



Monthly Updates On CURRENT AFFAIRS

JULY 2019

NATIONAL

- Jagdish Mukhi Supreme Court extends Assam NRC deadline to August 31. The final National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam should be published by a month and rejected the pleas seeking permission for 20 per cent sample re-verification. The Centre and the Assam government sought permission for sample re-verification to find out wrongful inclusions and exclusions of persons in the NRC. The National Register of Citizens (NRC) for the state of Assam has been taken as the exercise to enumerate citizens in Assam. The exercise aims at identifying illegal immigrants in the state of Assam that borders Bangladesh.
- Chief Minister Pema Khandu launched the state wide tree plantation programme 'Clean-Green Arunachal Campaign 2019' in Itanagar. The campaign under the State Forest department will plant 1-lakh tree saplings in the next 24 hours. The campaign is being held as part of Van Mahotsav celebration and has set the target of planting 1 Crore tree within the next five years.
- Mridula Sinha Health plan for heart patients to cover entire Goa by Aug 15. Entire Goa would be covered under an ambitious health programme of the state government for heart patients by August 15. STEMI (ST segment elevation myocardial infraction) programme was launched in Goa last year under which patients suffering heart attack are thrombolysed before bringing them to hospital for further treatment to save their life. Thrombolysis is a treatment to dissolve dangerous clots in blood vessels, improve blood flow and prevent damage to tissues and organs. STEMI programme was launched by the state health department Vishwajit Rane in December last year.
- Tamil Nadu will become first state to manufacture electric cars. Korean automobile giant Hyundai's plans for its Chennai facility will help make Tamil Nadu the first state in India to manufacture electric cars. The Tamil Nadu Industries Development Corporation (TIDCO), a government agency, is selecting a consultant for preparing a report on developing a greenfield airport near Chennai--the second airport in the city.
- Indian Railways' Northeast Frontier Railway zone has started a unique initiative to earmark a special portion of the SLR coach with pink colour. This is done to specially help the women passengers with better safety and security. This special colour will help the women passenger to easily identify the coach in the platform even during rush hours. Eight trains in Rangiya division of the Northeast Frontier Railway have begun operations with some pink coaches, exclusively for women. In some trains depending on the nature of the coach the same has been earmarked both for lady passengers as well as Divyangjan.
- 36th Goods & Service Tax (GST) Council Meeting was held in New Delhi via Video Conference under the chairmanship of Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman. The GST Council made the following changes in the GST rate on supply of goods and services which will be effective from August 1, 2019. The GST rate on all Electric Vehicles (EVs) was reduced from 12% to 5%. The GST rate on

charger or charging stations for EVs was reduced from 18% to 5%. Hiring of electric buses (of carrying capacity of more than 12 passengers) by local authorities was exempted from GST. Western Railway Mahalaxmi General Stores Depot (GSD) has become the first in Indian Railways to portray a heritage gallery of the printing and allied machines used in the Western Railway Printing Press. Govt sets target for installation of solar projects of 40,000 MW by 2022 The government has set a target for the installation of Rooftop Solar projects of forty thousand Megawatt by 2022 in the country. The projects include installation of solar panels on the rooftop of houses. An average it is estimated that 1.5 million units per Megawatt per year are generated from solar rooftop plants. ECONOMY

- The Finance Ministry said that interest rates for small savings schemes will be reduced by 10 basis points for July-September quarter of the on-going financial year. Schemes that will fetch lower interest are Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP), Public Provident Fund (PPF), among others, barring interest on savings deposits that has been retained at 4%. PPF and National Savings Certificate (NSC) will yield 7.9% annual interest from the earlier 8%. KVP will fetch 7.6% with maturity of 113 months as compared with 7.7% with maturity of 112 months. The girl child savings scheme Sukanya Samriddhi Account will fetch a lower return of 8.4% as compared with 8.5%. Similarly, term deposits of 1-3 years will fetch interest rate of 6.9%, to be paid quarterly, while the five-year quarterly pegged at 7.7% and for recurring 7.2% from existing rate of 7.3%.
- According to a latest update from the RBI, the Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2019-20 - Series II will be opened for subscription for the period from July 08 - July 12, 2019. The nominal value of the bond based on the simple average closing price [published by the India Bullion and Jewellers Association Ltd (IBJA)] for gold of 999 purity of the last three business days of the week preceding the subscription period, i.e. July 03 - July 05, 2019 works out to Rs 3,443/- (Rupees Three Thousand Four Hundred Forty Three only) per gram. Denomination: Minimum investment in the Bonds shall be one gram with a maximum limit of subscription per fiscal year of 4 kg for individuals, 4 kg for Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) and 20 kg for trusts.
- The government will invalidate all PAN cards that are not linked to Aadhaar by September 1. At the moment 180 out of the existing 400 million PAN cards are not linked to Aadhaar. To validate and continue using the existing PAN cards, citizens will have to link them to Aadhaar. Or else, they will be permitted to use Aadhaar instead for filing returns and while making other high-value transactions, specified under the Income Tax Act. Those who cite an Aadhaar number, which is not already linked to a PAN number, for tax returns and other specified transactions after September 1, will get a fresh one from the Income Tax Department. This is how the Aadhaar-PAN linkage, proposed in the Finance Bill, 2019 will be rolled out.
- America based Investment Bank, Morgan Stanley has predicted the GDP growth rate for India at 6.2% in 2019 and 7.1% in 2020. For 2018 it was 7.4%. Morgan Stanley has also cut the global growth estimate at 3% and 3.2% for 2019 and 2020.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- The fifth international Dharma-Dhamma conference was inaugurated on by Union Minister of State Kiren Rijiju in the presence of Sri Lanka's Home Minister Gamini Jaiwickrama Perera, Bhutan's Home and Culture Minister Lyonpo Sherub Gyeltshen, senior BJP leader Ram Madhav and Juna Akhada's Awadheshananda Giri Ji Maharaj. The main purpose of this conference is to address people about the terror, violence and global warming prevalent in the world. This two-day conference will address the subjects of Sat-Chit-Ananda and Nirvana which are the pivotal topics of Buddhism. This conference is being hosted by Rajgir for the second time.
- India successfully launched its second moon mission Chandrayaan-2 from its most powerful rocket GSLV-Mk0III-M1 with a plan to land the rover on September 7 in the unexplored lunar south pole, exactly a week after the liftoff was aborted due to a technical snag. The total cost of the 3,850-kg Chandrayaan-2 mission is Rs 978 crore. Once Chandrayaan-2 reaches to south pole region of lunar terrain, India will become the fourth ever nation to have a soft-landing on the moon. Other three nations are United States, China and Russia. Japan's Hayabusa2 probe touches down on asteroid Ryugu, collecting samples from beneath the surface in an unprecedented mission that could shed light on the origins of the solar system. This is the

second time Hayabusa2 has touched down on the desolate asteroid Ryugu, some 300 million kilometres from Earth. Ryugu, which means “Dragon Palace” in Japanese, refers to a castle at the bottom of the ocean in an ancient Japanese tale. The Hayabusa2 mission was launched in December 2014, and has a price tag of around \$270 million.

- Indian scientists develop wonder material 'black gold'. Scientists have tinkered with the chemistry of the yellow metal and have turned it into 'black gold'. They claim that it can be potentially used for applications ranging from solar energy harvesting to desalinating seawater. Scientists at the Mumbai-based Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) used gold nanoparticles and by rearranging size and gaps between them developed a new material, which has unique properties such as capacity to absorb light and carbon dioxide.
- A Russian and European all-sky-survey satellite is safely in space following a successful launch on a Proton rocket. The Spektrum-Röntgen-Gamma mission, also known as Spektr-RG, is a joint project between the Russian space agency, Roscosmos, and the German space agency, DLR. Spektr-RG launched to space from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The spacecraft is expected to detect 100,000 galaxy clusters, 3 million supermassive black holes, tens of thousands of star-forming galaxies, the presence of plasma (superheated gas) and many more types of objects.

SPORTS

- Zimbabwe all-rounder Solomon Mire has announced his retirement from international cricket across all formats. He currently holds the record for the highest score for Zimbabwe in a T20ODI for the 94 he scored against Pakistan in 2018.
 - England won the World Cup on account of more number of boundaries as even the super over resulted in a tie. Both teams made 241 runs in the match and 15 runs in the super over.
 - The International Cricket Council, ICC has suspended Zimbabwe Cricket with immediate effect over violation of global body's constitution which doesn't allow any government intervention
 - Sachin Tendulkar inducted into ICC Hall of Fame. He has been inducted into the International Cricket Council's Hall of Fame alongside South African pace legend Allan Donald. He was 6th Indian to be inducted into ICC Hall of Fame.
 - The Indian football team slipped two places to 103rd in the FIFA rankings released on Thursday. India lost two matches and drew one in the Intercontinental Cup earlier this month in Ahmedabad. It had lost 2-4 to Tajikistan and 2-5 against eventual winners DPR Korea before playing out a 1-1 draw against Syria. India has 1214 ranking points in its kitty, down by five points from the previous chart issued last month. The Indian team now lies at 18th among Asian countries.
 - Sunil Chhetri and Ashalata Devi bag top honours in AIFF awards. The All India Football Federation (AIFF) announced awards for the 2018-19 season. Chhetri was declared as the men's footballer of the year whereas in the women's category Devi bagged the award. This is the third consecutive footballer of the year win for Chhetri and his seventh honour in men's category and Women's footballer of the year: Ashalata Devi
 - MC Mary Kom, the six-time world champion, defeated Australia's April Franks in the 23rd President's Cup to clinch the gold medal in a one-sided 51kg category final in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia. The Indian boxers finished their campaign with nine medals, including seven gold and two silvers, helping the contingent win the 'Best Team' award. The women boxers had a flawless record in the finals, winning all the four gold medals on offer, the men had mixed fortunes and had to settle for two silvers along with three golds.
- PERSONS IN NEWS**
- Wing Commander Tarun Chaudhri became the first pilot of Indian Armed Forces (IAF) to do a wingsuit jump. The jump was accomplished by Chaudhri from a mi-17 helicopter from an altitude of 8500 feet. This is the first flying wingsuit jump demonstration at an organised gathering. The jump was undertaken during the Kargil Diwas celebrations at air force station Jodhpur on 21-22 July 2019.

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- The new leader of conservative party Boris Johnson took over as Prime Minister of Britain on 24 July 2019. Mr. Johnson met the queen at Buckingham Palace where he was invited to form a new Government. He also announced senior cabinet posts, including Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary.
- IPS officer VK JOHRI has been appointed as the next Director General of Border Security Force. He is presently serving as the special secretary in raw, under the cabinet secretariat.
- Vidisha Baliyan, from Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar, was crowned Miss Deaf World 2019. The pageant was held in Mbombela, South Africa. Vidisha became the first Indian to bag the title.
- Former olympic track and field athlete P.T. Usha has been nominated for the International Association of Athletics Federations veteran pin for her 'long and meritorious service to the cause of world athletics'. She will receive the pin during the opening ceremony of the 52nd IAAF congress in Doha. Usha is often called the 'Queen of Track and Field'.
- Former Union Minister Kalraj Mishra took oath as the new Governor of Himachal Pradesh in Shimla.
- Aparna Kumar created history by becoming the first civil servant and IPS officer to achieve the incredible and rare feat of completing '7 summits' challenge'. She hoisted India's Tricolour on mount Denali in Alaska, USA. She is an ITPD Dehra Dun Frontier DIG. She is also the first woman IPS officer to reach the South Pole on January 13.
- Indian girl, Isha Kanth is one of the two persons in the world to have bagged an internship programme at the International Court of Justice. She has earlier worked in rural Bihar spreading awareness on the right to education and women empowerment among children belonging to the marginalised sections.

PLANS AND POLICIES

- The Government of India has approved the national permit scheme for inter-state travel for bus operators. The move is likely to increase the state revenue by 3-4% as the money will be directly credited to the states in a proportionate manner. The government will also provide the online facility of obtaining a permit for the electric vehicles including buses, car taxis, autos and bike taxis.
- The Lok Sabha passed The Companies (Amendment) Bill 2019 which seeks to amend the Companies Act 2013. It aims to tighten corporate social responsibility compliance, transfer certain responsibilities to national company law tribunal and categorise certain offences as civil offences. Under the bill, any unspent annual CSR funds must be transferred to the funds under schedule 7 of the act.
- The centre approved construction of nearly 1.4 lakh more houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), taking the number of houses to be built under the scheme to over 85 lakh. A total of 492 projects will cost ₹6,642 crore. PMAY is an initiative in which affordable housing will be provided to the urban poor with a target of building 20 million affordable houses by 31 March 2022.
- The union minister for human resource development, Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank launched 'Paramarsh' – a University Grants Commission (UGC) scheme on 18 July 2019. It will mentor National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) accreditation aspirant institutions. The scheme will target 1000 higher education institutions for mentoring with a specific focus on quality.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal to introduce the Transgender persons (protection of rights) bill, 2019. The bill provides a mechanism for their social, economic and educational empowerment. The bill will benefit a large number of transgender persons, mitigate the stigma, discrimination and abuse against this marginalized section and bring them into the mainstream of society.
- The Cabinet has approved for introduction of the code on occupational safety, health and working conditions bill, 2019 in the parliament. The decision will enhance the coverage of the safety, health and working conditions provisions manifold as compared to the present scenario. The new code has been drafted after amalgamation of the relevant provisions of the 13 central labour acts.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

- International sand artist, Padmashri Sudarsan Pattnaik won People's Choice Prize at Boston International 'Sand Art' Championship in the USA. He was among the 15 top sand artists selected from across the world.
- Veteran star Meryl Streep honoured with Tribute actor award at the 2019 Toronto International film festival. She is the first-ever recipient of the award. Her next film 'the laundromat', about the panama papers scandal, is among the films that will be screened at the film festival.
- 3rd edition of the CSR journal excellence awards honoured 6 firms for the best practices in corporate social responsibility. The theme of the event was 'INDIA FIRST'. The 6 firms- Tata Power, Renew Power, Hindustan Zinc, Aditya Birla Capital Ltd., YES Bank Ltd. and Mahindra & Mahindra emerged as the winners of the awards.
- Two-time Olympic gold medalist Keshav Dutt and former India football captain Prasun Banerjee were conferred the 'Mohun Bagan Ratna' on 29 July 2019. July 29 is celebrated as the 'Mohun Bagan Day' because on this day in 1911, the mariners became the first club to defeat a British club, east Yorkshire regiment, and lift the IFA shield.
- NIIT limited has bagged the ASSOCHAM education excellence awards 2019 as the 'best innovative brand' in the education sector. It received the award for company's continuous effort to offer new-age career programs to address the changing workforce requirements. Over the last 38 years, NIIT has contributed extensively to this sector by impacting over 35 million learners in it.
- Shah Rukh Khan received an honorary Doctorate degree from Melbourne-based La Trobe University for his contributions through Meer foundation. He visited Australia to attend the 10th edition of Indian film festival of Melbourne (IFFM) in August 2019 as its chief guest. La Trobe University is the first Australian University to award khan with an honorary degree.