mehta as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Sunil Mehta is the former Managing Director and CEO of Punjab National Bank. He will replace VG Kannan, who resigned from office as chief executive of IBA on December 31, 2019.

The term of the CEO of IBA is for 3 years. At present, the managing committee of IBA has SBI chief Rajnish Kumar as Chairman for the year 2019-20 along with 3 deputy chairmen and honorary secretary.

IBA: It refers to Indian Banks' Association. It was formed on 26 September 1946. It is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It is an association for the management of the banks and financial institutions of the country. It currently represents around 200 banking and financial institutions operating in India.



Gita Sabharwal: She is an Indian who received her B.A. in Sociology and her M.A. in Psychology from Delhi University. She received her M.A. in Development Management from the University of Wales, UK. She holds 25 years of experience in peacebuilding, development, governance and social policy across five Asian countries including the Maldives. Earlier she served the UN in Sri Lanka as the Peacebuilding and Development Adviser for nearly seven years. She has also served as the Social Development Adviser for UK's Department for International Development in India and Vietnam. Sabharwal has developed and managed programmes across sectors ranging from poverty reduction, social protection, civil society, decentralization, gender equality and public enterprise reform.

Recently, the United Nations has appointed India's Gita Sabharwal as the Resident Coordinator in Thailand, which is the highest-ranking representative of the UN development system at the country level.



Taranjit Singh Sandhu: He is a 1988-batch Indian Foreign Service officer. He is currently posted as High Commissioner of India in Sri Lanka. He has previously served as the Deputy Chief of Mission at Embassy of India in Washington DC from 2013 to 2017.

Recently, senior diplomat Taranjit Singh Sandhu has been appointed as India's Ambassador to the US, replacing Harsh Vardhan Shringla. He will take charge as the new Indian Ambassador to the United States. Shringla has been named as India's next foreign secretary.



Dr. N Kumar: He is an inspiring teacher and a mentor of Research. He is from Kadukkarai village located in the Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu. He began his career in 1979 as an Assistant Professor in Horticulture at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. He has written 8 Text Books, Research papers internationally acclaimed-52 and 14 chapters in edited books.

Recently, Dr N Kumar, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, has been conferred 'Harit Ratna Award 2019' by the All India Agricultural Students Association. The award was conferred at the 5th National Youth Convention at Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya in Raipur. He was awarded for the dissemination of Rs 30-crore entrepreneurship project in agri-business and also for motivating students towards the agriculture sector in Tamil Nadu.



Defence

ICG: It refers to Indian Coast Guard. ICG is an armed force that protects India's maritime interests and enforces maritime law, with jurisdiction over the territorial waters of India, including its contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone. ICG was founded in 18 August 1978 by the Parliament of India. It is headquartered in New Delhi. The motto of ICG is Vayam Raksamah (We protect). The Director General of ICG is Krishnaswamy Natrajan, PTM, TM, and Additional Director General is Krupa Ram Nautiyal, PTM, TM.

Recently, a high-speed interceptor boat C-448 has been commissioned by ICG in Mangaluru, Karnataka. The interceptor boat has been built by L&T (Larsen & Toubro) shipyard. It will have a crew of 12 personnel commanded by Assistant Commandant Apoorva Sharma.

The boat which will be used for patrolling and rescue operations is equipped with an infrared system for night surveillance. It can perform high-speed interception, low-intensity maritime operations etc. It has an endurance of 500 nautical miles at 20 knots and can reach a maximum speed of 45 knots.



Assam Rifles: The Assam Rifles is the oldest paramilitary force of India. The unit can trace its lineage back to a paramilitary police force that was formed under the British in 1835 called Cachar Levy. Since then the Assam Rifles have undergone a number of name changes—the Assam Frontier Police (1883), the Assam Military Police (1891) and Eastern Bengal and Assam Military Police (1913), before finally becoming the Assam Rifles in 1917. It was founded in 1835. Its headquarters are in Shillong, India. Since 2000, they are guarding the Indo-Myanmar Barrier under “one border one force” policy of Government of India. Its governing body is the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Defence of India. Its Motto is 'Sentinels of the North East'. The DG of Assam Rifles is Lt Gen Sukhdeep Sangwan.



Recently, The Assam Rifles has constructed a combined war memorial in the memory of the 357 Army and Assam Rifles personnel killed while fighting insurgency in the northeastern state. The memorial has been constructed at Mokokchung, Nagaland. This memorial is the first of its kind in Nagaland, which also has the famous Second World War Cemetery at Kohima.

SAMPRITI-IX: It is a Joint Military Exercise between India and Bangladesh. A defence agreement was signed by both the countries in 2017 in order to conduct military exercises, since then India has been assisting in training the officers of Bangladesh.

The 9th edition of joint military training exercise between India-Bangladesh SAMPRITI-IX will be conducted at Umroi, Meghalaya. It will be conducted from February 3 to February 16, 2020. The exercise which is being hosted alternately by both the countries is an important bilateral defence cooperation endeavour between India and Bangladesh.

During the joint exercise, Command Post Exercise (CPX) and Field Training Exercise (FTX) is to be conducted according to United Nations Charter. The troops of both the armies will also practice Counter-Terrorist operation.



Indian Navy: The Indian Navy is the naval branch of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Navy. The Chief of Naval Staff, a four-star admiral, commands the navy. It was founded in 5 September 1612. The current Chief of Navy Staff (CNS) is Karambir singh. Indian Navy day is celebrated on the 4th of December every year.



Recently, Indian Navy launched 'Operation Vanilla' to help cyclone-hit Madagascar. It has been launched to provide assistance to the affected population of Madagascar post devastation caused by

Cyclone Diane. INS Airavat, deployed on a mission in the southern Indian Ocean, was diverted towards Madagascar as part of the operation.

The Indian Navy Ship is geared to set up medical camp and provide food, water and other necessary relief material. The assistance of India to Madagascar is in consonance with the Indian Navy's Foreign Cooperation initiatives in line with the Prime Minister's vision of 'Security and Growth for all in the Region (SAGAR)'. In the Indian Ocean Region, the Indian Navy has been the first responder for Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR).

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