

Current Affairs 9 February 2019 with PDF

Finance and Banking

RBI raises collateral-free farm loan limit to Rs 1.6 lakh

- **RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das today announced that the limit of collateral free agricultural loans has been increased from one lakh to 1.6 lakh.** Addressing the post monetary policy announcement in Mumbai today, **Mr. Das said the decision has been taken in view of the overall inflation and rise in the agricultural input costs since 2010 when the limit was last revised.**
- Mr. Das said this move will enhance coverage of small and marginal farmers in the formal credit system.
- Earlier today, in his maiden bi-monthly policy review, the **Monetary Policy Committee headed by Mr. Das reduced the policy repo rate by 25 basis points from 6.5 percent to 6.25 percent and also changed the policy stance from calibrated tightening to neutral.**
- **The RBI Governor said he expects banks to transmit the rate cut benefit to customers and will have an interaction with all the banks in this regard within the coming fortnight.** On the liquidity front, Mr. Das said that RBI is constantly and continuously monitoring the liquidity situation and based on the requirement, will ensure that there is no liquidity scarcity.
- **On the unexpected rate cut, Mr. Das said the MPC has factored in the possibility of fiscal slippage post various budget proposals and also the inflation outlook.** Stating that the primary objective of RBI remains price stability, Mr. Das said that inflation is likely to touch the figure of 3.9 percent by the end of this year.

Union Minister Suresh Prabhu launches two schemes in Mumbai

- Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu launched two ambitious schemes, **the Hirkani Maharashtrachi and District Business Plan Competition in Mumbai today.**
- Addressing the gathering Mr Prabhu said that participation of women is very important for the successful implementation of the schemes.
- He said that under Hirkani Maharashtrachi, women's SHGs will pitch their business plan at taluka level. Ten groups will be selected from each taluka and Rs. 50,000 will be given to each SHG to implement their idea.
- **Five SHGs at district level will be selected and Rs. 2 lakh will be given to each SHG to take the idea forward.**
- He had also informed that under District Business Plan Competition, competitors at district level will pitch ideas, out of which five ideas will be selected from agriculture, social service, education and miscellaneous categories. Work order worth Rs. 5 lakh will be given to the 5 selected ideas.

US-India CEO Forum to be held on February 14; American members of Forum announced

- US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross on February 7, 2019 **announced the names of the American private sector members of the US-India CEO Forum. MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga and Qualcomm CEO Steve Mollenkopf are among the members of the US-India CEO Forum.**
- **The first meeting of the US-India CEO Forum under the US President Donald Trump Administration will be held in New Delhi on February 14, 2019.**
- The meeting will be co-chaired by US Commerce Secretary, Wilbur Ross and Union Minister of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu.
- The Chairman, President and CEO of the American Tower Corporation, James Taiclet will be the US Private Sector Co-chair of the forum.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana: Guidelines launched for States to implement scheme; PM-Kisan Portal launched

- The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare on February 7, 2019 **launched a platform named PM Kisan, <http://pmkisan.nic.in>, under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM-KISAN)** for uploading the details of the Small and Marginal Farmers (SMF).
- **The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana** was announced in the Union Interim Budget 2019 by Finance Minister Piyush Goyal.
- The Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Radha Mohan Singh on February 8, 2019 wrote to the Chief Ministers of all States for their support in the effective and speedy implementation of the PM-KISAN Yojana so that the entitled benefits are speedily transferred to the farmers.
- The selection of eligible small farmer families under the scheme will be undertaken by the State Governments.
- The necessary details such as bank account details will be provided on the online portal so that the first installment of the benefits can be transferred to the eligible families.

Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu flags off Arunachal leg of Startup India Yatra

- Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu flagged off the **Arunachal leg of the Startup India Yatra from civil secretariat in Itanagar.**
- The Startup Yatra van will travel across the state with two Boot camps and 4 van stops to provide a platform to entrepreneurs at grassroots to pitch their ideas.
- The yatra will create awareness among the youths on government's policy for startups, startup India and other schemes aimed at supporting the entrepreneurs.
- It would go a long way in motivating the youths to take up self-employment activities to help in creating jobs.

Indexes

India climbs 8 Spots in 2019 International Intellectual Property Index; ranks 36th

- **India climbed eight places in the 2019 International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, ranking at 36th position among 50 countries.** India's overall score has increased from 30.07 percent in 2018 to 36.04 percent in 2019.
- In 2018 International Intellectual Property Index, India was ranked 44th out of 50 countries.
- The seventh edition of the International Intellectual Property Index, **"Inspiring Tomorrow" was released by the Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) of U.S. Chamber of Commerce on February 7, 2019.**
- **The Index was topped by the United States with 42.66 points out of 45,** followed by the United Kingdom (42.22) at 2nd, Sweden (41.03) at 3rd and Germany (41.00) at 4th.

India and states

Jammu & Kashmir Government grants Divisional Status to Ladakh Region

- The Jammu and Kashmir Governor, Satya Pal Malik on February 8, 2019 **granted the Divisional Status to Ladakh Region, while exercising its powers under Section 5 of Land Revenue Act, 1996.**
- **The Ladakh division will comprise Leh and Kargil districts with its headquarters at Leh.** Till now, the Ladakh region formed a part of the Kashmir Division of Jammu & Kashmir.
- The State Government also approved creation of the posts of Divisional Commissioner (Ladakh), Leh and Inspector General of Police (Ladakh), Leh.

- The notification came just after the visit of PM Narendra Modi to Leh on February 3, 2019.

PM Modi launches DD Arun Prabha channel in Itanagar today

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has said that **basic infrastructure has been a long-standing demand of Arunachal Pradesh which was ignored by the previous governments.**
- He said his government has made sure that there is never a dearth of funds and determination for development. He was addressing the gathering after laying the foundation stones and inaugurating various development projects at Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh today.
- Earlier today, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the DD 'Arun Prabha' Channel in Itanagar.** It will be a 24x7 satellite television channel and is **Doordarshan's second channel for the north-eastern region, after DD North East.**

Prime Minister lays the foundation stone for a National Highways Project in West Bengal

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi **laid the foundation stone for the four laning of the Falakata-Salsalabari section of NH -31 D in the northern part of West Bengal.**
- **This 41.7 km long section of National Highways falls in the Jalpaiguri district of the West Bengal** and will be constructed at a cost of about Rs 1938 Crore.
- **The project will reduce the distance from Salsalabari and Alipurduar to Siliguri by nearly 50 km.**
- This is significant as better access to Siliguri means better access to railways and airways.
- The National Highway will facilitate better movement of tea and other agricultural produce from the region to markets.
- The National Highway will incorporate all necessary safety features to provide relief to road users.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban): Government institutes PMAY (U) Awards to reward top performers

- The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on February 8, 2019 **instituted the 'PMAY (U) awards for Implementation and Innovation' under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) to reward the "Top Performers"** in different categories and attain the goal of 'Housing for All' in a sustained manner.
- The award scheme aims to recognise the outstanding performance and promote a healthy competition between **States and UTs, Urban Local Bodies, Beneficiaries and Housing Finance Corporations.**
- The Award has 3 broad levels. **The first level is for States, UTs and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) for performance on key indicators of the Mission.**
- There would be separate competition among Municipal Corporations and Municipalities within the ULBs.
- The awards will recognise and reward the selected beneficiaries from each State/UT under 'Beneficiary-led Construction' component for building their house in a most aesthetic and innovative manner.

Ujjwala Utsav observed; PMUY anthem 'Ujjwala Bharat Ujjwala' released

- **The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas observed the Ujjwala Utsav** to celebrate the stellar role played by all stakeholders such as district nodal officers, policy makers, distributors and beneficiaries in making Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) a success.
- The event was organised to encourage, motivate as well as felicitate all frontline field force for their outstanding contribution to PMUY.
- The occasion also saw the launch of the PMUY anthem '**Ujjwala Bharat Ujjwala**', composed and developed by eminent singer Padma Shri Kailash Kher.

- The PMUY anthem is available on online music platforms such as **Amazon, Apple, Hungama, Wynk, Google Play, Saavn, and many others.**

5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meet held in Delhi

- **The 5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meeting was held in New Delhi.**
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen co-chaired the meeting.
- The two sides signed agreements after the meeting.
- **The last Joint Consultative Committee Meeting between the two countries was held in October 2017 at Dhaka.**

India Pavilion inaugurated at 69th Berlin International Film Festival

- The **India Pavilion at the Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) 2019** was inaugurated by **Director European Film Market, (EFM) Matthijis Wouter Knol.**
- An official release said, members of the Indian delegation including Additional Director General in Directorate of Film Festivals Chaitanya Prasad and Director, Films, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting GC Aron, apprised the EFM representatives about the significance of Golden Jubilee celebration of IFFI, and the recent policy initiatives of the Government to ensure ease of filming in India.
- Speaking on the occasion, **Mr Knol said that the stakeholders of EFM will actively consider participating in the Golden Jubilee year of IFFI.**

Appointment

Sailesh assumed charge as Secretary of Ministry of Minority Affairs

- **Sailesh assumed the charge as Secretary of Ministry of Minority Affairs on February 7, 2019.**
- Sailesh is an IAS Officer of Assam-Meghalaya Cadre of 1985 batch.
- The Minister of Minority Affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi took meeting with the Secretary and other senior officers of the Ministry and reviewed progress of scheme implementation for the welfare of minorities.

Awards

Sena medals awarded to 92 army men, including Lance Naik Wani

- **Lieutenant General Ranbir Singh, GOC-in-C of Northern Command presented the Sena medals to 92 army men at an investiture ceremony** for their gallantary and distinguished services.
- 76 medals were presented for gallatry services, 7 medals for distinguished services and 8 for Vishist Seva.
- **Lance Naik Nazir Ahmed Wani, a recipient of Ashok Chakra** was also awarded Bar to Sena Medal poshthumously which was received by his wife.