

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – APRIL 16, 2019

TAMIL NADU

- ◆ **The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) – has allocated four new test spots for ‘drones’ in the State apart from Chennai**



- ✓ Under the new policy titled ‘Requirements for operation of Civil Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) 2018’, created to regulate and control operation of the Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) to ensure flight safety, the DGCA has assigned 4 test spots at Vellore, Salem, Coimbatore and Erode
- ✓ Drone operators are supposed to register with <https://digital-sky.dgca.gov.in/> to use these test spots
- ✓ In Chennai, researchers and developers can fly their drones inside Anna University college campus
- ✓ Recently, ‘Digital Sky’, a single-window system for issue of Unique Identification Number (UIN), unmanned Aircraft Operator Permit (UAOP) and day-to-day operation of drones has been launched
- ✓ Drones will be embedded with encrypted firmware to receive permissions through the ‘Digital Sky’ application before take-off

◆ **Taiwanese smartphone manufacturer, Foxconn – to commence mass production of iPhones in India this year at its factory in Sriperumbudur outside Chennai**



- ✓ Apple had been concentrating on making its iPhone production in China so far
- ✓ Apple's older model phones, including iPhone7, at its other supplier Wistron's facility in Bengaluru for several years
- ✓ Taiwanese industrial major Wistron assembles iPhone 6S in the country.
- ✓ Wistron has also announced plans to invest Rs 3,000 crore in the Narasupra industrial sector in Karnataka's Kolar district
- ✓ Foxconn already has two assembly sites in the southern Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, where it makes devices for Xiaomi and Nokia.

◆ **A 24 MW floating solar power plant – to come up at the Tuticorin factory complex of SPIC (Southern Petrochemicals Industries Corporation)**

- ✓ It will be owned by Greenam Energy, a wholly-owned subsidiary of AM International Holdings, Singapore
- ✓ EDAC Engineering, a SPIC group company, is undertaking construction of the project that is owned by Greenam.
- ✓ Ashwin Muthiah, founder chairman of AM International Group, is also the chairman of SPIC
- ✓ The project intends to supply electricity to SPIC and the excess will be sold to the state power utilities

NATIONAL

◆ **The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister – approves Rs 4,315.15 crore – for the implementation of 10% reservation for economically weaker section (EWS) from among the general category**

- ✓ The reservation paves the way for the creation of 2,14,766 additional seats across 158 centrally funded higher education institutes over a period of two years
- ✓ The Rajya Sabha had approved the amendment of the Constitution to provide 10% reservation to general category poor in jobs and education on January 9
- ✓ The quota will be over and above the existing reservation for OBCs, SCs and STs

◆ **The Indian Meteorological Department – predicts a ‘near normal’ South West monsoon this year**

'SAME AS NORMAL'

➤ Monsoon likely to be 'near normal' at 96% of average, with 5% error margin

➤ 39% probability of normal, 32% of below normal and 17% of deficient rains

➤ No difference between 'normal & 'near-normal' monsoon, says IMD chief

- ✓ As per IMD, the country would witness 96% of long period average
- ✓ The Long Period Average (LPA) of the seasonal rainfall over the entire country for the period 1951-2000 is 89 cm
- ✓ The monsoon is categorized as 'normal' when the June-September period has rainfall in the range of 96-104% of the LPA
- ✓ If it falls in the range of 90-96% of the LPA, the seasonal rainfall is considered 'below normal'
- ✓ The forecast also indicates a 17% probability of drought and 32% probability of 'below normal' rainfall
- ✓ The IMD had predicted normal rainfall (97% of the LPA with a model error of +/- 5%) for the year 2018, but it turned out to be 'below normal' with nearly 91% of the LPA
- ✓ It differs from the forecast of private agency, Skymet, which had predicted on April 3 a 'below normal' monsoon this year during the June-September monsoon period at 93% of the LPA, due to the emergence of 'El-nino' condition, a cyclic warming of the central and eastern pacific region
- ✓ IMD will also release the region-wise and month-wise distribution of rainfall in first week of June
- ✓ A temperature rise greater than 1 degree Celsius for three months continuously is considered a "strong" El Nino (and which is threatening to the monsoon).
- ✓ A 0.5 degree Celsius to 1 degree Celsius rise is called "weak El Nino conditions." Currently, the El Nino is 0.9 degree Celsius.

COURT VERDICTS

- ◆ **The Supreme Court – stays the reservation in promotion for SC/STs in Government jobs – for want of quantifiable data to the Centre and the State on the adequacy of their representation**

CASE HISTORY

- In Sept, a Constitution bench had said promotion quota could be implemented but ruled that “creamy layer exclusion” principle, which applied only to OBCs, could be extended to SCs and STs
- Following SC’s verdict in Jarnail Singh case, Delhi HC in November directed Centre to implement SC order
- Challenging HC decision, Centre moved SC and said it was not possible to implement order within 3 months

- ✓ A bench of Justice S A Bobde and Abdul Nazeer directed that status quo to be maintained till the issue is decided by the Government

- ◆ **The Madras High Court – has ordered strict adhering of rules in schools, including immediate implementation of biometric attendance system, merit-cum-seniority based promotion and verification of their movable and immovable assets against the declarations of teachers**



- ✓ Justice SM Subramaniam, while passing the orders, said that teachers and non-teaching staff of Government schools should not oppose the advanced Aadhaar-based biometric attendance system, as it strives to create a fool-proof attendance system in state’s public services

INTERNATIONAL

- ◆ **FBI – has barred Chinese academics from visiting US, if they are suspected of having links to Chinese intelligence agencies**
 - ✓ The move follows the cancellation of visas to around 30 Chinese professors in the social sciences, heads of academic institutes and experts helping government policies as part of FBI's counterintelligence operation
 - ✓ The Chinese scholars are barred as part of the US administration's crack down on intellectual property theft by Chinese scientists working at American research institutions
 - ✓ President Xi Jinping has set a goal for China to become a global scientific power by 2049

- ◆ **European Union – approves the tougher copyright rules on April 15 to protect its own creative industries**
 - ✓ The move, aimed at ensuring fair compensation for the EU's \$1 trillion creative industries, is a big blow to online giants like Google, Facebook etc.,
 - ✓ Under the new rules, these online platforms will have to sign licensing agreements with musicians, performers, authors and journalists to use their work
 - ✓ The sharing platforms should install filters to prevent users from uploading copyrighted materials
 - ✓ The change was endorsed by 19 countries including France and Germany and opposed by Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden with Belgium, Estonia and Slovenia abstaining

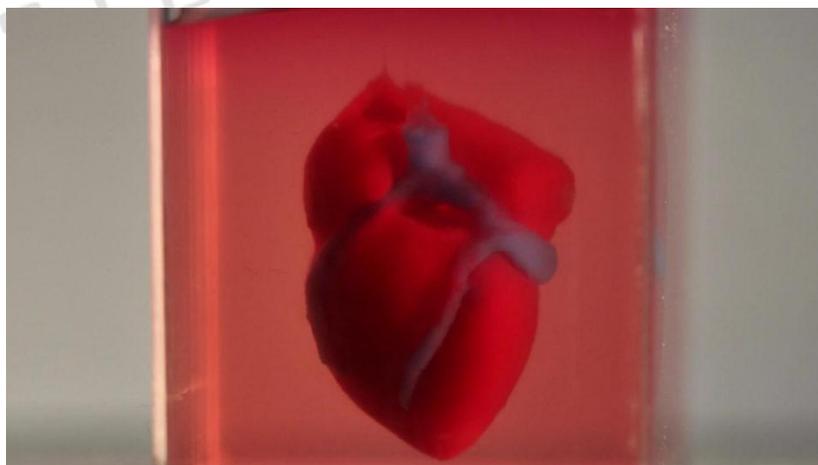
- ◆ **Notre Dame cathedral, the iconic symbol of the beauty and history of Paris - was ravaged by an extensive fire on April 15**



- ✓ The cause of the fire was not immediately known and there was no immediate indication that anyone had been hurt.
- ✓ A jewel of medieval Gothic architecture built in the 12th and 13th centuries, Notre Dame, was a landmark not only for Paris but for the entire world.
- ✓ The cathedral is visited by about 30,000 people a day and around 13 million people a year.
- ✓ Notre Dame has stood tall above Paris since the 1200s and has given its name to one of the country's literary masterpieces — Victor Hugo's 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame'. The last time the cathedral suffered major damage was during the French Revolution.
- ✓ It survived two world wars largely unscathed
- ✓ Notre Dame Cathedral had been undergoing a massive renovation, with a hefty price tag of \$180 million
- ✓ The cathedral is used by the Roman Catholic Church for Sunday mass each week and is the seat of the Archbishop of Paris, Michel Christian Alain Aupetit, who has held the position since January 2018
- ✓ In 1804, the cathedral was the site where the Coronation of Napoleon I as Emperor of France
- ✓ The Cathedral celebrated its 850th anniversary in the year 2013.
- ✓ Notre Dame is French for "Our Lady" and refers to the Virgin Mary

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

◆ Scientists in Israel – unveils World's first 3-D printed heart with human tissues and vessels intact



- ✓ A biopsy of fatty tissue taken from patients was used in the development of 'ink' for the 3-D print
- ✓ The heart, produced by researchers at Tel Aviv University, will go a long way in producing hearts suitable for transplant into humans

◆ **A Cubesat team led by an Indian-American student – will be flown into space on future missions of NASA**



- ✓ The team of researchers from the Yale Undergraduate Aerospace Association led by 21-year old Keshav Raghavan is among the 16 teams selected across US, whose CubeSats will be flown into space on missions planned to launch in 2020,2021 and 2022
- ✓ The team's Cubesat is named 'BLAST' (Bouchet Low-Earth Alpha/Beta Space Telescope), after physicist Edward A Bouchet, the first African-American to receive a PhD in US
- ✓ It had designed the satellite over a period of four years through the launch grant of NASA's CubeSat Launch Initiative competition
- ✓ According to NASA, BLAST is a scientific investigation mission to map the distribution of galactic cosmic radiation across the night sky.
- ✓ It will identify alpha and beta particle in the rays, and measure the radiation energy around Earth
- ✓ The investigation aims to search the origins of these rays to provide insight into the origins of the universe

DEFENCE

◆ **The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) - successfully test-fired the underdevelopment, indigenous, long range subsonic cruise missile Nirbhay from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur in Odisha on April 15**

- ✓ The organisation has conducted five trials since 2013 before the test, with the last trial conducted on November 7, 2017
- ✓ It is a nuclear-capable cruise missile and can carry warheads of up to 300 kg
- ✓ It is capable of targeting any object within 1,000 km range, covering the target range in 42 minutes and 23 seconds
- ✓ The state-of-the-art Nirbhay missile can eventually be deployed from multiple platforms – sea, land, aircraft and underwater.



- ✓ The latest test was conducted from the land.
- ✓ DRDO is also planning to develop ship, aircraft and submarine-launched version of this cruise missile.
- ✓ Su-30 MKI fighter planes will be equipped with such missiles once they are ready. DRDO wants to increase Nirbhay's range to 1,500 km.

AWARDS

- ◆ **Three Indian student teams - won awards in NASA's annual Human Exploration Rover Challenge at the US Space and Rocket Centre in Huntsville, Alabama**



- ✓ The team from KIET Group of Institutions in Ghaziabad won the "AIAA Neil Armstrong Best Design Award" in the college/university division
- ✓ The Mukesh Patel School of Technology Management and Engineering from Mumbai won the "Frank Joe Sexton Memorial Pit Crew Award" in the college/university division

- ✓ The Mukesh Patel school also won the System Safety Challenge Award at the competition hosted by NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville and held at the US Space and Rocket Centre
- ✓ Lovely Professional University from Phagwara, Punjab, won the STEM Engagement Award
- ✓ NASA astronaut and two-time spaceflight veteran Sunita "Sunni" Williams also interacted with teams and participating in the activities
- ✓ The International Space Education Institute of Leipzig, Germany, won first place in the high school division with 91 points and the University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez - Team 1 won the college/university division with 101 points
- ✓ Nearly 100 teams took part in the competition, hailing from 23 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, as well as a record number of countries, including Bangladesh, Germany, India, Mexico, Morocco, and Peru.
- ✓ Human Exploration Rover Challenge invites high school and college students to build and test roving vehicles for future missions to the Moon, Mars and beyond

