

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – JAN 19, 2020

TAMIL NADU

- **Tamil Nadu - to hold the annual Pulse Polio immunisation camp on January 19, 2020**
- ✓ The camp aims to vaccinate 70.5 lakh children under 5 years as part of a nationwide campaign.



- ✓ The state will hold the mass vaccination drive in a single phase between 7am and 5pm on January 19 and use the next one week for the mop-up activities.
- ✓ In its 16th polio-free year, TN will conduct intensive campaign across 40,051 booths in all primary health centres, government hospitals, state medical college hospitals, ICDS centres, noon meal centres and schools
- ✓ After administering the Polio drops, the left little finger of all vaccinated children will be marked with a black indelible ink for identification

SCHEMES

- **Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani - inaugurates 'Yashaswini Scheme' for women entrepreneurship and 'Swasthya Sakhi project' in Taleigao town near Panaji district of Goa recently**



- ✓ The Yashaswini Scheme for Women entrepreneurship will provide women Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Goa with interest-free loans up to Rs 5 lakh for a tenure of 5 years.
- ✓ The loan has to be repaid in a total of 4 installments, starting from the second year
- ✓ The Swasthya Sakhi Project intends to ensure the wellness and welfare of women, especially during pregnancy.
- ✓ Under the project, a diagnostic kit will be provided to the healthcare workers to monitor pregnant women and conduct basic diagnostic tests such as blood sugar, blood pressure, blood haemoglobin and heart rate
- ✓ The kit has been developed by the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI)

STATES

- **The Assam government and the Centre - signed a \$88 million loan agreement with the World Bank on January 16, 2020 to implement the Assam Inland Water Transport Project in the state**



- ✓ The project intends to modernise the infrastructure and services of Assam's passenger ferry sector, which operates on its rivers including the Brahmaputra.
- ✓ Overall, there are around 15 waterways in Assam on rivers including Tiwang, Barak, Kopili, Puthimari, Doyang and Lohit.
- ✓ Assam has more than 361 ferry routes with a majority of them cross the Brahmaputra or serve its islands

NATIONAL

- **The Union Government - renamed its 'National TB Control Programme' to 'National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme'**
- ✓ India has set a goal of 2025 for eliminating the disease, five years ahead of the goal of United Nations Sustainable Development target.
- ✓ It has to be noted that WHO had recently observed that TruNat MTB, the molecular test developed by Indian Scientists has greatest accuracy
- ✓ The battery operated, TruNat MTB can diagnose Tuberculosis within one hour
- ✓ Earlier, similar renaming was also done for leprosy and polio programmes.
- ✓ In 1983, National Control Programme was renamed to National Leprosy Eradication Programme
- ✓ Also, in case of Polio, National Programme for Control of Polio myelitis was renamed to Polio eradication Programme.

- **The Railway authorities in Uttarakhand - have decided to replace Urdu language on signboards at platforms with Sanskrit.**



- ✓ The signboards having names of railway stations written in Hindi, English and Urdu will hereafter be written in Hindi, English and Sanskrit.
- ✓ According to railway officials, the decision has been taken as per provisions of the Railway Manual, which says that names of the railway stations should be written in Hindi, English and in the second language of the state
- ✓ In 2010, the Uttarakhand government had become the first in the country to give Sanskrit the status of second official language of the Himalayan state
- ✓ Later in 2019, Himachal Pradesh became the second state to provide Sanskrit the status of second official language in the state.

- **Patna's Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport - launches a regular air ambulance service from a dedicated round-the-clock counter.**

- ✓ The counter was inaugurated by Bihar health minister Mangal Pandey on January 16



- ✓ The Airports Authority of India has given its approval to similar counters at airports in Gaya and Ranchi
- ✓ On an average, up to 12 patients use the air ambulance service in Bihar per month
- ✓ An air ambulance is a small plane loaded with specialised equipment, medication and a trained team to shift critically ill patients to the hospitals at a different place.

- **The National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) - has recently launched a real estate portal to potential home buyers**

- ✓ The portal www.housingforall.com will list out all the ready-to-move properties along with a construction completion certificate.
- ✓ The portal will provide its services to the real estate agents only.
- ✓ Overall, about one lakh ready-to-move houses are available in the country
- ✓ NAREDCO is expecting more than 1,000 projects to get listed in the portal.

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

- **The Supreme Court - has ruled that casual workers are also entitled to social security benefits under the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act.**
- ✓ The bench of Justices U U Lalit and Indu Malhotra held that an employer cannot differentiate between contractual and permanent employees as per Section 2(f) of the EPF Act
- ✓ As per the Act, the definition of an employee is inclusive, and it includes all persons engaged either directly or indirectly in connection with the work of an establishment and are paid wages
- ✓ The order, issued to public sector unit Pawan Hans Limited, instructs to bring all contractual employees under its PF scheme and provide benefits from January 2017, when the workers' union had approached court
- ✓ Of its 840 employees, the company engaged 570 on a regular basis, while 270 were contract workers.
- ✓ Earlier in 2001, the Centre had issued a notification making the EPF Act applicable to aircraft or airline establishments employing 20 or more people but exempted government-owned airlines.

INTERNATIONAL

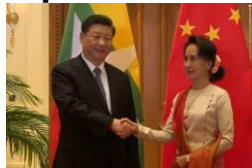
- **Prince Harry and wife Meghan Markle – have decided not to use the title of “Royal Highness” under a deal struck with the Buckingham Palace to step aside as senior royals**



- ✓ The couple will forego state funding and have to repay around 2.4 million pounds of tax payer money that was spent on renovating their home near Windsor Castle
- ✓ The unusual deal was negotiated by representatives of the Queen Elizabeth II, Harry, and other senior members of the family
- ✓ It puts an end to a crisis that started 10 days ago when the couple abruptly announced plans to give up their royal duties and spend majority of the year in Canada in North America.
- ✓ The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, as the couple are known formally, will be allowed to earn money in the private sector to support themselves financially

and have to be engaged in any work that would “uphold the values of Her Majesty.”

- ✓ Harry will remain a prince and sixth in line to the British throne.
 - ✓ Queen Elizabeth II has three direct heirs to the throne - Charles, 71, William, 37, and 6-year-old Prince George
- **China and Myanmar – signed 33 agreements to speed up infrastructure projects as part of the flagship Belt and Road Initiative in Myanmar**



- ✓ However, no major new projects were agreed during the visit by President Xi Jinping, the first of any Chinese leader in 19 years.
- ✓ Xi and Myanmar state counselor, Aung San Suu Kyi signed the deals
- ✓ The most significant deal appeared to be a concession and shareholder’s agreement for the \$1.3 billion Kyaukphyu deep sea port and Special Economic Zone on the Bay of Bengal, located in a part of Rakhine State
- ✓ Kyaukphyu project is a significant one for India as the so called China-Myanmar economic corridor provides China with a shortcut to the Indian Ocean.
- ✓ This shortcut allows China’s vast oil and gas imports from the Persian Gulf to bypass the Strait of Malacca, and could also serve a future military purpose.
- ✓ China has also acquired Pakistan’s Gwadar port and Sri Lanka’s Hambantota port, raising concerns over the Chinese theory of “String of Pearls” to encircle India by Beijing.
- ✓ The Chinese President’s state visit to Myanmar’s capital came as Western investors started avoiding the country due to the Rohingya crisis.
- ✓ A 2017 military crackdown on the minority, which was termed as ‘genocide’ by UN investigators, forced around 7,40,000 people from western Rakhine state to cross the border into Bangladesh

PERSONALITIES

- **Dmitry Medvedev, Prime Minister of Russia – tendered his resignation to the President Vladimir Putin on January 15, 2020 along with his cabinet**
- ✓ According to President Putin, Medvedev’s cabinet failed to achieve its goals.
 - ✓ Later, Putin suggested Mikhail Mishustin’s name as the new Prime Minister of the country.
 - ✓ Mishustin was the chief of the tax department of the country.
 - ✓ Earlier, Putin talked about constitutional amendments in the nation address, as per which Putin wanted to extend his hold on the presidential power even after his term ends.
 - ✓ He said that new constitutional provisions would allow MPs to nominate the Prime Minister and members of the cabinet.

- ✓ He also announced that Medvedev will be appointed as the Deputy Head of the Presidential Security Council.
- ✓ Putin's current term is coming to an end in 2024 and he is the longest serving President of Russia apart from Joseph Stalin
- ✓ Before becoming the President, Putin served as an officer in the Soviet Union's intelligence agency KGB for more than 15 years.

DEFENCE

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh - flagged off the 51st unit of K-9 Vajra-T cannon at the Larsen & Toubro armored system complex at Hazira, Surat on January 16**



- ✓ Earlier in 2017, the Ministry of Defence had signed an agreement of Rs 4500 crore with L&T company to supply 100 units of K9 Vajra-T 155mm/52 caliber guns to the Indian Army under 'Make in India' initiative.
 - ✓ K-9 Vajra Self-Propelled Artillery was inducted into the Army in November 2018
 - ✓ The Engineering major, L&T is assembling these canons with the help of South Korea's Hanwha Techwin Company
 - ✓ The weight of the cannon is 50 tons and it has the capability to fire 47 kg shells up to 43 kilometers.
 - ✓ The K-9 Vajra cannon is also used by the South Korean army
 - ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'Make in India' scheme on September 25, 2014, to strengthen the country's economy besides providing employment to the youth
 - ✓ The scheme aims to create 100 million new jobs by 2020
- **The Indian Army - recently conducted the largest air borne exercise called the 'Winged Raider'.**



- ✓ Around 500 troops participated in the exercise, which has demonstrated the operational readiness of the paratroopers and air warriors
- ✓ The exercise was conducted in the north-eastern theatre
- ✓ The C-130 Hercules, Dhruv Helicopters and C-17 globe master transport aircraft participated in the exercise.
- ✓ The exercise focused on encountering China in the border region.
- ✓ Earlier, similar exercise called Him Vijay was conducted in Arunachal Pradesh in October 2019.
- ✓ The exercise tested the Integrated Battle Groups (IBG) in Indian army, focusing on mountain combat activities

APPOINTMENTS

- **Senior Indian Advocate Harish Salve - has been appointed as the Queen's Counsel (QC) for the courts of England and Wales.**



- ✓ Harish Salve's appointment was announced recently when the UK's Ministry of Justice released the new list of 'silk appointments'
- ✓ The renowned lawyer will be formally appointed to the position on March 16, 2020.
- ✓ Harish Salve served as the Solicitor General of India from November 1999 to November 2002.
- ✓ He is employed as a barrister with the legal firm - Blackstone Chambers since 2013
- ✓ Salve is the lead counsel for India at the International Court of Justice in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case in 2019.
- ✓ It has to be noted that Harish Salve had charged just Re 1 to represent India in the case.
- ✓ He had also played a key role in the Hyderabad Nizam funds case which India had won
- ✓ The decades-old legal dispute with Pakistan took place at the UK Court over £35m-worth funds belonging to the 7th Nizam of Hyderabad.
- ✓ The Queen's Counsel (QC) refers to a group of senior lawyers, appointed from different Commonwealth countries during the reign of a 'female' sovereign.
- ✓ The special counsel will enjoy the privilege of sitting within the Bar of court and wear silk gowns of a special design and hence these appointments are often called "taking silk" or as the silk appointments.

- ✓ A lawyer serving as a barrister or a Scottish advocate for at least 10 years is a pre-requisite to be appointed to the special counsel
- ✓ In January 2019, Indian advocate Dipen Sabharwal was appointed as the Queen's Counsel.
- **Nripendra Misra, former Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister - has been appointed as the new Chairperson of Nehru Memorial Museum**



- ✓ According to an order from the Culture Ministry issued recently, the eight-member Council has been reconstituted.
- ✓ The new vice-chairperson will be Prasar Bharati Chair A. Surya Prakash.
- ✓ The other council members include Indian Council for Cultural Relations Chairperson Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, journalist and Rajya Sabha member Swapan Dasgupta and Indian Institute of Advanced Study Chairperson Kapil Kapoor.
- ✓ Two Culture Ministry officials and the NMML Director will be ex-officio members.
- ✓ The reconstitution comes following the revamp of the wider NMML Society last November when Congress leaders Karan Singh, Mallikarjun Kharge and Jairam Ramesh were removed.
- ✓ The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library was set up in 1966 as an autonomous institution under the Culture Ministry.
- ✓ Located at the Teen Murti Bhavan, Nehru's official residence as Prime Minister, it contains his papers and others related to the freedom movement and other aspects of modern history.
- ✓ The Government is finalising plans to set up a Museum of Prime Ministers in the premises of the Nehru Memorial Museum

OBITUARY

- **Khagendra Thapa Magar, world's shortest man who could walk, as verified by Guinness World Records - died of pneumonia in Nepal on January 17**



- ✓ The 27-year old Magar was measuring a mere 67.08 centimetres (2 feet 2.41 inches)
- ✓ Magar was first declared the world's shortest man in 2010.
- ✓ He lost the title after Nepal's Chandra Bahadur Dangi, who measured 54.6cm, was discovered and named the world's shortest mobile man.
- ✓ Magar regained the title after Dangi's death in 2015

SPORTS

- **Three-time doubles Grand Slam winner Sania Mirza – claimed her 42nd WTA doubles title in the WTA Hobart International doubles final on January 18**



- ✓ Former doubles No.1 Mirza and Ukraine's Nadiia Kichenok defeated the second-seeded Chinese duo Peng Shuai and Zhang Shuai in straight sets to win the women's doubles title
 - ✓ The 33 year old, Sania won her last title in the first week of 2017 in the Brisbane International in partnership with Bethanie Mattek-Sands of USA
 - ✓ It was one of three doubles finals she reached that year before announcing her pregnancy in April of 2018.
 - ✓ The former world No.1 won the Australian Open doubles title in 2016
 - ✓ She had a successful 2015 season in which she claimed the Wimbledon and US Open doubles titles, all in partnership with Martina Hingis.
 - ✓ Sania took a two year break from Tennis since 2017, initially due to injuries and then after delivering a son in October 2018.
- **Star Wrestler Vinesh Phogat - won her first gold medal of the 2020 season in the 53 kg category at the Rome Ranking Series event**



- ✓ Teen sensation Anshu Malik bagged silver in 57kg competition in Rome
- ✓ Vinesh had bagged bronze at the World Wrestling Championships, and assured herself of an Olympic berth last year
- ✓ She occupied the number two spot in the world ranking charts in the 53kg weight category

- ✓ Vinesh has been competing in 48 kg category and won Gold in Asiad and Commonwealth Games
- ✓ She has recently switched from 50 kg to 53 kg category
- ✓ Vinesh is only the fifth Indian woman wrestler to win a Worlds medal after Alka Tomar (2006), Geeta Phogat (2012), Babita Phogat (2012) and Pooja Dhanda (2018).

RANKINGS

- **India - ranked 84th in the Henley Passport Index, released recently**
- ✓ Japan is holding first position from last three years.

MOST POWERFUL PASSPORTS, 2020

Passport	Henley rank	Access to destinations
Japan	1	191
Singapore	2	190
SKorea	3	189
Germany	3	189
Italy	4	188
Finland	4	188
Spain	5	187
Luxembourg	5	187
Denmark	5	187

All information: Henley Passport Index 2020 and earlier editions

INDIAN PASSPORT OVER THE YEARS

Year	Henley rank	Access to destinations
2006	71	25
2007	73	—
2008	75	37
2009	75	—
2010	77	50
2011	78	53
2012	82	51
2013	74	52
2014	76	52
2015	88	51
2016	85	52
2017	87	49
2018	81	60
2019	82	59
2020	84	58

- ✓ Japan's passport holders can visit 191 countries without any visa.
- ✓ Other top rankings of the index are - Singapore (2nd) Germany (3rd), South Korea (3th), Italy (4th), Finland (4th), Spain followed by Luxembourg and Denmark (5th)
- ✓ In 2006, India has been ranked 71st in the inaugural year of index.
- ✓ Currently, Indian passport holders can go to 58 countries without obtaining a visa.
- ✓ The list in the rankings included passports of 199 countries and 227 tourist places
- ✓ UAE's passport has witnessed the highest growth from 65th position in 2010 to 18th in 2020
- ✓ Nigeria's passport ranked at 199th is the weakest passport in the world.
- ✓ The rankings of the 'most powerful' passports in the world are based on data collected from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

AMAZON'S INDIAN INVESTMENTS – A REPORT

- E-commerce giant, Amazon Inc founder and CEO Jeff Bezos – announced an investment of \$1 billion (over Rs. 7000 crore) to digitise small Indian sellers
- ✓ In June 2016, Bezos said Amazon would pump \$5 billion in the India retail business, even though it has already committed over \$6.25 billion.
- ✓ This includes investments in offline retailers such as Future Retail, More and Shoppers Stop.
- ✓ Amazon's India investments have already crossed \$7 billion, including investments and commitments in other businesses like cloud services and offshore operations
- ✓ In order to involve small and medium businesses, a mega summit called the 'smBhav' was organized by Amazon in New Delhi on January 14
- ✓ Around 3000 small and medium entrepreneurs attended the summit.



- ✓ Amazon intends to create the jobs - both directly and indirectly - across industries, including information technology, skill development, content creation, retail, logistics, and manufacturing
- ✓ Since 2014, Amazon has grown its employee base more than four times in India
- ✓ Last year, it had inaugurated its new campus building in Hyderabad – Amazon's first fully-owned campus outside the US and the largest building globally in terms of employees (15,000) and space (9.5 acres).

HERE'S A SNAPSHOT OF BEZOS'S VAST OPERATIONS IN INDIA

INVESTMENTS IN VARIOUS UNITS

ONLINE RETAIL BUSINESS:	OFFLINE RETAILERS:
₹40,617 cr	₹3,660 cr
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Amazon Seller Services (main online marketplace unit): ₹33,500 cr ➤ Amazon Pay (digital payments): ₹4,582 cr ➤ Amazon Wholesale (business-to-business trading unit): ₹1,110 cr ➤ Amazon Transportation Services (logistics unit): ₹620 cr ➤ Amazon Retail India (food & vegetables retail): ₹355 cr* ➤ Frontizo (JV with Patnis, which acts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More (JV with Samara Capital where Amazon owns 49% stake): ₹1,980 cr ➤ Future Retail (through Future Coupons for 3.5% stake): ₹1,500 cr ➤ Shoppers Stop (5% stake): ₹180 cr
	<p style="color: red;">OFFSHORING</p> <p>Amazon IT Services: ₹1,088 cr</p>
	<p style="color: red;">REVENUES & LOSSES</p> <p>For ecommerce</p> <p>Amazon India's four key units – online marketplace, whole trading unit, payments and</p>





ALANGANALLUR JALLIKATTU – A REPORT

- The Tamil Nadu’s highly popular Alanganallur Jallikattu - concluded with all the traditional fanfare associated with the event on January 17
- ✓ In all, 739 bulls were sent into the arena, and 688 bull tamers came to tame the bulls.

ALANGANALLUR JALLIKATTU FIGURES			
Number of bulls in the field	Number of tamers in the field	Total injured	Tamers
739	688	36	18
		Owners 10	Viewers 8

- ✓ The spectator count as per estimates was 15,000, which included people from across the state and tourists from other countries
- ✓ The first prize of one car each was given to the participant who tames the highest number of bulls and the best bull in the event
- ✓ The second and third prizes in the event were motorbike and Rs 10,000 in cash.
- ✓ Ranjith Kumar from Alanganallur was adjudged the Best Bull Tamer at this year's event — he caught 16 bulls
- ✓ He came in the 9th round of the event and set a unique record of taming 16 bulls in a single round, which no one has done ever before.



- ✓ Ranjith was presented with a Hyundai Santro car and four milch cows worth Rs 7 lakhs by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Edappadi K Palaniswami.
- ✓ Interestingly, last year, his brother Ram Kumar got the Best Tamer award.
- ✓ The second prize of a motorbike was bagged by Karthik from Alagarkoil, who tamed 14 bulls
- ✓ The third prize was won by Ganesan from Arittampatti, who tamed 13 bulls, and awarded Rs 10000 cash
- ✓ Some star bulls of the event are police officer, Anuradha's bull, Ravanan from Pudukottai, and Karuppan from Kulamangalam, reared by M Maranadu, which won the best bull prize
- ✓ The event is the last one among the holy trinity of Jallikattu in Tamil Nadu, the other two being Avaniapuram and Palamedu.
- ✓ The Jallikattu at Avaniapuram marked the start of the once-a-year bull taming sport in many rural and semi-urban regions of Tamil Nadu

- ✓ If the participant manages to hang on over the hump of the bull for a determined distance, he is declared a winner and if not, the animal emerges the victor.
- ✓ In January 2017, massive protests were held in Tamil Nadu seeking nod to hold Jallikattu, which was banned by the Supreme Court
- ✓ Following the protests, a bill to allow the sport was unanimously adopted by the Tamil Nadu Assembly on January 23, 2017 by amending the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960

