

Current Affairs 13 February 2019 with PDF

Banking and Economy

RBI penalises seven banks for violating various norms

- Seven Banks were penalised by the Reserve Bank of India for violating various norms. **Three banks- HDFC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and IDBI Bank - were fined Rs 2 million each for non-compliance with various directions issued by RBI on Know Your Customer (KYC) norms and Anti-Money Laundering (AML) standards.**
- This action is based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the banks with their customers, RBI said in a release.
- **The central banks also penalised four other bank- Allahabad Bank, Andhra Bank, Indian Overseas Bank and Bank of Maharashtra-** for non-compliance with various directions issued by RBI on monitoring of end use of funds, exchange of information with other banks, classification and reporting of frauds, and on restructuring of accounts. While Andhra Bank was fined Rs 10 million, the other banks were fined Rs 15 million each.

Kerala government launches online clearance mechanism for entrepreneurs

- **Kerala government** launched an online mechanism that will ensure clearance to proposals within 30 days of application.
- **The Kerala single window interface for fast, transparent clearances (K-SWIFT) was launched on Monday by Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan at ASCEND Kerala 2019,** an initiative of the government to position the state as an investment hotspot.
- Noting that K-SWIFT complements the notion of rebuilding of Kerala, the CM urged the officials for a change in their attitude towards entrepreneurs. In this context, he said the 30-day time limit, which is applicable from village to secretariat level, may be reduced to even 15 days in future.

Textiles Ministry to organise outreach programme for stakeholders

- **The Union Ministry of Textiles would be organising an outreach programme for textiles sector MSMEs on February 13, 2019 in New Delhi to hold interactions with the stakeholders** to help them avail the support and outreach for 100 days programme announced by the Prime Minister.
- Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment Thawar Chand Gehlot will be the Chief Guest of the event and Minister of Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani will preside over the function. **An exhibition showcasing achievements of the textiles sector MSMEs will also be held on the occasion.**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the support and outreach 100 days programme for MSMEs on November 2, 2018 identifying one hundred districts in various sectors across the country.
- Among these, thirty-nine districts were identified for textiles sector, 12 for handloom, 19 for handicraft and 8 for power loom.

India and states

Delhi Government Launches 16 Bike Ambulances For Congested Areas

- **Delhi government has launched bike ambulance services to ensure health assistance reaches on time in the congested areas of the national capital.**

- The bike ambulances, which will be called the "**First Responder Vehicles**", will have a portable oxygen cylinder, first aid kit and dressing materials, air-splints, GPS and a communication device.
- Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Health Minister Satyendar Jain **launched the fleet of 16 bikes at Delhi Secretariat.**
- The bike ambulances will benefit congested areas and JJ clusters in East Delhi (East, North East and Shahdara).

Rajasthan government launches 'Rajiv Gandhi Career Portal'

- **Rajasthan School Education Minister Govind Singh Dotasara** Wednesday **launched 'Rajiv Gandhi Career Portal' for students from classes 9 to 12.**
- The portal aims to provide career guidance with information on entrance examinations, scholarships and employment-oriented courses.
- "It is a big step of the government towards providing employment-oriented education to students. **The portal is developed with support from UNICEF and is a first-of-its-kind in the country,**" Dotasara said.
- He said the portal will provide information to students on over 200 vocational, 237 professional courses besides online information on over 455 employment areas, 10,000 colleges in the country, 960 scholarship schemes and over 955 entrance examinations. Later, the minister announced the formation of Rajiv Gandhi Career Counselling Cell.

India, Norway launch 'India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative' to combat Marine Pollution

- The **Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change** on **February 11, 2019** signed a **Letter of Intent (LoI)** with the **Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs** to launch the **'India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative'.**
- **The Joint Initiative was signed by Nils Ragnar Kamsvåg, Norwegian Ambassador to India and Anil Kumar Jain, Additional Secretary in the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.**
- The launch of the initiative came after the Indian and Norwegian governments **signed an MoU to establish the 'India-Norway Ocean Dialogue' during the Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg's visit to India in January 2019.**
- A Joint Task Force on **Blue Economy** was also established under the aegis of the MoU to promote multi-sectoral cooperation in various aspects of Blue Economy.

HRD Ministry to take immediate steps to protect Maithili language and scripts

- **The Ministry of Human Resource Development has decided to take immediate steps to implement the recommendations of a committee,** which it had constituted in 2018 to make a report for the promotion and protection **of Maithili language and its scripts.**
- The committee has submitted its report to the Ministry. In the report, it has made several recommendations for the promotion and protection of the **Maithili language.** The report was examined in the Ministry and it has been decided to take immediate action on some of the recommendations of the committee.
- **Mithilakshar or Tirhuta** is the script of broader cultural **Mithila.** The scripts of **Mithilaksar, Bangla, Assamese, Nebari, Odia and Tibetan** are part of the family.
- **It is an extremely ancient script and it is one of the scripts of the broader North Eastern India.**
- Mithilakshar had come to its current shape by 10th Century AD. **The oldest form of Mithilakshar is found in the Sahodara stone inscriptions of 950 AD.**

President unveils life size portrait of Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Parliament

- President Ram Nath Kovind on February 12, 2019 **unveiled the life size portrait of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the Central Hall of Parliament.**
- Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, Union Ministers and leaders of various parties were present during the event.
- The former Prime Minister provided crucial leadership in challenging situations. **The 1998 nuclear test in Pokhran and the 1999 Kargil war are examples of his firm decisions taken in the interest of the nation.**

I&B Ministry organises first annual conference of Media Units

- The Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry will organise **the first annual conference of Media Units in New Delhi on February 13, 2019.**
- The conference aims to give a unique platform to the officers of **the Indian Information Service working in different Media Units to converge at an All-India level.**
- The conference will involve discussions and deliberations upon the emerging areas of the evolving communication paradigm.
- **It will be chaired by Information and Broadcasting Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore.**
- Through the Conference, the Ministry aims to strengthen synergy between the Media Units in order to ensure last mile delivery.

Minority Status of Aligarh Muslim University: Supreme Court refers case to 7-Judge bench

- The Supreme Court on February 12, 2019 **referred the petition seeking withdrawal of minority status of the Aligarh Muslim University to a seven-judge bench.**
- A three-judge bench headed by **Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi** referred the matter to the larger bench to determine the correctness of minority status of AMU and to define the parameters for granting minority status to the institution.
- The Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government had moved a petition in the Supreme Court against a 2006 Allahabad High Court Judgement which stated that the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) was not a minority institution. The university administration had also filed a separate petition against the High Court verdict.
- In January 2006, the Allahabad High Court had struck down the provision of the Act by which the university was accorded the minority status.
- However, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party Government in 2016 withdrew the petition saying that the University was not a minority institution.

World

Hungary to give life tax exemption to women with 4 children

- **Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban on February 10, 2019 announced new measures, under which increasing financial aid and subsidies will be provided to families that have more than three children.**
- The measures were announced by the Prime Minister during his "state of the nation" speech. They are meant to encourage women to have more children and to reverse Hungary's population decline.
- The Hungarian government has decided to provide a lifetime income tax exemption for women who give birth to at least four children.
- The government has also proposed the introduction of a subsidy worth 8,825 US dollars towards the purchase of a seven-seat vehicle for families with three or more children.

US President signs executive order to prioritise research in Artificial Intelligence

- US President Donald Trump on February 11, 2019 signed **an executive order directing federal agencies to prioritise research and development in Artificial Intelligence (AI)**.
- The order follows huge investment pledges from China and other countries intended to advance and apply AI technology in fields ranging from warfighting to health care.
- The plan, **called American AI initiative**, requires the federal agencies to make government data and computing resources more available to AI experts while maintaining security and confidentiality.
- Creating such standards for capturing and sharing huge troves of data, such as medical records, is expected to lead to breakthroughs in medical diagnosis and treatment.

US cargo spacecraft Cygnus released from International Space Station

- **The US cargo spacecraft Cygnus was released from the International Space Station (ISS) on February 8, 2019.**
- The cargo spacecraft was successfully released at 4:16 GMT. The operation was controlled by US astronaut Anne McClain and her Canadian colleague David Saint-Jacques.
- It will now perform a 17-day nanosatellite deployment mission and after that, on February 25, will burn over the Pacific Ocean while entering the atmosphere.

Abu Dhabi temple's foundation stones to be laid soon

- **The Shilanyas ceremony of the Hindu temple to be built in Abu Dhabi is scheduled on the April 20, 2019.**
- **Mahant Swami Maharaj**, the spiritual leader of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, will be making his first official visit to the UAE from April 18 to 29.
- The Shilanyas ceremony is a sacred Hindu ritual wherein the first foundation stones are sanctified and fixed in the ground as the base of the Mandir. Then the Mandir's foundations will be made on these sacred stones.
- In February 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had witnessed the Bhumipujan of the land where the historic Mandir is to be constructed in Abu Dhabi.

Appointments

IPS officer Rina Mitra appointed principal adviser to Bengal govt

- **Rina Mitra**, a 1983-batch IPS officer, who retired on January 31 as special secretary (internal security) in the Union home ministry, **has been appointed as principal adviser (internal security) in the West Bengal government.**
- Mitra, a Madhya Pradesh cadre officer and batch mate of CBI director Rishi Kumar Shukla, had lost out in the race for the post of CBI director recently

Awards

Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam wins Israel's Dan David Prize 2019

- **Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam on February 10, 2019 won the prestigious Dan David Prize 2019** for his work on inter-cultural encounters between Asians, Europeans and people of North and South America during the early modern era.
- **He won the Israel's prestigious USD 1 million dollar award in the category of "Past Time Dimension" for his work in macro history.** He shared the award in the **Past** category with **Professor Kenneth Pomeranz of University of Chicago.**
- Once presented with the award money, **Subrahmanyam will donate 10 percent of the prize money towards scholarships for graduate or post-graduate researchers.**
- The award in the **"Present"** category was won jointly by **Reporters without Borders and Professor Michael Ignatieff for "Defending Democracy".**

PM Modi presents Swachh Shakti-2019 Awards; inaugurates development projects in Haryana

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 12, 2019 participated in **Swachh Shakti 2019 event and distributed the Swachh Shakti 2019 Awards during his visit to Kurukshetra, Haryana.**
- On the same occasion, he also inaugurated and laid foundation stone of several development projects in Haryana.
- **The Prime Minister Modi gave away the Swachh Shakti awards to woman sarpanches from across the country in Swachh Shakti 2019 programme.** He also visited the Swachh Sundar Shauchalay exhibition at Kurukshetra.
- **The Swachh Shakti 2019 was attended by women panches and sarpanches from across the country.** Over 15,000 women took part in Swachh Shakti event that was aimed at empowering women. This was the third edition of the Swachh Shakti programme.

Days

World Radio Day observed today

- The **2019 World Radio Day is observed on 13 February, 2019.**
- The theme of 2019 World Radio Day is **"Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace."**