

Current Affairs 26 January 2019 with PDF

Awards & Honors

Pranab Mukherjee, Nanaji Deshmukh Bhupen Hazarika awarded Bharat Ratna

- **Social activist Nanaji Deshmukh, Music maestro Bhupen Hazarika and former President Pranab Mukherjee have been awarded with country's highest civilian honour Bharat Ratna.**
- As per a press communique issued by President's office, **Nanaji Deshmukh and Bhupen Hazarika will be awarded with the honour posthumously.**
- The President also approved conferment of 112 Padma Awards, including 4 Padma Vibhushan, 14 Padma Bhushan and 94 Padma Shri Awards. Folk artist Teejan Bai, President of Djibouti Ismail Omar Guelleh, Industrialist Anil kumar Manibhai Naik and theatre actor Balwant Moreshwar Purandare will be honoured with Padma Vibhushan.
- Former CAG V K Shunglu, Akali Dal leader Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa and Foreigner John Chambers are among those who will be given Padma Bhushan. Journalist Kuldip Nayar will be honoured with Padma Bhushan posthumously.
- For Padma Shree, Actor Manoj Bajpayee, Prabhu Deva, cricketer Gautam Gambhir, footballer Sunil Chhetri, Archer Bombayla Devi Laishram, archaeologist K K Muhammed are among those chosen for the awards this year. Actor Kader Khan has been awarded Padma Shree posthumously.

Government announces Padma Shree award winners, cricketer Gautam Gambhir, Kadar Khan among 94 to be honoured

- **President of Djibouti Ismail Omar Guelleh, L&T chairman A M Naik, late journalist Kuldip Nayar, late actor Kadar Khan and cricketer Gautam Gambhir were among the 112 prominent personalities who were named on Friday for conferment of this year's Padma awards.**
- **India football captain Sunil Chhetri, table tennis star Sharath Kamal, wrestler Bajrang Punia were among the recipients for the the Padma Shri awards announced on the eve of the Republic Day on Friday.**
- **Harika Dronavalli (chess), Bombayla Devi (archery), Prashanti Singh (basketball) and Ajay Thakur (kabaddi) have also been conferred the Padma Shri award while Bachendri Pal (mountaineering) was honoured with the Padma Bhushan award.**
- **Folk artist Teejan Bai, Guelleh, Naik and theatre actor Balwant Moreshwar Purandare will be honoured with Padma Vibhushan,** former CAG V K Shunglu, former union minister Kariya Munda, Akali leader S S Dhindsa were named for Padma Bhushan, which will be conferred by President Ram Nath Kovind in March-April.
- Late actor Kadar Khan, cricketer Gautam Gambhir and former diplomat S Jaishankar are among 94 persons named for Padma Shri, the Home Ministry announced.

Banking and Finance

SBM Bank (India) Ltd becomes first foreign bank to set up wholly owned subsidiary in India

- **SBM Group, a diversified financial services provider and the second largest listed banking institution on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius, announced the launch of SBM Bank (India) Limited which will operate as a full-fledged universal bank.**
- **SBM Bank (India) Limited becomes the first foreign bank in India to obtain a banking licence from the Reserve Bank of India to operate as a Wholly Owned Subsidiary (WOS), a release said.**

- Under this new structure, SBM Bank (India) Limited plans to extend its network by end of March 2020 with four new branches focusing on the mid-market segment comprising mid-corporate and higher end SMEs.

SC issues contempt notices to RBI for denying info under RTI on loan defaulters

- **The Supreme Court on Friday issued contempt notices to the RBI for failing to reveal under the Right to Information Act intelligence received on loan defaulters and details of action taken against banks in connection with fraud.**
- **In December 2015, a bench of the top court — comprising Justices MY Eqbal and C Nagappan — had asked banking sector regulator RBI to reveal such information in the interest of shoring up public confidence in the banking system and as a deterrent to bank frauds, instead of claiming that it held such information in a “fiduciary capacity” and revealing it would ruin the economy.**
- In separate petitions filed in the Supreme Court, Mumbai resident Girish Mittal and Delhi-based RTI activist Subhash Chandra Agrawal have alleged that instead of sharing information, the RBI has brought in policy changes that allow withholding of most information. The petitions pertain to information about alleged irregularities by the Sahara group.

Sarvatra Technologies accredited as Best Banking Technology provider

- **Sarvatra Technologies, India's leading end-to-end payments and banking solutions provider, has been awarded the 'Best Banking Tech' of the year for its world-class Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) switch platform that played a critical role in the effective nationwide participation in National Financial Switch (NFS) network.**
- Sarvatra Technologies was presented the prestigious award in a grand ceremony at 9th India Digital Awards 2019 organised by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).

Supreme Court upholds constitutional validity of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code

- **The Supreme Court on January 25, 2019 upheld the constitutional validity of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).**
- **A Bench headed by Justice R.F. Nariman upheld the constitutional validity of the code “in its entirety”.** However, the apex court said that related parties in the Act should mean a person connected with the business.
- **The Bench disposed of a batch of pleas filed by companies challenging various provisions of the IBC.**
- The committee of creditors’s voting rights of resolution plans will be limited to 66 percent from earlier threshold of 75 percent, a move that will help speed up the resolution process.
- In order to facilitate the corporate debtor to continue as a going concern during the CIRP, the voting threshold for routine decisions has been reduced to 51 percent.
- **Withdrawal of an insolvency application will be allowed, if 90 percent of the creditors agree.**

India and states

Jan Shikshan Santhans: Government launches new reforms, guidelines to align JSS with National Skill Qualification Framework

- Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Petroleum and Natural Gas (MSDE) on January 24, 2019 **launched new reforms and guidelines for Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)** to further strengthen the skills ecosystem benefiting those in the underprivileged sections of society.

- **The motive behind the new guidelines is to align the JSSs to the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF).** By aligning JSSs to the National Skill Framework, the Government aims to provide standardised training across sectors.
- The Ministry also launched the new JSS website (www.jss.gov.in) on the same occasion.
- The website will furnish information on action plans, database of beneficiaries and stakeholders, details of finance and expenditure and other ongoing developments along with a public log-in access.
- **The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) signed an MoU with National Centre for Excellence of RSETIs (NACER),** the apex body for Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs).
- The objective of this collaboration is to provide skilled Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) candidates from Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKKs) for the 10-day residential Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) at RSETIs.

CEMILAC clears Biojet fuel for Aircraft; IAF to operate biojet flight on January 26

- After months of ground and flight trials, **the Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC), a premier military certification agency, on January 22, 2019 cleared the use of indigenously produced bio-fuel for use in the military aircraft.**
- P Jayapal, Outstanding Scientist and Chief Executive of the Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification deliberated on the results of various tests conducted on bio-jet fuel as per procedure recommended by top certification agencies.
- Only after complete satisfaction with the performance parameters, the agency formally granted its approval for use of this fuel.
- This clearance is a major step for continued testing and eventual full certification of the bio-jet fuel for use on a commercial scale by civil aircraft as well.
- The approval will enable the Indian Air Force to fulfil its commitment to fly the maiden IAF An-32 aircraft on January 26, 2019 with a blend of bio-jet fuel.

Government to develop around 400 abandoned airstrips across country

- **The Union Government has decided to renovate and develop around 400 abandoned airstrips across the country to strengthen air-connectivity.**
- The information was **shared by Secretary of Union Civil Aviation department R N Choubey in Jamshedpur on January 25, 2019.**
- He was addressing a gathering after Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha and Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das performed the groundbreaking ceremony for a proposed airport in Dhalbhumgarh, under Ghatsila sub-division of East Singhbhum district.
- The Airports Authority of India has prepared a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in this regard and sent it to all the 29 states and seven Union Territories expressing its willingness to develop the unused airstrips along with the respective state governments.
- **The first such MoU was signed with Jharkhand government to develop the abandoned airstrip at Dhalbhumgarh.**

Fourth edition of Bharat Parv begins in Delhi

- **Fourth edition of Bharat Parv, showcasing the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat will begin at Red Fort in Delhi today.** It will continue till 31st January.
- Tourism Ministry said, the five day event is a part of Republic Day Celebrations and the objective of this festival is to generate a patriotic fervour and promote rich cultural diversity of the country.
- Bharat Parv will be open for public from 12 Noon to 10 PM every day and the entry will be free.

I&B Ministry to increase advertisement rates by 11% to private TV channels

- **Information and Broadcasting Ministry has decided to revise the advertisement rates offered by the Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC) to private TV channels.**
- The Ministry in a statement said, the revision would lead to an increase in **rates of around 11 per cent over the rates of 2017** in respect of most of the private TV channels.
- It said, it could be of higher percentage for some others, as per their reach and TV ratings. The Ministry said, differential rate structures for news and non-news channels will be offered, depending upon their overall reach in the country.

Millennials will be eligible to vote for 1st time in 2019 general elections

- **President Ram Nath Kovind said on January 25, 2019 millennials will be eligible to vote for the first time in the general elections this year.**
- Addressing the gathering on the National Voters' Day celebrations in Delhi, **the President said these first-time voters will determine the fate and future of 21st Century India.** He said it is a matter of pride to be a voter in world's largest democracy.
- The President asked new voters to exercise their franchise with responsibility, awareness and compassion. **The theme for National Voters Day this year is "No Voter To Be Left Behind".**
- The President also complimented the efforts of Election Commission in making all efforts so that not a single voter is left behind.

Sports

Veteran South African all-rounder Johan Botha retires from all forms of cricket

- **Veteran South African all-rounder Johan Botha has announced his immediate retirement from all forms of cricket.** The cricketer cited wear and tear on his body and sheer physical fatigue as the main reason behind the decision.
- The news of his retirement was announced on the official website of Botha's Australian Twenty20 league team, the **Hobart Hurricanes on January 23, 2019.** The 36-year-old played for South Africa in five test matches, 78 one-day internationals and 40 T20 Internationals from 2005 to 2012.
- **Johan Botha had switched nationalities in 2012, to give a shot to his talent in the Australian cricketing circuit.**

World

China clones five gene-edited monkeys

- **Scientists in China have cloned five monkeys for human disease research. The research team edited genes of monkeys to induce several human diseases like Alzheimer's** claiming that it would help in medical research.
- This experiment may likely to raise fresh ethical concerns about gene-editing. As per reports, this is **the first time multiple clones had been made from a gene-edited monkey for biomedical research.**
- The announcement in **National Science Review**, a Chinese journal, follows the recent confirmation that the world's first gene-edited human babies have been born in China, which caused widespread disquiet in the scientific community.

UN chief warns against losing the race on climate change

- **United Nations chief Antonio Guterres on January 24, 2019 warned that the world is "losing the race" on climate change** and demanded that governments make bolder commitments beyond the Paris accord.
- UN chief said that he is not hopeful that nations would find the resolve but stressed that world needs political will and governments should understand that this is the most important priority of our times.

Obituaries

Renowned Hindi author, poet Krishna Sobti passes away

- **Eminent Hindi author and poet Krishna Sobti passed away on January 25, 2019 at a hospital in Delhi. She was 93.**
- She is a recipient of ***prestigious awards such as Sahitya Akademi award, Jnanpith and was also offered Padma Bhushan***, which she had declined.
- She is best known for her **1966 novel Mitro Marjani, an unapologetic portrayal of a married woman's sexuality.**
- Sobti also used to write under the pen name of Hashmat and has published Hum Hashmat, a compilation of pen portraits of writers and friends.