

**EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – DEC 28, 2018**

**STATES**

- **Assam – celebrates ‘Dwijing’ festival from December 27 to January 7, 2019 (12 days)**



- ✓ The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the annual river festival began on the bank of River Aie at Chirang district
- ✓ Organised by - Assam Tourism and Bodoland Tourism
- ✓ About 15 lakh tourists are expected to participate in the festival
- ✓ The festival is celebrated in the Bodoland Districts of Assam with various colorful events
- ✓ River Aie (Mother) originates from the Himalayan Mountains of Bhutan and flows through the Chirang and Bongaigaon districts of Assam before joining Brahmaputra
- ✓ It is the lifeline of the region as about 30000 families in the region are dependent on it
- ✓ The festival was started in 2016-17 under the name of ‘Aye River Winter Festival’
- ✓ The name was officially changed to “Dwijing (river bank in Bodo language)” in 2017
- ✓ Hagrama Bridge, the longest rural river bridge of the state was a tourist attraction during the festival

# NATIONAL

## ➤ Government – announces new FDI policy on e-commerce



- ✓ The new norms aim to tackle the anti-competitive behaviour by e-commerce entities
  - ✓ They will enable a level- playing field for all sellers especially MSMEs and small traders
  - ✓ The new framework will come into force on February 1, 2019
  - ✓ Highlights of the new norms
  - ✓ Any entity related to ecommerce platforms is barred from selling on that site
  - ✓ The new policy also prohibits ecommerce platforms from giving any preferential treatment to any supplier
  - ✓ Under the new policy, promotional schemes such as cashbacks or faster delivery are deemed unfair and discriminatory
  - ✓ A vendor cannot procure more than 25% of products from group companies of the same marketplace where they intend to sell them
  - ✓ However, there is no cap in case the vendor sells the procured goods on other e-commerce platforms which do not hold a stake in the said firm
  - ✓ With the new norms, Cloudtail, the largest seller of Amazon, can't sell on Amazon as it is a Joint venture between Amazon and NR Narayana Murthy's Catamaran Ventures
  - ✓ Similarly, Flipkart's new owner Walmart may not be able to sell on Flipkart's website
  - ✓ Flipkart cannot sell top smartphone brands, Xiaomi and Oppo as it has exclusive partnerships with them
- **Government – bans 'Khalistan Liberation Force' - under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)**
- ✓ It will be the 40th organisation to be banned under the law
  - ✓ The Khalistan Liberation Force was established in 1986 with the objective of establishing an independent Khalistan from Punjab

- **Lok Sabha – passes the ‘Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill’, commonly referred to as Triple Talaq Bill on December 28 – with a majority of 245-11 votes**
- ✓ The Bill was earlier introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Law and Justice, Ravi Shankar Prasad on December 17, 2018
- ✓ The bill would replace the ordinance passed on September 19, 2018
- ✓ Highlights of the Bill
- ✓ All declaration of triple talaq, either in spoken or written or electronic form, to be void (i.e. not enforceable in law) and illegal
- ✓ Declaration of Triple Talaq would be a cognizable offence, attracting a jail term up to 3 years’ with a fine
- ✓ Under the revised bill, only the aggrieved woman or her close relative, can file a police case against her husband
- ✓ Under the provisions of the bill, the Magistrate may grant bail to the accused only after hearing the woman against whom talaq has been pronounced
- ✓ A Muslim Women against whom the triple talaq is pronounced is entitled to seek financial allowance from her husband for herself and for her dependent children – as determined by the Magistrate
- ✓ A Muslim Women against whom the triple talaq is pronounced is entitled to seek custody of her minor children – as determined by the Magistrate
- ✓ Talaq-e-biddat (Triple Talaq)
- ✓ It refers to the practice under Muslim personal laws where the uttering of word ‘talaq’ thrice in one sitting by a Muslim man to his wife results in an instant and irrevocable divorce
- ✓ In a landmark 3-2 verdict on August 22, 2018, the Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice J. S. Khehar, found the practice of Triple Talaq “un-Islamic” and "arbitrary" – and declared that it was violative of Article 14 and 21 of the Indian Constitution
  
- **Ministry of Tourism – signs MoU with Resbird Technologies - for the development of a Mobile Audio Guide application for 5 iconic sites under the ‘Adopt a Heritage’ project**



- ✓ The 5 iconic sites are –
  - ✓ Rajasthan - Amer Fort
  - ✓ Assam - Kaziranga
  - ✓ Goa - Colva Beach
  - ✓ Kerala - Kumarakom
  - ✓ Bihar - Mahabodhi Temple
- ✓ The Ministry had also announced 7 'monument mitras' including 'Dalmia Bharat Pvt. Ltd' - for the management of Mahabalipuram group of monuments under the CSR initiative for the "Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan" project
- ✓ As of date, 10 MoUs have been executed with various Monument Mitras for the development of heritage sites
  
- **Indian Railways – announces a fare concession of 40% to Transgender Senior citizens**
  - ✓ It will be available from January 1, 2019 for transgenders who are aged 60 years or above
  - ✓ The Railways already grant 40% concession in fares to men aged 60 years or above and 50% concession in fares to women aged 58 years or above
  - ✓ It offers concession in fares ranging from 10-100% to 53 different categories of people
  
- **Union Cabinet – approves the draft 'National Commission for Indian Systems of Medicine (NCIM) Bill, 2018'**
  - ✓ It seeks to replace the existing regulator, Central Council for Indian Medicine
  - ✓ It aims at bringing reforms in the medical education of Indian medicine sector.
  - ✓ It proposes a common entrance exam and an exit exam, which all graduates will have to clear to get practicing licenses
  - ✓ A teacher's eligibility test has been proposed in the Bill to assess the standard of teachers before appointment and promotions
  
- **Union Cabinet – approves the draft 'National Commission for Homoeopathy, Bill, 2018'**
  - ✓ The proposed bill seeks to replace the existing regulator, Central Council for Homoeopathy
  - ✓ It aims to bring reforms in the medical education of Homoeopathy in lines with the National Medical Commission proposed for setting up for Allopathy system of medicine

- **Nagpur division of Central Railways – introduces ‘Automated Train Examination System’ (ATES) – to eliminate manual inspection of trains**



- ✓ It was developed by Konkan Railway Corporation Limited
  - ✓ In the first phase, 2 units of this system have been installed in Ajni
  - ✓ ATES checks every train passing through the track on which it is installed and immediately warns about any issues
  - ✓ It measures axle box temperature, wheel disc temperature and records the undergear of rolling stock of running trains through infrared and other cameras
  - ✓ The system was inaugurated by General Manager of Central Railways, Devendra Kumar Sharma at Betul station on December 18
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- **Government – announces 730-day leave for ‘Single fathers’ working in Central Government jobs**
  - ✓ The Child care leave (CCL) would be across the entire period of service for a single male parent
  - ✓ The amended rule entitles such a beneficiary to 100% salary for the first 365 days and 80% for the next 365 days
  - ✓ So far, only women government servants were entitled to CCL in 3 spells within a year that could be availed for up to two children
  - ✓ A ‘single’ male government employee means “an unmarried or widower or divorcee government servant”
  - ✓ Apart from CCL, women can avail paid maternity leave of 180 days and male parents can claim 15 days
  - ✓ Earlier, the government, had increased the maternity leave for females in the organised sector to 26 weeks through a law passed by Parliament in March 2017



# INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- **India – to give Rs 4500 crore assistance to Bhutan – for its 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan**



- ✓ This was announced by PM, Narendra Modi after talks with the visiting Bhutan PM, Dr. Lotay Tshering
- ✓ The new five-year plan of Bhutan began this year and will continue till 2022
- ✓ He also said that the ground station being built by ISRO in Bhutan will be ready soon

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **26<sup>th</sup> edition of National Children’s Science Congress – inaugurated in Bhubaneswar, Odisha (December 27-31)**
- ✓ Focal theme - “Science, Technology and Innovation for a Clean, Green and Healthy Nation”
- ✓ 800 international students from 10 ASEAN and 7 Gulf countries are also participating in the event this year, apart from students across the country
- ✓ The congress is organized for the second time in Odisha, the first one was in 2015



- ✓ The event was organized by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and supported by the National Council for Science and Technology (NCSTC)

- ✓ The various sessions in the congress provides a platform to children ( in the age group 10 to 17) for displaying their innovations in science



- ✓ R. Dhanusu, a class VII student of the Panchayat Union Middle School at Kangaiyanur (near Villupuram) has been selected to present his research paper on the 'Impact of Brick Kiln on Population of Rhizobium Bacteria in Agriculture' at the Congress
- ✓ History of the Congress
- ✓ National Children's Science Congress was initiated in the year 1993 in New Delhi with the theme 'Know your environment'
- ✓ In 2017, it was held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat with the theme "Science and Innovation for Sustainable Development"
- **12th Annual 'Indian Subcontinent Decision Sciences Institute (ISDSI) conference' - commenced in S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research (SPJIMR), Mumbai**



- ✓ The 4-day conference will provide a platform for the academicians and researchers to discuss about challenges and tools in Decision making domain
- ✓ Theme - "Data Driven Decision Making in the Digital Age"

# AWARDS

- **Champion of Change awards – conferred by the Vice president, M Venkaiah Naidu on December 26, 2018 in New Delhi**
- ✓ In the event, the Vice President gave away 47 such awards
- ✓ Notable recipients
  - ✓ Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh was conferred the ‘Champions of Change’ award - for his leadership role in transforming the governance of the state
    - ✓ Manipur was recognised for the all round development on various parameters in its aspirational district, Chandel
  - ✓ Union Minister of State for Food Processing, Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti
  - ✓ Union Minister for Tribal Affairs, Sudarshan
  - ✓ Member of Parliament, Nishikant Dubey



- ✓ The award selection jury was led by former Chief Justice of India, K G Balakrishna and former Supreme Court judge, Sudha Mishra
- ✓ The award is an initiative of the Interactive Forum of Indian Economy, a NGO recognized by the Government of India
- **Divya Patidar Joshi (Madhya Pradesh) - was crowned with the ‘Mrs. India 2018’ title in New Delhi – at the ‘Mrs. India My Identity Beauty Pageant 2018’**



- ✓ With this win, she would be representing India for Mrs. Universe title in the year 2019



## SPORTS

- **Virat Kohli – surpasses Rahul Dravid's long-standing record of most runs scored 'overseas' by an Indian in a calendar year**



- ✓ Kohli now scored 1138 runs this year overtaking Dravid, who held the record for scoring 1137 runs in Tests away from home in 2002
- ✓ Besides Kohli and Dravid, Mohinder Amarnath scored 1065 runs in 1983 while the great Sunil Gavaskar had notched 918 runs in 1971 to make the top four in the list

## REPORT

- **Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18 – prepared by Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises**
- ✓ The Survey ranking the performance of the various central public sector units – was tabled in the Parliament
- ✓ The survey mentioned that there were 339 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE) in 2017-18, out of which 257 was in operation
- ✓ Highlights of the Survey
- ✓ Public sector firms' contribution (by means of excise duty, customs duty, Goods and Services Tax, income tax, corporate tax, dividend etc) fell 2.98% to Rs 3.5 lakh crore from Rs 3.6 lakh crore in 2016-17
- ✓ The dividend declared or paid by such firms stood at Rs 76,578 crore against Rs 78,129 crore in 2016-17

- ✓ The Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) employed 10.88 lakh people excluding casual and contractual workers in 2017-18 compared to 11.35 lakh in 2016-17, showing a fall of 4.14% in employee strength
- ✓ However, the salary and wages of all CPSEs stood at Rs 1,57,621 crore in 2017-18 against Rs 1,40,956 crore in the previous year, exhibiting a growth of 11.82%
- ✓ Indian Oil Corporation, Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and NTPC, contributed 13.37%, 12.49% and 6.48% respectively to the total profit earned by CPSEs
- ✓ 3 worst performing PSUs include BSNL, Air India and MTNL, which contributed 52.15% of the total loss incurred by CPSEs – for the second successive year
- ✓ The Top-10 loss making PSUs claimed 84.71% of the total losses made by all the 71 CPSEs
- ✓ The Top-10 profit making CPSEs accounted for 61.83% of the total profit earned
- ✓ Top 5 PSUs in 2017-18
  - ✓ The Indian Oil Corporation
  - ✓ ONGC
  - ✓ NTPC
  - ✓ Coal India
  - ✓ Power Grid Corporation

