

Banking and Finance

First Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement 2019-20: RBI cuts Repo Rate to 6%

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on April 4, 2019 released its First Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement 2019-20.

After assessing the current and evolving macroeconomic situation in the economy, the six member- Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to:

- Reduce the policy Repo Rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points to 6 percent from 6.25 percent with immediate effect.
- Consequently, the Reverse Repo Rate under the LAF stands adjusted to 5.75 percent
- The Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate stand at 6.25 percent.
- The MPC also decided to maintain the neutral monetary policy stance. The MPC voted 4:2 in favour of the 25 basis point cut.
- The decision of the MPC was in consonance with the objective of achieving the medium-term target for Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation of 4 percent within a band of +/- 2 percent.
- Inflation remained below the RBI's 4 percent target for 7 months but core inflation, excluding food and fuel.
- The CPI inflation was revised downwards to 2.4 percent in Q4 of 2018-19, around 2.9-3 percent in the first half of 2019-20 and 3.5-3.8 percent in the second half of 2019-20.
- The committee projected GDP growth of 7.2 percent in the financial year 2019-20.

BSE, India INX become first Indian exchanges to sign MoU with Moscow Exchange

- **BSE** (earlier known as Bombay Stock Exchange) and **India International Exchange (India INX)** have signed a memorandum of understanding with **Moscow Exchange (MOEX)** to connect investor community and companies in both countries besides allowing a capital formation platform.
- **BSE and India INX are the first Indian exchanges to enter into the MoU with Moscow exchange.**
- The exchange companies have agreed to the secondment of senior personnel to enhance understanding of activities in each other's market. They will conduct joint research to explore the possibility of further cooperating in the area of cross-listing of derivative products, exchange traded fund, dual listing and fixed income product cooperation.

RBI tweaks liquidity coverage ratio norms to boost liquidity

- In a bid to further improve the cash position of banks, **the RBI Thursday provided additional 2 per cent liquidity window to the lenders by tweaking liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) norms.**
- **The LCR indicates the proportion of highly liquid assets held by banks to ensure their ability to meet short-term obligations.**
- While this move will harmonise the liquidity requirements of banks with LCR, it will also release additional liquidity for lending by banks," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said after unveiling the first bi-monthly monetary policy for 2019-20.
- The decision has been taken with a view to improve the ease of undertaking forex transactions by increasing the last-mile touch points of regulated entities to sell foreign exchange for non-trade current account transactions.
- **A detailed instructions in this regard would be issued by the end of April 2019, he added.**

TRAI asks Telcos to submit plan details of segmented offers every month

- **The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) directed the telecom operators (Telcos) to submit all tariff plans at the end of every month.**
- The telecom operators need to submit the details of rates, terms and conditions of scheme, quantum of service that customers will get, name of the plan, validity period and benefits available to the subscriber.
- TRAI also directed service providers to share with it the number of subscribers at the end of each month who have availed the segmented offer.
- TRAI had earlier issued a similar order in October 2018 but the same was set aside by **the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT).**

CBDT signs 18 APAs

- **The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) entered into 18 Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs),** including 3 Bilateral APAs (BAPAs), in March 2019.
- With the signing of these APAs, the Indian Advance Pricing Agreement regime moved forward with total number of APAs entered into by the CBDT in the year 2018-19 stands at 52, including 11 BAPAs.
- The total number of APAs entered into by the CBDT so far stands at 271, including 31 BAPAs.

Nepal-India Franchise Investment Expo and Conclave to be held in Kathmandu from May 15

- **Nepal-India Franchise Investment Expo and Conclave will be held in Kathmandu from 15th to 16th May, 2019.**
- The event primarily focuses on building the relations between **India** and **Nepal** through **entrepreneurship development.**
- The conclave is organised by **Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI)** in association with Embassy of India and Franchise India.
- Briefing media persons in Kathmandu this afternoon, FNCCI President Bhawani Rana said the event is expected to introduce new investment opportunities to Nepalese market. She said one of the core areas will be to focus for networking between investors of Nepal and India.

Awards

UAE honours PM Narendra Modi with Zayed Medal

- **The United Arab Emirates (UAE) on April 4, 2019 honoured PM Narendra Modi with its highest decoration, Zayed Medal** in recognition of his "pivotal role" in strengthening ties between the two nations.
- **The Zayed Medal is the highest decoration of the UAE awarded to kings, presidents and heads of states.**
- The honour has previously been conferred on the leaders of several countries including Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and Queen of the United Kingdom Elizabeth II.

World

NuGen Mobility Summit 2019 to be held in November

- **The NuGen Mobility Summit 2019 will be held during November 27 – 29, 2019 at Manesar, National Capital Region.** The Summit will be organised by the **International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT).**
- The Summit will be organised in association with **SAE NIS, SAE INDIA, SAE International, NATRiP, DIMTS, Department of Heavy Industry under the Union Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) and Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA).**
- More than 2500 participants and over 250 exhibitors are expected to take part in the Summit.
- Experts working with leading international scientific organisations and testing laboratories from various countries like USA, Europe, Japan and other Asian countries will also participate in the event and share their experiences.

US Department of Agriculture closes 'kitten slaughterhouse'

- **The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced to soon remove the practice of using cats in research work.**
- According to a watchdog group, the use of cats involved forced “**cannibalism**” and resulted in killing of over 3000 cats since 1982.
- In a laboratory in Beltsville near the capital Washington, scientists have been feeding cats and kittens meat contaminated with the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii* over more than three decades, according to the White Coat Waste Project.

Pakistan could be blacklisted by Paris-based FATF

- **Pakistan could be blacklisted by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** due to insufficient actions to block the flow of funds and activities of the terror groups.
- In June 2018, the FATF had placed Pakistan on the 'grey list' of countries whose domestic laws are considered weak to tackle the challenges of money laundering and terror financing.
- A group of experts from the FATF recently visited Pakistan to review the condition.
- It noted that Pakistan had revised its terror financing risk assessment but did not demonstrate it against the risks posed by terror groups, Al-Qaeda, Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD), Falah-i-Insaniyat (FIF), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Haqqani Network and persons affiliated with the Taliban.

Days

International Mine Awareness Day observed

- **International Mine Awareness Day was observed across the world on 4 April, 2019.**
- The theme of International Mine Awareness Day 2019 was "**United Nations Promotes SDGs – Safe Ground – Safe Home**".

National Maritime Day observed

- **India celebrates National Maritime Day on 5 April** which is dedicated to country's glorious maritime history.
- It was on this day in 1919 when SS Loyalty, the first ship of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company Ltd, set sail for the United Kingdom from Mumbai (then British Bombay).
- The theme of the National Maritime Day 2019 celebrations is "**Indian Ocean-An Ocean of opportunity**".