



Monthly Updates On **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

APRIL 2019

NATIONAL

- A 14 days' joint training exercise, MITRA SHAKTI VI, between Indian Army and the Sri Lankan Army held at Diyatalawa Parade Ground in Badulla District of Sri Lanka. It was the sixth edition of the joint exercise between these two nations. The exercise was conducted from 26th March 2019 to 08th April 2019.
- According to World Press Freedom Index 2019 released by an International NGO, 'Reporters without Borders', India has dropped to two places down on a global press freedom index to be ranked 140th out of 180 countries. The index is based on the assessment of the countries' press freedom records in the previous year. The report is partly based on a questionnaire which asked questions about pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, and infrastructure.
- India is ranked at 19th position with a score of 64.9 out of 28 countries in the Index of Cancer Preparedness (ICP) released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). It is released as part of the report titled "Cancer preparedness around the world: National readiness for a global epidemic" by EIU. The ICP explores the issue of cancer preparedness through three broad domains i.e. policy and planning, care delivery, health systems, and governance.
- In eLearning training, Telangana state has ranked number one by reaching to 20,000 field staff during 2018-19. This is the second year in succession that the State got the distinction under the Department of Personal and Training (DoPT). During the last two years, over 40,000 field staff belonging to different departments have been trained in the State.
- Indian Army has built longest suspension bridge namely Matiri Bridge over the Indus River in the Leh-Ladakh region. As its name suggests, it symbolises excellent civilmilitary relations in the Leh-Ladakh region. It has been constructed by combat engineers of 'Sahas aur Yogyata' regiment of Indian Army's Fire & Fury Corps. It is 260-feet long bridge, which makes it longest suspension bridge over Indus river. It has been built in a record time of 40 days which is the shortest time taken by Indian Army to build any suspension bridge of this length.
- The joint military training exercise between the Indian Army and the Singapore Army 'Bold Kurukshetra 2019' was focused on developing interoperability and conduct of joint tactical operations in mechanised warfare. Both troops learnt about each other's organisations and best practices being followed during combat operation. This was the 12th edition of joint military training between India and Singapore.
- Kandhamal Haldi (turmeric) produced by the tribal farmers in southern Odisha's Kandhamal district received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in April 2019. It is famous for its medicinal properties. The recognition coincided with the state's Foundation Day (Utkal Divas).

- 8. Garden Reach Ship Builders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) of Kolkata became the 'first' Indian shipyard to build and deliver 100 warships. GRSE Chairman and Managing Director, VK Saxena handed over the 100th warship, 'IN LCU L-56', to the Indian Navy in 2019.

ECONOMY

- The amalgamation of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank into the Bank of Baroda (BoB) came into effect on April 1, 2019 and all branches of the former two, function as branches of BoB. Post the merger, Bank of Baroda has become the third largest bank in the country. This is the second merger of state-run banks in the recent years in the banking sector after State Bank had merged five of its associate banks.
- According to the World Bank, India is the world's highest recipient of remittances with its diaspora sending a \$79 billion back home in 2018. Remittances grew by more than 14% in India. India is followed by China (USD 67 billion), Mexico (USD 36 billion), the Philippines (USD 34 billion), and Egypt (USD 29 billion).

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- On 27th March 2019, DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organization) had conducted Mission Shakti, an anti-satellite missile test, from Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Island launch complex in Odisha. It had targeted India's one of the existing satellites operating in the lower orbit. The test was successful on all parameters. This test has made India to join a selected group of nations — USA, Russia and China — with a similar technology.
- Indigenously-designed, 'INS Imphal' is a guided missile destroyer launched at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai. It incorporates new design concepts for improved survivability and stealth technology. Its enhanced stealth features have been achieved through shaping of hull and use of radar transparent deck fittings which make it difficult to detect.
- In April 2019, Sri Lanka has launched its first satellite 'Raavana-1' into space from NASA's Flight Facility on Virginia's east shore. It weighs around 1.05 kg and has a lifespan of around one and a half years. The launch marks Sri Lanka's entry into the global space age. Nepal has also launched its first satellite NepaliSat-1 into space, which is a low orbit satellite.
- The world's first and only floating nuclear power plant, 'Akademik Lomonosov' has started commercial operations in Russia in April 2019. Its two KLT-40 reactors were successfully brought up to 100% capacity on 31st March. It is 144 meters long, 30 meters wide and has a displacement of 21,000 tonnes.
- India has successfully test-fired 1000 km range sub-sonic cruise missile 'Nirbhay' from a test range in Odisha. It is first indigenously designed and developed long-range subsonic cruise missile. It can be deployed from multiple platforms and can carry warheads of up to 300 kg. It can travel with turbojet engine and is guided by a highly advanced inertial navigation system.
- At the center of a galaxy called Messier 87, about 55 million light-years away, a supermassive black hole is revealed by the Event Horizon Telescope. The mass of this black hole is about 6.5 billion times the mass of sun. Astronomers have taken the first-ever image of a black hole, which is located in a distant galaxy known as 'Messier 87' (M87).
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched a Defence Intelligence Satellite, EMISAT in its 47th Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) mission, along with foreign nano satellites. It has been launched from ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. EMISAT which weighs 436 kg is focused on electromagnetic measurement.
- South Korea has launched the world's first fully-fledged 5G mobile networks in April 2019. The system will bring smartphones near-instantaneous connectivity 20 times faster than the existing 4G allowing users to download contents at ultra-fast speed. It is crucial for the future development of devices ranging from self-driving vehicles that send data traffic to one another in real time, industrial robots, drones and other elements of the 'Internet of Things'.

SPORTS

- Switzerland's Roger Federer has defeated USA's John Isner to win his 101st career title at the Miami Open. Now, Federer is only behind America's Jimmy Connors with 109 career singles titles. This title is his 28th Masters title and the 101st overall. He has won 20 Grand Slam singles titles.
- South Korea has defeated India by 4-2 in a penalty shootout to lift their third Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh. Previously, it had won the tournament in 1996 and was joint champions with India in 2010.
- Meena Kumari Maisnam won gold in the 54 kg category in the Boxing World Cup 2019 which concluded at Cologne, Germany. Sakshi (57 kg) and Pwilao Basumatary (64 kg) have won silver while Pinki Rani (51 kg) and Parveen (60 kg) have won bronze as India finished with five medals.
- Services has won their sixth Santosh Trophy 2019 title with 1-0 victory over Punjab in the final in Ludhiana. On their way to finals, Punjab had defeated Goa by 2-1 and Services had defeated Karnataka by 4-3 in the semifinal.
- World number one, Bajrang Punia has won the gold at Asian Wrestling Championship 2019 in China's Xian. He has defeated Kazakhstan's Sayatbek Okasov in 65 kg men's freestyle final. It is Bajrang's second gold at this championship, won last one in 2017. Parveen Rana won a silver medal and Satywart Kadian won a bronze medal.
- The 2019 India Open, officially the YONEX-SUNRISE India Open 2019, is a badminton tournament which took place at K. D. Jadhav Indoor Hall in New Delhi. Viktor Axelsen of Denmark won in men's singles category by defeating India's Srikanth Kidambi while Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand won in Women's singles category.
- Indian shooters won the gold medals in both the mixed air rifle and mixed air pistol competitions in the ISSF shooting World Cup in Beijing in April 2019. Anjum Moudgil and Divyansh Singh Panwar have defeated their Chinese counterpart to win the mixed air rifle gold. In the mixed air pistol competition, Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary have defeated Chinese team to win the gold.

PERSONS IN NEWS

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has appointed Manu Sawhney as its CEO to replace Dave Richardson of South Africa. He is the former CEO of Singapore Sports Hub and Managing Director of ESPN Star Sports. The appointment was ratified by the ICC Board following a global search and appointment process led by ICC Chairman Shashank Manohar and the Nominations Committee.
- Rajan Anandan, vice president and head of Google India and South East Asia has resigned the company after working with it for eight years. He had joined Google after leaving Microsoft India in 2011. He had joined venture capital (VC) firm Sequoia Capital India as its Managing Director after leaving Google.
- In April 2019, the UAE (United Arab Emirates) president, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan honoured Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the prestigious Zayed Medal for playing a "pivotal role" in giving a "big boost" to the bilateral strategic ties. It is the highest decoration award, given to kings, presidents and heads of states.
- Cricketer Mithali Raj has been named as the goodwill ambassador of the Indian team for the Street Child Cricket World Cup. The first ever Cricket World Cup for street children will take place ahead of the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup in England and Wales.
- In April 2019, David Malpass, a senior US Treasury official in President Donald Trump's administration, is chosen as the president of the World Bank. He has replaced former World Bank President Jim Yong Kim who left in January 2019.
- In April 2019, Hockey India named Graham Reid as the new chief coach of the India men's hockey team. He is backed by a successful career as a player and also comes with a strong coaching experience, having worked with the Australian and the Netherlands national teams.

PLANS AND POLICIES

- State Bank of India launched 'Green Car Loan' to encourage customers to buy electric vehicles (EVs) in the country. The interest rates on the loan will be 20 basis points (0.2%) lower than SBI's existing auto loans. Thus, the equated monthly instalment (EMI) per Rs 1 lakh will be lower at Rs 1,468 for 96 months. The scheme comes with the longest repayment period of up to 8 years.
- Around 3.10 crore small farmers received 1st tranche under PM Kisan of Rs 2,000 each. The government had announced that 12 crore farmers would be covered under the Rs 75,000-crore Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme.
- The total deposits in bank accounts opened under the Jan Dhan scheme are set to cross Rs 1 lakh crore soon. The Modi government launched the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) on August 28, 2014.
- Sahulat, a mobile app aimed to facilitate voting by elders was launched in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on 3 April 2019. District Election Officer Mohammad Aijaz Asad launched the Android-based application to reach out to the voters who are 90 years old or above. The app has a simple and user-friendly interface with very simple login operation making it convenient for everyone.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

- Tata Steel has been named as the 'Global Slag Company of the Year' at the 14th Global Slag Conference and Exhibition 2019. The award was presented to Tata Steel for its innovative practices in development of new applications for steel by-products (slag). The award demonstrates global recognition of Tata Steels commitment towards sustainability & circular economy principles.
- In April 2019, Russia has awarded its highest state honour 'Order of St Andrew the Apostle' to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is given for exceptional services in promoting special and privileged strategic partnership between the Russian Federation and the Republic of India. This is the seventh international award that PM Modi has been honoured with.
- The second edition of Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize 2019 is awarded to author Rana Dasgupta for his 2010 novel 'Solo', a tale of estrangement and the ultimate failure of material existence. The prize for social achievement is awarded to Yohei Sasakawa, the World Health Organization Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination, for "his incredible efforts to uproot leprosy and great contribution to world peace". The prize is also awarded to Taiwan President, Tsai Ing-wen as "a beacon of democracy".
- A total of 150 Indian peacekeepers serving with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) have received medals of honour for their dedicated service and sacrifice. Under the UNMISS, the Indian Horizontal Mobility Engineering Company had completed the renovation of 145 km of roadway connecting Bentiu and Leer in South Sudan.
- Dr A. K. Singh is conferred with Lifetime Achievement Award during 4th APJ Abdul Kalam Innovation Conclave held at Chandigarh University, Mohali. He is director of Life Sciences at DRDO. He is honoured for his rich contribution in the field of life sciences, aerospace and aeronautics. He has more than 18 patents and has contributed in more than 57 research publications at international and national level.
- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has been awarded the distinction of "Public Water Agency of the Year" by Global Water Intelligence at the Global Water Summit in London on April 9, 2019. The award recognises excellence across the international water industry and rewards those initiatives in the water conservation, waste water, and desalination sectors, which bring remarkable improvements in the lives of people.