

## PRELIMS EXCLUSIVE – Dec'18

### • Appointments

- **Madhavi Divan** has been appointed as the new Additional Solicitor General.
- **Bhupesh Baghel** He has become the new CM of Chhattisgarh.
- **Bharat Bhushan Vyas** has been appointed as New Member of UPSC.
- **BP Singh** has been appointed as new FTII (Film and Television Institute of India) Chairman.
- **Sunil Arora** has taken over as new Chief Election Commissioner of India.
- **Shaktikanta Das** has been appointed as the 25th Governor of RBI.
- Comptroller and Auditor General **Rajiv Mehrishi** has become the Vice-Chair of the UN Panel of Auditors. It is a forum for the exchange of information and methodologies to further develop and improve the value and quality of the external assurance process. Presently, the panel consists of 11 countries -- India, Germany, Chile, Canada, France, Italy, Philippines, Ghana, Indonesia, Switzerland and United Kingdom. Currently, the **panel is chaired by the Comptroller and Auditor General of the UK.**
- **Preeti Saran**, a former senior Indian diplomat, has been elected unopposed to an Asia Pacific seat on the UN's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). Saran will begin her term at CESCR after another former Indian diplomat Chandrashekhar Dasgupta completes his third term on the CESCR by the end of December 2018. The CESCR was set up in 1985 by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN to monitor on its behalf the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESR). The CESCR meets in Geneva and holds two sessions per year.
- Noted English writer **Amitav Ghosh** has been honoured with the **Jnanpith Award** for "outstanding contribution towards literature". The Jnanpith Award is an Indian literary award presented annually by the **Bharatiya Jnanpith. Instituted in 1961**, the award is bestowed only on Indian writers writing in **Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule** to the Constitution of India and **English with no posthumous conferral.**
- The **country's first music museum** will be set up with assistance from the Central Government in **Thiruvaiyaru, Tamilnadu**, the birth place of Saint Tyagaraja, one of the Trinity of Carnatic music. The other two of the Trinity are *Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri*.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced the institution of a new **National Honour For National Unity** on the pattern of **Padma Awards**. The annual award would be given to any Indian who has **contributed to national unity in any manner**. The prime minister drew inspiration from Sardar Patel's contribution towards unification of the country.
- A postage stamp was released recently to mark 150 years of the invention of Bengal's Rossogolla by **Nabin Chandra Das**. After years of contesting claims, the **Geographical Identification tag for Bengal Rosogolla** was given to West Bengal in November 2017. Earlier this year, the State government observed **November 14 as Rosogolla Day** to mark one year of obtaining the GI tag.
- The National Mathematics Day was recently celebrated on **December 22<sup>nd</sup>** in honour of famed mathematician **Srinivasa Ramanujan's birth anniversary**. At a fledgling age of 11, Ramanujan began to show signs of an unfolding genius. British mathematician Godfrey H. Hardy was instrumental in supporting Ramanujan's extraordinary calibre for mathematics.
- PM has announced new names for 3 islands in Andaman & Nicobar, honouring Netaji Bose and his Indian National Army. Ross Island is now Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep, Neil Island is Shaheed Dweep, Havelock Island is Swaraj Dweep. All 3 are in South Andaman district.

- **Rajasthan** cabinet has scrapped education criteria for civic poll candidates.
- **Punjab Assembly** has passed resolution to seek 33% reservation for women in Parliament.
- **Pamban bridge:** India is to build new vertical bridge to replace Pamban Bridge.
- **HUL:** It has been found guilty of Profiteering Rs 383 crore by National Anti-profiteering Authority.
- **Bogibeel Bridge:** PM Modi has inaugurated 4.9 km long new bridge connecting the southern bank of the Brahmaputra River in Assam's Dibrugarh district with Silapathar in Dhemaji district, bordering Arunachal Pradesh.
- **NPS:** Government has raised its contribution in National Pension System to 14% from 10%.
- **World bank:** India received a total remittance of \$80 billion in 2018.
- **Kerala:** It has become the first state to have 4 international airports with inauguration of Airport at Kannur.
- **Shahpurkandi Dam:** Union Cabinet has approved the implementation of Shahpurkandi Dam on river Ravi in Punjab.
- **REC:** CCEA approves strategic sale of Rural Electrification Corporation.
- **RBI:** It is to introduce Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions.
- **Train 18:** India's first engine-less train becomes country's fastest train with speed of 180 kmph.
- France has been experiencing one of the most significant social mobilisations in its recent history known as **Yellow Vests protests**. It all started on November 17 when tens of thousands of people took to the streets across the country to protest against rising fuel prices. The protesters are called "**Les gilets jaunes**" (**the yellow vests**) after the high-visibility jackets they adopted as a symbol of their complaint.
- Georgia elected **Salome Zourabichvili** as its first woman president. She is the first woman to be elected as president in any former Soviet republic outside the Baltic states. It is the last direct election for the largely ceremonial post under constitutional changes approved last year that completed Georgia's shift to a parliamentary system of government. In 2024, the president will be chosen by a 300-member electoral college made up of members of parliament and local government representatives, with the term reverting to five years.
- Russian President Putin announced that the **Avangard system** had been successfully tested and is ready to be deployed. Avangard, also known as "**Objekt 4202**," is a **hypersonic boost-glide missile system**. This system is supposed to combine a high-performance ballistic missile with an unmanned glider vehicle for significant improvements in maneuverability and sustained top speed. This technology allows Avangard missiles to travel at up to **20 Mach** or approximately 24,700 km per hour.
- In a landmark decision, UAE has increased the representation of Emirati women in the Federal National Council to **50 per cent** from 22.5 per cent from the coming Parliamentary term. The decision aims to rank the UAE in the top positions worldwide in terms of representation of women in parliament. The Federal National Council (FNC) is the consultative council, the parliamentary body of the UAE. It has 40 members.
- The Maldives has applied to **re-join the Commonwealth**, reversing a policy of isolation under previous leader Abdulla Yameen. Yameen withdrew the Maldives, an archipelago of 340,000 Sunni Muslims, from the Commonwealth after it mounted pressure on him to protect human rights and ensure the rule of law amid a ferocious crackdown on dissent. The Maldives' interest in re-joining the Commonwealth stems from a deep conviction that the values and principles enshrined in the

Commonwealth Charter are more vital than ever. The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent and equal sovereign states, nearly all of them former territories of the British Empire.

- Qatar has announced that it was quitting OPEC from January 2019 to focus on its gas ambitions. Doha, one of OPEC's **smallest oil producers but the world's biggest liquefied natural gas (LNG) exporter**, is embroiled in a protracted diplomatic row with Saudi Arabia and some other Arab states. OPEC members Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and fellow Arab states Bahrain and Egypt, have imposed a political and economic boycott on Qatar since June 2017, accusing it of supporting terrorism. Doha denies the charges and says the boycott aims to impinge on its sovereignty.
- **India to Chair Kimberley Process**
  - India was handed the Chairmanship of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) by the European Union. India will take over the chairmanship from January 2019. Botswana and the Russian Federation will serve as Vice-Chair during the period of 2019-2020.
  - The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme is a process, which was established in 2000 **to prevent "conflict diamonds" from entering the mainstream** rough diamond market by a United Nations General Assembly Resolution following recommendations made by the **Fowler Report**.
  - This process was made to ensure that money generated from trading of diamonds were not used for financing violence by rebel movements and their allies seeking to undermine legitimate governments.
  - India is the **founding member** of KPCS and is actively involved in KP activities to ensure that almost 99 per cent of the diamond trade in the world is conflict free.
- **National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies**
  - The National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies' (NABCB) accreditation programme for **Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems** Certification Bodies has been accorded the recognition of equivalence in the Asia-Pacific region.
  - Any industry carrying **ISO 45001** certificate with NABCB logo will be recognized in the Asia-Pacific region.
  - The **immediate beneficiary** of this equivalence is the Indian Industry which is exporting products to various countries, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.
  - NABCB is the **third accreditation body** in the Asia-Pacific Region to become internationally equivalent in the region, the other two being the accreditation bodies of Hong Kong and Mexico.
  - NABCB, **a constituent Board of the Quality Council of India**, is responsible for accreditation of certification/inspection bodies as per applicable international standards under an international system of equivalence.
  - It has already secured international equivalence for its accreditation programmes for ISO 9001 certification bodies in 2002 and ISO 14001 certification bodies in 2007.
- **Hand-in-Hand 2018**
  - The 7th **Sino-India joint exercise** Hand-in-Hand 2018, scheduled from 10 to 23 December 2018 was held at Chengdu, China.
  - The aim of the exercise is to build and promote close relations between armies of both the countries and to enhance ability of the joint exercise commander to take military contingents of both nations under command.
  - The exercise will involve tactical level operations in an international counter insurgency/ counter terrorism environment under UN mandate.

- The last 'Hand-in-Hand' exercise took place in Pune in 2016. However, the drill did not take place in 2017 due to tensions between the two armies over Doklam, where the forces of India and China were locked in a 73-day stand-off.
- **Admiral's Cup Sailing Regatta 2018**
  - The Admiral's Cup Regatta, the prestigious international military sailing event is hosted annually by Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala.
  - The ninth edition was conducted at Ettikulam Bay from 02 December to 06 December 2018.
  - Team Italy represented by Midshipman Vincenzo Rocco and Midshipman Alberto Cabras won the Admiral's Cup 2018.
  - The Indian Navy instituted the 'Admiral's Cup Regatta' as a 'Fleet Race' in a single crew Olympic class 'Laser Radial' sail boat in 2010 with eight foreign Naval Academies participating that year.
- **Vijay Diwas**
  - It is commemorated on 16 December every year in India to mark its military victory over Pakistan in 1971 during the war for the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan.
  - On this day in 1971, the chief of the Pakistani forces along with 93,000 troops, surrendered to the allied forces consisting of Indian Army and Mukti Bahini in Dhaka after they got defeated in the war.
  - This year, India celebrated 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory.