

Current Affairs : April 2017

National Current Affairs for April 2017

1. Justice Abhay Manohar Sapre of the Supreme Court has been appointed as the chairman of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, succeeding Justice Balbir Chauhan who resigned from the post. Chief Justice of India Justice J.S. Khehar nominated Justice Sapre on his post. In December 2016, the Union Cabinet gave its nod to a proposal to set up a single, permanent Tribunal to adjudicate all inter-state river water disputes subsuming existing tribunals.

2. Senior Journalist Raj Chengappa was unanimously re-elected as the President of the editors' Guild of India at the Annual General meeting of the Guild on February 18, 2017 in New Delhi. Prakash Dubey was named the General-Secretary of the Guild while Kalyani Shankar became its Treasurer. Chengappa is currently the Group Editorial Director of 'India Today'.

3. The union cabinet on February 15, 2017 gave its approval to the merger plan of the State Bank of India with five of its associate banks. State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur (SBBJ), State Bank of Travancore (SBT), State Bank of Patiala (SBP), State Bank of Hyderabad (SBH) and State Bank of Mysore (SBM) will be merged with the State Bank of India with the aim of creating a globalized bank, increasing operational efficiency at a reduced rate of expenditures.

4. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) on February 15, 2017 scripted history by successfully launching a record 104 satellites in one shot on board its reliable launch vehicle, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Shriharikota. The PSLV called PSLV-C37 for this historic mission successfully placed a payload of total 1378 kg into space in its 38th consecutive successful mission. ISRO bettered Russian space agency's feat of launching 37 satellites at one shot in 2014 and set a new world record.

5. Eminent Hindi Litterature Surendra Verma was selected for the prestigious Vyas Samman for 2016 in February, 2017 for his novel 'Kaatna Shami ka Vrksa : Padma Pankhuri ki Dhar Se' which was published in 2010. The Vyas Samman, instituted by the K. K. Birla Foundation in 1991 to honour annually the outstanding literary work in Hindi of past 10 years by an Indian writer, carries a prize money worth Rs 2.5 lakh, a plaque and a citation. Surendra Verma was honoured with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1993 and the Sahitya Akademi Awards in 1996. Verma is the 26th recipient of the Vyas Samman.

6. Veteran journalist Vijay Joshi assumed charge of the Editor-in-Chief of the Press Trust of India on February 10, 2017, replacing M.K. Razdan on this post. He has experience of more than three decades as a journalist working in numerous position in numerous news agencies including PTI. Prior to this new assignment, he was with the Associated Press as director of news for Southeast Asia. He has served as journalist in Singapore, Egypt, Malaysia, Thailand and the Middle East with many news agencies.

7. India has approved a deal to develop jointly a medium range surface to air missile (MR-SAM) system for the army in Rs 17000 crore deal. This is the latest in a series of other variants of SAM system for the Navy and the Air Force being jointly developed with Israeli help under deals estimated at billions of dollars. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which met on February 22, 2017 gave the go ahead for the deal to be executed by the defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI).

8. After Vietnam, Singapore and other countries, India is taking military cooperation with Indonesia forward. The two countries have decided to conduct joint air combat exercise and deepen maritime security cooperation. Vietnamese sailors are already being trained in India in comprehensive underwater combat operation. India has also renewed its air force training programme with Singapore. India provides facilities to Singapore for exercise of mechanised force and artillery at different defence location in India.

9. The Indian Air Force (IAF) on February 14, 2017 inducted its first indigenously developed airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) system, mounted on a Brazilian Embraer-145 jet, ramping up its capability to detect enemy aircraft and missiles. The Netra AEW&C system has been developed by the Defence Research and Development (DRDO) and has a range of around 200 km. The aircraft was handed over to the IAF on the opening day of Asia's largest air show Aero India 2017 at Bengaluru, more than six years behind schedule. Over 550 defence and aerospace firms, including 279 foreign companies, took part in the biennial event held at the Yelanka air force base.

10. South Asian speaker summit was held on February 18-26 in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan on February 18, 2017 said that South Asian countries must work in tandem to achieve the goals for peace and prosperity of their people. "We South Asia vhave not only a shared history, a contiguous geography, but also a shared destiny," Mahajan said in her inaugural speech. She stressed that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have set global priorities for the progress of humanity.

International Current Affairs for April 2017

1. Hong Kong was rated as the most free economy of the world with a score of 89.8 points out 100 in the index of economic freedom – 2017 released in February 2017 by US-Based

the Heritage Foundation. Singapore (88.6) and New Zealand (83.7) secured second and third spots respectively in the Index while North Korea was rated the least free economy with only 4.9 points. Total 186 economics were included in the index. The index has been prepared on the basis of 10 factors of economic freedom, using the statistics from international organizations like World Bank, IMF and Transparency International. India was ranked 143rd in the index with a score of just 52.6 points.

2. India and Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation on February 17, 2017 in New Delhi on boosting railway safety measures in the Indian Railways with focus on railway track and rolling stock safety. Indian Railway Board Chairman A.K. Mittal and Vice-Minister Hiroshi Tabata of Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan signed the agreement on behalf of their respective countries. The areas of cooperation under this pact include rail inspection, rail welding, providing automatic railway track safety inspection, maintenance of rolling stock etc.

3. Veteran military strategist Lt. Gen. H. R. MC master was appointed the new National Security Adviser (NSA) of the USA on February 20, 2017 by President Donald Trump Mr McMaster succeeded Michael Flynn on this post. McMaster is the author of the book 'Dereliction of Duty : Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The joint Chiefs of Staff and Lies that Led to Vietnam'.

4. Former foreign minister and a Social-Democrat leader Frank-Walter Steinmeier was elected the new President of Germany with a massive majority on February 12, 2017. 630 lawmakers of German Parliament's lower house and an equal number of representatives from 16 States of Germany took part in the election. The German President has little executive power, but is considered an important moral authority and symbols of the National integrity.

5. Pakistan's Senate unanimously passed the Hindu Marriage Bill – 2017 on February 17, 2017 to regulate marriages of ministry Hindus in Pakistan. The Bill now needs the President of Pakistan's assent to come into force as a law as it had already been cleared by the National Assembly, the lower house of Pakistani Parliament. It will be the first elaborate Hindu Community's personal law. The bill aims to regulate marriage, registration of marriage, separation and remarriage and other marriage related issues of Hindus in Pakistan with the minimum age of marriage set at 18 years for both boys and girls.

6. Jamaica's star sprinter Usain Bolt was honoured with the coveted Laureus Sportsman of the Year honour for 2017 at a ceremony in Monaco on February 14, 2017. Bolt pipped Cristiano Ronaldo and LeBron James to lift the top Laureus honour for the record-equalling fourth-time in his career. He won it in 2009, 2010 and 2013 before this latest one. Legendary Michael Johnson presented the award to Bolt. American gymnast Simone Biles won the Laureus Sportswoman of the year honour.

8. Kheleo, the official mascot of the FIFA under-17 Football World Cup was launched on February 10, 2017 at a ceremony in Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi. Union minister of Youth Affairs and sports Mr. Vijay Goel and the All India Football Federation (AIFF) President and the chairman of the local organising committee Mr. Praful Patel unveiled the mascot of Kheleo – ‘a clouded leopard’. The FIFA under-17 World Cup is scheduled to be organised from October 6 to 28, 2017 in India. Total 24 teams will compete for the FIFA U-17 crown.

9. China’s newly formed Rocket Force has showcased an advanced ballistic missile with a range of more than 1,000 km that can hit targets in India, Japan and Taiwan. China’s state media issued a veiled warning to neighbours, especially Japan, about the capabilities of the DF-16 missile, which was first revealed at a military parade in Beijing in September 2015. Experts said that the DF-16 poses a challenge to foreign military installations along the first island chain, which is what the Chinese military calls the series of island that stretch from Japan in the north to China’s Taiwan and the Philippines to the south , state run China daily reported.

10. The Israeli Parliament’s adoption of a contentious law meant to retroactively legalise thousands of West Bank settlement homes built unlawfully on private Palestinian land is expected to trigger international outrage and a flurry of lawsuits against the measure. The explosive law, passed 60-52 in Israel’s 120-member Knesset (Israeli Parliament) on February 6, 2017, is the latest in a series of pro-settle steps taken by Israel’s hard line government since the election of Donald Trump as US President.