

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JAN 15, 2020

STATES

- The Kerala government – moves to the Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019 under Article 131, making it a Centre-state dispute
- ✓ It had contended that the CAA is ‘unconstitutional’ in denying Indian citizenship to Muslims, Rohingyas, Hazaras, Tamils and even minorities, such as Indian-origin people from Fiji and Malaysia.

'LAW ARBITRARY & UNCONSTITUTIONAL'

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Article 131 gives SC exclusive jurisdiction to decide suits relating to Centre-state and state-state disputes 	<p>Hazaras of Afghanistan, Christians of Bhutan and Sri Lanka and Buddhists from Nepal for citizenship</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In its plea, Kerala govt says CAA overlooks issues of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and Muslims in Sri Lanka 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Asks why CAA does not cover ethnic Indians in Malaysia and Fiji
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Also does not consider Tamils in Sri Lanka, Hindu Madhesis in Terai of Nepal, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plea says CAA is manifestly arbitrary and unconstitutional as it violates secularism and right to equality

- ✓ Earlier, on December 31, 2019, the Kerala government assembly had passed a resolution requesting the Centre to scrap CAA.
- ✓ The resolution had requested the apex court to abrogate the law, as otherwise the state was bound to implement its “arbitrary, unreasonable and irrational” provisions under Article 256 of the Constitution
- ✓ The law intends to provide citizenship for Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Jain, Parsi and Buddhist minorities who fled Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh due to religious persecution and entered India by December 31, 2014.
- ✓ This is the second instance in the last 60 years that a state government has knocked the doors of the apex court resisting implementation of a Parliament-enacted law

- ✓ The Article 131 provides exclusive jurisdiction to the apex court to decide suits relating to Centre-state and state-state disputes.
- ✓ In 1961, West Bengal government had filed a suit in the SC under Article 131 against Parliament passing the Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition and Development) Act, 1957, which had empowered the Centre to acquire land vested or owned by the state.
- ✓ In recent years, two judgments were reported on the issue of state vs centre or state vs state cases
- ✓ The first judgment reported in 2012 — State of Madhya Pradesh vs Union of India — concluded that States cannot challenge a Central law under Article 131.
- ✓ The second judgment reported in 2025 — State of Jharkhand vs State of Bihar — took the opposite view and referred the question of law to a larger Bench of the Supreme Court for final determination.
- ✓ The CAA came into effect all over the country from January 10

➤ **Himachal Pradesh – sets a Guinness World Record by making a record-breaking 1995kg Khichdi on the eve of Makar Sankranti**



- ✓ A massive 1,995kg of khichdi — a dish made from pulses and rice — was prepared at Tattapani in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh on January 14
- ✓ The state Department of tourism and civil aviation had created the new world record by cooking 1,995kg khichdi in a single utensil
- ✓ The utensil used to prepare the khichdi was brought from Jagadhri in Haryana, and stood 5.5-ft-tall and had a diameter of 7ft.
- ✓ A team of 25 chefs from Himachal Pradesh tourism department prepared the khichdi in 5 hours, using 405kg rice, 190kg pulses, 90kg ghee, 55kg spices and 1,100 litres of water
- ✓ The earlier record in this category stood at 918.8kg.

➤ **Arunachal Pradesh - has signed an agreement with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to prepare a Red List Assessment of all orchids in the State**



- ✓ With the signing of the pact, Arunachal Pradesh becomes the first State in the country to initiate IUCN's “red listing” at the State level

NATIONAL

- **The enchanting “Beating Retreat” ceremony - is likely to conclude this year with the country’s national song “Vande Mataram” instead of “Sare Jahan se Achha”**



- ✓ The iconic “Sare Jahan se Achha”, had replaced the decades-old tradition of playing a traditional Christian hymn and Mahatma Gandhi’s favourite “Abide with Me” at the end of the “beating retreat” musical spectacle.
 - ✓ In ancient and mediaeval times, the military “beating retreat” ceremony, with buglers playing the retreat, was used as a signal to halt fighting, recall patrolling units and lower flags at sunset.
 - ✓ In modern-day India, it signifies a spectacular musical end to the annual Republic Day celebrations.
 - ✓ It is held at Vijay Chowk at one end of the majestic Rajpath in New Delhi
 - ✓ The popular Christian hymn “Abide with Me” was composed by poet Henry Francis Lyte, but is usually sung to William Henry Monk’s melody “Eventide”
 - ✓ The tune had been played at the annual ceremony since 1950
 - ✓ In 2017, 2018 and 2019, the ceremony ended with the ever-popular tune of Sare Jahan se Achha
 - ✓ In 2018, for instance, 25 of the 26 performances were tunes composed by Indian musicians, with “Abide with Me” being the only western tune
 - ✓ In 2019, ‘Abide with Me’ was among the 8 western tunes out of the 27 performances.
 - ✓ This year, ‘Vande Mataram’ is all set to replace ‘Abide With Me’ indicating the end of western tunes.
- **No jeweller in the country - will be allowed to sell gold jewellery without getting hallmark certification from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) from January 15, 2021 onwards**
 - ✓ This was announced by Consumer Affairs Minister, Ramvilas Paswan
 - ✓ The jewellery vendors have been given one year to arrange registration and compulsory hallmarking in the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).
 - ✓ Instead of 10 grades earlier, hallmarked gold jewellery will henceforth be available in 3 grades of 14 carat, 18 carat and 22 carat
 - ✓ If jewellery or artefacts are sold without a BIS hallmark, then the jeweller may have to pay a penalty of 5 times the cost of the object or even end up with imprisonment up to one year.

- ✓ Gold hallmarking is a purity certification and is voluntary in the country now.
 - ✓ The BIS is already running a hallmarking scheme for gold jewellery since April 2000 and about 40% of gold jewellery is now hallmarked
 - ✓ Consumers have to watch out for 4 marks on hallmarked gold jewellery - BIS triangular purification mark, purity in carat, certification centre's name and jewellers' identification mark
 - ✓ The mandatory hallmarking aims to protect the public against lower caratage
 - ✓ It will also ensure consumers not getting cheated while buying gold ornaments and get the purity as marked on the ornaments
 - ✓ The purity of gold is measured in karat of gold.
 - ✓ 100% pure gold is called 24 Karat gold
 - ✓ 22 Karat gold is 91.6% pure and hence the name '916' hallmark is mentioned with respect to gold jewelleryes.
- **The Environment Ministry - has relaxed Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules for 'Blue Flag' certified beaches**
- ✓ The rules restrict construction near beaches to help states construct the necessary infrastructure near the beaches, thereby enabling them to receive 'Blue Flag' certification
 - ✓ Last year, the Ministry selected 13 beaches in India to vie for the certificate
 - ✓ The selected beaches are — Ghoghala beach (Diu), Shivrajpur beach (Gujarat), Bhogave beach (Maharashtra), Padubidri and Kasarkod beaches (Karnataka), Kappad beach (Kerala), Kovalam beach (Tamil Nadu), Eden beach (Puducherry), Rushikonda beach (Andhra Pradesh), Miramar beach (Goa), Golden beach (Odisha), Radhanagar beach (Andaman & Nicobar Islands) and Bangaram beach (Lakshadweep).
 - ✓ The 'Blue Flag' certification is an international recognition for beaches that meet certain criteria of cleanliness and environmental propriety.
 - ✓ It also requires beaches to create certain infrastructure like portable toilet blocks, grey water treatment plants, a solar power plant, seating facilities, CCTV surveillance etc., for the convenience of the tourists.
 - ✓ The certification is granted by the Denmark-based Foundation for Environment Education
 - ✓ The certification will cover 33 stringent criteria under 4 major heads for the beaches - (i) Environmental Education and Information (ii) Bathing Water Quality (iii) Environment Management and Conservation and (iv) Safety and Services.
 - ✓ The 'Blue Flag' beach is an 'eco-tourism model' and certifies the beaches that provide tourists and beachgoers clean and hygienic bathing water, facilities/amenities, a safe and healthy environment, and sustainable development of the area.
 - ✓ The Blue Flag Programme was started in France in 1985

- ✓ It has been implemented in Europe since 1987, and in areas outside Europe since 2001, when South Africa joined.
- **Indian Railways - planning to offer access to “high quality, buffer free” video content to passengers by the year 2022**
- ✓ The project will be implemented by PSU RailTel
- ✓ RailTel has chosen Margo Network, a subsidiary of Zee Entertainment, as the digital entertainment service provider for providing content-on-demand (CoD) on trains and at railway stations
- ✓ The multilingual content will include movies, shows, music and educational programs.
- ✓ It will be available in both paid and unpaid formats, as per the requirements of the passengers
- ✓ The content will be provided in moving trains through media servers installed in trains.
- ✓ Apart from this, the CoD platform will also offer e-commerce services such as bookings for cab, bus and trains.
- ✓ The project will cover all 17 Zones of Indian Railways and a total of approximately 8,731 trains.

PERSONALITIES

- **Captain Tania Shergill - will lead the marching contingent at the Army Day parade on January 15, 2020**



- ✓ Tania represents the fourth-generation in her family to serve in the military
- ✓ She was commissioned into the Corps of Signals from the Officers' Training Academy at Chennai in 2017
- ✓ Tania will also lead the Army's contingent down the majestic Rajpath during the Republic Day parade on January 26.
- ✓ She hails from Hoshiarpur and holds an engineering degree in electronics and communications,
- ✓ Capt Shergill is a unique officer in the sense that her father was from the Artillery Regiment, grandfather from the Armoured Corps and great grandfather from the Sikh Regiment in the infantry.
- ✓ Her father, Capt Surat Singh Gill, joined the CRPF after retiring from the Army and was awarded the President's Police Medal for gallantry as well as for meritorious service
- ✓ The instance is not the first time that women officers have led the Army, Navy or IAF marching contingents or taken part in the Republic Day parade.

- ✓ In 2015, with the then US President Barack Obama as the chief guest, the Army, Navy and IAF had fielded all-women marching contingents for the very first time.
- ✓ It was based on PM Narendra Modi's call that "woman power" or "Naari Shakti" would be the predominant theme of that year's Republic Day celebrations.
- ✓ Even last year, Captain Bhavna Kasturi had led an all-men Army contingent on the Republic Day parade.
- ✓ The Army Day is celebrated on January 15 every year
- ✓ The day was observed in recognition of Field Marshal K M Cariappa taking over as the first commander-in-chief of the Indian Army from Sir Francis Butcher, the last British commander in 1949.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **US researchers - have developed the first-ever "living robot" or 'xenobot' by engineering bits of frog embryo to behave like "living, programmable organisms."**

COMPUTER-DESIGNED LIVING FORMS

<p>What Xenobots are 1mm-wide 'robots' built by stitching together living cells from frog embryos that can be programmed to carry out specific tasks</p>	<p>can't reproduce; doesn't have a mouth, digestive system, limbs or nervous system. It's fuelled by bits of embryonic yolk and dies in about a week when the food runs out</p>
<p>Is It Living? Xenobot has living cells that interact with each other. It can heal itself if damaged. But it's unlike any living being. It</p>	<p>What Can It Do? Not much yet. But in future could deliver drugs, clean up plastic or nuclear waste, remove plaque from human arteries</p>

- ✓ The technology will help to create computer-designed "life forms" that will be used to deliver drugs into the human body, clean up radioactive waste, collect microplastics in the oceans or even remove plaque from human arteries
- ✓ These millimetre-wide bots were constructed by stitching together two cell types in specific ways so that they are able to move towards a target on their own and carry out the assigned tasks
- ✓ The bots were also designed to pick up a payload — such as a medicine that needs to be carried to a specific place inside a patient — and could heal themselves after being cut
- ✓ The bots were named after the species of African frogs, *Xenopus laevis*, whose embryonic cells or stem cells were used by the research team for the project.
- ✓ Unlike traditional robots, the xenobots are fully biodegradable and could theoretically accomplish the tasks without causing any type of pollution.

DEFENCE

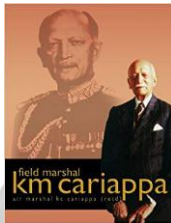
- **The Cabinet Committee on Security - has cleared a deadly weapons and sensors package for the 4 guided-missile destroyers under construction at Mazagon Docks in Mumbai**
- ✓ The CCS had cleared over ₹6,150 crore acquisition cost of a wide range of advanced weapon systems and sensors for the four 7,300-tonne destroyers being constructed indigenously under 'Project-15B'
- ✓ The first of the destroyers, INS Visakhapatnam, is likely to be commissioned in 2021-2022.
- ✓ It will be followed by her sister warships, INS Mormugao and INS Imphal
- ✓ The fourth destroyer under construction is yet to be named.
- ✓ The destroyers, which span 163 metres in length and 17.4 metres at the beam, have been indigenously designed and constructed
- ✓ Once these warships are commissioned, they will join the ranks of operational destroyers named INS Delhi, INS Mumbai, INS Mysore, INS Kolkata, INS Kochi and INS Chennai.
- ✓ The naval tradition to name indigenously constructed destroyers is after a state capital or big city.
- ✓ These naval destroyers are ranked second, only after the aircraft carriers in terms of size and combat power
- ✓ All the four destroyers will be armed with BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles as well as next-generation Barak surface-to-air missile systems, among other weapons like 127 mm guns and rocket launchers.
- ✓ While BrahMos has been developed with Russia, the Barak-NG is a collaboration between Israeli Aerospace Industries - Rafael and Defence Research & Development Organisation.
- ✓ The interception range of the supersonic Barak-NG missile systems has been increased from the earlier 70 km to around 100 km
- ✓ It provides an all-weather 'defence shield' against incoming enemy fighters, drones, helicopters, missiles and other armaments.
- ✓ The strike range of the 290-km Brah-Mos is also now being extended
- ✓ While the ₹29,644-crore fixed cost component for construction of the destroyers was signed in 2011, the project cost of the four stealth warships has increased now to around ₹35,800 crore
- ✓ The Navy has a force level of 125 warships as well as 15 diesel electric and two nuclear submarines, along with around 235 aircraft, helicopters and drones

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➤ Indian Army Day – January 15



- ✓ The country celebrates the 72nd Army Day this year on January 15
- ✓ Army Day Parade is also organized at Parade Ground, Delhi on this day
- ✓ On this day in 1949, Field Marshal KM Cariappa took the command of Indian Army from General Francis Butcher



- ✓ General Butcher served from January 1, 1948, to January 15, 1949, at the top post of the army.
- ✓ KM Cariappa led the Indian army along the western border in the Indo-Pak war of 1947.
- ✓ After his retirement, he served as the High Commissioner of India in Australia and New Zealand till 1956
- ✓ The Indian Government had honored him with the rank of 'Field Marshal' in 1986.

