

Banking and Finance

India inks an agreement with NABCONS bank for setting up India-Africa Institute of Agriculture & Rural Development in Malawi

- **India** on Tuesday **signed an agreement with a development bank for setting up India-Africa Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development (IAIARD) in Malawi.**
- In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said it has signed an MoU with **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Consultancy Service, NABCONS for setting up the Institute.**
- The agreement is a part of India's efforts to enhance capacity in the areas of agro-financing and entrepreneurship development for African countries.
- IAIARD will be a Pan-African Institute wherein trainees not only from Malawi but also from other African countries, will receive training to develop their human resources and build their capacity.
- The entire expenditure on faculty from India, the travel, logistics and training course expenses for students from other African countries will be borne by the Government of India for an initial period of three years.

RBI to inject USD 5 billion more liquidity into banking system

- The **Reserve Bank of India will inject long-term liquidity worth USD 5 billion into the banking system through a dollar-rupee buy-sell swap for tenure of three years on April 23, 2019.**
- The move is aimed at meeting the durable liquidity needs of the system.
- **The swap will be in the nature of a simple buy-sell foreign exchange swap from the Reserve Bank side.**
- Under the swap, a bank would sell US dollars to the RBI and simultaneously agree to buy the same amount of US dollars at the end of the swap period.
- The auction would be a multiple-price based auction in which successful bids will get accepted at their respective quoted premium.

India and states

India, Chile sign MoU, release Joint Statement

- **India and Chile released a Joint Statement on April 1, 2019** after extensive talks between Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and the President of Chile, Sebastian Pinera Echenique, during the former's official state visit to Chile from March 30 to April 1, 2019. This is the third leg of the President's three-nation tour which included Croatia and Bolivia.
- The Indian President paid an official visit to the South American nation at the invitation of the Chilean President. The visit highlights the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Chile and India.

India, Bolivia release Joint Statement

- **India and Bolivia released a Joint Statement on March 30, 2019 after extensive talks between Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and the President of Bolivia, Evo Morales Ayma,** during the former's official state

visit to Bolivia from March 28-30, 2019. This is the second leg of the President's three-nation tour which also includes Croatia and Chile.

- The Indian President paid an official visit to the South American nation at the invitation of the Bolivian President.
- In this historic meeting, both heads of state held a broad exchange of views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. They then issued a joint statement reiterating their commitment in enhancing cooperation in areas of mutual interest, in particular reforms of the UNSC, fight against terrorism and climate change.

NCR districts switch to Euro-VI grade fuels (BS-VI fuels)

- The supply of ultra-clean **Euro-VI grade fuel (also known as Bharat Stage VI grade fuel)** began in cities adjoining the **National Capital Region (NCR)** on **April 1, 2019**.
- Several cities in the 12 neighboring districts of **Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh including Agra switched over to the cleaner fuel**.
- The Bharat Stage VI grade fuel, both petrol and diesel containing 10 parts per million (ppm), is being supplied in Alwar, Bharatpur, Karauli and Dholpur in Rajasthan and Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, Baghpat, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Shamli and Agra in Uttar Pradesh.

'Disturbed Area' tag extended for 3 Arunachal districts

- **The Union Ministry of Home Affairs on April 1, 2019 extended the "disturbed area" tag under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) for three districts of Arunachal Pradesh for another six months.** These 3 districts are Tirap, Changlang and Longding.
- **"Disturbed Area" tag partly removed from three other districts of Arunachal Pradesh.**
- The Government withdrew the "disturbed area" tag partly from three other districts bordering Assam including Namsai, Lower Dibang Valley and Lohit district.

'Kandhamal Haldi' gets GI tag

- **'Kandhamal Haldi', a variety of turmeric indigenous to southern Odisha, got the Geographical indication (GI) tag from Intellectual Property India, an organisation functioning under the Union ministry of Commerce & Industry.**
- Kandhamal in southern Odisha is famed for its turmeric, a spice that enjoys its pride of place in an array of cuisines.
- The agricultural product also stands out for its healing properties and arresting aroma.

Supreme Court upholds HC Judgment for higher pension

- **Supreme Court has dismissed the Special Leave Petition (SLP) on April 1, 2019, filed against a Kerala High Court Judgment setting aside Employee's Pension (Amendment) Scheme, 2014.**
- Judgement was given by a bench comprising CJI Ranjan Gogoi, Justice Deepak Gupta and Justice Sanjiv Khanna.
- Earlier Kerala High Court had asked Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) to give pension to all employees on the basis of their full salary rather than capping the figure on which contribution is calculated at a maximum of Rs 15,000 per month.

World

US approves sale of 24 MH 60 Romeo Seahawk helicopters to India

- **The Trump administration has approved the sale of 24 multi-role MH-60 Romeo Seahawk helicopters to India at an estimated cost of 2.4 billion US dollars, the State Department has said.**
- **It is considered the world's most advanced maritime helicopter.**
- The choppers will provide the Indian defence forces with the capability to perform anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare missions.
- The US government yesterday notified the Congress that it has approved the sale of the helicopters.
- In its notification, the State Department told the Congress that this proposed sale will support the foreign policy of the US by helping to strengthen the US-Indian strategic relationship.

Japan names new imperial era as 'Reiwa'

- **Japan on April 1, 2019 declared 'Reiwa' as the name of its new imperial era that will begin on May 1, 2019** once the new Crown Prince Naruhito ascends the Chrysanthemum Throne.
- Crown Prince Naruhito will succeed his father Emperor Akihito, who will abdicate the empire on April 30, 2019, putting an end to three decades long 'Heisei' era.
- The new era will be the 248th in the history of Japan. The announcement regarding the same was made by Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga.

Bolivia joins International Solar Alliance

- During the state visit of the **President Ram Nath Kovind to Bolivia, Bolivia signed the framework agreement to join the International Solar Alliance.**
- The ISA is a major initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in contributing to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement through the rapid and massive deployment of solar energy.
- The International Solar Alliance was launched jointly by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Francois Hollande on the first day of the COP-21 summit at Paris in 2015.

Estonia tops in E-voting with 44% of online votes

- **Estonia** has emerged as a global leader in **online voting with 44% of votes in the recently concluded parliamentary elections in the country.**
- Centre-Right Reform Party emerged victorious with 40% of the e-votes and nearly 30% of the total votes.
- A large number (25%) of e-votes were cast by people over the age of 55, while 20% were cast by people aged between 45 to 54 years. With total 1.3 million of population, 5,61,131 were the total voters while 2,47,232 people preferred for online voting.

Algeria's President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to resign before his mandate expires

- **Algeria's President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced on April 1, 2019 that he will resign** from his position before his mandate expires on April 28, 2019.
- The move follows mass protests by the citizens of the nation who called for the 82-year-old to step down after almost 20 years in office.
- The ailing leader said that he will take steps to ensure state institutions continue to function during the transition period.

US govt decided to cut aid to the countries of 'Northern Triangle'

- **Government of USA has recently decided to cut aid to the countries of “Northern Triangle”.** US government blamed these Central American countries for sending migrants to the United States.
- In this regard, President Trump decided to cut aid to the three Central American countries that were contributing most to the problem - **El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.**
- Washington post said that the aid affects nearly USD 500 million in 2018 funds and millions more left over from the previous fiscal year. The money was destined for Central America but had not been spent yet.

Sports

India retains ICC Test Championship mace for third consecutive year

- **India have retained the ICC Test Championship Mace and won the purse of USD 1 million for a third successive year on April 1, 2019.**
- **India won this award after finishing at the top of the MRF Tyres ICC Test Team Rankings on the cut-off date of April 1,** while New Zealand have ensured second place.
- International Cricket Council chief executive Manu Sawhney congratulated the Indian team while reiterating the importance of Test cricket and looking forward to the start of the ICC World Test Championship later this year.

India finish with 16 gold medals at Asian Airgun Championships

- **Indian shooters continued their dominance claiming five gold medals** on the final day of the **Asian Airgun Championships to sign off with a total of 25 medals in Taoyuan, Taipei.**
- India finished with 16 gold, five silver and four bronze medals.
- The next assignment for Indian shooters is scheduled at Al Ain, the United Arab Emirates where the International Shooting Sport Federation Shotgun World Cup stage two commences on Friday.

Appointments

Sohail Mahmood, High Commissioner to India, Appointed as Pakistan’s Foreign Secretary

- **Pakistan's High Commissioner to India and seasoned diplomat Sohail Mahmood will be the country's new foreign secretary,** Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi announced Sunday.
- Qureshi, while talking to reporters in Multan, said that the decision to appoint Mahmood as foreign secretary had been made following discussions with Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Vinod K Dasari appointed Royal Enfield CEO

- **Eicher Motors Ltd has announced that it has appointed Vinod K. Dasari as chief executive officer of Royal Enfield.**
- He replaces Siddhartha Lal, who will continue to remain MD of Eicher Motors. Dasari has also been appointed to the board of Eicher Motors as an executive director.
- Lal will continue his association with Royal Enfield on product and brand related areas.