

Weekly Current Affairs

13 January – 19 January 2019

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National News

1. Naveen Patnaik launches scheme to distribute free LED bulbs in Odisha

- ✦ Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the 'Ama Ghare LED' scheme, under which about 95 lakh families in the state will each get four LED bulbs free of cost.
- ✦ Patnaik said the LED bulbs (9-watt each) will be distributed to the beneficiaries registered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and the State Food Security Scheme (SFSC).
- ✦ The beneficiaries will have to produce their bio-metric authentication in order to avail the benefits of the scheme.

2. Sikkim CM launches 'One Family, One Job' scheme

- ✦ Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Chamling launched 'One Family, One Job' scheme that envisions employment to a member of every family which does not have a government job in the state.
- ✦ He also declared that all loan debts in the farming and agriculture sector would be revoked.
- ✦ Chamling's Sikkim Democratic Front government earlier announced that 20,000 youths would immediately be given temporary jobs under the scheme.

3. PM Narendra Modi unveils slew of projects worth over Rs 1,550 cr in Odisha

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a slew of projects worth over Rs 1,550 crore for Odisha.
- ✦ He dedicated to the nation electrification of Jharsuguda- Vizianagaram and Sambalpur-Angul lines spanning 813 km completed at a cost of Rs 1,085 crore.
- ✦ A Multi-Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) at Jharsuguda, built at a cost of Rs 100 crore, was dedicated to the nation by the prime minister.

4. Pongal: legends behind the Harvest festival celebrated largely in Tamil Nadu

- ✦ Pongal is a three-day Hindu festival majorly celebrated in south India. It is celebrated in the winters when the sun reaches its southernmost point according to the Hindu calculations.
- ✦ The most popular legend associated with Pongal is that on the first day, which known as the Bhogi, Lord Krishna lifted Govardhan Mountain in his little finger, to protect cattle and people from Indira, the rain god.
- ✦ Pongal marks the beginning of the sun's northward journey towards the equinox, known as Uttarayan.

5. SC dismisses pleas of 5 states seeking modification of its order on DGPs

- ✦ The Supreme Court dismissed the pleas of five states seeking modification of its order issued last year on the selection and appointment of director generals of police (DGPs).

- ✦ The apex court was hearing applications of various state governments, including Punjab, Kerala, West Bengal, Haryana and Bihar, seeking implementation of their local laws regarding the selection and appointment of DGPs.
- ✦ The states and Union Territories are required to send names of senior police officers to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) for being considered as probable candidates for the post of DGPs or police commissioners (as per applicability).

6. President Ram Nath Kovind Inaugurates three day Gandhian Resurgence Summit at Parmarth Niketan camp at Prayagraj Kumbh

- ✦ President Ram Nath Kovind Inaugurated the three day Gandhian Resurgence Summit at Parmarth Niketan camp at the ongoing Prayagraj Kumbh today. About 300 Gandhians from different parts of the country and organisations are participating in the Summit.
- ✦ The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Shri Yogi Adityanath said that about 2 crore 25 lakhs devotees have taken holy dip during the two days Makar Sankranti bathing festival.
- ✦ Prayagraj Kumbh 2019 will be remembered for opening of doors to Akshaya Vat (sacred tree) and Saraswati Koop (sacred well) for common men after 450 years. It was a long pending demand of the devotees.

7. Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurates UNNATI-- Unispace Nanosatellite Assembly & Training programme of ISRO in Bengaluru

- ✦ Space Technology has been provided with more budgetary allocations during the last five years and now it is utilised in Infrastructure Developments like roads.
- ✦ The Minister said that application of Science & Technology has become more in our day activities. Space Technology in India has entered every household.
- ✦ The Minister appreciated the efforts of ISRO in launching various satellites and its space programmes, particularly Chandrayan Mission.

8. First human rights TV channel to 'lend voice to the voiceless'

- ✦ The world's first television channel dedicated to human rights was launched in London with a promise to deliver hidden stories ignored by mainstream media into people's living rooms.
- ✦ The International Observatory of Human Rights (IOHR) said its web-based channel would bring human rights issues to audiences in over 20 countries across Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.
- ✦ Initially the programmes would be in broadcasted in English but other languages including Farsi, Turkish, Arabic and Russian would be inducted in the future.

9. Reliance Retail, Jio to launch new e-commerce platform

- ✦ Reliance Retail, Jio to launch new e-commerce platform

- ✦ Reliance Industries Ltd Chairman and managing director Mukesh Ambani said group companies Reliance Retail and Reliance Jio Infocomm would jointly launch a new e-commerce platform in the country.
- ✦ The new e-commerce project would empower 1.2 million shopkeepers in Gujarat, Ambani said, adding the company was committed to making the western Indian state a fully digital one.
- ✦ The company's consolidated net profit of Rs 10,251 crore for October-December was 7.7% higher than the September quarter.

10. 2nd World Orange Festival begins in Nagpur

- ✦ The second World Orange Festival will be organised in Nagpur.
- ✦ The festival, while offering its famed oranges to the world, will also showcase and brand the exquisite fruit in order to boost its export.
- ✦ Agricultural experts and scientists from various countries will participate in the workshops and guide farmers.

11. India's largest startup ecosystem inaugurated in Kerala

- ✦ India got its largest startup ecosystem when Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated here a 1.8-lakh-square-foot facility housing incubation set-ups across a string of segments in modern technology.
- ✦ Overall the Kerala Government is working for the state to have a total area of 2.3 crore sq ft of IT space (up from 1.3 crore sq ft last year).
- ✦ The opening of the new complex at the Technology Innovation Zone (TIZ) is a major step towards achieving the objective .

12. Puducherry govt to ban single-use plastic products from March 1

- ✦ Chief Minister V Narayanasamy said that the cabinet has decided to ban production, sale and use of single-use plastic products in the Union Territory from March 1.
- ✦ He said a massive drive would also be launched to create awareness among the merchants and the public on the necessity of the ban.
- ✦ The neighbouring Tamil Nadu government had in June 2018 announced that it would ban the use of plastic items including non-biodegradable carry bags from January 1, 2019, to “gift a plastic-free state to future generations”.

13. Govt. to launch an end-to-end prediction system for predicting thunderstorms/lightning by April 2019

- ✦ Last year during the pre monsoon season a series of thunderstorm/dust storm affected the northern states and claimed about 200 lives. In view of this the India Meteorological Department will be implementing an end-to-end prediction system for predicting thunderstorms/lightning by April 2019.
- ✦ All these observatories are expected to be established by end of 2020. On the specific request from Kerala Government, IMD will be installing 100 new Automated Weather Stations including rain-gauges to monitor weather activities in the state.

- ✦ These new tools will help IMD to disseminate forecasts and warnings on time and more effectively to the users and the new website and mobile Apps will be ready for launch by June 2019.

International News & Foreign Affairs

1. India, US hold 2+2 Inter-Sessional meeting in New Delhi

- ✦ A 2+2 Inter-Sessional meeting between the United States and India took place, focusing on the progress of defence and foreign policy issues between the two countries.
- ✦ The Indian delegation was led jointly by Joint Secretary (AMS) from the Ministry of External Affairs Gourangalal Das, and Joint Secretary (PIC) from the Ministry of Defence, Shambhu S Kumaran.
- ✦ During meeting, both India and the US also exchanged views on regional developments as partners and stakeholders for a free, open, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

2. India to buy \$5 billion oil, gas from US & spend \$18 billion in defence

- ✦ India has committed to purchase USD 5 billion worth of oil and gas from the US per annum and USD 18 billion worth of defence equipment that are under implementation.
- ✦ At a reception hosted in his honour by the US-India Business Council (USIBC), Shringla said India has been sourcing and buying much more from the US than ever in the past.
- ✦ In the defense sector, India is looking at USD 18 billion worth of orders that are under implementation.

3. Mukesh Ambani, Jack Ma, Jeff Bezos in top '100 Global Thinkers' list of 2019

- ✦ Reliance Industries Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani has made it to the prestigious Foreign Policy magazine's 2019 list of '100 Global Thinkers'.
- ✦ The other names on the list, which will be fully released next week, include Alibaba's Jack Ma, Christine Lagarde, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Amazon's founder and CEO Jeff Bezos, and Bill and Melinda Gates.
- ✦ The other Indian-origin names on the latest list of thinkers include Fareed Zakaria, one of the most influential foreign-policy analysts and TV hosts for almost two decades, and author Amitav Ghosh.

Banking

1. Yes Bank appoints Brahm Dutt as non-executive part-time chairman

- ✦ Yes Bank, India's fourth-largest private sector bank, on Saturday announced the appointment of Brahm Dutt as non-executive part-time chairman.
- ✦ Brahm Dutt has been on Yes Bank's board since July 2013 as an independent director, and contributed to almost all the sub-committees of the board over the past five and a half years, it added.
- ✦ He is currently also the chairman of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee.

2. Reserve Bank slaps Rs 3 crore penalty on Citibank

- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs 3 crore on Citibank India for not complying with directions regarding the 'fit-and-proper criteria' for directors of the bank.
- ✦ The RBI in a statement, however, added that the action is based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers.
- ✦ The US-based Citibank has been operating in India for over 115 years. The bank has 35 branches in India and a network of 541 ATMs, according to the latest RBI data.

3. IDFC Bank re-named IDFC First Bank

- ✦ Private sector lender IDFC Bank said its name has been changed to IDFC First Bank Ltd with effect
- ✦ IDFC Bank and non-banking financial company Capital First had announced completion of their merger on December 18, creating a combined loan asset book of Rs 1.03 lakh crore for the merged entity.
- ✦ Following the merger, the board of IDFC Bank had approved the appointment of V Vaidyanathan, founder and chairman of Capital First Ltd, as managing director and chief executive officer of the merged entity.

4. Fin Min wants PSU banks to bring down govt equity to 52%

- ✦ In a bid to align with the best corporate practices, the Finance Ministry has asked the public sector banks to gradually bring down the government's equity to 52 per cent.
- ✦ The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has already initiated step for Rs 20,000 crore share sale through qualified institutional placement.
- ✦ A notification under the Securities Contracts Regulations (Amendment) Rules makes it mandatory for all listed entities to have a minimum public float of 25%.

5. Stage set for RBI rate cut as retail inflation falls to 2.19%

- ✦ India's retail inflation and wholesale inflation fell to multi-month lows in December amid signs of weakening economic recovery, creating wiggle room for the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) monetary policy committee to cut interest rates at its meeting on 7 February.
- ✦ Data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) showed consumer price index (CPI) based inflation at an 18-month low of 2.19% in December against 2.33% a month ago, as food prices continued to slide.
- ✦ Wholesale inflation (measured by WPI) softened to an eight-month low of 3.8% in December from 4.64% in November, 2018.

6. RBI sets new external commercial borrowings framework, lifts sectoral curbs

- ✦ The Reserve Bank came out with a new policy for overseas borrowings, allowing all eligible entities to raise foreign funding under the automatic route and removing sectoral curbs.
- ✦ All eligible borrowers can now raise External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) up to \$750 million or equivalent per financial year under the automatic route replacing the existing sector wise limits.
- ✦ The "liberalisation/rationalisation" in the new framework ECB and rupee-denominated bonds has been done to further improve the ease of doing business.

7. The Union Cabinet approved fund infusion in Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank).

- ✦ The government had provided for Rs 500 crore towards capital infusion in the Exim Bank in the budget for this fiscal.
- ✦ Established by the Government of India, Exim Bank commenced operations as a purveyor of export credit, mirroring global export credit agencies.
- ✦ This includes import of technology and export product development, export production, export marketing, pre-shipment and post-shipment and overseas investment.

New Appointments & Person in News

1. President appoints senior advocates Sanjay Jain, K M Nataraj as Additional Solicitor Generals

- ✦ President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed senior advocates Sanjay Jain and K M Nataraj as Additional Solicitor Generals of India for the Supreme Court.
- ✦ Additional Solicitor General, appointed under Law Officers Act 1987, is the third largest law officer of the Central Government. It is a duty of the Additional Solicitor General to assist the Solicitor General.
- ✦ Jain was appointed as ASG for the Delhi High Court in 2014 and had resigned from the post last year.

2. India coach Stephen Constantine resigns after Asian Cup exit

- ✦ India went down fighting against Bahrain in their last Group A match.
- ✦ The 56-year-old Constantine, who had earlier coached India from 2002 to 2005, was handed over reins of the team again in 2015.
- ✦ Englishman Stephen Constantine has resigned as India's head coach after they were knocked out of the AFC Asian Cup following a 1-0 defeat by Bahrain in Sharjah.

3. Kerala HC disqualifies LDF-backed Independent MLA Karat Razack for defaming rival leader

- ✦ The Kerala High Court disqualified Left-backed Independent MLA Karat Abdul Razack from the Koduvally Assembly constituency for his defamatory campaign against the IUML's M.A. Razack Master during the May 2016 Assembly polls.
- ✦ The HC found that he had indulged in a corrupt practice hence his election was declared void, as it was in violation of the Representation of People's Act.
- ✦ The disqualification was as per the provisions of the Representation of the Peoples Act 1951. The Representation of the Peoples act defines the corrupt practices for the disqualification of the elected representative.

4. Justice Asif Saeed Khosa takes oath as 26th Chief Justice of Pakistan

- ✦ Chief justice Khosa will serve as top judge for approximately 337 days and is scheduled to retire on Dec 21, 2019.
- ✦ The ceremony started with recitation from the Holy Quran after which notification of his appointment was read out.
- ✦ Prime Minister Imran Khan and other attendees congratulated Justice Khosa for assuming the office of Chief Justice of Pakistan.

5. Former chief statistician TCA Anant assumes charge as UPSC member

- ✦ Former chief statistician TCA Anant assumed charge as a member of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), which conducts the prestigious civil services examination to select the country's bureaucrats.
- ✦ Anant was appointed Chief Statistician of India-cum-Secretary, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, in June 2010 for five years.
- ✦ The commission has a strength of 10 members. After Anant's appointment, the commission still has one more vacancy of member.

6. TCS hires former Citigroup executive Daniel Houghes Callahan as independent director

- ✦ Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) hired former Citi executive Daniel Houghes Callahan, 62, as an additional and independent director for 5 years
- ✦ As chief administrative officer and head of Citigroup's technology, Callahan was member of Citi's operating committee until November 2018.

- ✦ Prior to joining Citi in 2007, Callahan held senior positions in AIBM Japan, Morgan Stanley, and Credit Suisse.

Science Tech & Defence

1. SpaceX launches 10 Iridium Communications Satellites

- ✦ A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carrying 10 Iridium Communications satellites has blasted off from California.
- ✦ SpaceX will try to land the Falcon's first stage on an autonomous vessel floating in the ocean.
- ✦ The payload is the eighth and final set of satellites to be launched as Iridium replaces its entire globe-circling fleet with next-generation orbiters. Deployment of the satellites is scheduled to be completed a little over an hour after liftoff.

2. SpaceX Dragon Returns to Earth After 2nd Space Station Delivery

- ✦ SpaceX's fourth Dragon capsule to make two trips to the International Space Station successfully returned to Earth overnight, with splashdown confirmed in the Pacific Ocean.
- ✦ The SpaceX-CRS-16 Dragon successfully delivered more than 2,500 kilograms (5,600 pounds) of cargo to the space station and orbited Earth for five weeks.
- ✦ The International Space Station is a habitable artificial satellite, in low Earth orbit.

3. Japan launches Epsilon-4 rocket with 7 satellites

- ✦ Japan successfully launched the Epsilon-4 rocket carrying seven satellites from the Uchinoura Space Center in Kagoshima.
- ✦ The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency or JAXA shouldered the cost of the launch, which adds up to roughly USD 50 million, to encourage space exploration by the private sector, reports NHK World.
- ✦ In fact, the largest satellite has been successfully placed in orbit shortly after take-off at an altitude of 514 kilometres.

Important Days

1. National Religious Freedom day Observed on 16 January

- ✦ National Religious Freedom Day commemorates the Virginia General Assembly's adoption of Thomas Jefferson's landmark Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom on January 16, 1786.

- ✦ In an age of hyper-partisanship, Religious Freedom Day offers all Americans — religious and nonreligious — an opportunity to celebrate and renew our commitment to
- ✦ safeguarding principles we have historically agreed on: religious liberty and conscience protection.
- ✦ The day marks the anniversary of the passage of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, which cut formal ties between the Church of England and the state of Virginia.

2. Army day observed on 15 January

- ✦ Army Day is celebrated on 15 January every year in India, in recognition of Field Marshal Kodandera M. Cariappa's (then a Lieutenant General) taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher
- ✦ It is in recognition of Field Marshal Kodandera M. Cariappa taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India, on 15 January 1949.
- ✦ Army Day is used to develop the art of encouragement in the people to fight for the country in the critical times.

Obituaries

1. Former Maharashtra Minister Shivajirao Deshmukh dies

- ✦ Veteran Congress leader and Maharashtra's former legislative council chairman Shivajirao Deshmukh passed away in Mumbai after a prolonged illness. He was 84.
- ✦ Deshmukh was first nominated to the state's legislative council in 1996.
- ✦ Before that, he was elected to the legislative assembly on four occasions. He was elected unopposed as the chairman of the legislative council three times.

Awards

1. Namita Gokhale wins Sushila Devi Literature Award

- ✦ Writer Namita Gokhale has won the Sushila Devi Literature Award for her novel "Things to Leave Behind".
- ✦ She was awarded in the 'Best Book of Fiction Written by a Woman Author' category at the inaugural edition of Bhopal Literature and Art Festival.
- ✦ The literature festival was inaugurated by the Union Tourism Minister, KJ Alphons, on January 12, at Bharat Bhawan the multi-cultural hub in Bhopal.

2. Detained Chinese lawyer Yu Wensheng wins Franco-German human rights award

- ✦ The French and German ambassadors to Beijing have granted a human rights award to a detained Chinese lawyer, with his wife picking up the prize on his behalf.
- ✦ Mr Yu Wensheng - best known for suing the Beijing government over the city's once chronic pollution - was detained in January last year and charged with "inciting subversion of state power".
- ✦ Beijing has stepped up its crackdown on civil society since President Xi Jinping took power in 2012, tightening restrictions on freedom of speech and detaining hundreds of activists and lawyers.

3. WHO Goodwill ambassador Yohei Sasakawa to get Gandhi Peace Prize for 2018

- ✦ Gandhi Peace Prize for 2018 will be conferred on Yohei Sasakawa who is Goodwill Ambassador of the World Health Organization for Leprosy Elimination.
- ✦ The award will be given to Mr Sasakawa in recognition of his work towards the eradication of the disease in India and across the world.
- ✦ Ekal Abhiyan Trust has been chosen for the award for the year 2017 while Akshaya Patra Foundation and Sulabh International will share the award for 2016. Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari bagged the award for 2015.
- ✦ As chairman of The Nippon Foundation, Japan's largest charitable foundation, he is seen as a pioneer in guiding public-interest activities by the private sector in modern Japan.

4. Vinesh Phogat first Indian to be nominated for Laureus World Sports Awards

- ✦ Asian Games gold medallist Vinesh Phogat has become the first Indian athlete to earn a nomination in one of the seven main categories of the Laureus Sports Awards
- ✦ She was nominated due to her comeback after battling a long injury lay-off to win a gold medal at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and Jakarta Asian Games.
- ✦ She had become the first Indian woman wrestler to win the yellow metal in wrestling at the continental meet.

5. PM Modi Wins First Ever Philip Kotler Presidential Award For "outstanding Leadership And Selfless Service".

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the first-ever Philip Kotler Presidential award, which focuses on the triple-bottom-line of 'people, profit and planet'. It is an award which is offered annually to the leader of the nation.
- ✦ Modi was selected for his "outstanding leadership and his selfless service towards India, combined with his tireless energy has resulted in extraordinary economic, social and technological advances in the country".
- ✦ The Philip Kotler Presidential Award is constituted to honour mastery in the field of marketing and management.

Sports

1. 8-year-old Kartik Singh becomes youngest to win Junior World title in golf

- ✦ Gurgaon's 8-year-old Kartik Singh has won the under-8 category at the Kids' Golf World Championship organised by US kids Golf in Malaysia, which makes him the youngest Indian to win the title.
- ✦ Kartik is well known all across DLF Golf and country club for his dedication and hard work.
- ✦ He started playing Golf three years ago, when he accompanied his father to a match and was spotted by the coaches there. He has the best hand-eye coordination.

2. Chennai's Gukesh crowned world's second youngest grand master

- ✦ Tamil Nadu lad D Gukesh became the second youngest Grand Master in the world and the youngest Indian to achieve the feat at 12 years, seven months and 17 days, erasing the mark set by his state-mate R Praggnanandhaa in June last year.
- ✦ He achieved his third and final GM norm at the ongoing 17th Delhi International Open Chess tournament in Delhi after beating compatriot D K Sharma in the ninth round. Gukesh becomes India's 59th Grand Master.
- ✦ Ukraine's Sergey Karjakin remains the youngest-ever GM, having achieved the feat at the age of 12 years and seven months in 2002.

3. Indian boxing's first CWG gold-medallist Mohammed Ali Qamar named women's chief coach

- ✦ Mohammed Ali Qamar, the man who won India's first Commonwealth Games gold medal in boxing, has taken over as chief coach for the country's women pugilists, becoming the youngest ever to get the top job.
- ✦ Ali Qamar, who turns 38 in a couple of months' time, was appointed to the position, replacing veteran Shiv Singh. Ali Qamar has been an assistant coach in the national camp for more than a year.
- ✦ Arjuna Awardee has helmed the Railways Sports Promotion Board's women's team for more than three years

4. Virat Kohli-led India become first team to win bilateral series across formats versus Australia Down Under

- ✦ Yuzvendra Chahal returned to ODIs with a bang as he bagged a career-best 6 for 42 to help India fold Australia for a score of just 230 runs in the series decider at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).
- ✦ It was India's first win in the format since 1947 that includes a total of 12 tours to the nation.
- ✦ The win also made India the first nation since South Africa in 2008/09 to win both the Test and ODI series on a tour of Australia.

5. Bengaluru Raptors win Premier Badminton League

- ✦ Bengaluru Raptors edged the Mumbai Rockets 4-3 to win their maiden Premier Badminton League title.
- ✦ World No. 18 Anders Antonsen lost narrowly to the Bengaluru skipper Srikanth when the two faced off in that battle at the beginning of this week.
- ✦ Bengaluru Raptors have become the fifth team after Chennai Smashers, Delhi Dashers, Hyderabad Hotshots and Hyderabad Hunters to win the title.



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