

## Current Affairs 17 February 2019 with PDF

### Banking and Economy

#### ***Anoop Satpathy-led Expert Committee submits report; recommends National Minimum Wage at Rs 375 per day***

- The Expert Committee led by Anoop Satpathy, Fellow of V. V. Giri National Labour Institute (VVGNI), on February 14, 2019 submitted its report on “Determining the Methodology for Fixation of the National Minimum Wage” to the Government.
- The Committee was constituted by the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment January 17, 2017 to review and recommend methodology for fixation of National Minimum Wage (NMW) and determine the base level National minimum wage/wages through an evidence-based approach.
- The Report has been placed on the Ministry’s website for facilitating the process of consultation and dialogue among social partners and stakeholders for necessary approval of methodology.
- ***The report recommended a balanced diet approach which is culturally edible for fixation of national minimum wage.*** It proposed a particular amount of food items per day per person to constitute a national level balanced food basket: **More or less than 10 percent of 2400 calories + proteins greater than or equal to 50 gm + fats greater than or equal to 30 gm per day per person**
- It proposes minimum wage should include reasonable expenditure on essential non-food items such as clothing, fuel, light, house rent, education, medical expenses, footwear and transport which must be equal to the median class.

#### ***RBI warns of mobile data theft by ‘AnyDesk’ app***

- Amid rising instances of fraud using the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) platform, **the Reserve Bank of India has cautioned all banks and payment system operators about a new modus operandi allegedly used by scammers to target customer phones.**
- In an alert dated February 14, the cyber security and IT examination cell of the central bank said that a mobile application called ‘AnyDesk’ was allegedly being used by fraudsters to access data on mobile devices. Once the app is installed on customer phones, it seeks permission to access controls of the phone, like all other applications.
- In its alert, the RBI said that it had sent out a similar advisory on January 10. Officials say the circular was originally issued by National Payments Commission of India (NPCI) to ensure that genuine makers of payments applications put some controls on the kind of data they access on customer phones.
- Data on the NPCI website shows that between April 2018 and January 2019, the UPI platform saw 388 crore transactions worth over Rs 6.4 lakh crore.

#### ***India and Singapore to sign pact for skilling Indians in aviation***

- **India and Singapore will sign an agreement for skilling Indian youths in the aviation sector at the Aero India Show next week.** Academies will be set up in Bengaluru and other places in India that will act as regional hubs for the training of Indian youths for domestic and overseas jobs in these sectors.
- **National Skill Development Corporation of India's (NSDC) Aerospace and Aviation Sector Skill Council in collaboration with Singapore Polytechnic and a Singapore-based private sector firm will signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on February 22 to establish skill development centers.**
- Aero India show 2019 will be held in Bengaluru from February 20-24.

#### ***PM Modi launches several development projects including Patna Metro Rail Project in Bihar***

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of various infrastructure and development projects worth 33,000 crore rupees at Barauni in Begusarai district of Bihar today.** He laid the foundation stone of **Patna Metro Rail Project** at a cost of over 13,000 crore rupees via video conferencing. **The project would be completed by 2024.**
- Mr Modi also initiated construction and dedicated projects related to gas pipeline, expansion of Barauni Refinery, revival of Barauni fertiliser unit, ATF aviation fuel plant, extension of Paradip-Haldia-Durgapur LPG pipeline to Patna and Muzaffarpur, Urja Ganga Project City Gas Distribution at Patna and other projects worth over 15,000 crores.
- **Mr Modi laid the foundation stone for the first phase of Jagdishpur Haldia and Bokaro Dhamra gas pipeline project under the Prime Minister's package for Bihar.** He also kick started work of several development projects of civic works, Clean Ganga Mission and Railways also.
- The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of 22 projects under AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) mission worth over 1,400 crores. Under the mission, a drinking water pipeline would be laid.

#### ***India raises customs duty to 200 pc on all goods imported from Pakistan***

- **India has raised the basic customs duty to 200 per cent on all goods imported from Pakistan** with immediate effect following withdrawal the Most Favoured Nation, MFN status in the aftermath of the Pulwama terror attack.
- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said this in a tweet. The main items which Pakistan exports to India include fresh fruits, cement, petroleum products, bulk minerals and ores and finished leather.

#### ***India withdraws Most Favoured Nation status accorded to Pakistan***

- India on February 15, 2019 withdrew the '**Most-Favoured Nation**' status accorded to **Pakistan following the Pulwama terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir that led to the killing of 37 CRPF personnel and injuring of many others.**
- The Minister said that the Union External Affairs Ministry would be launching an all-out effort to isolate Pakistan for having a direct hand in this gruesome terrorist attack. He said that the CRPF will make all the arrangements to bring back the mortal remains of all those who lost their lives in this attack.
- **The most favoured nation (MFN) status was accorded in 1996 under WTO's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).**
- The special status is accorded by one state to another in international trade. The term means that the country which is the recipient of this treatment must nominally receive equal trade advantages as the "most favoured nation" by the country granting such treatment.

## **India and states**

#### ***IAF Carries Out Vayu Shakti Exercise at Pokhran***

- **The Indian Air Force today carried out an exercise in Pokhran, Rajasthan, involving around 140 fighter jets and attack helicopters.**
- Speaking at the inauguration of the day and night **Vayu Shakti exercise**, Air Chief Marshal B S Dhanoa said if called for, the IAF is prepared to deliver an appropriate response.
- In the exercise, the IAF showcased firepower capability of indigenously-developed platforms like **Light Combat Aircraft, Tejas, Advanced Light Helicopter** and efficacy of **Akash surface-to-air missile and Astra air-to-air missile.**

- Army Chief Gen Bipin Rawat, defence attaches of several countries and top officials of defence ministry also witnessed the exercise.

#### ***President Kovind launches Digital Kisan Platform in 4th Agri Leadership Summit***

- **President Ram Nath Kovind launched Digital Kisan Platform in the Fourth Agri Leadership Summit**, organised by the Haryana government at Gannaur in Sonapat district today.
- **The President visited the Agri exhibition in the International Horticulture Market and later honoured nine farmers with Krishi Rattan Pursakar and also conferred Kisan Rattan Pursakaar** on Vice Chancellor K P Singh for Haryana Agriculture University, Hisar. The President will address the participants of the Summit.

#### ***New mobile app launched for beneficiaries of PMAY (U) mission***

- Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep S Puri on February 14, 2019 **launched the PMAY (U) mobile application in New Delhi.**
- **A one-minute film showcasing the impact of PMAY (U) in the lives of beneficiaries was also released on the occasion.** Speaking during the launch, the Minister emphasised that the mission intends to create a closer interface with its beneficiaries.
- **The mobile application has been developed to bring beneficiaries directly in contact with the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) mission.**
- The mobile app will allow beneficiaries of PMAY (U) to capture and upload high-resolution photographs and videos of completed houses along with their families.

#### ***UAE's Tabreed to build India's first district cooling system in Amaravati***

- **A UAE-based international cooling provider has entered into a 30-year concession with Andhra Pradesh government to build, own, operate and transfer India's first district cooling system in the state's new capital Amaravati.**
- The agreement between the **National Central Cooling Company (Tabreed) and Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA)** is for a contracted cooling capacity of 20,000 refrigeration tonnes and this will be **the company's first plant outside its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) market, a statement released by the firm said.**
- Tabreed's district cooling system is part of Andhra Pradesh government's vision for Amaravati to create jobs and homes along with a world-class infrastructure, a green city, and efficient resource management.

#### ***Vande Bharat Express: PM Modi launches India's first semi-high speed train***

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 15, 2019 flagged off India's first Semi High Speed Train, 'Vande Bharat Express' on New Delhi-Kanpur-Allahabad-Varanasi route from the New Delhi Railway Station.**
- With maximum speed of 160 kmph, **Vande Bharat Express or Train-18 offers travel classes like Shatabdi Train but with better facilities with a totally new travel experience to passengers.**
- Vande Bharat Express is regarded as a successor to the 30-year-old Shatabdi Express. Shatabdi was introduced in 1988 and is presently running on over 20 routes connecting metros with other important cities.

#### ***Inland Waterways Authority of India launches new portal 'LADIS'***

- **The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) on February 15, 2019 launched a new portal called 'LADIS' – Least Available Depth Information System in New Delhi to ensure optimum use of national waterways.**

- The portal will ensure that the **real-time data on least available depths (LADs) is disseminated for ship and barge and cargo owners** so that they can undertake transportation on the national waterways in a more planned way.
- **The LADIS portal is hosted at on IWAI's website and has been built in house by the IWAI.**
- Initially the information of LADs will be available for national waterway 1, national waterway 2, Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route and national waterway 3, along with the date of survey. The facility will soon be expanded to other national waterways as well.

#### *India liberalises e-visa regime, makes it more tourist friendly*

- **The Union Tourism Ministry recently made a series of amendments in India's e-visa regime, liberalising it further and making it more tourist friendly.** The e-tourist Visa, which was introduced in September 2014 with 46 countries **has now been made applicable for 166 countries.**
- The Ministry of Tourism had been working very closely with the Ministry of Home Affairs for easing of the visa Regime in the country over a period of time.
- The duration of stay in India of e-tourist and e-business visas has been made maximum up to one year with multiple entry subject to the stay stipulations.
- **The existing restriction of allowing foreigner for a maximum of three times has also been removed.**
- Further, e-visa will be valid for entry through 2 two more designated airports such as **Bhubaneswar and Port Blair**, raising the total number of such airports to 28.

## Appointments

#### *IAF inducts Hina Jaiswal India's 1st Woman Flt Engineer*

- **Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal has created history by becoming the first Indian Woman Flight Engineer. She successfully completed the Flight Engineers' course at 112 Helicopter Unit attached to the Air Force Station, Yelahanka here.**
- Commissioned on January 5, 2015 in the engineering branch of the IAF, **she has served as Chief of firing team and battery commander in a frontline Surface to Air Missile squadron, before being selected for the Flight Engineers' Course.**
- She earned her Flight Engineer's wing on Friday. During the course of the last six months of gruelling training, she displayed unflinching commitment, dedication and perseverance, said an official statement from the Defence Ministry.

#### *Major Gopal Mitra, the first differently-abled Indian to be appointed at UNICEF*

- **Major Gopal Mitra became the first differently-abled person from India to be appointed at the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).**
- Major Gopal Mitra, SM lost his vision in an IED blast. Despite all odd Major Mitra did Masters in social work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences and MSc in Development Management from London School of Economics', said the Indian Army's post on Instagram.

## Awards

### ***President to confer Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony***

- **Indian President Ram Nath Kovind would be presenting the Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony to Rajkumar Singhajit Singh, Bangladesh cultural organisation Chhayanaut and Ram Sutar Vanji for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively** on February 18, 2019 at Pravasi Bhartiya Kendra, New Delhi.
- The award was instituted by the Union Government in 2012 to recognise the contributions made by Rabindranath Tagore to humanity at large with his works and ideas, as part of the commemoration of **his 150th Birth Anniversary, for promoting values of cultural harmony.**
- **The award is conferred annually and carries an amount worth Rs one crore, citation in a scroll, a plaque and an exquisite traditional handicraft and handloom item.**
- The award may be divided between two persons or institutions who are considered by the jury to be equally deserving of recognition in a given year.

## **World**

### ***NASA declares Mars rover Opportunity officially dead***

- **NASA's Mars rover Opportunity was officially declared dead on February 13, 2019**, after having contributed almost 15 years of grand services.
- The declaration **came after the long wait of eight months after the robot stopped responding to engineers back on earth after the dust storm hit the red planet.**
- Setting off for Mars on the night of July 7, 2003, the golf-cart-sized robot has covered the distance of 28 miles since it has landed on the surface on January 25, 2004.
- After landing the rover, towards its journey to Endurance Crater, started searching intensively for bedrock and sand dunes.