

**JANUARY 06, 2019**

**INDIAN AFFAIRS**

### **Government launches nationwide cleanliness survey 'Swachh Survekshan 2019'**

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019, The Minister of state (I/C), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, **Hardeep S Puri** launched the fourth edition of annual cleanliness of Urban India known as "**Swachh survekshan 2019**",

#### **Key Points**

- i. The Survey will be conducted across **4237 towns and cities** between **4<sup>th</sup> January to 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019** by independent third party.
- ii. The survey is completely paperless and digital and will be completed in a record time of 28 days. For the first time the survey will be conducted without giving any prior information.
- iii. Data will be collected from 4 broad sources which are Service Level Progress, Direct Observation, Citizens feedback and Certification.
- iv. **MoHUA** has introduced an important component of Certification (Star Rating of the Garbage Free cities and open defecation free Protocols) on two different aspects:

- The cities would be evaluated on the basis of the star rating achieved by them as per the protocol of MoHUA will has 12 parameters.
- 5% weightage has been allotted in the swachh Survekshan to Open Defecation Free (ODF) Certification.

v. The Survey will contain 5000 marks in Swachh Survekshan 2019 as compared to 4000 marks of Swachh Survekshan 2018.

vi. 7 cities which are Indore, Ujjain, Khargone, Shahganj, Rajnandgaon, Ambikapur and Bhilai have been already given ODF++ certification and 35 cities have been given ODF+.

vii. Mysuru and Indore had been ranked as the No. 1 city in Swachh Survekshan 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively.

### **4677 PMBJP Kendras functional in 35 States/UTs of the country by end of year 2018: MoS Road Ministry**

On January 4, 2019, **Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, Shipping and Chemicals and Fertilizers, Shri Mansukh L. Mandaviya** stated that **4677 Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana' (PMBJP) Kendras** became functional in **35 States/UTs** of the country.

- i. Also unbranded generic medicines worth **Rs. 417 crores** (MRP) have been sold through PMBJP Kendras till December 2018.
- ii. The medicines are procured only from **WHO-GMP** certified manufacturers,
- iii. Thus, PMBJP has saved approximately **Rs. 1668 crores** to the citizens of country.

### **Union Minister for HRD Shri Prakash Javadekar inaugurates 27th Edition of New Delhi World Book Fair in Pragati Maidan with Sharjah as Guest of Honour**

On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2019, the **27th** edition of the **New Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF)**, which has the **UAE's** third largest emirate **Sharjah** as its 2019 guest of honour, inaugurated in Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. The event will conclude on 13<sup>th</sup> January.

### Key Points:

- i. To promote the idea of inclusive learning through a series of exhibitions of audio, silent, tactile and Braille books, the Book Fair's theme is **"Books for Readers with Special Needs"**.
- ii. It is co-organised by the **National Book Trust (NBT)** and the **India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO)**.
- iii. The nine-day-long fair, was inaugurated by Human Resource Development Minister **Prakash Javadekar** and **H.E. Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan Al Qasimi**, Executive Chairman of the Department of Government Relations, United Arab Emirates. Besides a NBT calendar was also launched during the first day of the event based on the theme **'Readers with Special Needs'**.
- iv. During the fair, International Disability Film Festival was organized for the First time where over 45 documentaries from 27 countries.
- v. Secretary, Ministry of I&B Shri Amit Khare released seven books of Publications Division, Ministry of I&B during the World Book Fair. The list of 7 books are

1. **Bapu ke ashirwaad** – The book contains original handwritten thoughts and messages of **Mahatma Gandhi** and it is dedicated to the importance of thoughts and their possible impact in dealing with every-day life's tribulations.
2. **2500 years of Buddhism** – The book gives an inclusive account of Buddhism in last 2500 years and its foreward is written by India's 2<sup>nd</sup> President **Dr. S. Radhakrishnan**. The book is also included in the limited list of India Publication under **"Bharat ek Parichay"** Programme.
3. **Portraits of Strenght** – This books is about the hitherto unheard, unsung women from far flung parts of India whose contribution has been hailed by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in **"Mann ki Baat"**.
4. **Hindi Swadesh mein aur Videsh Mein** – The book is about the coming age of Hindi language and its literature not just within the country but even beyond.
5. **Rang Birangi Kahaniya** – It is a quintessential children's book.
6. **Badal ki Sair** – The book is a collection of short stories written for children in a manner to highlight the lucid story telling style which was made popular by Munshi Premchand.
7. **Aao Paryavaran Bachayen aur Dhra ko Swarg Bnayen** – This book is a product of co-publishing arrangement with the Sasta Sahitya Mandal and it is about saving the environment amidst the cross fire of development.

### About New Delhi:

- ◆ Chief Minister: **Arvind Kejriwal**
- ◆ Deputy Chief Minister: **Manish Sisodia**
- ◆ Lieutenant Governor: **Anil Baijal**

### About United Arab Emirates (UAE):

- ◆ Capital: **Abu Dhabi**
- ◆ Currency: **United Arab Emirates Dirham**

### **India & Pakistan's 28<sup>th</sup> exchanged lists of nuclear installations under Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations Act, 1988 undertook on first day of new year**

On January 1, 2019, **India, Pakistan** exchanged lists of nuclear installations and list of prisoners for the **28<sup>th</sup>** time through diplomatic channels in **New Delhi and Islamabad**.

- i. This was done under the Agreement on the **Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear installations that was signed in December 1988** which came into force in January 1991.
- ii. The pact states that two countries must inform each other of nuclear facilities to be covered under the agreement on **January 1 every year**.
- iii. India handed over a list of 249 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 98 fishermen in its custody.
- iv. The Pakistani side handed over a list of 537 prisoners — 54 civilians and 483 fishermen — in its jails.
- v. The first such exchange was done in **January 1, 1992**.

### Overview of PM Narendra Modi's one-day visit to Palamu, Jharkhand

On January 5, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited **Palamu, Jharkhand**, where he inaugurated projects worth a total of **Rs. 3500 crores**.

i. The following states the foundations stones laid or the inaugurations done:

- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi witnessed the e-Grih Pravesh of **25,000** beneficiaries under **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana**.
- He laid the Foundation Stone for the revival of **North Koel (Mandal Dam) project**, Kanhar Sone pipeline irrigation scheme.
- He explained that a new system has been developed for monitoring the quality of houses constructed under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana via photography and geo-tagging.

ii. He also said **99** big irrigation projects, are now being fast tracked, at a cost of almost **90,000 crore rupees**.

iii. Regarding the success of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana, he stated that **1.25 crore** houses have been built in less than five years and the average construction time has fallen from **18** months to **12** months.

iv. Furthermore, **1.25 lakh rupees** is reaching the beneficiary's account in four instalments, greater than the earlier amount of **70,000 rupees**.

#### Jharkhand:

- ◆ Chief Minister: Shri. Raghubar Das.
- ◆ Governor: Smt. Draupadi Murmu.

### Overview of PM Narendra Modi's one-day visit to Baripada, Odisha

On January 5, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited **Baripada, in Odisha**, where he inaugurated projects worth **Rs. 4500 crore**.

i. The following lists the inaugurations done by the PM:

- He dedicated the Balasore-Haldia-Durgapur section of the IOCL's Paradip-Haldia-Durgapur LPG pipeline to the nation, which will ensure easy supply of LPG in parts of Odisha and West Bengal,
- Inaugurated the Multi Modal Logistic Park at Balasore and six Passport Sewa Kendras.
- He laid the foundation stone for the four-laning three National Highway projects.
- He also flagged off the second passenger train from Tatanagar to Badampahar.

ii. He also 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.

#### Odisha:

- ◆ Chief Minister: Naveen Patnaik.
- ◆ Governor: Prof. Ganeshi Lal.
- ◆ Lakes : Chilika Lake, Kanjia Lake, Anshupa Lake, Balimela Reservoir.
- ◆ Dams: Rengali Dam, Kala dam, Pitamahar Dam, Kansbahar Dam, Tikhali Dam, Deras Dam, Salia Dam, Ghodahada Dam, Kuanria Dam.
- ◆ Festivals: Kalinga Mahotsav, Chandan Yatra, Durga Puja, Konark Dance Festival, Rath Yatra, Diwali, Kumar Purnima

### Indus Food Meet 2019 to be held in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha to participate as partner state

From 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019, the **Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI)** and union **commerce ministry** is going to organize a two-day mega food international event, the **Indus Food Meet 2019**, at the India Exposition Mart of **Greater Noida** in Uttar Pradesh. The event will conclude on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

### **Key Points:**

- i. **Odisha** which will participate as '**Partner State**' will be setting up its own Pavilion with 30 exhibitors to promote exports of food processing sector.
- ii. Furthermore the **Directorate of Horticulture** and Agricultural Promotion & Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited (**APICOL**) along with local industry will showcase various processed food items of Odisha like spices, cashew, confectionary items, processed agro food, etc.
- iii. The event which is an initiative to promote the country as a strong exporter of food and beverage products, would be hosting over 600 prominent global buyers from food and beverage industry from over 60 countries.
- iv. This **2nd** edition of Indus Food is likely to create a global food and beverage market place in line with global food expos like SIAL, ANUGA and GulfFood.
- v. A seminar on "**Potential and prospects of Food Processing Industry in Odisha**" is also being organized during the inaugural ceremony.

### **About Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI):**

◆ TPCI is an apex trade and investment promotion organization notified in the Foreign Trade Policy and recognized and supported by the Department of Commerce, Govt. of India.

◆ President TPCI: **Prashant Garg**

◆ Chairman: **Mohit Singla**

◆ Head Office: **New Delhi**

### **About Uttar Pradesh:**

◆ Chief Minister: **Yogi Adityanath**

◆ Deputy Chief Minister: **Keshav Prasad Maurya, Dr. Dinesh Sharma**

◆ Capital: **Lucknow**

◆ Governor: **Ram Naik**

### **About Odisha:**

◆ Chief Minister: **Naveen Patnaik**

◆ Capital: **Bhubaneswar**

◆ Governor: **Ganeshi Lal**

### **Encouraging farmers to enrol farmers for the Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojana: Maharashtra govt**

On January 5, 2019, **Maharashtra** Government announced distribution of free sops to encourage farmers to enrol in the **Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojana**.

- i. The things included: two LED bulbs, a DC fan and a mobile charging socket.

### **About Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojana (ASKP):**

- Launched in October 2018, it aims to reduce losses due to non-payment of electricity bills and also promote solar energy.
- Farmers with less than five acres will have to pay 5 per cent of the cost of a 3 HP solar pump while farmers with more than five acres will get a 5 HP solar pump and the sops.
- It would provide subsidy of upto 95% on solar agriculture pumpsets.
- Also around 1 lakh solar pumps were distributed to farmers to irrigate 14,000 Ha land.
- The Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co Ltd (Msedcl) is the implementing agency.

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

### **Pakistan's Provincial Government declares Panj Tirath Hindu religious site as national heritage**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2019, the provincial **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa** government in northwest Pakistan has declared the ancient Hindu religious site of **Panj Tirath** in the provincial capital **Peshawar** as national heritage.

### **Key Points:**

- i. The announcement which stated that a fine of **2 million Pakistani rupees** and **five years** imprisonment to be awarded to anyone found guilty of damaging the historic site was made under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Antiquities Act of 2016.

- ii. 'Panj Tirath' is named for the five pools of water present at the site and houses a Hindu temple "Shawal Thakardawara" and a lawn with date palm trees.
- iii. Devotees believe that mythical **king Pandu** from the epic Mahabharata bathed in the pools during the month of Kartik and worshipped under the date palm trees in the area for two days.
- iv. The site was damaged during the reign of the Afghan Durrani dynasty in 1747, however it was restored by local Hindus during the period of Sikh rule in 1834 and worship started again.

#### About Pakistan:

- ◆ Prime minister: **Imran Khan**
- ◆ Capital: **Islamabad**
- ◆ President: **Arif Alvi**
- ◆ Currency: **Pakistani Rupee**

## **BANKING & FINANCE**

### **Government amalgamated three Regional Rural Banks-Punjab Gramin Bank, Malwa Gramin Bank and Sutlej Gramin Bank into a single Bank**

With the effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019, the three Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) – **Punjab Gramin Bank, Malwa Gramin Bank and Sutlej Gramin Bank** has been amalgamated into a single RRB by the Government.

#### Key Points:

- i. After consulting the sponsor banks of the three RRBs, the central government felt that in the interest of the banks and the areas served by them, they should be amalgamated into a single RRB.
- ii. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (**NABARD**), the Government of Punjab, Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India and Punjab and Sind Bank are the sponsor banks of the said RRBs.

#### About Punjab:

- ◆ Chief Minister: **Amarinder Singh**
- ◆ Governor: **V.P. Singh Badnore**
- ◆ Capital: **Chandigarh**

#### About National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD):

- ◆ Chairman: **Harsh Kumar Bhanwala**
- ◆ Headquarters: **Mumbai**
- ◆ Founded: **12 July 1982**

### **Government Revises Interest Rate on Time Deposit Small Savings Scheme**

The Ministry of Finance, Government of India has revised the interest rates on select Time Deposit Small Saving Scheme for the quarter ending on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. The Interest rates on one-year time deposit is hiked from 6.9% to 7% whereas the interest rate on three-year time deposit has been changed from 7.2% to 7%.

#### Key Points

- i. Interest on Small Saving Schemes is revised every quarter by Ministry of Finance, Government of India. Rates of Savings Deposit Scheme is 4.0%, 5-Year Time Deposit is 7.8%, 5-Year Recurring Deposit is 7.3%, 5-Year Senior Citizen Savings Scheme is 8.7%, 5-Year Monthly Income Account is 7.7%, 5-Year National Savings Certificate is 8.0%.
- ii. Interest rates applicable to Public Provident Fund (PPF), Kisan Vikas Patra and Sukanya Samriddhi were remains unchanged at 8%, 7.7% and 8.5% respectively.
- iii. Now, Investment in time deposits of one-year, two year and three year maturity periods will fetch interest at same rate 7%.

#### About Ministry of Finance:

- ◆ Union Minister: **Arun Jaitley**
- ◆ Minister of State: **Shiv Pratap Shukla and Pon Radhakrishnan**

### **IRDAI slapped a penalty of Rs 5 lakh on United India Insurance Co for violating motor settlement norms**

On January 4, 2019, the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** slapped a penalty of **Rs 5 lakh** on **United India Insurance Co** for violating norms regarding settlement of motor claims.

i. The insurer also violated file and use guidelines issued by the Authority.

### **UBI, Srei Equipment Finance enter pact for MSME sector finance**

The United Bank of India (UBI) and Srei Equipment Finance have entered into an agreement for financing the Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSME) and agriculture sector.

#### **Key Points**

i. Under the agreement UBI plans to leverage the co-lending model to offer credit at blended interest rate of 11-12 per cent.

ii. The Bank will leverage low its low cost loans with Srei Equipment finance to enable purchase of equipment and vehicle in the seamless manner.

iii. The Bank is eyeing around 200 crore business over the period of three months by this agreement.

#### **United Bank of India (UBI)**

◆ Headquarters: Kolkata, West Bengal

◆ MD & CEO: Ashok Kumar Pradhan

◆ Tagline: The Bank that begins with 'U'

## **BUSINESS & ECONOMY**

### **Govt exempts rupee payments for Iran oil from taxes: FinMin**

On January 2, 2019, the **finance ministry** in it's notification exempted rupee payments to the **National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC)** that it gets from Indian refiners, from a withholding tax.

i. The exemption, put in place December 28 but backdated to November 5, will allow Indian refiners to settle about **\$1.5 billion** of outstanding payments to NIOC.

ii. India and Iran on Nov. 2, 2018, signed a bilateral agreement to settle oil trades through an Indian government-owned bank, **UCO Bank**, in the Indian currency.

### **Vijay Mallya first person to be named 'fugitive economic offender', under ED's plea: PMLA Mumbai**

On January 4, 2019, **Vijay Mallya** became the **first** person to be declared a '**fugitive economic offender**' under **Section 12** of the **Fugitive Economic Offenders' Act, 2018** by a special **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Court in Mumbai**.

i. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had filed an application before the court in November, 2018 and this declaration was made by Special judge **MS Azmi**.

ii. The ED had also sought immediate confiscation of about **Rs 12,500 crore** worth of assets.

iii. He is wanted in India for defaulting on **Rs. 9,000 crore** in loans to his failed Kingfisher Airlines from a consortium of **12** banks led by the **State Bank of India**.

### **SoftBank renames early venture arm with focus on Asia**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2019, **SoftBank Ventures Korea**, the early-stage investment vehicle of Japanese internet conglomerate **SoftBank Group**, has renamed itself **SoftBank Ventures Asia** and will focus on finding artificial intelligence-related startups globally, with an emphasis on Asia.

#### **Key Points:**

i. The firm is looking to expand its presence beyond Seoul, Beijing, San Francisco, and Tel Aviv by targeting to open offices and hire investment professionals in Singapore and Shanghai.

ii. The new name is effective immediately and SoftBank Ventures Asia is already actively investing in the US, China, EU, Israel, Southeast Asia, and Korea.

iii. With a war chest of US\$1.1 billion assets under management, SoftBank Ventures Asia has invested in over 250 companies across 10 countries, with a focus on AI, Internet of Things (IoT), and robotics startups.

iv. Softbank Ventures Asia is a wholly-owned subsidiary of SoftBank Group Corp. and was established as

SoftBank Ventures Korea in 2000.

**About SoftBank Group:**

- ◆ Chairman & CEO: **Masayoshi Son**
- ◆ Headquarters: **Minato, Tokyo, Japan**

**About Japan:**

- ◆ Capital: **Tokyo**
- ◆ Currency: **Japanese Yen**
- ◆ Prime minister: **Shinzō Abe**

**AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS**

**Andhra Pradesh Minister Devineni Umamaheswar Rao receives award for Polavaram Project**

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019, the Water Resources Minister of Andhra Pradesh (AP), **Devineni Umamaheswar Rao** received the '**Central Board of Irrigation and Power Award-2019**' for better planning and construction of **Polavaram Irrigation Project** on the Godavari River.

**Key Points:**

- i. AP Water Resources Minister, Rao received the award in the category of "Best Implementation of Water Resources Project" .
- ii. The Minister of State (IC) Power and New and Renewable Energy **Raj Kumar Singh** honoured Devineni Umamaheswar Rao at Scope convention Centre Lodhi Road, New Delhi.
- iii. The multi-purpose **Polavaram** irrigation project which has been accorded the status of a national project is under the final phase of construction in West **Godavari** district and East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh and its reservoir spreads to parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha.
- iv. So far, 64 per cent of the project work is completed and the target is to complete the project by December 2019.
- v. About Rs 15,380.97 crore has been spent on the project. Out of which, an amount of Rs 6,727.26 crore has been reimbursed by the central government and the remaining Rs Rs 3,517.84 crore is still awaited.

**About Andhra Pradesh:**

- ◆ Chief Minister: **N. Chandrababu Naidu**
- ◆ Governor: **E. S. L. Narasimhan**
- ◆ Capital: **Amaravati**

**About Ministry of New and Renewable Energy:**

- ◆ Minister of State (Independent Charge) – **Raj Kumar Singh**
- ◆ Headquarters: **New Delhi**

**Home Minister Rajnath Singh presented Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards**

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019, Home Minister Shri **Rajnath Singh** presented the prestigious 13<sup>th</sup> **Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism** awards to 29 winners in 18 categories across Print, Broad cast and purely digital to recognize the outstanding contributions of journalists in 2017 in **New Delhi**.

**Key Points**

- i. The Award aims to celebrate the excellence in journalism and recognize the courage and commitment of the journalists.
- ii. The award was instituted by The Indian Express Group in 2005 as part of centenary year celebration of its founder, Ramnath Goenka.
- iii. The Complete list of winners is available at official site of Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism. You can check the list at <http://expressindia.indianexpress.com/ramnath-goenka-foundation/winners2017.html>

**Ministry Of Skill Development And Entrepreneurship Felicitates Entrepreneurs And Individuals At National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018 in Delhi**

On January 4, 2019, the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** hosted the **3rd edition** of the **National Entrepreneurship Awards (NEA)** at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre,



Janpath, **New Delhi**.

A total of **33** winners – **30 Young Entrepreneurs and 3 Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Builders** were awarded.

**Objective:**

To recognize and honor outstanding young first-generation entrepreneurs and contributors of entrepreneurship ecosystem.

**Key Points:**

i. The ceremony was chaired by:

**Shri Dharmendra Pradhan**, Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, and

**Shri Anant kumar Hegde**, Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.

ii. **Shri Suresh Prabhu**, Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation was the Chief Guest at the award ceremony.

iii. MSDE partnered with premier institutes and organizations such as XLRI, Jamshedpur; IIT Bombay, Mumbai; IIT Delhi; IIT Guwahati, Assam; IIT Kanpur; and IIT Madras, Chennai for this ceremony.

**About the Award:**

i. It was established by **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** in 2016.

ii. A total of 43 awards were presented out of which:

- 39 awards were for Young Entrepreneurs in different sectors and
- 4 awards were for Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Builders.

iii. The awards are classified into three investment categories –

- below Rs 1 Lakh,
- between Rs 1 Lakh to 10 Lakhs and
- between 10 Lakhs to Rs 1 Crore;

iv. The winners will receive a trophy, certificate and cash prizes ranging from Rs. 5 to 10 lakhs.

v. The nominees were small to big first-generation entrepreneurs below the age of 40 years.

**Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE):**

◆ Union Minister: Shri. Dharmendra Pradhan.

◆ Minister of State: Shri Anant kumar Hegde.

**APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNS**

**Shri Chhabilendra Roul took charge as Secretary, Department of Fertilizers**

On January 3, 2019, **Shri Chhabilendra Roul** was appointed as the new **Secretary, Department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers**, Government of India.

i. His tenure commenced effectively from 31.12.2018.

ii. He succeeded Smt. Bharathi S. Sihag, IAS (HP:83) who completed her tenure.

**Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers:**

◆ Union Minister: Shri. D. V. Sadananda Gowda.

◆ Minister of state: Shri Mansukh L. Mandaviya, Rao Inderjit Singh

**Subramanian resigned from Bandhan Bank following appointment as Chief Economic Advisor**

On January 5, 2019, **Bandhan Bank** announced the resignation of independent director **Krishnamurthy V Subramanian** following his appointment as the **chief economic advisor (CEA)** to the government.

i. On December 7, 2018, the government appointed Subramanian as the CEA for a period of three years.

ii. He replaced Arvind Subramanian, who resigned from the post in June 2018.



### **Rakesh Aggarwal took over as new JIPMER director**

On January 1, 2019, **Dr Rakesh Aggarwal** assumed charge as the new **director** of **Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (JIPMER)**, Puducherry.

- i. He succeeded Dr S Vivekanandan.
- ii. He is also an elected fellow of **Indian Academy of Sciences**, **Indian National Science Academy**, **National Academy of Sciences (India)** and **National Academy of Medical Sciences (India)**.

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

### **US scientists successfully launched a telescope from Antarctica that analyses X-rays arriving from distant neutron stars, black holes**

Scientists from **Washington University** of United states of America (USA) successfully launched a **telescope (X-Calibur instrument)** from the **McMurdo Station** in **Antarctica** that will analyze **X-rays** arriving from distant **neutron stars, black holes and other exotic celestial bodies**.

- i. The X-calibur instrument is carried aloft on a helium balloon intended to reach an altitude of 130,000 feet which is four times the cruising altitude of commercial airliners.
- ii. **Neutron stars** are object of very small radius around 30 km and a very high density composed of closely packed neutrons.

### **Cyclonic Storm 'PABUK' over Andaman Sea & neighbourhood**

On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2019, a warning was issued by **The India Meteorological Department (IMD)** that a Cyclonic storm "**PABUK**" over **Andaman Sea and neighbourhood** is moving towards west-northwestwards with a speed of 21 kmph. Cyclone warning for Andaman Islands is "**ORANGE MESSAGE**".

#### **Key Points**

- i. IMD issued guidelines to people living on the **Andaman islands** to remain at safe place and suspended all fishing operations in the Andaman sea and southeast and east central Bay of Bengal on 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
- ii. The Cyclone PABUK will cross Andaman by the evening of 6<sup>th</sup> January and move towards Myanmar coast and weaken gradually during 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> January.
- iii. PABUK was originated in the Gulf of Thailand and created landfall in Nakhon Si Thammarat province of Thailand on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
- iv. The Met department said, Pabuk is very likely to move northwestwards and cross Andaman Islands around tomorrow evening as a cyclonic storm with a wind speed of 70-80 kmph gusting to 90kmph.

#### **About Andaman & Nicobar Islands**

- ◆ Capital: Port Blair
- ◆ Lieutenant Governor: Admiral (ret.) Devendra Kumar Joshi

## **SPORTS**

### **Sri Lanka's Thisara Perera slams 13 sixes, scores 140(74), breaks 22-yr-old record**

On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2019, 29 years old Sri Lanka's **Thisara Perera** smashed 13 sixes against New Zealand in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ODI to break the 22 years old record of maximum sixes in an ODI innings by a Sri Lankan player. The previous record was held by **Sanath Jayasuriya** who smashed 11 sixes in an innings.

Thisara Perera's maiden century in which he scored 140 runs in just 74 balls, Since it pulled off a thrilling victory of 21-runs for New Zealand.