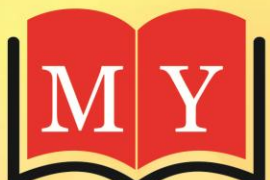


# Weekly Current Affairs

## 17 February – 23 February, 2019

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## National News

### 1. Tripura's first mega food park inaugurated in Agartala

- ✦ Tripura's first mega food park viz. Sikaria Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd was recently inaugurated at Village Tulakona in state capital Agartala.
- ✦ It is 18th of its kind food park in the country set up under Mega Food Park Scheme implemented by Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries.
- ✦ It will also provide direct and indirect employment to 5000 people in primary field of food processing, agriculture, agro processing and post-harvest agri infrastructure.

### 2. Dolphin Numbers Have Shrunk In Odisha, Reveals Census

- ✦ Odisha's recent annual census of dolphins in its waters have thrown up some shocking numbers, with the aquatic mammals' population declining from 469 in 2018 to 259 this year.
- ✦ The census was carried out by the state's forest and environment department on January 19 this year.
- ✦ A total of 16 Bottle Nose dolphins were seen in Odisha. Out of these, 2 were sighted in Balasore and 14 in Gahirmatha.

### 3. Union Home Minister to launch various women safety initiatives

- ✦ The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh will launch various initiatives for women safety.
- ✦ To provide effective deterrence against the offence of rape, the Government has enacted the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018.
- ✦ The Criminal Law Amendment in April 2018 prescribes stringent penal provisions including death penalty for rape of a girl below the age of 12 years.

### 4. Cabinet approves new company under Department of Space

- ✦ The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modigave its approval to the setting up of a new company under Department of Space (DoS) to commercially exploit the research and development work carried out by Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) Centers.
- ✦ The Cabinet also gave its nod to the Promulgation of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance, 2019.
- ✦ The areas and avenues provide opportunities for commercial exploitation of ISRO programmes include, small satellite technology transfer to industry, manufacture of small satellite launch vehicle (SLV) in collaboration with the private sector.

**5. NITI Aayog organises two -day National Workshop on Promoting Healthy Diets Through Local Food System**

- ✦ With an aim to improve nutritional choices and enhance dietary diversity of India, the NITI Aayog, organised a National Workshop on “Promoting Healthy Diets Through Local Food Systems” in New Delhi
- ✦ The workshop provided a platform to reach a common understanding of diet diversity problems in Aspirational Districts across India.
- ✦ Under the aegis of POSHAN Abhiyaan, promoting consumption and household/community production of locally available nutritionally rich food resources has been a priority concern.

**6. Modi flags off world's first diesel to electric converted locomotive**

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off an electric locomotive converted from a diesel engine at the Diesel Locomotives Works (DLW) in his constituency.
- ✦ In a first, the Indian Railways has converted a diesel locomotive into an electric one, as part of efforts to completely electrify the broad gauge network.
- ✦ In keeping with the Indian Railways' Mission 100 per cent electrification and de-carbonization agenda, DLW has developed a new prototype electric locomotive converted from diesel locomotive.

**7. Shri K.J. Alphons to inaugurate Eco Circuit Project**

- ✦ Shri K.J. Alphons, Union Minister for Tourism will be inaugurating the project 'Development of Eco Circuit'.
- ✦ Swadesh Darshan scheme is one of the flagship schemes of Ministry of Tourism for development of thematic circuits in the country
- ✦ The Ministry of Tourism recognizing the tourism potential of the State has sanctioned 7 projects in the State of Kerala under the Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD schemes for an approximate amount of Rs. 550 crores.

**8. Prabhu launches Swayatt on GeM to promote MSMEs, women and young entrepreneurs**

- ✦ Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu launched Swayatt, an initiative to promote MSMEs, women and young entrepreneurs through e-transactions on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM).
- ✦ The aim is to bring together the key stakeholders within the Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem to GeM, the national procurement portal.
- ✦ The initiative will also enable MSMEs to conduct market trials with government buyers, seek time-bound feedback, and gain realistic product-price comparisons and market valuation from potential buyers and investors.

**9. Tata Consultancy Services ranked as global Top Employer for the 3rd consecutive year**

- ✦ Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has been ranked by the Top Employers Institute as global Top Employer for the third year in a row.

- ✦ TCS has the most employee-friendly workplace policies, good work culture and has done large investments for the skill development of its 4.17 lakh employees globally.
- ✦ TCS also received the Continental Award for the Middle East, where the company was ranked number one in the region for 2018.

## **International News**

### **1. Argentina sign the framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance**

- ✦ Argentina became the 72nd country to sign the Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- ✦ Countries which have signed the agreement until now include India, France, Australia, UAE, UK, Japan amongst others. The agreement was opened for signature during the COP22 at Marrakech on November 15, 2016.
- ✦ The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a group of 121 solar resource-rich countries with headquarters in Gurugram, India.
- ✦ The organisation aims to deploy over 1,000 gigawatt of solar energy and mobilise more than USD 1,000 billion into solar power by 2030, according to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

### **2. NITI Aayog Delegation, Led By Amitabh Kant, Visits Saudi Arabia**

- ✦ Invest India Grid was launched in Saudi Arabia during the visit of a NITI Aayog delegation with 40 opportunities of investment, trade and business also identified during the visit.
- ✦ The delegation, led by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, comprised of leading Indian CEOs who took part in discussions with the Saudi Centre for International Strategic Partnerships.
- ✦ Invest India Grid was launched in Saudi Arabia during the workshop, which would be setting up a dedicated team for facilitating Saudi investments in India.

### **3. Astronomical Society of India gets first woman president**

- ✦ Dr G C Anupama, Senior Professor (Dean) from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru, became the first woman to be elected president of Astronomical Society of India (ASI), prime association of professional astronomers in the country.
- ✦ She is the India group head of an international team of scientists that is building a 30-metre telescope at a cost of over \$1 billion in Hawaii.
- ✦ She is the recipient of Sir CV Raman Young Scientist Award in 2001 and is a fellow of National Academy of Sciences.

### **4. India, Sri Lanka ink MoU to establish business centre for ICT incubators in Jaffna**

- ✦ India and Sri Lanka signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a business centre for ICT incubators in Jaffna through grant of 25 crore Sri Lankan rupees from India.
- ✦ The centre would provide opportunities and enhance the enabling environment for Information Communication Technology (ICT) and other professional services in the Northern region inhabited by minority Tamils.
- ✦ India's overall commitment of development assistance to Sri Lanka stands at a total of around 3 billion US\$, out of which 560 million US\$ is pure grant assistance.

### 5. Australian mammal becomes first to go extinct due to climate change

- ✦ A small brown rat which lived on a tiny island off northern Australia is the world's first mammal known to have become extinct due to "human-induced climate change.
- ✦ The mammal had not been seen for almost 10 years and was initially pronounced extinct after "exhaustive" conservation efforts failed.
- ✦ Critics of Australia's conservation efforts say the extinction of the melomys highlights the lack of resources for preserving wildlife.

## Banking

### 1. RBI imposes Rs 3.5 cr Penalty on 3 Public Sector Bank

- ✦ The Reserve Bank has imposed Rs 3.5 crore penalties on three public sector banks, including PNB and OBC, for violation of various banking norms.
- ✦ The monetary penalty on the banks has been imposed for non-compliance with various directions issued by the RBI on monitoring of end use of funds, exchange of information with other banks, and on restructuring of accounts.
- ✦ A penalty of Rs 1.5 crore has been imposed on Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) and Rs 1 crore each on Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Bank of India.

### 2. RBI board announced Rs 28,000 cr as interim dividend to govt

- ✦ The central board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved the transfer of Rs 28,000 crore as interim dividend to the government, a much-needed transfer against the backdrop of a tight fiscal situation.
- ✦ This is the second successive year that the Reserve Bank will be transferring an interim surplus.
- ✦ The government has budgeted Rs 74,140 crore from dividend/surplus of RBI, nationalized banks and financial institutions for 2018-19 and next year it expects it to go up to Rs 82,912 crore.

### 3. Vijaya Bank, Dena Bank merger with BoB to be effective from April 1

- ✦ State-owned Bank of Baroda's proposed merger with Dena and Vijaya Bank will be affected from April 1. The government's amalgamation plan for these state-owned banks has already got all the necessary approvals from the regulators concerned.
- ✦ As per the approved plan, after the commencement of the amalgamation scheme, the boards of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank will stand dissolved.
- ✦ The Bank of Baroda board in a recent meeting also decided to issue and allot equity shares to Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank on March 11.

## New Appointments & Person in News

### 1. PepsiCo's Kurkure signs Taapsee Pannu as brand ambassador

- ✦ Kurkure has also launched a television campaign to celebrate the progressive thinking of young homemakers
- ✦ Taapsee Pannu, who endorses 10 brands, signed five big contracts in 2018
- ✦ The announcement is strategically timed as Kurkure embarks on a new journey with its new positioning – 'Khayal toh Chatpata hai'.

### 2. Hina Jaiswal becomes India's first woman flight engineer inducted by IAF

- ✦ Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal became the first Indian Woman Flight Engineer of the Indian Air Force.
- ✦ Hina completed the six-month flight engineer course from the 112 Helicopter Unit attached to the Air Force Station in Yelahanka in Bengaluru.
- ✦ Earlier restricted to men, the flight engineer branch was opened to women officers in 2018.

### 3. Puma signs India's Mary Kom as women's training ambassador

- ✦ World amateur boxing champion M.C. Mary Kom has signed a two-year deal with Puma to be their ambassador for women's training in India.
- ✦ Kom, a bronze medallist at the 2012 Olympics, won her record sixth gold medal at the World Amateur Boxing Championships in November last year.
- ✦ Puma India's managing director Abhishek Ganguly hoped the partnership would inspire women across India.

### 4. Depinder Singh Ahuja is chief of staff of Southern Command

- ✦ Lieutenant General Depinder Singh Ahuja took charge as chief of staff of headquarters Southern Command.
- ✦ He is an alumni of the National Defence Academy and was commissioned into the Bengal Sappers in December 1981.

- ✦ He has held several important regimental, staff and instructional appointments in his 37-year career. Lt Gen S K Saini is the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) of the Army Southern Command in Pune.

#### **5. Naspers appoints Reliance Jio payment head Anirban Mukherjee as CEO of PayU India.**

- ✦ Naspers-owned PayU announced the appointment of Anirban Mukherjee as Chief Executive Officer of PayU India.
- ✦ Anirban will be taking over from Amrisha Rau, who is moving on to a bigger global role with Naspers' fintech practice, as its Head of financial technology partnerships and investments.
- ✦ Amrisha was one of the founders of CitrusPay, which was acquired by Naspers-backed PayU in 2016.

#### **6. Supreme Court appoints former judge Justice DK Jain as ombudsman for BCCI**

- ✦ The Supreme Court has appointed former apex court judge Justice DK Jain as the first court-appointed ombudsman for the BCCI.
- ✦ The role of the ombudsman would be to resolve the disputes relating to the players within the state cricket associations as also financial issues.
- ✦ The ombudsman will be resolving any issue that comes with regards to the players, as also financial issues.

#### **7. Kareena Kapoor launches Swasth Immunised India campaign, addresses the importance of vaccination**

- ✦ Kareena Kapoor launched the Swasth Immunised India Campaign. Kareena was conferred with Brand Ambassador of Swasth Immunised India earlier in February.
- ✦ The Swasth Immunised India campaign aims to build a robust campaign aimed at spreading awareness on the importance and benefits of immunisation among the masses.
- ✦

## **Science Tech & Defence**

#### **1. Air Force Jets, Helicopters Destroy Targets In Mega Exercise In Rajasthan**

- ✦ The Air Force carried out a mega exercise involving 140 fighter jets and attack helicopters, in a firepower demonstration close to the border with Pakistan that came two days after the Pulwama attack.
- ✦ Top Air Force sources said though the Vayu Shakti was planned in advance, the drill was a demonstration of the force's capability to hit targets with "pinpoint accuracy" and carry out missions at short notice.
- ✦ In the Vayu Shakti exercise, the IAF showcased firepower capability of indigenously-developed platforms like Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas,

Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and efficacy of Akash surface-to-air missile and Astra air-to-air missile.

## 2. Karnataka Inaugurated India's First Agromet Forecast Centre

- ✦ Union Minister for Science & Technology, EarthDr Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated the North Karnataka Agromet Forecasting and Research Centre (NKAFC), India's first agreement forecast centre, at University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Dharwad, Karnataka.
- ✦ The main objective of the centre is to give accurate reports on the weather which would enable the farmers to protect the crops and get a good yield.
- ✦ The centre has been established by the union ministry of earth sciences and the India Metrological Department, in association with the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS).

## 3. Infosys launches learning app 'InfyTQ' for engineering students

- ✦ Indian IT major Infosys has announced the launch of InfyTQ, a next-generation digital platform to offer the best learning and engagement experiences for engineering students in India.
- ✦ InfyTQ is a free platform open to all engineering students in their third and fourth year across India.
- ✦ The learning courses on the app will be centered around conceptual and practical aspects of technology to help students receive a thorough understanding of the fundamental building blocks.

## 4. Iran Launches New 'Fateh' Submarine, Capable Of Firing Cruise Missiles

- ✦ Iran launched a new locally-made submarine capable of firing cruise missiles, in the country's latest show of military might at a time of heightened tensions with the US.
- ✦ The launch ceremony, led by President Hassan Rouhani, took place in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas.
- ✦ The underwater-vessel weighs nearly 600 tonnes and is equipped with torpedoes and naval mines in addition to cruise missiles.

## 5. India's first fulldome 3D Digital theatre inaugurated by Culture Minister

- ✦ India's first 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science City was inaugurated by Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma.
- ✦ The 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science city was the first of its kind in India having a 23 metre titled dome to offer a fully immersive experience to the visitors.
- ✦ The new system is capable of screening high resolution, full dome, and digital 2D/3D content by utilising six, high-end projectors in a 23-meter diameter dome using Ulteria Seam technology.

## 6. BEL Launches Atmospheric Water Generator safe Drinking Water, Straight From the Air



- ✦ Navratna Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) has unveiled its new product, the Atmospheric Water Generator (AWG), an innovative solution to meet the ever-increasing need for drinking water worldwide,
- ✦ BEL's Atmospheric Water Generator employs a novel technology to extract water from the humidity present in the atmosphere and purify it.
- ✦ The Atmospheric Water Generator is being manufactured by BEL in collaboration with CSIR-IICT and MAITHRI, a start-up company based in Hyderabad.

### 7. Israel's First Lunar Lander Launched Into Space From Florida

- ✦ A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket blasted off from Florida, carrying Israel's first lunar lander on a mission that if successful, will make the Jewish state only the fourth nation to achieve a controlled touchdown on the moon's surface.
- ✦ With this, Israel will become the 4th country after Russia, USA and China to carry out a 384,000km journey and land a spacecraft on the Moon.
- ✦ The rocket's two other payloads were a telecommunications satellite for Indonesia and an experimental satellite for the US Air Force.

## Important days

### 1. World Day of Social Justice observed on 20 February

- ✦ Social Equality Justice day is a day recognizing the need to promote efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, exclusion and unemployment.
- ✦ "If You Want Peace & Development, Work for Social Justice" is the theme for the World Day of Social Justice 2019.
- ✦ It highlights how deeply social order and growth is dependent on achieving social justice.

### 2. World Thinking Day observed on 22 February

- ✦ World Thinking Day, formerly Thinking Day, is celebrated annually on 22 February.
- ✦ The day is celebrated to appreciate the help and guidance of brothers and sisters around the world.
- ✦ The day is significant as it was the birthday of Scouting and Guiding founder Lord Robert Baden-Powell and of Lady Olave Baden-Powell, his wife and World Chief Guide.

## Awards

**1. Sunil Chhetri receives 'Football Ratna' award**

- ✦ Star Indian striker Sunil Chhetri was awarded the first-ever 'Football Ratna' by Football Delhi, the State Association governing the sport in the national capital.
- ✦ Delhi Football president of Shaji Prabhakaran presented the honour at a function which was held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.
- ✦ Shubham Sarangi, youth player from Delhi who is currently the player of Delhi Dynamos team for Indian Super League (ISL), was also honoured by Football Delhi on this occasion.

## **Books & Authors**

**1. Governor of West Bengal, H.E. Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi Launches Book Dedicated to Swami Pragyananandji at the Kumbh Mela**

- ✦ Famous Industrialist and Philanthropist Mr. Dinesh Shahra's book, 'Simplicity & Wisdom' was launched at Parmarth Ashram in Kumbh Mela.
- ✦ The book is dedicated to Late eminent Vedanti Swami Pragananandji. The book was formally launched by 'His Excellency' Keshari Nath Tripathi Governor of West Bengal, and Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Head of Parmarth Ashram.
- ✦ This book is primarily aimed at offering saintly wisdom and guidance to lead a content and happy life.

**2. Banned Punjabi poem on Jallianwala massacre to be published in English after 99 years**

- ✦ A poem on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre by acclaimed Punjabi writer Nanak Singh, which was banned by the British after its publication in 1920, has now been translated into English.
- ✦ It will be published by Harper Collins India next month to mark the centenary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
- ✦ The poem narrates the political events in the run-up to the massacre and its immediate aftermath.

## **Sports**

**1. Badminton Nationals: Saina Nehwal defeats PV Sindhu to clinch women's singles title**

- ✦ Saina Nehwal maintained her stranglehold on PV Sindhu as she clinched her second successive and overall fourth senior national badminton title.

- ✦ The defending champion defeated the world No 6 by 21-18, 21-15 to carve her name on the championship for the fourth time.
- ✦ Nehwal, who had beaten Sindhu in the last edition's final in Nagpur and then twice more, including the Commonwealth Games summit clash, was in control throughout the 44-minute encounter that failed to keep the spectators at the edge of their seats.

## 2. Chris Gayle to retire from ODIs after ICC World Cup 2019

- ✦ West Indies batsman Chris Gayle announced that he will retire from ODI format after the 2019 World Cup.
- ✦ Gayle will continue to play on the T20 franchise circuit and hopes to be picked for The Hundred, England Cricket Board's new competition, when it begins in 2020.
- ✦ He had the first ever World Cup double century against Zimbabwe 4 years ago. Gayle hit 231 ODI centuries in his career.

## 3. Jharkhand-based NGO Yuwa Wins Laureus Sport for Good Honour

- ✦ Yuwa, a Jharkhand-based NGO which works for girl empowerment, won the Laureus Sport for Good award, becoming the third Indian entry to bag the honour.
- ✦ The NGO, founded by Americans Franz Gastler and Rose Thomson Gastler in 2009, runs a football program in rural Jharkhand covering 450 girls.
- ✦ The girls are amateurs and, those who have been around for long, have become coaches.

## 4. Vidarbha Clinches Irani Cup title

- ✦ Ranji champions Vidarbha clinched the Irani cup defeating Rest of India at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium.
- ✦ Vidarbha had scored 425 in their first innings in reply to rest of India's 330 .

## 5. Squash Queen Nicol David to Retire at End of Season

- ✦ Eight-time world champion Nicol David has announced she will retire at the end of the 2018-19 squash season.
- ✦ The 35-year-old is the most successful woman squash player of all time and spent an unprecedented nine years as world number one between 2006-2015.
- ✦ David, has also won five British Open titles, two Commonwealth Games gold medals, five Asian Games gold medals and three World Games gold medals in a glittering career spanning two decades.

## Obituaries

### 1. Badge of honor military novelist WEB Griffin passes away

- ✦ American military veteran and novelist, William E. Butterworth III, better known as W.E.B. Griffin (his pen name), passed away at the age of 89.
- ✦ He joined the army at the age of 17 and has served in the Korean War.
- ✦ He wrote more than 200 books under the pen name W.E.B. Griffin and various other names and sold millions of copies. His most popular series include “Badge of Honor,” “Clandestine Operations” and “Presidential Agent.”



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