

Weekly Current Affairs

06 January – 12 January 2019

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National News

1. PM inaugurates, launches development works in Baripada, Odisha

- ✦ The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, visited Baripada, in Odisha. He unveiled a digital plaque to mark the commencement of work for conservation and development of Rasika Ray Temple, and Excavated Structure at Ancient Fort Haripurgarh.
- ✦ He dedicated to the nation, the Balasore-Haldia-Durgapur section of the Paradip-Haldia-Durgapur LPG pipeline of IOCL. He also inaugurated the Multi Modal Logistic Park at Balasore, and six Passport Sewa Kendras.
- ✦ The Prime Minister said that in the last four and a half years, the Union Government has attempted to reduce the difficulty faced by people in obtaining passports. He said that the six Passport Sewa Kendras being inaugurated today, are a step in this direction.

2. PM lays foundation stone for revival of 6 irrigation projects in Jharkhand

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of revival of six irrigation projects, including North Koel (Mandal Dam) project amounting to 2,500 crore rupees and Kanhar Stone Pipeline irrigation system.
- ✦ The Mandal Dam project will help around one lakh 11 thousand hectares of agricultural land in Jharkhand and Bihar to get irrigation facilities and 24 MW of electricity will also be produced.
- ✦ Jharkhand has recorded 18 percent growth in the growth rate of agriculture in last four year and present Raghubar Das government is taking many steps, like subsidised agriculture equipments and seeds.

3. 9-day long International Kite Festival kicks off in Ahmedabad

- ✦ In Gujarat, the nine-day long international kite festival kicked off at Sabarmati River Front in Ahmedabad this morning.
- ✦ Our correspondent reports that more than 150 kite fliers from 45 countries are participating in this edition of the festival.
- ✦ About 500 kite fliers 13 different states of the country and 19 cities of Gujarat are also taking part. The festival is also planned at Vadodara, Kevadiya, Dwaraka, Surat, Rajkot, Jetpur, Songadh, Saputara and Dhordo in the coming days.

4. AAI signs MoU with SAMEER for boosting communication

- ✦ Airports Authority of India (AAI) signed MoU with Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER) for joint research programs in the field of Communication Navigation and Surveillance (CNS).
- ✦ AAI and SAMEER, an autonomous research and development (R and D) institute under MeitY have entered into an overarching MOU that will provide a platform for Collaborative Research for both the Organizations to work together.

- ✦ Both the organisations will strive to arrive at a beneficial solution for CNS Systems related R and D activities in the country.

5. Odisha 'Partner State' in Indus Food Meet 2019

- ✦ Odisha has become the 'Partner State' in the Indus Food Meet 2019. The two-day mega food international event, which going to be held from January 14 at India Exposition Mart of Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh, is being organised by Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) and union commerce ministry.
- ✦ Odisha minister for MSME Prafulla Samal and MSME additional chief secretary LN Gupata Thursday reviewed the preparation for the state's participation in the Meet.
- ✦ The 2nd edition of Indus Food Meet is hosting over 600 most prominent global buyers from food and beverage industry from over 60 countries.

6. Kumbh Mela: Railways launch mobile app to help devotees, tourists navigate through Allahabad

- ✦ The North Central Railway (NCR) has launched a mobile application that will help those arriving in Allahabad for the Kumbh Mela starting from January 15 to navigate through the city and the mela grounds
- ✦ The 'Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App' will also provide information regarding all the 'Mela special' trains that will be run during the period.
- ✦ Additionally, the app will provide a link to the user to buy both unreserved and reserved train tickets.

7. First Global Aviation Summit to open in Mumbai on Jan 15

- ✦ Against the backdrop of the International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) prediction of a "100 percent increase in global air travel by 2030", the first-ever two-day Global Aviation Summit-2019 with the theme of 'Flying For All' will open here on January 15.
- ✦ Organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation along with FICCI, the first GAS-2019 will discuss how to ride this strong tailwind of growth and pave the way forward for the aviation sector.
- ✦ The GAS is supported by ICAO, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the US, IATA, Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation, Airports Council International and Association of Asia-Pacific Airlines and will include conferences, exhibitions and G2G, G2B and B2B exchanges.

8. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan attends Global Skill Summit at Ranchi

- ✦ Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship attended the Global Skill Summit 2019 held in Ranchi, Jharkhand.
- ✦ Governor of Jharkhand Smt. Droupadi Murmu was the chief guest in this one day Global Skill Summit, 2019 which was also attended by Chief Minister of Jharkhand Shri Raghubar Das.

- ✦ On this occasion Shri Dharmendra Pradhan said that India, with its pool of talented youth, has the potential to cater to the ever-growing demand for skilled manpower in the world.

9. Chhattisgarh withdraws general consent accorded to the CBI to probe cases in the state

- ✦ Two months after the Chandrababu Naidu-led government in Andhra Pradesh withdrew general consent accorded to the CBI to probe cases in the state, the Congress government in Chhattisgarh took a similar decision on Thursday.
- ✦ The state government has conveyed the decision to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Department of Personnel and Training.
- ✦ Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 makes the consent of the states mandatory for the CBI to exercise its power and jurisdiction in the state.

10. India will overtake the US economy by 2030 ; Standard Chartered

- ✦ India is likely to become the world's second-largest economy by 2030, next only to China and overtaking the US, according to Standard Chartered's long-term forecast released on Jan. 08.
- ✦ The UK-based multinational bank also predicts that based on nominal GDP using purchasing power parity exchange rates, China will overtake the US by 2020.
- ✦ Current emerging markets will likely make up the majority of the 10 biggest economies by 2030.

11. Lok Sabha passes DNA (Use and Application) Technology Regulation Bill

- ✦ The Lok Sabha passed the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019 by voice vote after a brief discussion.
- ✦ It seeks to provide regulation for the use and application of DNA technology for the purpose of establishing the identity of certain category of persons including the victims, offenders, suspects, under trials, missing persons and others.
- ✦ The bill also seeks to establish a National DNA Data Bank and Regional DNA Data Banks. Speaking on the bill, Science and Technology Minister Dr Harshvardhan said the issues of privacy, confidentiality and data protection have been minutely addressed in this legislation.

12. Country's longest single lane steel cable bridge opened in Arunachal

- ✦ India's longest 300-metre single lane steel cable suspension bridge was inaugurated by Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu .He also laid the foundation stone for a district secretariat building.
- ✦ The bridge across the Siang river at Yingkiong in Upper Siang district has been named Byorong Bridge.
- ✦ The road to Tuting, near the China border in Upper Siang district, was 192 km before the bridge was built. The bridge is expected to benefit 20,000 people on either banks of the river, besides bolstering the defence preparedness.

13. NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission releases the Atal Tinkering Lab Handbook on eve of National Youth Day

- ✦ NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) released the "Atal Tinkering Lab Handbook – Naye Dishayen, Naye Nirman, Naya Bharat" on the eve of the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, also celebrated as the National Youth Day.
- ✦ They also announced the 10 Month Student Entrepreneurship Programme, which is a fully-funded initiative to help the Top Six innovations of the Atal Tinkering Marathon 2017 to transform their innovative prototypes into functioning, scaled and Go-to-Market products.
- ✦ These innovations include prototypes across six crucial themes having broader social impact, namely, Clean Energy, Waste Management, Agritech, Healthcare, Smart Mobility and Water Resources.

14. Govt launches National Clean Air Programme to tackle air pollution

- ✦ Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr Harsh Vardhan just launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) that aims to reduce toxic particulate matter by 2024, taking 2017 as the base year.
- ✦ In addition to the release by his office, he also shared a twitter clip talking about NCAP and the research that went behind the plan.
- ✦ It will be launched in the 43 smart cities falling in the list of the 102 non-attainment cities, under the Smart Cities program.

15. 6 states sign agreement for Renukaji dam multipurpose project

- ✦ Six states--Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh--on Friday signed an agreement for construction of Renukaji Dam Multi-Purpose Project in the presence of Union Water Resources Minister Nitin Gadkari.
- ✦ Three projects are proposed to be constructed on the Yamuna and two of its tributaries, Tons and Giri, in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh of the Upper Yamuna Basin.
- ✦ These include Lakhwar project on the Yamuna in Uttarakhand, Kisau on the Tons in Uttarakhand and Himachal, and Renukaji on the Giri in Himachal.

16. Sikkim says it will become first state to roll out Universal Basic Income

- ✦ Sikkim will be the first state to roll out Universal Basic Income (UBI) and has started the process to introduce the unconditional direct cash transfer scheme.
- ✦ Sikkim's ruling party, the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), has decided to include UBI in its manifesto ahead of the Assembly election in 2019 and aims to implement the scheme by 2022.
- ✦ The 2017 Economic Survey had flagged the UBI scheme as "a conceptually appealing idea" and a possible alternative to social welfare programmes targeted at reducing poverty.

International News & Foreign Affairs

1. Chinese rover powers up devices in pioneering moon mission

- ✦ Chinese spacecraft and rover power up their observation equipment after making a first-ever landing on the far side of the moon, the Chinese National Space Administration said.
- ✦ The Jade Rabbit 2 rover has succeeded in establishing a digital transmission link with a relay satellite that sends data back to the Beijing control center, the space agency said in a posting late Friday on its website.
- ✦ Chang'e 4, named after a Chinese moon goddess, is the first craft to make a soft landing on the moon's far side, which faces away from Earth.

2. China to 'sinicize' Islam, passes law to make religion compatible with socialism

- ✦ Months after UN flagged China's 're-schooling' campaign against Muslims in the Xinjiang region, Beijing has passed a law to make Islam 'compatible' with socialism within next five years.
- ✦ The law to implement measures to 'Sinicize' Islam was passed after Chinese government officials met representatives from eight Islamic groups, as per a Global Times report.
- ✦ The government officials after the meeting agreed to "guide Islam to be compatible with socialism and implement measures to Sinicize the religion"

3. Former Indian envoy to Myanmar, Vikram Misri, took charge as India's new envoy to China

- ✦ India's new ambassador to China Vikram Misri took charge of the post on Monday and met top Chinese officials during which they discussed Sino-India ties.
- ✦ A 1989-batch India Foreign Service (IFS) officer, Misri 54, replaced Gautam Bambawale who retired in November last year.
- ✦ He has served in various capacities at the headquarters of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) as well as in the Prime Minister's Office.

4. India Ranks 79th, Japan Tops List Of Most Powerful Passports

- ✦ According to the Henley Passport Index, which periodically measures the access each country's travel document affords, India jumped two positions from 81st in 2018 to 79th this year.
- ✦ Japan retained its top spot as the world's most travel-friendly passport due to the document's access to 190 countries.
- ✦ South Korea edged up the ranking from October's index to join Singapore, offering access to 189 jurisdictions.

5. India, Japan bilateral currency swap gets Cabinet nod

- ✦ The Union Cabinet on gave its nod to the \$75-billion bilateral currency swap arrangement between India and Japan.
- ✦ The arrangement is expected to bring stability to foreign exchange and capital markets in India.
- ✦ The Cabinet also approved setting up of 3 new AIIMS at Vijayanagar in Samba in Jammu and Awantipur in Pulwara in Kashmir and Rajkot in Gujarat.

6. WEF recognises Tata Steel's Netherlands plant as 'Factory of the future'

- ✦ The World Economic Forum announced that Tata Steel's plant at IJmuiden in the Netherlands has been inducted into its prestigious community, a distinction awarded to manufacturing facilities which are seen as leaders in technologies of the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution'.
- ✦ This makes Tata Steel part of a network of just 16 key factories to create the world's leading learning platforms for production.
- ✦ To aid the learning and adoption of technologies by other companies, the 'Lighthouse' companies are committed to open their doors and share their knowledge with other manufacturing businesses.

Banking

1. Govt amalgamates three RRBs into a single bank

- ✦ The government has amalgamated three Regional Rural Banks -- Punjab Gramin Bank, Malwa Gramin Bank and Sutlej Gramin Bank -- into a single RRB with effect from January 1.
- ✦ In a filing to the BSE, Punjab and Sind Bank said the central government, after consulting the sponsor banks of the three RRBs, felt that in the interest of the banks and the areas served by them, they should be amalgamated into a single RRB.
- ✦ National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Chairman: Harsh Kumar Bhanwala, Headquarters: Mumbai

2. RBI limits customer liability in fraudulent PPI transactions

- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India has decided to limit the liability of customers in case of unauthorised electronic payment transactions in Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) issued by non-banks.
- ✦ Under new norms on customer liability, the regulator said frauds due to third-party breach where neither the customer nor the PPI issuer is at fault, there cannot be any liability for the customer, in case the incident is reported within three days.
- ✦ If the fraud is reported between three and seven days, customer liability will amount to the transaction value or 10,000, whichever is lower.

3. RBI appoints Nandan Nilekani as chairman of panel on digital payments

- ✦ Panel to suggest measures to strengthen safety of digital payments ecosystem.
- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Nandan Nilekani, co-founder of Infosys, as the chairman of a five-member high-level committee that will work towards deepening digital payments in India.
- ✦ Besides, it will suggest measures to strengthen the safety and security of digital payments and provide a road map on how to increase customer confidence while accessing financial services through digital modes.

4. Nepal's central bank asked RBI to declare new Indian currency notes legal in a written plea

- ✦ Nepal has asked the RBI to declare newly circulated Indian currency notes of denominations higher than Rs 100 legal tender in the country.
- ✦ The Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the country's central monetary authority, has written a letter on Friday to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), asking it to make Indian bank bills Rs 200, Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 legal tender in Nepal.
- ✦ The RBI has only allowed the circulation of Indian currency notes of Rs 100 and less in Nepal and provides exchange facilities for bills of these denomination.

5. Sri Lanka's Central Bank gets \$400 million swap from RBI

- ✦ Sri Lanka's Central Bank said that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has agreed to provide USD 400 million under a swap arrangement to boost the island nation's reserves.
- ✦ The RBI has agreed to provide the funds under its SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Swap Facility.
- ✦ Central Bank Governor Indrajith Coomaraswamy last week said that the nearly two-month long political crisis had an adverse impact on the country's economy.

New Appointments & Person in News

1. KV Subramanian resigns from Bandhan Bank after appointment as CEA

- ✦ Bandhan Bank announced that Krishnamurthy V Subramanian has resigned as independent director from its board following his appointment as the chief economic advisor (CEA) to the government.
- ✦ On December 7, the government had appointed ISB Hyderabad professor Subramanian as the CEA for a period of three years.
- ✦ He replaced Arvind Subramanian, who resigned from the post in June 2018.

2. Vijay Mallya becomes first person to be declared a 'fugitive economic offender' under new law

- ✦ A special court in Mumbai declared absconding liquor baron Vijay Mallya a fugitive economic offender (FEO) on a plea of the Enforcement Directorate.

- ✦ Mallya has become the first businessman to be declared EFO under the provisions of the new Fugitive Economic Offenders Act which came into existence in August last year.
- ✦ A fugitive economic offender is offences involving amount of at least Rs 100 crore or more and has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution.any individual against whom warrants for arrest is issued for his involvement in select economic

3. Gita Gopinath joins IMF as its first female Chief Economist

- ✦ Prominent Indian-American economist Gita Gopinath has joined as the chief economist of the International Monetary Fund, becoming the first woman to occupy the top post at the global lender.
- ✦ Gopinath, 47, joined last week at a time, when she believes the world is experiencing a retreat from globalisation, posing challenges to multilateral institutions.
- ✦ The John Zwaanstra professor of International Studies and Economics at Harvard University, Gopinath, a US citizen, succeeds Maurice (Maury) Obstfeld as Economic Counsellor and Director of the IMF's Research Department. Obstfeld retired December 31.

Science Tech & Defence

1. MoU between Indian Army and PNB

- ✦ Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Indian Army and PNB on the Defence Salary Package.
- ✦ The signing ceremony was chaired by the Adjutant General, Lt Gen Ashwani Kumar and was attended by top dignitaries of PNB headed by Mr Naveen Kumar.
- ✦ A number of additional facilities have been incorporated in the MoU after concerted efforts. The Army hopes this MoU will benefit a large number of serving and retired Army personnel who have accounts with PNB and also provide them an opportunity to access modern banking facilities.

Important Days

1. World Hindi Day observed on 10 January

- ✦ World Hindi Day is celebrated on January 10 every year, marking the anniversary of first World Hindi Conference which was held in 1975. The first World Hindi Conference was inaugurated by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi.

- ✦ Since 1975, the World Hindi Conference has been organised in different countries like India, Mauritius, United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago, United States.
- ✦ World Hindi Day was first observed on January 10, 2006. Since then, it is celebrated on January 10 every year.

2. National Youth Day observed on 12 January

- ✦ National Youth Day is celebrated in all over the world on 12 January on the birthday of Swami Vivekananda.
- ✦ In 1984 the Government of India declared the day as the National Youth Day and since 1985 the event is celebrated in India every year.
- ✦ The National Youth Day is observed all over India at schools and colleges, with processions, speeches, recitations, music, youth conventions, seminars, Yogasanas, presentations, competitions in essay-writing, recitations and sports on 12 January every year.

Awards

1. Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards

- ✦ The Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards, the most prestigious annual event in the Indian media calendar, is a recognition of the highest standards of journalism.
- ✦ Home Minister Rajnath Singh Friday presented awards to 29 winners in 18 categories — across print, broadcast and purely-digital — for outstanding work done in 2017.
- ✦ The awards aim to celebrate excellence in journalism, recognise courage and commitment and showcase the outstanding contributions of journalists from across the country.

2. 6 professors take home Infosys Science Foundation awards

- ✦ The global software major's Infosys Science Foundation awarded its Infosys Prize 2018 to six winners, including two Indian Institute of Science (IISc) professors.
- ✦ The winners included IISc professor at its centre for Nano Science and Engineering Navakanta Bhat in Engineering and Computer Science, professor at IISc's Centre for Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences SK Satheesh in Physical Sciences.
- ✦ The annual prize aims to celebrate the success of the recipients in science and research by recognising their achievements in the six categories of Engineering and Computer Sciences, Humanities, Life Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Physical Sciences and Social Sciences.


Sports

1. Virat Kohli Leads India to First-Ever Test Series Win In Australia

- ✦ A dominant India won their first-ever Test series in Australia by a margin of 2-1 after play in the fourth and final Test in Sydney was abandoned due to rain.
- ✦ Australia were still trailing by 316 runs when the match was called off as a draw, ending India's 71-year wait after wins in Adelaide and Melbourne. It is the first time India managed the feat since they began touring Australia in 1947-48.
- ✦ Consequently, Virat Kohli became the first Indian as well as the first Asian captain to win a Test series in Australia.

2. Mohamed Salah once again named African Footballer of the Year

- ✦ Mohamed Salah has been named African Footballer of the Year for a second successive year.
- ✦ The Egypt forward edged the same two players last year in a vote decided by the technical directors and head coaches of 56 Caf member associations.
- ✦ Among other awardees, Houston Dash and South Africa forward Thembi Kgatlana was named Women's Player of the Year.

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