

## CURRENTAFFAIRS SNIPPETS: FEBRUARY2019

### BUSINESS& TRADE

#### **India became the second largest LPG consumer and importer**

LPG imports grew by 12.5% over past five years to reach 12 million metric tons in 2018-19. India now stands at the second position behind China in LPG imports, surpassing Japan. LPG exporters to India include Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Kuwait and Iran

### GOVERNMENT

#### **Indian Air Force struck against Jaish-e-Mohammed camps in Pakistan**

12 Mirage-2000 fighter jets, supported by Sukhoi Su-30 aircrafts were used to drop 1000-kg laser guided bombs on terrorist training camps in Balakot, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, reportedly killing around 300+ militants in training camps of Jaish-e-Mohammed

#### **India hosted global digital health partnership summit**

4<sup>th</sup> Global Digital Health Partnership Summit held in New Delhi was inaugurated by the Union Health Minister J P Nadda. The summit provided an opportunity to support governments and health system reformers in improving the health and well-being of their citizens through digital technologies

#### **GST council reduced tax rates on housing**

The GST council decided to slash the tax rate from the present 12% to 5% on under-construction residential properties and the affordable housing projects category

#### **Assam launched PRANAM commission to protect parents of govt employees**

The chief minister of Assam Sarbananda Sonowal announced PRANAM commission to look after the issues related to the Parents Responsibility and Norms for Accountability and Monitoring (PRANAM) Bill. The bill makes it mandatory for state government employees to look after their parents and unmarried differently abled siblings who do not have their own sources of income

#### **HRD Ministry launched SHREYAS Programme**

The Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar launched the Scheme for Higher Education Youth

in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS) to provide industry-specific apprenticeship opportunities to fresh graduates. SHREYAS focuses towards students primarily from non-technical courses & will introduce employable skills into their learning, promote apprenticeship as integral to education and amalgamate employment facilitating efforts of the government into education system

#### **Railway Minister launched Rail Drishti dashboard**

The Union Minister of Railways Piyush Goyal launched Rail Drishti dashboard. It encompasses all digitization efforts in Indian Railways and promotes transparency and accountability. The dashboard brings information from various sources on a single platform and gives access to key statistics and parameters to every citizen of the country

#### **Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana of Madhya Pradesh**

The scheme guarantees 100 days of employment every year to urban youths from economically weaker sections. The youth would get Rs 4,000 stipend per month and total Rs 13,500 for the 100 days period would be provided. During this period, they would be given skill development training, so that they become independent

#### **HRD minister launched Operation Digital Board**

Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar launched Operation Digital Board to leverage technology to boost quality education in the country. Operation Digital Board (ODB) will make learning & teaching processes interactive and popularize flipped learning as a pedagogical approach

#### **CCEA approved launch of KUSUM scheme**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the launch of KUSUM, Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhayan scheme. It aims to provide financial and water security to farmers by harnessing solar energy capacities of 25.75 GW by 2022

#### **Odisha government launched KALIA Chhatra Bruti scholarship for Farmers Children**

Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) is a support scheme of

Odisha whose primary targets are small farmers, cultivators and landless agricultural laborers.

Eligibility for the student scholarship is that the students should be children of KALIA beneficiaries & should be studying in government professional colleges on merit

### **Government launched new initiative SWAYATT and GeM start-up runway**

The Union Minister of Commerce and Industries Suresh Prabhu launched SWAYATT (Start-ups, Women and Youth Advantage Through eTransactions) and GeM Start-up Runway.

SWAYATT will bring together the key stakeholders within Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem to Government e-Marketplace, the national procurement portal.

### **Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) launched in 16 States and UTs**

The 112 helpline earlier launched in Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland was launched in 16 states and UTs by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh under the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS). To access ERSS, the person can dial '112' on a phone. The person can also press the power button of a smartphone three times quickly to send a panic call to the Emergency Response Centre or long press the '5' or '9' key to activate the panic call from the normal phone

### **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM)**

The PradhanMantriShram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) announced in the interim budget 2019 has been notified by the Ministry of Labour and Employment. PM-SYM is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme on 50:50 basis where prescribed age-specific contribution shall be made by the beneficiary and the matching contribution by the central government

### **e-Aushadhi Portal**

Minister of State for AYUSH, ShripadYessoNaik launched e-Aushadhi portal for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs. The portal is intended to bring increased transparency & accountability in the licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs, improved information management facility & data usability

### **Interim Union Budget 2019 - Key points**

- Individual taxpayers with annual income up to 5 lakh rupees get full tax rebate
- Individuals with gross income up to 6.5 lakh rupees will not need to pay any tax if they make investments in provident funds & prescribed equities
- Standard tax deduction for salaried persons raised from Rs. 40K to 50K
- Gratuity limit increased from 10 lakhs to 30 lakhs
- Tax on notional rent on second home has been removed
- To increase availability of affordable housing, benefits under Section 80-IBA of Income Tax act are extended for one more year
- *PradhanMantriKisanSammanNidhi (PM-KISAN)* - Will cover 12 cr beneficiary farmers with less than 2 hectares land holding Rs. 6000/year per family will be transferred to bank a/c in 3 installments. The landless can earn through MGNREGA, but don't qualify for PM-KISAN
- *PradhanMantriShram Yogi Mandhan* - Pension Yojana for workers in unorganised sector (Monthly income up to 15K). An assured monthly pension of 3000 Rs. per month after 60 years of age
- Allocation to healthcare is Rs. 61,398 cr, i.e. 2.2% of budget

### **India's unemployment rate hit four-decade high**

India's unemployment rate hit a 45-year-high of 6.1% in 2017-18, as per the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO) periodic labour force survey of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

### **Kerala is the first state to monitor drug price overcharging**

Price monitoring & research unit will track pricing violation of essential drugs & medical devices under Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO). National Pharma Pricing Authority (NPPA) had proposed such a system five years back

### **PETROTECH - 2019**

Prime Minister NarendraModi inaugurated the PETROTECH -2019 conference in UP and called for responsible pricing of crude oil that balances interests of producers and consumers highlighting the need to have universal access to clean, the

affordable and equitable supply of energy. In the backdrop of changing global energy basket, PETROTECH-2019 offered an excellent opportunity to hydrocarbon industry, their associates and academia to interact and debate the latest advances in hydrocarbon sector, which can be leveraged to meet global energy requirements

#### **Ladakh declared as third administrative division of J & K**

The J&K government ordered creation of a separate administrative division for Ladakh region. It is hailed as a landmark decision by the governor ruled state under President Rule. Earlier, J&K had two administrative divisions of Jammu and Kashmir. Ladakh would be the third administrative division

#### **PM Modi flags-off the first ever diesel-to-electric converted locomotive**

The first ever diesel-to-electric converted locomotive became operational at the Diesel Locomotive Works at Varanasi. The 10,000HP freight locomotive was converted from two units of old diesel locomotives of 2600 HP each with indigenous technology. The conversion has proved to be cost effective, as it requires half of the rehabilitation cost of old locos and it is also environment-friendly with enhanced traction power to double the average speed of goods train

#### **NITI Aayog, Adobe partnered to enhance digital literacy and creativity skills**

Atal Innovation Mission and software major Adobe have signed a Statement of Intent to collaborate on enhancing digital literacy and creativity skills. Under the agreement, Adobe would implement the Digital Disha Programme across 100 schools under Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) initiative

### INTERNATIONAL

#### **Afghanistan launched new export route to India through Chabahar Port**

Afghanistan launched a new export route to India through Chabahar Port of Iran. 23 trucks carrying 57 tonnes of dried fruits, textiles, carpets and mineral products were dispatched from western Afghan city of Zaranj to Iran's Chabahar port. The consignment would then be shipped to Mumbai.

#### **India invited as Guest of Honour for OIC Foreign Ministers meet**

For the first time, India attended Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Foreign Ministers Meet in Abu Dhabi. The invitation came at a time when India was cornering Pakistan on all international forums due to its alleged role in Pulwama terror attack. OIC was once the biggest supporter of Pakistan and Pakistan had blocked all efforts of India to engage with OIC. This invitation is seen as a signal of changing geopolitical dynamics

#### **FATF keeps Pakistan in Grey List for Failing to Stop Terror Financing**

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) condemning the Pulwama Terror Attack decided to continue the 'Grey' listing of Pakistan for its failure to stop funding of terrorist groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jamat-ud-Dawa

#### **4<sup>th</sup> India-ASEAN Expo Summit**

The 4<sup>th</sup> India-ASEAN Expo Summit aimed to build upon the success of previous edition of ASEAN-India Business and Investment Meet and Expo which was held in 2018 as a precursor to India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit. The Summit aimed to provide a platform for the policy makers, industry captains and business leaders to come together and forge a common vision for India and ASEAN's mutual growth and progress

#### **World Government Summit 2019**

The seventh annual World Government Summit was held in Dubai (UAE). It is a forum dedicated to shaping the future of governments. It was attended by 4,000 decision-makers from 140 countries including heads of state, ministers and business leaders

#### **Asia LPG Summit 2019**

The second edition of the Asia LPG Summit was inaugurated by Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas at New Delhi. The two-day summit with the theme 'LPG – Energy for Life' deliberated over series of subjects including how India's successful Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana can become a viable model for other countries to replicate particularly those striving to provide clean cooking fuel to its people

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### **IMBEX 2018-19**

India-Myanmar bilateral army exercise, IMBEX 2018-19 began at Chandimandir military station that houses headquarters of Western Command. The objectives of IMBEX 2018-19 were to train Myanmar delegation on tactics, procedures, expertise and methodology required by contingents of member nations to serve in UN peacekeeping operations

### **Annual 'Cobra Gold' asian military exercise held in Thailand**

It is the biggest exercise with seven active participants in addition to Thailand and the US: Singapore, Japan, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea. Three major components of the exercise were - Military field training, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief training with the goal to enhance maritime security, prevent & mitigate emerging disease threats and respond to large-scale natural disasters

### **GSAT-31 launched from French Guiana**

India's communication satellite GSAT-31 was successfully launched from the Spaceport in French Guiana. GSAT-31 was launched from launch vehicle Ariane 5 VA-247. GSAT-31 would be placed in Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit & augment Ku-band transponder capacity in Geostationary Orbit

## SPORTS

### **Afghanistan posted the highest ever T20 international score**

Afghanistan created history in second T20 international against Ireland in Dehradun. Afghanistan scored 278 for the loss of three wickets in 20 overs & registered the highest-ever total in T20s. Afghanistan broke Australian record of 263 runs scored in 2016 against Sri Lanka

### **International Hockey Federation Player of the Year Awards 2018**

FIH Player of the Year, Men: Arthur van Doren (Belgium)

FIH Player of the Year Women: Eva de Goede (Netherlands)

FIH Goalkeeper of the Year, Men: Vincent Vanasch (Belgium)

FIH Goalkeeper of the Year, Women: Maddie Hinch (Great Britain)

### **Vidarbha won Ranji Trophy Final in 2018-19**

The defending champions Vidarbha won 85<sup>th</sup> Ranji Trophy title. The defending champions defeated Saurashtra by 78 runs in the final

### **India's Mithali Raj became the first woman cricketer to play 200 ODIs**

India's ODI captain Mithali Raj became the first woman to play 200 ODI matches with her appearance in the match against New Zealand. The record for largest number of games played by a woman cricketer was already in her name, when she played 192 ODIs in her career, going past Charlotte Edwards' record of 191 appearances

## AWARDS & HONORS

### **91<sup>st</sup> Academy Awards**

The 91<sup>st</sup> Academy Awards ceremony, honouring the best films of 2018, was held in February 2019 at the Dolby Theatre, in Los Angeles, California.

- Best Actor in a Leading Role— Rami Malek, Bohemian Rhapsody
- Best Actress in a Leading Role — Olivia Colman
- The Favourite. Best Director — Alfonso Cuarón, Roma
- Best Picture — Green Book
- Documentary Short Subject — Period. End of Sentence (Indian)

### **Laureus World Sports Awards 2019**

Sportsman of the Year: Novak Djokovic, (Serbia) Tennis.

Sportswoman of the Year: Simone Biles (USA) Gymnastics.

Comeback of the Year: Tiger Woods (USA) Golf.

Breakthrough of the Year: Naomi Osaka (Japan) Tennis.

Academy Exceptional Achievement Award: Eliud Kipchoge, Kenya

### **Swachhata Excellence Awards 2019**

The Raigarh Municipal Corporation of Chhattisgarh won “Swachhata Excellence awards 2019”. Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation was awarded the first prize for Million Plus Cities. Nagar Palika Parishad of Jashpur Nagar (Chhattisgarh), Malappuram Municipality (Kerala) and Nagar Palika Parishad Surajpur (Chhattisgarh) claimed the prizes in the “Statutory Towns” category

### **61<sup>st</sup> Grammy Awards 2019**

Kacey Musgraves - Album of the Year - Golden Hour

Childish Gambino - Record of the Year - This is America

Donald Glover, Ludwig Goransson & Jeffrey Lamar Williams (songwriters) - Song of the Year - This is America

### **EY Indian Entrepreneur of the year 2018**

Lifetime Achievement Award - Azim Premji, Chairman, Wipro Limited

EY Entrepreneur of 2018 - Siddhartha Lal, CEO, Eicher Motors

### GLOBAL RANKING

#### **Inclusive Internet Index 2019**

Sweden topped the rankings followed by Singapore and the US. India was ranked 47<sup>th</sup> in the Inclusive Internet Index 2019 prepared by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) for Facebook

#### **International IP Index 2019**

In International IP Index 2019 released by the US Chamber of Commerce’s Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC), India climbed eight places from 44<sup>th</sup> to 36<sup>th</sup>. The jump in the ranking is attributed to the recognition of international standards of copyright protection and incentives for intellectual property

### PERSONALITIES

#### **Hina Jaiswal became the first woman flight engineer of IAF**

Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal broke the glass ceiling and became the first ever woman flight engineer of IAF. The flight engineer branch was opened to women officers in 2018. Hina commissioned into IAF’s engineering branch in January 2015. She had created history by becoming the first woman candidate to pursue the elite course.

#### **Rishi Kumar Shukla appointed CBI Director**

IPS officer Rishi Kumar Shukla was appointed as the chief of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a fixed tenure of two years. Rishi is currently serving as the chairman of Madhya Pradesh Police Housing Corporation in Bhopal