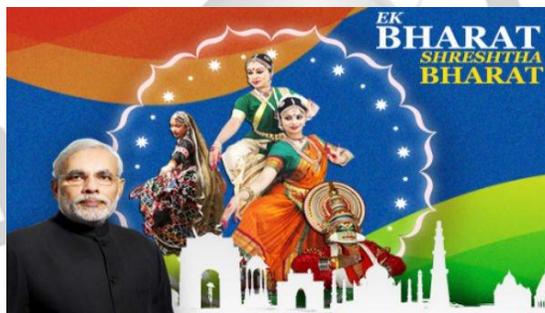


## **EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEB 11, 2020**

### **NATIONAL**

- **The Union Government – has launched 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' campaign to promote cultural unity among various states of the country.**



- ✓ It is a 18-days long campaign which commences on 10<sup>th</sup> February and continues till 28th February 2020.
  - ✓ The campaign aims to promote the spirit of national integration through various cultural activities.
  - ✓ It intends to showcase the rich culture and heritage, food, handicrafts and customs of the 36 states and union territories of the country
  - ✓ As part of the programme, two different states have been paired to promote cultural exchanges between them.
  - ✓ The state of Jammu and Kashmir has been paired with Tamil Nadu, Punjab with Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand with Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh with Kerala, Delhi with Sikkim and Rajasthan has been paired with Assam.
  - ✓ The basic objective of this initiative is to promote the coordination between the people of different states by bridging the cultural differences.
- **The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs - has decided to pair the 20 best performing smart cities as 'sister cities' with the least performing 20 smart cities**

- ✓ According to the list, PM Narendra Modi's parliamentary constituency Varanasi will be 'paired' with Amritsar in Punjab.
- ✓ Similarly, Ahmadabad will 'tie up' to improve Chandigarh.
- ✓ Surat and Visakhapatnam will be teamed up with Sharanpur and Diu to improve their performance respectively.
- ✓ Bhopal will be associated with Aizawl, Mizoram's capital city for its improvement.
- ✓ These 'sister cities' will help each other to implement projects under the 'Smart city' mission.
- ✓ The Centre's 'smart city mission' is aimed at ensuring the overall development of various cities in the country.
- ✓ The objective of this mission is to provide a clean and sustainable environment for smart solutions.
- ✓ The mission covers various core infrastructural entities like proper sanitation, adequate water supply, robust IT connectivity, sustainable environment, safety and security of citizens, education, and health, etc.
- ✓ The Centre is planning to develop 100 smart cities among the total number of states and UTs in the country.
- ✓ According to the ministry's internal rankings, 20 best performing cities are - Ahmedabad, Varanasi, Ranchi, Udaipur, Nagpur, Bhopal, Surat, Kanpur, Visakhapatnam, Vellore, Tiruppur, Vadodara, Nashik, Agra, Dehradun, Davanagere, Kota, Pune, Indore, and Amravati.
- ✓ The program of pairing the best performing smart cities with poorly performing smart cities as 'sister cities' is being called '20-20 formula'.
- ✓ Sister Cities will sign a memorandum agreement on February 20 under this program.

## **SUPREME COURT VERDICT**

- **The Supreme Court - upheld amendments to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 2018**
- ✓ SC/ST Amendment Act 2018
  - ✓ Pronounced by – A two-judge bench of SC consisting of Justices A K Goel and Lalit
  - ✓ Date – March 20, 2018
  - ✓ Features
    - ✓ The anticipatory bail will be granted under Section 438 CrPC, in cases of a proposed 'arrest' of a person
    - ✓ Also, no prior sanction would be required for proceeding against a government servant
    - ✓ Further, the act also does not mandate a preliminary enquiry before registration of a First Information Report (FIR) against the person accused under the Act.

## Strengthening the law

▪ The SC, in *Dr. Subhash Kashinath Mahajan vs State of Maharashtra*, held on March 20, 2018: No absolute bar against grant of anticipatory bail under the anti-atrocities law if no prima facie case is made out or if judicial scrutiny reveals the complaint to be prima facie *mala fide*

▪ Parliament introduces an amendment in 2018. Inserts Section 18A in the original Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989. Section 18A re-affirms the original legislative intention that Section 438 CrPC (pre-arrest bail) is not applicable to accused booked under the atrocities law

▪ Prathvi Raj Chouhan and other petitioners challenge the amendments as arbitrary

▪ February 10, 2020 judgment in Prathvi Raj Chouhan case: Justices Arun Mishra and Vineet Saran uphold Section 18A. However, the judges add that the High Courts will have an "inherent power" to grant anticipatory bail in cases in which *prima facie* an offence under the 1989 law is not made out

▪ Justice S. Ravindra Bhat adds a caveat about the use of this "inherent power" by courts. He says it should be used "only sparingly and in very exceptional cases". Otherwise, miscarriage of justice may result. The intention of Parliament to protect SCs and STs will be defeated

▪ "It is important to keep oneself reminded that while sometimes (perhaps mostly in urban areas) false accusations are made, those are not necessarily reflective of the prevailing and wide spread social prejudices against members of these oppressed classes"; Justice Bhat



- ✓ However, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court consisting of Justices Arun Mishra, M R Shah and B R Gavai on September 30, 2019 restored the earlier form of Act, providing for automatic arrest in cases of atrocities against SC and STs
- ✓ The Parliament on August 9, 2018 had passed the bill to dilute the SC's 2018 judgment and restore the law to its original 'stringent' version, following which the SC had taken up petitions seeking review of its judgment.
- ✓ On October 1 last year, the SC recalled its 2018 judgment.
- ✓ A bench of Justices Arun Mishra, Vineet Saran and S R Bhatt pronounced the verdict on February 10 upholding the stringent form of the Act.
- **For the first time in 70 years, the Supreme Court - decided to take up the sensitive task of defining the scope and ambit of right to freedom of religion practised by multiple faiths across the country, guaranteed under Article 25**
- ✓ A nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on February 10 upheld the decision of the five-judge Sabarimala Review Bench to refer the religious freedom rights to a larger Bench
- ✓ A bench of CJI S A Bobde and Justices R Banumathi, Ashok Bhushan, L Nageswara Rao, Mohan M Shantana goudar, S Abdul Nazeer, R Subhash Reddy, B R Gavai and Surya Kant framed seven questions on the fundamental right to religion and the right to establish and manage religious institutions.
- ✓ Apart from defining the ambit of right to religion, and examining the implications of Articles 25 and 26, the SC will decide whether a person, not belonging to a

religious denomination, can file a PIL questioning validity of customs and practices of that religion.

### Setting the agenda

The seven questions that the SC Bench will look into:

- What is the scope and ambit of religious freedom under Article 25 of the Constitution?
- What is the interplay between religious freedom and rights of religious denominations under Article 26?
- Whether religious denominations are subject to fundamental rights?
- What is the definition of 'morality' used in Article 25 and Article 26?
- What is the ambit and scope of judicial review of Article 25?
- What is the meaning of the phrase "sections of Hindus" under Article 25 (2)(b)?
- Whether a person not belonging to a religious group can question the practices and beliefs of that group in a PIL petition?

- ✓ Article 25, while guaranteeing freedom of conscience and free profession, practise and propagation of religion, subjects this to “public order, morality and health”.
- ✓ It allows the government to regulate or restrict the economic, financial, political and other secular activities associated with religious practices.
- ✓ It empowers the government to pass a law to provide social welfare and reform or throw open public religious institutions belonging to Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists to all classes of persons belonging to these religious denominations.
- ✓ On November 14 last year, the former CJI Ranjan Gogoi Bench, in a majority judgment, decided not to review the Sabarimala cases before it.
- ✓ It clubbed all other pending cases on religious subjects as varied as female genital mutilation among the Dawoodi Bohras to entry of Parsi women who married inter-faith into the fire temple and Muslim women into mosques and referred them all to a larger Bench

## INTERNATIONAL

- **The world's most prestigious Film Awards, known as Oscar Awards - has been announced for the year 2020.**
- ✓ The award function was held at the Dolby Theater in the city of Los Angeles, USA on February 9
- ✓ A foreign-language film finally conquered the Oscars this year.
- ✓ The South Korean thriller ‘Parasite’ became the first non-English feature film to win the Best Film Oscar at the 92nd Academy awards.
- ✓ It won both Best Picture and International Feature awards, while also taking home Best Director and best Original Screenplay awards
- ✓ Bong Joon Ho is the second Asian to win the Oscar for best director after Ang Lee (‘Life of Pi’ & ‘Brokeback Mountain’).

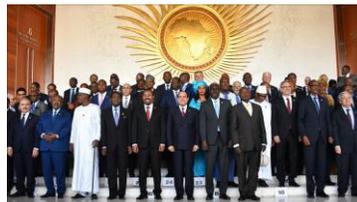
- ✓ Parasite is also the first Asian film to win the Best Screenplay award, shared by Bong with Han Jin-won.



- ✓ No film from South Korea had previously been nominated for Hollywood's top prize.
- ✓ 'Parasite', which also bagged the Palme D'Or at Cannes in 2019, won four Oscars, the most for any film.
- ✓ World War I drama '1917' was second, with three Oscars, including best cinematography.
- ✓ Before "Parasite", only 10 foreign language films had ever been nominated in the best picture category
- ✓ None of them managed to win the award that had so far only gone to English language films in the more than 90 years of the Academy Awards
- ✓ The Academy Awards are given by the US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences
- ✓ The first ceremony of Oscar award was held on May 14, 1929.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The African Union Summit 2020 – was held in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa.**



- ✓ During the summit, various African leaders discussed about tackling the rising incidences of terrorism in the Continent.
- ✓ Theme of African Union Summit 2020 - 'Silencing the Guns'.
- ✓ The summit has adopted the eight resolutions including the important 'Agreement with United Nations for funding in peace operation'.

- ✓ The African Union is a continental union, consisting of 55 countries based out of Africa.
  - ✓ It aims to strengthen unity among African countries.
  - ✓ The Summit is important from the perspective of India, as India has recently signed the defence agreement, 'Lucknow Declaration' with 50 African countries at DefExpo 2020
  - ✓ The creation of African Union was revived under the leadership of Libyan head Muammar Al-Gaddafi.
- **The 23rd National Conference on E-Governance - was held in Mumbai recently, to transform governance activities using digital technologies**



- ✓ On its conclusion, the conference adopted 'Mumbai Declaration'.
- ✓ During the conference, various awards were presented to states, Union Territories and government entities that have excelled in implementing National E-Governance initiatives.
- ✓ Delhi, Chandigarh and Daman and Diu were ranked at the Top 3 spots in delivering e-governance services among Union Territories.
- ✓ Among the states, Haryana and Rajasthan emerged as leaders
- ✓ National Health Authority and Ayushman Bharat received gold awards under the category of government process re-engineering for Digital Transformation.
- ✓ Department of IT of Haryana received the gold medal, under the category of providing citizen-centric delivery of services
- ✓ The golden award for outstanding research on citizen-centric services was presented to IIT Roorkee's Satellite based agriculture information system.
- ✓ Among the North-Eastern States, Nagaland won the first rank.

## PERSONALITIES

- **SS Vasan, a doctor of Indian origin – was named as the head of the team of researchers to develop a vaccine to fight the Coronavirus.**



- ✓ The deadly Coronavirus that started from Wuhan has spread to nearly 31 countries in the world.
  - ✓ In China alone, more than 600 people have been reported dead from this virus while more than 30,000 people have been found infected.
  - ✓ As per the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the purpose of this research is to understand the Coronavirus properly.
  - ✓ The vaccine is undergoing testing at the High-Security Lab of the Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) of Australia.
  - ✓ SS Vasan is a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford, England
  - ✓ He is an alumnus of Bengaluru's Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani.
  - ✓ He has also worked on Zika Virus, Dengue, and Chikungunya before the Coronavirus.
  - ✓ Earlier, a team of scientists in Australia has successfully developed a batch of Coronavirus in the laboratory.
- **Kamya Karthikeyan (12-year-old) from Mumbai - has become the youngest girl to climb Mount Aconcagua, the highest peak in South America.**



- ✓ Kamya studies in 7th grade at Navy Children School in Mumbai.
- ✓ Mount Aconcagua is the highest mountain in the Andes mountain range
- ✓ Earlier, Kamya has summited Mt Mentok Kangri II in August 2019.
- ✓ She is also the youngest mountaineer to summit Mt Everest.
- ✓ She aims to complete "Explorers Grand Slam" by 2021.
- ✓ 'Explorers Grand Slam' is an adventurer goal to summit 7 highest peaks of the world and also to reach North Pole and South Pole.
- ✓ The seven summits include Mt Everest, Denali, Aconcagua, Kilimanjaro, Vinson and two other highest mountain peaks chosen by the designates

## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

- **The four Indian astronaut-elects - left for Russia on February 10 to begin their 12-month training programme**
- ✓ The four Indian Air Force (IAF) test pilots will undergo training at the Gagarin Research & Test Cosmonaut Training Centre (GCTC) near Moscow.

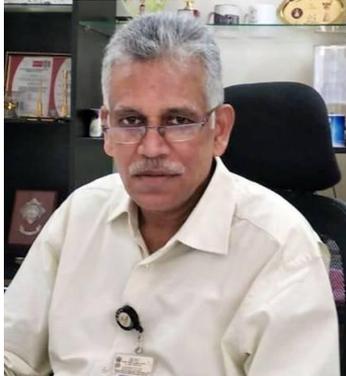
- ✓ The training of Indian candidates for a spaceflight is being planned as per the contract between Glavkosmos, JSC (part of the State Space Corporation Roscosmos) and Human Spaceflight Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro), which was signed in June 2019
- ✓ The training includes comprehensive, biomedical and physical training.
- ✓ The chosen personnel will study systems of the Soyuz manned spaceship
- ✓ They will also be trained in short-term weightlessness aboard the special Il-76MDK aircraft
- ✓ The Il-76MDK is an Ilyushin-78 military transport plane specially re-designed for parabolic flights of trainee astronauts and space tourists.
- ✓ The pilots will be provided a special training to handle abnormal landing of the manned spaceship descent module in various climate and geographic zones
- ✓ The training in Russia will be generic, whereas the mission-specific training on the crew module will happen in Bengaluru once the training pilots return
- ✓ India had picked 12 Indian Air Force test pilots who cleared level-1 screening for the first Indian human space mission, Gaganyaan, that aims to send Indian astronauts to space by around 2022

## DEFENCE

- **India-UK – to hold a joint exercise called ‘Ajeya Warrior’ on February 13, 2020**
- ✓ The fifth edition of the exercise to be conducted this year will feature around 120 soldiers from either sides put together.
- ✓ The exercise is being held from 2005.
- ✓ The exercise will be held in Salisbury Plains, located in Chalk Plateau (UK)
- ✓ India and UK hold joint naval exercises called Konkan exercise from 2004.
- ✓ The countries also hold Indra Dhanush joint air-to-air exercise since 2006.
  
- **The Centre’s National Disaster Response Force – is scheduled to host the second BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise - 2020 (BIMSTEC DMEx-2020) in Bhubaneswar, Odisha**
- ✓ The exercise is to be held between February 11, 2020 and February 13, 2020
- ✓ The main objective of the exercise is to test the existing emergency procedures and disaster-related problems occurring during flood, earthquake and storms.
- ✓ The exercise will also focus on restoring heritage sites damaged due to disasters.
- ✓ The BIMSTEC countries namely Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Nepal are expected to participate in the exercise.
- ✓ The other two BIMSTEC countries namely Thailand and Bhutan are not participating in the exercise this time
- ✓ The theme of the exercise - ‘A Cultural Heritage Site that suffers severe damage in the Earthquake and Flooding or Storm’

## APPOINTMENTS

- **Veteran space scientist G Narayanan - has been named the Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation's newly formed commercial entity, New Space India Ltd (NSIL).**



- ✓ Earlier, Narayanan had served as Deputy Director (systems reliability and quality assurance) at the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), a Thiruvananthapuram-based unit of Isro, that designs, develops and realise liquid propulsion stages for launch vehicles.
- ✓ Narayanan has been asked to resign from Isro before taking charge of NSIL, as the new commercial entity is a public sector undertaking (PSU)

## SPORTS

- **The Indian men's Hockey team midfielder, Vivek Sagar Prasad - was named as the 2019 Rising Star of the year by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) on February 10**



- ✓ The 19-year-old Vivek won the honour ahead of Argentina's Maico Casella and Blake Govers of Australia, who finished second and third.
- **Aditya Mehta (Mumbai, Maharashtra) - defeated multiple World champion, Pankaj Advani to win the National snooker championship at Pune**

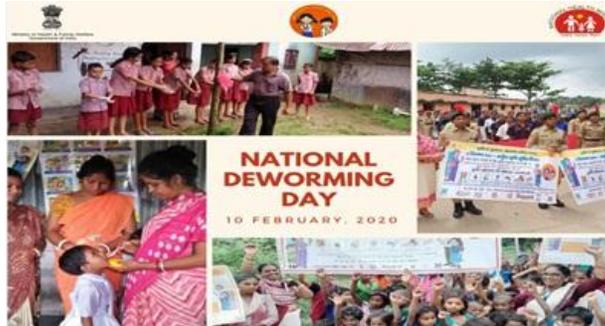


- ✓ In the women's snooker final, Karnataka's Vidya Pillai (Madhya Pradesh) prevailed over Ameer Kamani of MP to defend her senior ladies title.
- ✓ Aditya Mehta is currently ranked at 49 in the world ranking of Snooker players

# NATIONAL DAY

## ➤ **National Deworming Day - February 10**

- ✓ The main objective of this day is to deworm children to reduce the presence of parasitic worms in the intestine of children



- ✓ On this day, the Centre runs a special drive to provide a single dose of safe medicine 'Albendazole' in all states and UTs.
- ✓ This medicine is given to Children and adolescents in the age group of 1 to 19 years.
- ✓ The event is observed by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- ✓ The implementing agency under the ministry is National Health Mission
- ✓ The day is observed twice a year, on February 10th and August 10<sup>th</sup>
- ✓ It was carried out since 2015
- ✓ Worm infections lead to health issues ranging from anemia, malnutrition, diarrhea and loss of appetite.

## ➤ **The celebrations of World Pulses Day - was inaugurated in New Delhi on February 10 by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**



- ✓ The observance of the day aims to increase the production of pulses apart from creating public awareness of environmental and nutritional benefits of pulses
- ✓ The UN Pulses Day resolution was adopted in 2013
- ✓ The day is being celebrated since 2019
- ✓ India became self-sufficient in pulses since 2016-17.
- ✓ In 2018-19, India produced 22 million tonnes of pulses.
- ✓ Generally, pulses assist agricultural activities by improving soil fertility and productivity
- ✓ They also reduce dependence on synthetic fertilizers as they naturally introduce nitrogen in the soil

