

## **CURRENT AFFAIRS :- FEB 20 – FEB 27, 2018**

- The government of India and the UN jointly announced that India will host the global World Environment Day celebrations on 5 June 2018. The theme for World Environment 2018 is “Beat Plastic Pollution”.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the Palace Queen Humsafar Express between Mysuru and Udaipur in Mysuru Railway Station.
- Singapore will impose a 'carbon tax' from 2019 to cut its greenhouse gas emissions and make companies more competitive as global agreements on climate change take effect. Finance minister Heng Swee Keat stated that the tax would be levied on all facilities producing 25,000 tonnes or more of greenhouse gas emissions a year.
- The Union Cabinet has given approval for creation of National Urban Housing Fund (NUHF) for Rs.60,000 crores.
- Fitch placed Punjab National Bank on Rating Watch Negative (RWN), reflecting a possibility of downgrade following the USD 1.77 billion fraud. The fraud is the biggest ever in the banking history.
- In a major reform in the coal sector since its nationalisation in 1973, the government has allowed private companies to mine the fossil fuel for commercial use. This move ended the monopoly of state-owned Coal India Ltd. Currently, the private sector is allowed coal mining for captive use only.
- Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar launched 4 subsidized food canteens at Faridabad, Gurugram, Hisar, and Yamunanagar. These have been set up under the 'Antyodaya Aahaar Yojana' to provide healthy, nutritious and hygienic food at only Rs.10 per meal to all poor and needy.
- Maharashtra government will roll out 'Asmita Yojana' on the International Women's Day (March 8, 2018) to provide cheap (subsidised) sanitary pads to school girls and women. Under the scheme, schoolgirls studying in Zilla Parishad schools will get sanitary napkin packet at Rs.5 while rural women can avail it at the subsidised rate of Rs.24 and Rs.29.
- The Delhi government announced the launch of "Mission Buniyaad" for improving learning skills of children studying in state and municipal-run schools.
- The Centre has constituted a committee headed by the Vice Chairman of the NITI Aayog Mr. Rajiv Kumar to study the Brahmaputra and flood control measures in Assam and neighbouring states.
- India has been ranked 12th-worst among 52 low-middle income countries based on the number of children dying within the first month of their birth, which is 25.4 per 1,000 live births. Pakistan is the worst, according to the UNICEF. Japan, with an NMR of 0.9 deaths per 1,000 live births, has been ranked the world's safest country in which to be born.
- Kerala government has made vaccination compulsory for school admissions from next academic year onwards.
- The Gandhi Nagar railway station in Jaipur, Rajasthan became railway station to be fully-managed by women.
- The Union Government has issued order setting up the 'NITI Forum for North-East'. The forum will be co-chaired by the Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog Mr Rajiv Kumar and Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region (DoNER), Dr Jitendra Singh.

- Cobra Gold Military Exercise held in Thailand. This year, seven countries are participating in Cobra Gold - the US, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, and Singapore.
- The Indian and Indonesian armies began the sixth edition of their annual military exercise named 'Garuda Shakti' in Bandung, Indonesia.
- The World Day of Social Justice (WDSJ) is observed globally on 20th February. The theme for 2018 is "Workers on the Move: the Quest for Social Justice".
- Google has combined its two payment services, Google Wallet and Android Pay, into a new app called Google Pay. The platform includes features like the ability to pay at checkout counters with a smartphone or pay for public transportation.
- India has been ranked 81st in the global corruption perception index for 2017, released by Transparency International. In the latest ranking New Zealand and Denmark were placed the highest. On the other hand, Syria, Sudan and Somalia were ranked lowest.
- The Telangana Government signed an MOU with Taoyuan City of Taiwan for better technology partnership in the state.
- Flying officer Avani Chaturvedi scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo. She flew a MiG-21 bison in her first solo flight from Jamnagar base of Indian Air Force (IAF) in Gujarat.
- Uttar Pradesh's Khadi and Village Industries Board has signed a pact with Amazon India to facilitate online selling of Khadi products. As part of an MoU, Amazon India will educate, train and enable rural khadi artisans to directly sell their products to Amazon under the brand of UP Khadi.
- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has celebrated International Mother Language Day on 21<sup>st</sup> February. The 2018 theme is- "Linguistic diversity and multilingualism count for sustainable development".
- A three –day India International Textiles Expo (IITExpo) of India began in Sri Lankan capital of Colombo.
- Retirement fund body Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has reduced the interest rate on deposits to 8.55% for 2017-18. The finance ministry had recently lowered interest rate on General Provident Fund (GPF) and Public Provident Fund (PPF) to 7.6%.
- The Government of India and Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$84 million loan for improvement and expansion of water supply in Bhagalpur and Gaya towns in Bihar.
- The Haryana government launched Parivartan, a scheme designed to address 10 issues, including cleanliness and pollution, in 46 developmental blocks of the state. The important issues include facilitation of financing, making agriculture profitable and sustainable, improving health services, and implementing Swachh Bharat.
- Digital payments startup Paytm has launched two insurance companies, Paytm Life Insurance and Paytm General Insurance. Paytm Founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma, CFO Madhur Deora, and Shankar Prasad Nath are the three signatory stakeholders in both the companies.
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an expert committee under the chairmanship of YH Malegam to look into a range of issues relating to classification of bad loans, rising incidents of frauds and effectiveness of audits. A K Misra – Executive Director of RBI will be the Member-Secretary of the committee.

- Noted violinist M.S. Anantharaman, an exponent of Parur style of violin playing had passed away. He was proficient in Carnatic music.
- India will host the first International Solar Alliance (ISA) summit on 11th March 2018. The summit will be held in Delhi.
- The Assam government has announced to observe September 22 as 'Rhino Day' to generate public awareness on protection of the one-horned pachyderm.
- Chinese technology giant Huawei and telecom services provider Bharti Airtel announced to have successfully conducted 5G network trial under a test set-up in India. During the test trial, the speed of more than 3Gbps was achieved.
- Aditya Birla Idea Payments Bank Ltd (ABIPBL) started operations, making it the fifth payments bank to roll out operations. The Reserve Bank has issued a licence to the bank under Section 22 (1) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 to carry on the business of payments bank in India. The other payments banks that have started operations include Airtel Payments Bank Ltd, India Post Payments Bank Ltd, Paytm Payments Bank Ltd and Fino Payments Bank Ltd.
- The Reserve Bank of India has launched Ombudsman Scheme for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) for redressal of complaints against them. The offices of the NBFC ombudsmen will function at four metro centres – New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai.
- Canada's own first franchise-based Twenty20 league "Global T20 Canada", was announced in New Delhi. The Global T20 Canada League has received official sanction of the International Cricket Council (ICC). Cricket Canada has become the first Associate member of the ICC to start a Twenty20 franchise league in the North America market.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Amma Two Wheeler Scheme (in Chennai) of the state government coinciding with the birth anniversary of former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Jayalalithaa. The scheme, with the objective of enhancing the livelihood of working women, aims to provide subsidised two-wheelers to women, transgenders and differently-abled persons.
- The 15th edition of BioAsia, the annual flagship event of the Government of Telangana, was held in Hyderabad. The theme of BioAsia 2018 was "Right Time, Right Now" focusing on strategies to keep up with the pace of change and innovative ways to develop new models for distribution & healthcare delivery.
- The second week of March will witness Andaman & Nicobar Command hosting a multinational mega event MILAN 2018. MILAN is a congregation of littoral navies conducted biennially by Indian Navy at the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- State Bank of India (SBI) is set for a major restructuring of its business in the United Kingdom from April. SBI's UK operations will transform into a subsidiary named State Bank of India UK Limited from April 1, in compliance with wider ring-fencing of capital requirements by the Bank of England.
- Aruna Budda Reddy, who hails from Hyderabad, has created history by becoming the first Indian to win an individual medal at the Gymnastics World Cup in Melbourne, Australia. She clinched a Bronze medal in the Women's Vault.
- Veteran Bollywood actress and Padma Shri awardee Sridevi, who had an illustrious career spanning over four decades, passed away.

- Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) introduced a 'Baal Aadhaar' card for children below the age of five years. No biometric details will be required to get this blue-coloured Baal Aadhaar card. When the child becomes 5 years old, a mandatory biometric update is required.
- Union Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Uma Bharti launched the Swajal pilot project at Village Bhikampura in Rajasthan. Swajal is a community-owned drinking water programme for sustained drinking water supply. Under the scheme, 90% of the project cost will be taken care by the Government and the remaining 10% of the project cost will be contributed by the community.
- Television journalist Rahul Mahajan has been appointed as editor-in-chief of the television channel Rajya Sabha TV. Founded in 2008, Rajya Sabha TV is owned and operated by Rajya Sabha and covers the proceedings of the upper house of the Parliament.
- China was elected as the Vice President of Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a global body mandated to combat terror financing and money laundering.
- India has been ranked 47th out of 86 countries on the Inclusive Internet Index by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), which was commissioned by Facebook. Sweden took the first place.
- PyeongChang Winter Olympics 2018, officially known as the XXIII Olympic Winter Games were held in Pyeongchang, South Korea. The motto of Winter Olympics 2018 was "Passion.Connected". Soohorang, a white tiger, and Bandabi, an Asiatic black bear were the official mascots for this event.