

Daily Current Affairs 14 December 2018 with PDF

Finance

India, ADB sign USD 60 Million loan agreement to reduce floods in Assam

- **India** and the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** on December 13, 2018 signed a **USD 60 million loan agreement to reduce floods and the riverbank erosion in Assam.**
- **This Tranche 2 loan is part of the USD 120 million multi-tranche financing facility (MFF) of the ADB for the Assam Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Investment Program.** The program was approved by the ADB Board in October 2010.
- The agreement was signed by Sameer Kumar Khare, Additional Secretary (Fund Bank and ADB), Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Kenichi Yokoyama, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission.
- **The loan will have a 20-year term, including a grace period of 5 years.**
- It includes an Annual Interest Rate determined in accordance with ADB's lending facility based on the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR), and a **commitment charge of 0.15 percent per year.**

India and states

First National Workshop on Explosives Detection inaugurated at Pune

- **The first National Workshop on Explosives Detection was inaugurated today at High Energy Materials Research Laboratory Pune.**
- A total of 200 delegates from different **DRDO labs, Army, CRPF, CISF, Police, Academic Institutes, Industry and other Security agencies are attending the workshop.**
- Shri K.P.S. Murthy, Outstanding Scientist & Director HEMRL, mentioned that a significant amount of research work is being carried out in DRDO and academia.

India, Saudi Arabia sign bilateral annual Haj 2019 agreement

- **India** and **Saudi Arabia** on December 13, 2018 signed **the bilateral annual Haj 2019 agreement at Jeddah.** The agreement was signed by the Union Minister for Minority Affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Haj and Umrah Minister of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benteen.
- A large number of Muslim women are likely to go to Haj 2019 without **"Mehram"** (male companion). More than 2100 women have already applied.
- The Indian Government had lifted the ban on women going to Haj without a male companion for the first time in 2017.
- As a result of the ban, around 1300 Indian Muslim women had gone to Haj in 2018 without any male companion. They had been exempted from the lottery system.

- To assist these women Haj pilgrims, **for the first time, more than 100 women Haj Coordinators and Haj Assistants had been deployed in 2018.**

India's first private UAV factory comes up in Hyderabad

- **India' first private sector unit for manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) opened at Adani Aerospace Park** here on Friday.
- Built by the **Adani Group** and Israel-based **Elbit Systems**, the 50,000 square feet facility will develop Hermes 900 medium altitude long-endurance UAVs for the Indian and global markets.
- The unit will begin with the manufacture of complete carbon composite aerostructures for Hermes 900, followed by Hermes 480, catering to global markets. It will further be ramped up for assembly and integration of complete UAVs.

Google launches shopping website in India

- Google has unveiled **Google Shopping**, a dedicated search engine intended to provide an immersive and improved online shopping experience.
- Along with finding products, **Google Shopping allows users to filter through offers and review prices across multiple retailers.**
- The new shopping experience has been launched on three platforms: '**Shopping**' tab on Google Search, Google Lens app on mobile devices and a brand new Shopping home page.
- The shopping homepage is a dedicated made-to-browse page where shoppers can search for products across several categories and choose between thousands of retailers for the best price.
- In addition to letting users browse through products, the page also provides features such as price drops, ratings and reviews on any given product.

Appointments

Brijendra Pal Singh nominated as President of FTII

- The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on December 13, 2018 nominated '**CID**' **Director-producer Brijendra Pal Singh as the new President of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII)** and as the **Chairman of FTII Governing Council.**
- The nomination was made by the Ministry under Rule 3 and Rule 22 of the Rules of the FTII. Singh is at present the Vice Chairman of the FTII Governing Council.
- Once appointed, Singh's tenure will be for the remaining period of 3 years block starting from March 4, 2017 as per the provisions of Rule 6(1) of the Rules of FTII, Pune.

Ashok Gehlot to be sworn-in as Rajasthan Chief Minister; Sachin Pilot as Deputy CM

- **Ashok Gehlot is likely to be sworn-in as Rajasthan Chief Minister for the third time.** While, **Sachin Pilot will take oath as the Deputy CM of Rajasthan.**

- The decision was announced on December 14, 2018 after Congress President Rahul Gandhi met both Gehlot and Sachin Pilot in Delhi on December 13, 2018.
- Two-time chief minister Ashok Gehlot and Rajasthan Congress Chief Sachin Pilot were competing against each other in the race for the post of Rajasthan Chief Minister.
- The Indian National Congress (INC) emerged as the single largest party in Rajasthan, winning 99 seats on its own and one more with RLD in the 2018 Rajasthan Assembly Elections.

Awards

Author Amitav Ghosh honoured with 54h Jnanpith award

- Noted English writer **Amitav Ghosh** has been **honoured with this year's Jnanpith Award**, a literary award given to an author for "**outstanding contribution towards literature**".
- The decision was taken in a meeting of Jnanpith Selection Board chaired by eminent novelist, scholar and Jnanpith laureate Pratibha Ray.
- Amitav Ghosh is a path- breaking novelist. In his novels, Ghosh treads through historical settings to the modern era and weaves a space where the past connects with the present in relevant ways.
- He is known for a series of novels such as "**Shadow Lines**", "**The Glass Palace**", "**The Hungry Tide**", and Ibis Trilogy -- "**Sea of Poppies**", "**River of Smoke**" and "**Flood of Fire**", which chronicled the Opium trade between India and China run by the East India Company.

Jharkhand gets "Krishi Karman" award in rice category

- **Jharkhand** has been selected for "**Krishi Karman**" award in the rice category from the **Union Ministry of Agriculture**.
- The award will be given away in February 2019. It carries a cash prize worth Rs 2 crore and a citation.
- The award is being given as a gesture of appreciation to the farmers of the state for achieving the milestone.
- Two progressive farmers, one male and one female, would also be given '**Agriculture Minister's Krishi Karman Award**'.
- Each farmer would be given a cash award worth Rs 2 lakh along with a citation.

World

Nepal bans Indian currency notes above Rs 100 denomination

- The **Nepal government** has **banned the use of Indian currency notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations**, according to a media report.

- **The government has asked the people to refrain from keeping or carrying Indian bank notes higher than Rs 100 denomination** as it has not legalised them, The Kathmandu Post quoted Minister for Information and Communications Gokul Prasad Baskota as saying.
- The decision can affect Nepalese labourers working in India as well as Indian tourists visiting Nepal. **The Indian government introduced notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations after demonetisation in 2016.**

Global debt hits all-time high of USD 184 trillion: IMF

- ***The International Monetary Fund has revealed in a report that the global debt has reached an all-time high of 184 trillion US dollars***, which is the equivalent to 225 per cent of the world GDP in 2017.
- The report states that nations like the ***United States, China and Japan account for more than half of the debt.***
- On average, **the world's debt now exceeds 86,000 dollars per person**, which is more than two and half times the average income per-capita. IMF said it is striking that the most indebted economies in the world are also the richer ones.
- Since the beginning of the millennium, **China's share in global debt has gone up from less than three per cent to over 15 per cent.**

Sweden moves to ban outdoor smoking

- **Sweden is banning outdoor smoking in certain public places including playgrounds and train station platforms.**
- In a 142-120 vote the Riksdagen, the Swedish Parliament extended the smoking ban as of July 1, 2019.
- With the decision, smoking in outdoor restaurants and entrances to booths for smokers will also be banned.
- Currently, smoking in the nation is only allowed in designated smoking areas in most workplaces and public places.
- According to the new law, ***the goal is to make the Scandinavian country smoke-free by 2025.***