

# Daily Current Affairs 1 March 2019

## Banking and Finance

### *RBI, Bank of Japan sign Bilateral Swap Arrangement for India to access 75 billion in US dollars*

- The Reserve Bank of India and Bank of Japan have completed signing of the Agreement for Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA) between India and Japan.
- The BSA was negotiated between India and Japan during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Tokyo in October 2018.
- This BSA provides for India to access USD 75 billion and was approved by the Union Cabinet in January 2019.
- India can access the agreed amount of USD 75 billion for its domestic currency for the purpose of maintaining an appropriate level of balance of payments or short-term liquidity.
- The BSA provides India flexibility to use these reserves if at any point of time, in its judgment, there is need to use the resources available under BSA.

### *Nitin Gadkari inaugurates highways projects worth Rs 6900 Crore and Namami Gange Projects in Bihar*

- Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Nitin Gadkari inaugurated and laid foundation stones for sixteen National Highways projects worth Rs 6943.04 crore in Chhapra and Madhepura, Bihar on February 28, 2019.
- He also laid the foundation stone for several works under Namami Gange programme worth Rs 2826 crore at these two places.
- Gadkari also dedicated to the public 6 Ghats renovated and developed at a cost of Rs 19.75 crore.
- He also laid the foundation stone for 8 projects of rehabilitation and development work of Ghats at Chhapra at a cost of Rs 22 crore.

### *NCDC to organise 'India International Cooperative Trade Fair' in October 2019*

- The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) will organise a first of its kind 'India International Cooperative Trade Fair' in October 2019 in New Delhi.
- The Cooperative Trade Fair will provide platform for sale, market, product display, conferences, buyer-seller meet, networking, policy advocacy etc to national and international cooperatives.
- Talking about the achievements of NCDC, the 'Yuva Sahakar' scheme was launched in November 2018 for giving wings to young entrepreneurs in cooperatives.
- The newly formed cooperatives will be able to take advantage of the 'Cooperative Start up and Innovation Fund' created by NCDC with liberalised assistance for cooperatives in the North Eastern Region.

### *Dharmendra Pradhan hands over 100th Letter of Intent under SATAT scheme*

- Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill development and Entrepreneurship, Dharmendra Pradhan handed over the 100th Letter of Intent (LoI) to the Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) Entrepreneur under the SATAT scheme.
- The Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) is a developmental effort that would benefit both vehicle-users as well as farmers and entrepreneurs.
- SATAT was launched in October 2018 with a four-pronged agenda of utilising more than 62 million metric tonnes of waste generated every year in India, cutting down import dependence, supplementing job creation in the country and reducing vehicular emissions and pollution.
- Within 5 months of its launch, over 100 LoIs have been issued under the scheme.

### ***Tribal Affairs Minister launches MSP for Minor Forest Produces***

- The Union Tribal Affairs Minister, Jual Oram launched **the Minimum Support Price for Minor Forest Produces and the Value Addition component of Van Dhan scheme on February 28, 2019 at a workshop organised by TRIFED at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi.**
- The day-long workshop saw participation from representatives from 30 state governments and stakeholding organisations. Primarily, the rollout and implementation plan of the scheme was discussed with the delegates.
- **The Van Dhan Scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Bijapur District of Chhattisgarh in April 2018.**
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is now scaling up the Van Dhan Scheme and is ready to extend it to all tribal districts of the country in phases starting with the aspirational districts with substantial tribal population.

## **India and states**

### **Piyush Goyal announces “South Coast Railway (SCoR)” a new Zone of Indian Railways in Andhra Pradesh**

- Railways Minister Piyush Goyal on February 27, 2019 announced the **“South Coast Railway (SCoR)” as the new Zone of Indian Railways.**
- **The new zone SCoR will comprise of existing Guntakal, Guntur and Vijayawada divisions of Andhra Pradesh.**
- Waltair division shall be split into two parts. **One part of Waltair division will be incorporated in the new South Coast Railway zone and will be merged with the neighbouring Vijaywada division.** Remaining portion of Waltair division shall be converted into a new division with headquarter at Rayagada under East Coast Railway (ECoR).
- **South Central Railway will comprise of Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Nanded divisions.**
- As per item 8 of Schedule 13 (Infrastructure) of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014, Indian Railways was required to examine establishing a new railway zone in Andhra Pradesh.

### ***NITI Aayog’s Atal Innovation Mission partners with Adobe to enhance creativity in ATL Schools***

- **NITI Aayog’s Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Adobe on February 28, 2019 signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) to collectively drive the charter of developing creative skills and spreading digital literacy across all Atal Tinkering Labs in India.**
- Adobe will be adopting 100 schools under **Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) initiative and will be implementing its Digital Disha Program in ATLs under which free licenses of Adobe Spark premium shall be offered to ATLs.**
- **Launched in 2018, the Adobe Digital Disha Programme is aimed at driving synergies in creative thinking and technology-based learning.**
- Under this collaboration, children and teachers across these schools and communities will be benefitted from creative learning resources.

### ***Nitin Gadkari to launch project to connect Ring Road-DND Junction with Delhi-Mumbai Expressway***

- Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Nitin Gadkari will lay the foundation stone **for a six-lane National Highway (NH) project at Kalindi Kunj-Meethapur Road in Delhi on March 1, 2019.**
- **The highway will start at Ring Road- DND Flyway junction and will pass through Kalindi bypass and Faridabad-Ballabhgarh bypass.** It will finish at the interchange of **Delhi-Mumbai Expressway at Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) Expressway.**

- The project will have 3+3 lane service roads on either sides for about 29 km, 7.350 km of elevated section with two level crossings at four locations of Metro line, 18 new underpasses, and nine interchanges with improved junctions.
- The project will decongest Delhi with reduction of traffic congestion in **Ashram-Badarpur-Faridabad-Ballabhgarh region**.
- This is expected to result in reduction of vehicular pollution.
- **The cost of this 59 km long highway project is estimated at Rs 3580 crore.**

#### ***Suresh Prabhu inaugurates 'Aviation Conclave 2019' with theme of "Flying for All"***

- Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister of Commerce, Industry and Civil Aviation **inaugurated the Aviation Conclave 2019 with the theme of "Flying for All"**.
- The conclave was about the future of Indian aviation.
- It brought together industry leaders, government and regulators for setting the tone and propelling to realize the Vision-2040.
- Over 30 industry leaders participated in 5-key sessions- **Drone-Ecosystem Policy Roadmap, Roadmap for Manufacturing Aircraft, the Project Rupee Raftaar- Aircraft Financing from India, the National Air Cargo Policy and the Mission to transform Indian Airports into Next-Gen Aviation Hubs.**

#### ***Textiles Minister launches Short Term Courses at NIFT Panchkula***

- Union Minister of Textiles, **Smriti Zubin Irani**, launched five short term courses at NIFT Panchkula, Haryana.
- The proposed one-year Certificate Programmes are - ***fashion clothing & technology; design development for indian ethnic wear; fashion & media communication; textile for interiors & fashion; and fashion knitwear production and technology.***
- The permanent campus building of NIFT Panchkula is under construction and is expected to be completed by June 2020.

#### ***Monkeys declared as Vermin Species in Himachal Pradesh***

- Himachal Pradesh Forest Minister Govind Singh Thakur informed that monkeys have been declared as Vermin species for next one year for eleven districts and 91 tehsils and sub-tehsils in Himachal Pradesh.
- Due to monkeys menace in Himachal Pradesh, humans are getting affected. **Thus to resolve this issue, it became necessary to declare monkeys as vermin species.**
- State has reported damage to life and property including large scale destruction of agriculture done by monkeys in areas outside forest.

## **Awards**

#### ***PM Modi confers Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes for Science & Tech***

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday conferred the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes for Science and Technology for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 in New Delhi.
- Among the ten scientists who got the prize for 2017 are Dr Deepak Gaur of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi and Dr S Suresh Babu of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre. There were thirteen prize winners for 2018. They include Dr Amit Kumar of IIT, Delhi and Dr Nitin Saxena, IIT, Kanpur.

- **The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize is the most coveted national recognition bestowed upon young scientists and engineers to honour their research and developmental work in India.** It was first instituted in 1957 to honour the eminent scientist Dr Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar who was also the founder Director and the chief architect of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR.

## World

### *NASA to launch new mission to study space weather from ISS*

- **The National Aeronautics and Space Administration** has selected a new mission that will help **scientists understand and ultimately, forecast the vast space weather system around the Earth.**
- The mission titled as the ***Atmospheric Waves Experiment (AWE) is expected to cost around USD 42 million and it will be launched in August 2022,*** attached to the exterior of the Earth-orbiting International Space Station.
- The experiment will focus on colourful bands of light in Earth's atmosphere, called airglow, to determine what combination of forces drive space weather in the upper atmosphere.
- It was earlier thought that only the Sun's constant outflow of ultraviolet light and particles, the solar wind, could affect the region.

### *International Digital Health Symposium inaugurated*

- **Anupriya Patel**, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, inaugurated the '**International Digital Health Symposium**' and the **exhibition on Digital Health as part of the Symposium.**
- The participant countries along with various Government Ministries, states and other stakeholders showcased key innovations, implementation experiences and **innovative Digital Health Interventions.**
- **The Digital Health Symposium follows the two-day 4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit** and allows wide engagement with innovators, clinical leaders, academia, researchers, healthcare establishments, government representatives, technical experts, and entrepreneurs.

## Days

### *World Zero Discrimination Day observed*

- The 2019 **World Zero Discrimination Day is observed on 1 March, 2019.**
- The theme of 2019 World Zero Discrimination Day is "**Act to change laws that discriminate**".