

**NATIONAL****The Supreme Court's Constitution Bench has referred the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute case for court-appointed and monitored mediation for a "permanent solution".**

- Supreme Court has appointed a 3 member panel of mediators.
- Former apex court judge Justice (retd) F M Kallifulla will head the panel of mediators in the case.
- Other members of the panel of mediators include spiritual guru Shri Shri Ravi Shankar and senior advocate Sriram Panchu.
- The Court directs that the panel of mediators will file a progress report of the mediation proceedings within four weeks and the process should be completed within eight weeks.

**President Ram Nath Kovind launched the Pulse Polio programme for 2019**

- By administering polio drops to children on the eve of the National Immunization Day (10th March) at the Rashtrapati Bhawan.
- More than 17 crore children of less than five years across the country will be given polio drops as part of the drive to sustain polio eradication from the country.

**The Mizoram Cabinet approved the proposed Mizoram Liquor Prohibition Bill,2019.**

- Liquor was prohibited in the state from 1997 till January 2015 with the Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act in force.
- The previous Congress government had allowed opening of wine shops in the state from March 2015.

**Railways Minister Piyush Goyal announced that all mountain railways in India will now have glass-enclosed coaches.**

- Vista dome coaches have large windows on the sides and glass panels on the roof to provide better viewing experience.

**Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan announced that 7 crore LPG connections have been distributed within the last 34 months under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY).**

- PMUY was launched on May 1, 2016.

**The General Elections 2019 will be held in 7 phases beginning from 11th April to 19th May 2019.**

- The model code of conduct has come into force in the entire country with the announcement of the poll schedule.
- There will be approximately 10 lakh polling stations in this Lok Sabha Elections as compared to 9 lakh polling stations in 2014.
- The total electorate in this Lok Sabha elections will be 900 million, of which 15 million voters are in the 18-19 age group.
- Chief Election Commissioner : Sunil Arora

**Madhya Pradesh government issued an ordinance to raise the reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) from 14% to 27%.**

- Governor Anandiben Patel signed the ordinance to amend the Madhya Pradesh Lok Seva (AnusuchitJatiyon, Anusuchit Jan Jatiyonaur Anya PichhadeVargonkeLiyeArakshan) Adhiniyam, 1994 for increasing reservation for OBC to 27%.

**Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr Harsh Vardhan released the India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) in New Delhi.**

- The ICAP provides an integrated vision towards cooling across sectors encompassing interalia reduction of cooling demand, refrigerant transition, enhancing energy efficiency and better technology options with a 20-year time horizon.
- The thrust of the **India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP)** is to look for synergies in actions for securing both environmental and socio-economic benefits.

**The Centre has approved 2 corridors of the Surat Metro project to be executed at an estimated cost of around 12,000 crore rupees.**

- The project will be implemented by the Gujarat Metro Rail Corporation and it will be completed in five years.
- The length of the first corridor - Sarthana to Dream City line - will be 21.61 kilometers and the second - Bhesan to Saroli - will be 18.74 kilometres.

### INTERNATIONAL

#### India-Japan Space Dialogue was held in New Delhi

- The Indian delegation was led by Additional Secretary for Disarmament and International Security Affairs in Ministry of External Affairs, Indra Mani Pandey.
- The Japanese delegation was co-led by Deputy Assistant Minister in Foreign Policy Bureau of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador Policy Planning and International Security Policy, Kansuke Nagaoka and Director General of National Space Policy Secretariat in Cabinet Office Shuzo Takada.
- The dialogue brought together Ministries and agencies related to outer space in the two countries and provided an opportunity for information exchange on the respective space policies.
- Discussions were also held on bilateral cooperation between **JAXA-ISRO**, their space industries, global navigation satellite system, space situational awareness, space security and space-related norms.

#### India signs MoUs with UK, Germany & Austria

- The Union cabinet chaired by the Narendra Modi has approved the Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with 3 countries- UK (**Cancer Research Initiative**), Germany (**Occupational Safety and Health**) & Austria (**Road Infrastructure Sector**).

Country	-Capital	-Currency
➤ Austria	-Vienna	-Euro
➤ UK	-London	-Pound sterling
➤ Germany	-Berlin	-Euro

#### India and ADB signed \$26 Million Loan Agreement for Assam

- The Government of India & the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$26 Million Loan Agreement to provide additional financing for improving drainage infrastructure in Dibrugarh town of Assam under the ongoing Assam Urban Infrastructure Investment Program.
- ADB: HQ-Mandaluyong, **Manila, Philippines**: President- **Takehiko Nakao**.

### ECONOMY

#### Govt sets up a committee to examine insurance scheme issues for advocates

- The Union Government has set-up a five-member committee under the chairmanship of Secretary Legal Affairs to examine the issues related to framing of a proper, structured scheme for providing of insurance cover to the advocates. Committee also suggest modalities for the implementation of such scheme.
- The committee will recommend a comprehensive insurance scheme for the welfare of the advocated all over India to address concerns relating to untimely death and medical insurance.

#### Govt reduced the price of 390 anti-cancer drugs upto 87 pc

- The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority put out the list of 390 anti-cancer non-scheduled medicines with Maximum Retail Price reduction up to 87 per cent.
- This move is expected to benefit 22 lakh cancer patients in the country and will result in annual savings of nearly 800 crore rupees to the consumers.

#### Indian government imposed a complete ban on the import of solid plastic waste.

- Earlier, such imports were partly banned as agencies in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and Export Oriented Units (EOU) were allowed to import solid plastic waste.
- The Environment Ministry said the amendment upholds the principles of sustainable development and ensures minimal impact on the environment.

#### Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced that the Cabinet has approved a plan to revive some stressed thermal power plants to curb power deficit.

- New coal-fired power plants would be set up in Bihar (with the cost Rs.10,439 crore) and Uttar Pradesh (with the cost Rs.11,089 crore) to overcome the power deficit.

#### The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has eased business guidelines for white label ATMs

- RBI has changed guidelines for white label ATMs, allowing companies that manage these machines to source cash directly from the central bank, offer non bank services like bill payments and advertise even non financial products in their premises, increasing the revenue earning scope for these companies.

- White label ATM Operators (WLAO), can now source cash directly from RBI offices and currency chests, and will no longer be dependent on sponsor banks for procurement of cash.

#### **SBI links Savings A/C, Short Term Loans to Repo rate**

- India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) announced that it would link its interest rate on savings bank deposits with balance above Rs.1 lakh and short-term loans to Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s repo rate.
- The new system will come into effect from May 1 2019. With this, SBI became the 1st Indian bank to do so.

#### **New Coins of Rs 1,2,5,10 & 20 Issued**

- The government released new Re 1, Rs 2, Rs 5, and Rs 10 with refreshed design and attention towards the visually impaired citizens.
- The government also introduced new Rs 20 coins. Coins in this new series have been designed by the National Institute of Design.

#### **RBI levied Rs.71 cr fine on 36 banks**

- The RBI levied penalties totaling Rs.71 cr on 36 banks for not complying with directions on linking SWIFT financial messaging platform to their CBS in PNB scam.
- PNB employees had exploited this loophole for facilitating fraudulent transactions worth \$2 billion.

#### **United Bank of India signs Bancassurance deal with HDFC Life**

- United Bank of India has signed a banc assurance deal with private life insurer HDFC Life Insurance Company.
- United Bank's customers will be able to take advantage of HDFC Life's expertise in life insurance products, distribution and customer service.

#### **Marayoor Jaggery to get GI Tag**

- The Marayoor jaggery got the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, making it safe for consumption & ensuring a safe market in future.
- The dark brown Marayur jaggery is handmade at household units in Marayur&Kanthallur, Kerala.

#### **Delhi airport No. 1 in Airports Service Quality**

- Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) has been ranked number one in the world on Airports Service Quality (ASQ) ranking.
- It is now the seventh busiest airport in Asia and among the top 20 busiest airports across the world.

#### **PERSON IN NEWS**

- The **Guinness World Records** has officially confirmed **Kane Tanaka (Japan)** as the world's oldest living person. She is 116 years 66 days old as of (March 9).
- **Dr. Ausaf Sayeed**, presently High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Seychelles, has been appointed as the **next ambassador of India to Saudi Arabia**. He is going to replace Ahmad Javed, who had been serving as envoy to Saudi Arabia since December 2015.
- **Soumya Swaminathan**, a Deputy Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO) has been named as the **Chief Scientist of the WHO**.
- Indian-American television personality and food expert **Padma Lakshmi** has been appointed by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as its newest Goodwill Ambassador**, supporting the agency's fight against inequality and discrimination around the world.

#### **Subhash Chandra Garg appointed as Finance Secretary**

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved Subhash Chandra Garg as the new Finance Secretary who is also the Economic Affairs Secretary.
- He will replace Ajay Narayan Jha who is now the member of the 15th Finance Commission.

#### **Kummanam Rajasekharan quits as Mizoram governor**

- President Ram Nath Kovind has accepted the resignation of Governor of Mizoram Kummanam Rajasekharan. The president has appointed Jagdish Mukhi as the Governor of Mizoram, in addition to his duties of Assam Governor.

### SPORTS

- Tamil Nadu's 16-year-old P Iniyan defeated Ukraine's 37-year-old Grandmaster Sergey Fedorchuk in Noisiel Open chess tournament in France to become India's 61st Grandmaster.

### MISCELLANEOUS

- The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** announced that it will carry out the **1st-ever all-female spacewalk** at the International Space Station (ISS) on March 29, with astronauts **Christina Koch and Anne McClain**. Soviet cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya, the first woman to go to space twice, became the first female spacewalker on July 25, 1984.
- A 400-year-old Kyoto-based temple has unveiled a robotic avatar of the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy, Kannon, in an attempt to keep the younger generation connected with Buddhism. Named '**Mindar**', the robot can join its hands and move its eyes and torso while delivering 25- minute-long sermons to worshippers.
- **Hardeep Singh Puri**, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Housing and Urban Affairs has launched **e-Dharti app** which is a new online system where all the three main modules i.e. Conversion, Substitution, and Mutation have been made online.
- **Google** released **Bolo App** which is aimed to provide elementary school students access to technology like Google's speech recognition and text-to-speech to help kids learn to read in both Hindi and English. It offers 50 stories in Hindi & 40 in English.

### IMPORTANT DAYS

#### International Women's Day 2019

- **International Women's Day** is a global day celebrated on **8 March** that highlights the social, economic, cultural & political achievements of women.
- The **theme for 2019** is “**Think equal, build smart, innovate for change**” & **campaign theme** is **#BalanceforBetter**.

### AWARDS AND HONOURS

- Former governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), **Raghuram Rajan**, has been chosen for the '**Yashwantrao Chavan National Award 2018**' by Yashwantrao Chavan Prathisthan for his contribution to economic development.
- **Priyanka Dubey**, a bilingual correspondent with the BBC at its Delhi bureau, has been named for the **Chameli Devi Jain Award for an Outstanding Woman Journalist for the year 2018**.
- **President Ram Nath Kovind** presented the **Nari Shakti awards 2018**, the highest civilian honour for women in India, in New Delhi on the occasion of International Women's Day. A total of 41 individuals and 3 institutions were given the award.
- **2 stations on Delhi Metro's** red line extension have been renamed in honor of martyrs. Rajendra Nagar Metro Station has been renamed as Major Mohit Sharma Rajendra Nagar station and the New Bus Adda station has been renamed to Shaheed Sthal.

### ONE LINER

- **Al Nagah III**, a 14 day joint defence exercise between India and Oman is scheduled to be held from 12 to 25 March 2019 at Jabel Al Akhdar Mountains in Oman.
- The Ministry of Tourism has won the 1st Prize in the category of TV Cinema Spot at the prestigious international Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019 for Incredible India 2.0 Campaign.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology** at Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh .
- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley released the **book SabkaSaathSabka Vikas** - a collection of selected speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi .
- The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi released the Dictionary of Martyrs of India's Freedom Struggle, at an event in New Delhi. 5 volume dictionaries contain an account of the martyrs from India's 1st War of Independence in 1857 to India's Independence in 1947.