

Banking

RBI appoints five-member committee to deepen digital payments

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that the central bank of the country has appointed 5-member committee under the chairmanship of Nandan Nilekani** to further deepen digital payments and enhance financial inclusion through Fintech.
- He said, the RBI has requested the committee to give recommendations in 3 months in this regard. Mr. Das was speaking today at the inaugural event of Financial Technology (Fintech) Conclave being organized by NITI Aayog in New Delhi.
- Mr. Das said, the objective of the conclave is to shape India's continued ascendancy in FinTech, build the narrative for future strategy and policy efforts, and to deliberate steps for comprehensive financial inclusion.
- The RBI Governor said as a nation India must move for universal financial inclusion and total retail payment has grown nine folds in last five years. He said a consultation process with payment banks including seven purely digital loan companies will happen soon.
- NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said India's ambition is to emerge as a 10 trillion dollar economy and this is not possible without a revolution in the Fintech sector.

RBI To Set Up Regulatory Sandbox For Fintech Startups To Boost Innovation

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is looking to issue guidelines for setting up a regulatory sandbox or innovation hub for the fintech startups in May.** This hub will help the companies build **innovative products at a lower cost.**
- RBI governor Shaktikanta Das, said that there is a need for a definite regulatory and supervisory framework for the fintech startups. The framework is really important at this point to protect the customers and safeguard interests of all stakeholders.
- **While addressing the Fintech Conclave 2019,** Das explained that the framework should address all the gaps and associated risks while considering the growth requirements of this sector.

BPCL, IOCL awarded exploration rights for Abu Dhabi Onshore Block 1

- **A consortium of two Indian oil companies Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Indian Oil Corporation Limited were awarded the exploration rights for Abu Dhabi Onshore Block 1.**
- The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) signed agreements awarding the exploration rights.
- The approval regarding the same was accorded by Abu Dhabi's Supreme Petroleum Council.

India and states

Chandrayaan-2 to carry NASA's laser instruments to Moon

- **Chandrayaan-2,** the second moon mission of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), will be carrying laser retroreflector arrays owned by the US space agency National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

- Besides **Chandrayaan 2**, the laser retroreflector arrays will also be carried to the Moon aboard the Israeli lander Beresheet, which is due to touch down on April 11, 2019.
- The announcement regarding the same was made during the Lunar and Planetary Science Conference held in Texas in the third week of March 2019.

ISRO to launch 29 satellites including EMISAT

- **The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch 29 satellites including the primary payload EMISAT on April 1, 2019.**
- The PSLV-C45 (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle), carrying these satellites onboard, will take off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- Generally, after the launch mission is over, the rocket engine is left discarded as space debris. However, the ISRO uses the engine for experiments.
- Once the satellites are put into orbit by PSLV-C45, this fourth stage of the rocket will be brought down, propelled and used as a platform for different experiments by Indian institutions including ISRO.

Indian-Sri Lankan armies to conduct military exercise Mitra Shakti from today

- **The joint training exercise MITRASHAKTI - VI between Indian and Sri Lanka Army** is being held from today at Diyatalawa in Sri Lanka.
- An Indian contingent of 120 Army personnel, including 11 officers arrived last evening to take part in the two-week long exercise. The exercise is an annual event held in India and Sri Lanka alternatively.
- MITRASHAKTI is one of the largest bilateral armies to army exercises conducted in the region. Based on the success of previous exercises, it has been recently upgraded from a platoon level engagement to a full Company level engagement.
- The exercise is designed to enhance interoperability and mutual understanding between both the armies and build a relationship based on professional respect, personal bonding and extensive training interaction.

Nuclear, chemical training facility Abhedya inaugurated

- Chief of Naval Staff **Admiral Sunil Lanba** inaugurated the **Indian Navy's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Training Facility (NBCTF) at INS Shivaji in Lonavala on Monday.**
- The NBCTF, christened "**Abhedya**", impenetrable in Sanskrit, will help train personnel of naval ships fitted with nuclear, biological and chemical detection and protection systems.
- In a statement, the Navy said the facility will provide realistic training to naval personnel in detection, protection against and decontamination of nuclear, biological and chemical agents.
- Admiral Lanba launched the INS Shivaji's website on the Indian Navy portal. He also released the platinum jubilee logo, with the theme "Propelling the Indian Navy since 1945", for the premier technical training establishment.

Awards

American mathematician Karen Uhlenbeck awarded with Abel Prize 2019

- **American mathematician Karen Uhlenbeck won the Abel Prize 2019.**

- Uhlenbeck's breakthrough work along with mathematician Jonathan Sacks was on "**minimal surfaces such as the surface taken by a soap bubble.**"
- Uhlenbeck's work covered minimisation problems in higher dimensions.
- She is acclaimed for her work with partial differential equations that she uses to solve problems in geometry and topology.

World

Arab coalition, UN sign MoU for children protection in Yemen

- **The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen and the United Nations (UN) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to protect children affected by the country's five years-long civil war,** official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported yesterday.
- The agreement, which was said to have aimed at "reinforcing the protection of boys and girls affected by armed conflict in Yemen," was signed in the Saudi capital of Riyadh by the UN's Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for children and armed conflict, **Virginia Gamba,** and the coalition's commander of the joint forces, **Major General Fahd Bin Turki Bin Abdulaziz.**
- According to UN officials, **more than 50,000 people have been killed in the war, while more than 11 per cent of the country's population has been displaced.**

Donald Trump orders withdrawal of sanctions against North Korea

- US President Donald Trump ordered the withdrawal of additional large-scale sanctions on North Korea, immediately after the Treasury Department imposed them.
- President Trump's move came after his second summit with Kim held in February 2019 in Hanoi, Vietnam.
- Trump walked out of that summit after refusing to agree to North Korea's demands of lifting all sanctions.

Oman signs deal to allow US military to use its ports

- **Oman** on March 24, 2019 **signed an agreement with the United States, allowing American ships and warplanes to take advantage of its ports and airports.**
- The framework agreement is aimed at **bolstering Oman-US military relations.** It was signed between the defence ministries of both the nations.
- The agreement will allow the US forces to take advantage of the facilities offered at some of Oman's ports and airports during visits of the US military vessels and aircraft, particularly in the port of Duqm.
- The Duqm port is located in southern Oman on the Arabian Sea and around 500 kilometres from the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump sign proclamation recognising Israel's sovereignty over Golan Heights

- **US President Donald Trump has signed a proclamation recognising Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights and told the visiting Israeli Prime Minister,** Benjamin Netanyahu, that Israel has an absolute right to **self-defence.**
- Speaking at a White House signing ceremony in Washington, Mr Trump said, the United States recognizes Israel's absolute right to defend itself.
- **Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 war but its sovereignty over the territory is not recognized by the international community.** Mr Trump's move reversed more than a half-century of the US policy over the issue.