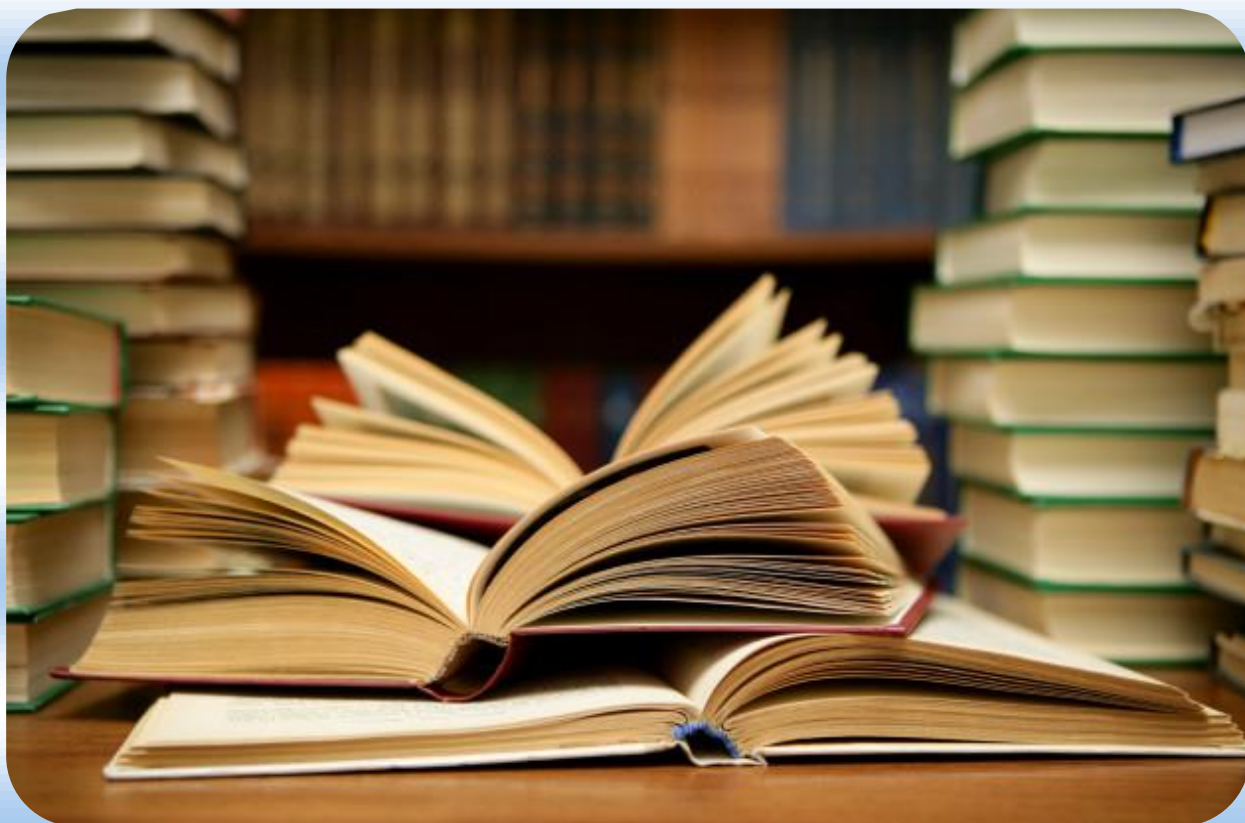


## LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA

### GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



## FEBRUARY-2020

# NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## ***Budget 2020: 99,300 crores and 3,000 crores allocated for Education and Skill Development***

The Centre will soon announce a new education policy and the government has received over 2 lakh suggestions on it, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday. Presenting the Budget for 2020-21, Sitharaman said Rs 99,300 crore has been allocated for the education sector and Rs 3,000 crore for skill development for the next fiscal. Steps will be taken to attract external commercial borrowing and FDI in the education sector, the finance minister said. She further said the government plans to start a programme for urban local bodies to provide opportunities for internship.

## ***Amazon invests 1.5 billion USD for two Data Centres under Data Centre Policy of Telangana***

HYDERABAD: In what is being seen as a massive investment by Amazon in Telangana, the tech giant has sought environmental clearance for the construction of two data centres at a cost of Rs 11,624 crore (\$1.6 billion). The data centres are expected to come up at two locations on the outskirts of Hyderabad in Ranga Reddy district. More than 90 per cent of the investment would go towards the high-end computer and storage equipment that would be housed at these two data centres.

## ***RBI Syncs Financial Year with the Fiscal Year***

Reserve Bank of India governor Shaktikanta Das on Saturday hinted that the central board of RBI may soon decide on aligning its accounting year with the fiscal year of the government. "We are examining that. It is under consideration. You will very shortly hear on that from RBI," Das told reporters after a customary post-Budget interaction with finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and other finance ministry officials. As of now, the RBI's accounting year runs from July to June while the government follows the April-March fiscal year.

## ***US removed "Developing" Tag for India: What are its implications?***

On February 10, the U.S. removed more than a dozen countries, including India, from its list of countries that are classified as "developing" for trade purposes. These countries will now be classified instead as "developed" economies, thus stripping them of various trade benefits. The move, which comes just ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump's visit to India later this month, has led to doubts over the chances of a trade deal being signed between India and the United States. What is the "developing country" status?

### ***Temperature controlled largest Terminal to store Agro and Pharma Products launched at Mumbai airport***

Mumbai airport, run by a joint venture between Airports Authority of India and GVK, on Friday announced the launch of an exclusive terminal for processing and storage of agro and pharma products. Touted as the world's largest airport-based temperature-controlled facility, the 'Export Cold Zone' can hold over 700 tonnes of such cargo at one time with a combined annual capacity of 5.25 lakh tonnes, Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) said in a release.



### ***Artificial Intelligence based Chatbot ASKDISHA launched by the Railways***

In the months of October 2018, IRCTC had launched 'Ask Disha' as a passenger-friendly digital service on the official website [irctc.co.in](http://irctc.co.in). The chatbot service is a platform where users can ask train ticket queries IRCTC's Ask Disha chatbot in Hindi! Now, chat with your favourite chat bot 'Ask Disha' in Hindi! The e-ticketing arm of Indian Railways, Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), had earlier introduced the chatbot services of the artificial intelligence based 'Ask Disha' in the English language.

### ***DPIIT notifies 100% Foreign Direct Investment in Insurance Intermediaries***

DPIIT notifies policy to allow 100% FDI in insurance intermediaries The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on Tuesday amended the Consolidated Foreign Direct Investment Policy 2017 (FDI Policy) to allow 100 per cent FDI in insurance intermediaries through the automatic route. This includes insurance brokers, reinsurance brokers, insurance consultants, corporate agents, third-party administrators, and surveyors and loss assessors.

### ***EASE 3.0 launched by the Finance Minister to enhance Ease of Banking***

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman directed public sector banks to rekindle the "personal touch" while dealing with customers at branch level. Speaking at an event by Indian Bank Association (IBA) to launch EASE 3.0, Sitharaman said the PSU banks should improve branch-level connect with their clientele. The Finance Minister said that staff at bank branches should speak local languages.

### ***Delhi Airport: The First Single-use Plastic-free airport***

New Delhi: GMR-led Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) said on Monday that Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport has become free of single-use plastic usage. The Confederation of Indian Industry-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development (CII-ITC CESD) that supports the business community towards achieving sustainability has certified DIAL for its successful voluntary implementation of single-use plastic-free airport measures within IGI Airport's operations.

### ***GISAT 1: New Age Satellite to monitor India continuously to be launched on March 5***

NEW DELHI: Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) is set to launch a new-age geo-imaging satellite Gisat-1 from Sriharikota on March 5 with the capability to perform real-time and constant watch of the Indian subcontinent. GSLV-F10 rocket will launch Gisat-1 from the second launchpad at 5.43 pm, subject to weather conditions. Weighing 2,275 kg, Gisat-1 is a state-of-the-art agile earth observation satellite that will be placed in a geosynchronous transfer orbit at 36,000km altitude.

### ***Gol approves two AIIMS institutes and 9 medical colleges for Jammu and Kashmir***

Jammu: Union Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh on Thursday performed "bhoomi poojan" ceremony of AIIMS building here. Speaking on the occasion, Singh said that Jammu and Kashmir has been allocated two AIIMS - one in Jammu and other in Kashmir. According to an official press release, Singh said that nine medical colleges have also been sanctioned in Jammu and Kashmir in addition to the two AIIMS.

### ***Mission Purvodaya: India-Japan join hands to make Odisha a Steel Hub***

Bhubaneswar: Minister of petroleum and natural gas and steel Dharmendra Pradhan has said that with Japan as the partner country, he is looking forward to making Odisha, the nerve centre of Purvodaya in steel sector. It has participated in the workshop on "Enabling Procedures for Increase of Steel Usage for the Growth of Economy" in Bhubaneswar. This workshop on "Enabling Procedures for Increase of Steel Usage for the Growth of Economy".

### ***PM Modi launches 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday effected a country-wide launch in Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisations, aimed at providing small farmers a platform to collectively tackle their challenges right from accessing various agricultural inputs to marketing their produce. These FPOs will turn farmers into businessmen, said Prime Minister Modi after effecting the launch of the novel cooperative platforms for farmers, 86 percent of which fall into small and marginal category.



### ***Udyanotsav inaugurated by the President at Rashtrapati Bhavan***

President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday inaugurated the annual Udyanotsav of the Mughal Gardens of Rashtrapati Bhavan. The President was accompanied by his wife Savita Kovind. The 15-acre gardens will be open for the public from February 5 to March 8, 2020 between 10 am to 4 pm. The visit can also be booked online on the President of India's website. The Gardens will remain closed on Mondays for maintenance, according to a press statement from Rashtrapati Bhavan. As in previous years, a small beautified cactus corner.

### ***Pink City-Jaipur receives World Heritage Certificate from UNESCO***

Jaipur as World Heritage City in News: Director-General of UNESCO Audrey Azoulay presented the 'World Heritage City' certificate to the Pink City – Jaipur on February 05, 2020. Minister of Urban Development Shanti Dhariwal received this award in a ceremony held at Albert Hall.



### ***After English and Mandarin, Hindi-the third most spoken language in the world***

Hindi is the 3rd most spoken language of the world in 2019 with 615 million speakers. The 22nd edition of the world language database Ethnologue stated English at the top of the list with 1,132 million speakers. Chinese Mandarin is at the second position with 1,117 million speakers. Bangla has been ranked as the 7th most spoken language of the world. Bangla has 228 million native speakers. Ethnologue brings out an yearly database of living languages of the world since its establishment in 1951.

### ***Intellectual Property Index: India ranks 40th***

India's slipped to 40th position on the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, which analyses the IP climate in 53 global economies, this year, according to a report of US Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center. Last year India was ranked at 36th position out of 50 countries. The US, the UK, Sweden, France and Germany remained the top five economies on the intellectual property index in 2019 retaining their spots from the last year. "Since the release of the 2016 National IPR Policy.

### ***Public Enterprises Survey: Air India, MTNL, BSNL highest loss making PSUs in FY19***

ONGC, Indian Oil Corporation and NTPC were the top three profitable PSUs in 2018-19, whereas BSNL, Air India and MTNL incurred highest losses for a third consecutive year, according to a survey tabled in Parliament on Monday. The Public Enterprises Survey 2018-19, which maps the annual financial performance of all central PSUs, revealed that the top 10 companies in the red claimed a whopping 94.04 per cent of the total losses made by all the 70 loss making CPSEs during the year.

### ***IISc ranked 16th in Times Higher Education Ranking***

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has ranked 16th among the top 100 universities of emerging economies. Indian universities had a good performance year within the emerging economies of the world as a record 11 made it to the top 100 Times Higher Education's (THE) Emerging Economies University Rankings 2020. Only China has more universities than India in the top 100 at 30 from a total of 47 countries and territories included in the analysis released in London on Tuesday evening.

### ***India ranks 77 on sustainability index and 131 on Flourishing Index***

India ranked 77th on a sustainability index that takes into account per capita carbon emissions and ability of children in a nation to live healthy lives and secures 131st spot on a flourishing ranking that measures the best chance at survival and well-being for children, according to a UN-backed report. The report was released on Wednesday by a commission of over 40 child and adolescent health experts from around the world.



### ***Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) tops in Nature Ranking Index-2020***

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has been ranked first in the Nature Ranking Index-2020. The rankings are based on total research output which the institutions have carried out from December 01, 2018 to 30th November, 2019. Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, has been ranked second. CSIR-New Delhi has achieved the top position with 142 counts (C) and a share percentage (SP) of 87.74 while IISc-Bengaluru stands second with 211 counts and 83.61 in share percentage.

### ***World Wide Education for the Future Index: India jumps to rank 35***

India jumped five ranks in the Worldwide Educating for the Future Index (WEFFI) 2019, as per a report published by The Economist Intelligence Unit. The index ranks countries based on their abilities to equip students with skill-based education. The report analyses education system from the perspective of skill-based education “in areas such as critical thinking, problem-solving, leadership, collaboration, creativity and entrepreneurship, as well as digital and technical skills.”

### ***Rakhi Halder wins gold medal at the Women’s National Weightlifting Championship***

Seasoned lifter Rakhi Halder clinched the 64kg category title in the 72nd Men’s and 35th Senior Womens’ National Weightlifting Championships at the Khudiram Anushilan Kendra here on Wednesday. Ranked 19th in the Olympic qualifiers list, Rakhi lifted 93 kg in snatch and 117 kg in clean and jerk to win the gold medal with total of 210kg. The Bengal lifter’s personal best is 218 kg (95kg in snatch and 123 kg in clean and jerk) which she scored at the Qatar International Cup last year where she bagged the bronze medal.

### ***Kaamya Karthikeyan: Mumbai Girl becomes the youngest to climb Mt Aconcagua***

A 12-year old Mumbai student, Kaamya Karthikeyan has set a record of becoming the youngest in the world to summit Mt. Aconcagua, the highest peak of the Andes Mountains in Argentina, South America, an official said here on Sunday.



### ***Under-19 Cricket World Cup 2020 won by Bangladesh for the first time***

What does it takes to make champions? Talent, hard work, luck, or maybe a bit of everything. But for any sports team from a country like Bangladesh, the most important thing is conviction. The belief and never-say-die attitude helped the under-19 cricket team finally lift the first ever global-scale trophy for Bangladesh. The win is like the word “Shazam!” that turned Billy Batson into Captain Marvel; it is like the fairy godmother’s touch that transformed Cinderella into a princess to join the grand ball.

# INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## ***National Emergency Declared in Pakistan to fight against Locusts in the border***

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan, which is facing its worst locust attack in decades, has declared national emergency to tackle the insects destroying crops on a large scale in Punjab province, country's main region for agricultural production. The decision was taken at a meeting convened by Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday.



## ***New Natural Gas Reserves discovered in UAE***

Abu Dhabi: The United Arab Emirates, a leading OPEC producer, announced Monday the discovery of huge gas reserves, saying the find would help the Gulf state achieve self-sufficiency. Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (ADNOC) said about 80 trillion cubic feet (2.2 trillion cubic metre) of shallow gas resources were discovered between the emirates of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the largest of the seven-member UAE. "This new discovery reinforces the nation's goal of achieving gas self-sufficiency, enabling major development projects.

## ***US President Donald Trump acquitted at the Senate***

The Senate, run by the president's fellow Republicans, voted to acquit him 52-48 on charges of abuse of power and 53-47 on obstruction of Congress. Democrats charged Mr Trump in December with pressuring Ukraine to smear a potential White House rival. He will now become the first impeached president to seek re-election. Impeachment allows Congress - the part of the US government that writes and brings in laws - to put presidents on trial. It is a rare event and a political process, rather than a criminal one.



### ***Pangolin identified as the host of Corona Virus in China***

In the search for the animal source or sources of the coronavirus epidemic in China, the latest candidate is the pangolin, an endangered, scaly, ant-eating mammal that is imported in huge numbers to Chinese markets for food and medicine. The market in pangolins is so large that they are said to be the most trafficked mammals on the planet.



### ***WHO names the new Corona Virus: "COVID-19"***

"We now have a name for the disease and it's Covid-19," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters in Geneva. It comes after the death toll from the virus passed 1,000. Tens of thousands of people have been infected. Dr Ghebreyesus called on the world to fight the new virus as aggressively as possible. The word coronavirus refers to the group of viruses it belongs to, rather than the latest strain. The virus itself has been designated SARS-CoV-2 by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses.

### ***India to partially open up Poultry and Dairy Markets to imports from US***

India has offered to partially open up its poultry and dairy markets in a bid for a limited trade deal during US President Donald Trump's first official visit to the country this month, people familiar with the protracted talks say. India, the world's largest milk-producing nation, has traditionally restricted dairy imports to protect the livelihoods of 80 million rural households involved in the industry. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to pull all the stops for the US president's Feb.

### ***Portugal President to make a 4-day visit to India***

Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa will pay a four-day state visit to India from January 13, the Ministry of External Affairs announced on Thursday. Marcelo Rebelo is visiting the country on the invitation of his Indian counterpart President Ram Nath Kovind. He will be accompanied by a high-level delegation, MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said at his weekly press briefing. This will be Marcelo Rebelo's first visit to India. The last visit by a Portugal President to India was in 2007.

### ***Task Force Meet: India and Norway to strengthen their Blue Economy Partnership***

Ministry of Earth Science said in a latest update that India and Norway have decided to strengthen partnership on blue economy. India's Minister for Earth Sciences, Harsh Vardhan, and Norway's Minister for Climate and Environment, Sveinung Rotevatn, opened the India-Norway Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development. The two countries also commenced a new collaboration on Integrated Ocean Management & Research. As a part of the Joint Initiatives.

### ***President Trump visit to India***

The optics of the trip were crucial both for him and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Mr Trump wanted to show people in the US that he was hugely popular abroad and that he was capable of negotiating good deals out of a country he once described as the "king of tariffs".



### ***Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad resigns***

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad abruptly submitted his resignation to the king on Monday and his party exited the ruling coalition, throwing the Southeast Asian nation into fresh turmoil after infighting over his successor came to a head. The statement from his office contained no other details. His party, Bersatu, said it would continue to support Mahathir as prime minister. Another group of lawmakers in the party of Anwar Ibrahim, who was in line to succeed Mahathir, said it was forming an independent bloc of 11 lawmakers.

### ***Sri Lanka withdraws from UNHRC Resolution***

Sri Lanka on Wednesday formally notified the UN Human Right Council that it was withdrawing from the UN resolution on post-war accountability and reconciliation. "I wish to place on record, Sri Lanka's decision to withdraw from co-sponsorship of Resolution 40/1 on Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka," Minister of Foreign Relations Dinesh Gunawardena said in Geneva. All the same, Sri Lanka was "committed" to achieving "sustainable peace and reconciliation."

### ***Myanmar President Visits India: India-Myanmar sign 10 MoUs***

India and Myanmar signed on Thursday 10 agreements with a focus on the socio-economic development of the southeast Asian nation as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held wide-ranging talks with Myanmar President U. Win Myint. The Myanmar president, who arrived in India on Wednesday, received a ceremonial welcome at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. He and First Lady Daw Cho Cho were welcomed by President Ram Nath Kovind and Narendra Modi.

### ***30 Years Egypt Ruler Mohammed Hosni Mubarak passes away***

Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's autocratic former president who ruled with an iron fist for three decades before being toppled during the Arab spring protests in 2011, has died aged 91. Mubarak became a symbol of thuggish and brutal authority after taking power in 1981 following the assassination of Anwar Sadat. His reign was marked by the emergence of a paranoid and cruel police state supported by a network of sprawling military businesses and corrupt crony businessmen. Many Egyptians see echoes of Mubarak's style of leadership in their current leader, the former general Abdel Fatah al-Sisi

### ***Mohammed Allawi appointed the PM of Iraq amidst Tishreen Revolution in the country***

Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi, a former communications minister, was appointed by President Barham Salih. His predecessor Adel Abdul Mahdi resigned in November, amid mass anti-government demonstrations. Hundreds of protesters have been killed. Mr Allawi now has a month to form a new government, which he will lead until early elections. He immediately expressed support for the protests. Earlier this week, local media reported that President Saleh had given parliament an ultimatum to decide on a new prime minister before he took the decision himself, after previous candidates were rejected by protesters.

