

CURRENT AFFAIRS APRIL 2

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)

Loans extended under the **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)** during 2016-17 have crossed the target of Rs. 1,80,000 crore for 2016-17.

Data compiled so far indicates that the number of borrowers this year were over 4 crore, of which over 70% were women borrowers. About 20% of the borrowers were from the Scheduled Caste Category, 5% from the Scheduled Tribe Category, while Other Backward Classes accounted for almost 35% of the borrowers.

The PMMY Scheme was launched in April, 2015. The scheme's objective is to **refinance collateral-free loans given by the lenders to small borrowers.**

- The scheme, which has a corpus of Rs 20,000 crore, can lend between Rs 50,000 and Rs 10 lakh to small entrepreneurs.
- Banks and MFIs **can draw refinance under the MUDRA Scheme after becoming member-lending institutions of MUDRA.**
- Mudra Loans are **available for non-agricultural activities** upto Rs. 10 lakh and activities allied to agriculture such as Dairy, Poultry, Bee Keeping etc, are also covered.
- Mudra's **unique features include a Mudra Card** which permits access to Working Capital through ATMs and Card Machines.

IMA issues advisory to tackle swine flu cases

With over 100 deaths due to swine flu (H1N1 virus) across Maharashtra this year, including in Aurangabad, Pune and Nashik district, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has issued an advisory to its members from the three concerned branches.

Guidelines:

- All cases of suspected or confirmed swine flu should be given anti-virals as per the protocol and carry out vaccination of healthcare providers among other crucial measures.
- Doctors handling flu patients should wear N-95 mask, while patients should wear surgical masks.
- All should stay — at least 3 meter — away from a flu patient while coughing and sneezing. One should not cough in hands and use disposable paper.

- As per the advisory, all high risk patients, heart and diabetes patients should take flu vaccination, whereas people traveling to Pune, Nasik and Aurangabad should consult their doctors regarding precautions and treatment advice.

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by **type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. H1N1 is a flu virus.** When it was first detected in 2009, it was called “swine flu” because the virus was similar to those found in pigs.

Transmission from Pigs to Humans: The H1N1 virus is currently a seasonal flu virus found in humans. Although it also circulates in pigs, one cannot get it by eating properly handled and cooked pork or pork products.

Swine flu is contagious, and it spreads in the same way as the seasonal flu. When people who have it cough or sneeze, they spray tiny drops of the virus into the air. If a person comes in contact with these drops or touch a surface that an infected person has recently touched, the person can catch H1N1 swine flu. Pregnant women who contract the H1N1 infection are at a greater risk of developing complications because of hormonal changes, physical changes and changes to their immune system to accommodate the growing foetus.

Operation Meghdoot:

Operation Meghdoot the code-name for an Indian Armed Forces operation, was launched 33 years ago on April 13th. It was launched in 1984, when Pakistan started permitting mountaineering expeditions into Siachen Glacier because of which India had to keep a close watch on Siachen. The operation was launched to capture the Siachen Glacier in the Jammu and Kashmir. The military action resulted in gaining control over the world’s highest battlefield. Siachen Glacier is 76.4 km long and covers about 10,000 sq km uninhabited terrain. It lies in the Karakoram Range in the North West India.

Global interest in PSLV soars

The Indian PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) space vehicle has received more than double its normal share of inquiries from prospective customers ever since it launched a record 104 satellites in a single flight in February. ISRO is also ramping up availability of the PSLVs. The PSLV, with **a near impeccable 37 successes in 39 flights** is a clear leader in the category of rockets that lift small satellites to low Earth orbits or LEOs.

The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle is an expendable launch system developed and operated by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It was developed to allow India to launch its Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) satellites into Sun-synchronous orbits, a service that was, until the advent of the PSLV, commercially available only from Russia. PSLV **can also launch small size satellites into geostationary transfer orbit (GTO).**

The PSLV **has four stages using solid and liquid propulsion systems alternately.** The first stage, one of the largest solid rocket motors in the world, carries 138 tonnes of hydroxyl-terminated polybutadiene urethane-bound (HTPB) propellant.

ISRO has envisaged a number of variants of PSLV to cater to different mission requirements. There are **currently three operational versions of the PSLV** — the standard (PSLV), the core-alone (PSLV-CA) without the six strap-on booster motors, and the (PSLV-XL) version, which carries more solid fuel in its strap-on motors than the standard version.

- In 2015 India successfully launched 17 foreign satellites belonging to Canada, Indonesia, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States. Some notable payloads launched by PSLV include India's first **lunar probe Chandrayaan-1**, India's first interplanetary mission, **Mangalyaan** (Mars orbiter) and India's first space observatory, **Astrosat**.
- On 15 February 2017, India successfully launched a payload of 104 foreign satellites in polar orbit around the Earth using PSLV tripling the previous record held by Russia for most number of satellites sent to space in a single launch.

Indian Institute of Petroleum and Energy (IPE) at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh:

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for setting up of Indian Institute of Petroleum and Energy (IPE) at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh as “an Institute of National Importance” through an Act of Parliament. The Institute will have the governance structure as well as legal mandate to grant degrees in a manner similar to that enjoyed by IITs. A separate Act will also impart the required status to the Institute to become a “Centre of Excellence” in petroleum and energy studies.

The Cabinet has also approved Rs 655.46 crore as capital expenditure to set up IPE and contribution of Rs 200 crore towards its Endowment Fund. The objective is to meet the quantitative and qualitative gap in the supply of skilled

manpower for the petroleum sector and to promote research activities needed for the growth of the sector.

Songkran:

Thai New Year – or Songkran – takes place every year on April 13. The word Songkran comes from a Sanskrit word and literally translates as “astrological passage”.

Fun & feast as several communities celebrate new year, harvest festivals:

The second spell of Hindu new year and harvest festivals falls are being celebrated across the country:

- Bengalis celebrate Poila Boishakh.
- Malayalis celebrate Vishu.
- Tamilians celebrate Puthandu.
- Assamese celebrate Rongali Bihu.
- Punjabis celebrate Baisakhi.
- Odia celebrates Maha Vishuba Sankranti.

Malala receives highest UN honour to promote girls education

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai as a **UN Messenger of Peace** to promote girls education. At 19, Yousafzai is the youngest Messenger of Peace, the highest honor given by the United Nations for an initial period of two years.

United Nations Messengers of Peace are distinguished individuals, carefully selected **from the fields of art, literature, science, entertainment, sports or other fields of public life**, who have agreed to help focus worldwide attention on the work of the United Nations.

These prominent personalities volunteer their time, talent and passion to raise awareness of United Nations efforts to improve the lives of billions of people everywhere. The United Nations Secretary-General appoints Messengers of Peace.

West Bengal's Haldia port cleanest in India: Ministry:

The **Haldia port of West Bengal has emerged as the cleanest** in a first-ever ranking of all major Indian ports on sanitation parameters. Vizag port came second. The ranking of all 13 Indian ports was conducted by the **Quality Council of India (QCI)** during the 'Swachhta Pakhwada'. The ranking was based on the efforts made by these ports to address waste generating sources with respect to port operation, office area, township area and the response to incoming ships.

URJA MITRA:

URJA MITRA App, which was launched recently by the Ministry of Power, empowers citizens by **real time information sharing on power supply**. The app is a first of its kind application which provides a central platform, Web-Portal as well as Mobile App, for State Power Distribution utilities to disseminate power outage information to urban/rural power consumers across India through SMS/email/push notifications.

Reclamation will cause ecological damage to Vembanad, says panel

A committee constituted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, has held the Cochin Port Trust (CPT) responsible for CRZ violations in Vembanad, which was classified as a **Critically Vulnerable Coastal Area in the CRZ 2011 notification**.

It has been alleged that the CPT has reclaimed stretches of Vembanad backwaters and has violated the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification.

- The committee is concerned because such reclamation can cause large-scale damages to the site.
- Also, activities in violation of CRZ provisions will definitely affect the ecological health of a very sensitive ecosystem like Vembanad, which is a **declared Ramsar site, a Critically Vulnerable Coastal Area, and a protected wetland system**.

Vembanad is the **longest lake in India**, and the largest lake in the state of Kerala. Spanning several districts in the state of Kerala, it is **known as Punnamada Lake in Kuttanad, Kochi Lake in Kochi**.

The **Nehru Trophy Boat Race** is conducted in a portion of the lake.

Government of India has identified the Vembanad wetland under **National Wetlands Conservation Programme..**

Aadhaar must for web-access to Survey of India maps

The Survey of India, the country's oldest scientific organisation and official maker of maps, has set up a web portal called **Nakshe** that allows 3,000 of its 7,000 maps to be downloaded for free.

To download the maps, one would require to provide their Aadhaar number. The SoI maps —prepared for defence and civilian purposes — are considered a standard reference for the shape, extent and geographic features of the country.

The maps will make it easier for residents of villagers and panchayats to readily access information. Currently, organisations and people who want specific maps need to fill forms and sometimes visit the SoI.

Survey of India, The National Survey and Mapping Organization of the country **under the Department of Science & Technology**, is the oldest scientific department of the GOVT. of INDIA. It was set up in 1767 and has evolved rich traditions over the years.

In its assigned role as the **Nation's principal mapping agency**, Survey of India bears a special responsibility to ensure that the country's domain is explored and mapped suitably to provide base maps for expeditious and integrated development and ensure that all resources contribute their full measure to the progress, prosperity and security of our country now and for generations to come. The Survey of India acts as **adviser to the Government of India on all survey matters, viz Geodesy, Photogrammetry, Mapping and Map Reproduction.**

Indo – Mongolian Joint Exercise : Nomadic Elephant

Twelfth iteration of Indo – Mongolian Joint Military Exercise Nomadic Elephant at Vairengte in Mizoram.

Nomadic Elephant is **aimed at training the troops in Counter Insurgency & Counter Terrorism Operations under the United Nations mandate.** The joint training will also lay emphasis on conducting operations by a joint subunit, comprising of troops from both the armies, in adverse operational conditions aimed at enhancing the interoperability between the two armies.

Mongolia is a **landlocked unitary sovereign state in East Asia**. It is sandwiched between **China to the south and Russia to the north**. It is also the world's second-largest landlocked country behind Kazakhstan and the **largest landlocked country that does not border a closed sea**.

Bharat ke Veer

It is a **web portal and mobile application** launched recently on the occasion of Valour Day of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

The portal is an IT based platform, with **an objective to enable willing donors to contribute towards the family of a braveheart who sacrificed his/her life in line of duty**.

This website is **technically supported by National Informatics Centre (NIC)** and powered by State Bank of India.

This domain allows anyone to financially support the bravehearts of his choice or towards the “Bharat Ke Veer” corpus. The amount so donated will be credited to the account of ‘Next of Kin’ of those Central Armed Police Force/Central Para Military Force soldiers.

To ensure maximum coverage, a cap of 15 lakh rupees is imposed and the donors would be alerted if the amount exceeds, so that they can choose to divert part of the donation to another braveheart account or to the “Bharat Ke Veer” corpus.

“Bharat Ke Veer” corpus would be managed by a committee made up of eminent persons of repute and senior Government officials, who would decide to disburse the fund equitably to the braveheart’s family on need basis.

The Valour Day is celebrated in remembrance of an act of unparalleled bravery displayed by a small contingent of CRPF personnel, pitted against a full-fledged infantry brigade of Pakistani Army, trying to overrun their post, at Sardar Post, Rann of Kutch, Gujarat on April 09, 1965. They not only defeated the Pakistani brigade but also killed 34 Pakistani soldiers and captured 4 of them alive. The CRPF successfully defended the post till the arrival of reinforcements. The saga of valour of Sardar Post is a rich source of inspiration to the officers and men of CRPF and befittingly 9th April is observed as the “Valour Day”.

Swachagraha-Bapu Ko Karyanjali' exhibition

To mark the **100-year anniversary of Satyagrah movement**, led by Mahatma Gandhi, an exhibition "**swachagraha" Bapu Ko Karyanjali"** – A Mission, An Exhibition, at the National Archives of India, was recently inaugurated.

The exhibition aims to sensitise future generations to fulfill Gandhi's dream of Swachh Bharat, "where society's reflection would be as clean as the thought within, of every citizen of India. The 'digital' and 'experimental' exhibition hopes to form a link between the essential principle of Satyagrah 'Jeevan-Chakra' evolved with the 'Swachhagraha movement'.

The exhibition succinctly depicts the events that unfolded in Champaran on April 10, 1917, when Gandhi started the Satyagrah movement, to fight for the rights of Indigo plantation farmers living in the region.

Tu-142M:

Navy's flagship anti-submarine aircraft Tu-142M will be turned into a museum. The aircraft will be given to the Andhra Pradesh government to be converted into a museum and kept on the Beach Road close to the Submarine Kursura in Visakhapatnam.

World Homeopathy Day:

World Homeopathy Day is being observed on 10 April 2017. It commemorates the 262nd birth anniversary of the founder of Homeopathy, Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician.

First NIMCARE World Health Day Summit 2017

The **first NIMCARE World Health Day Summit 2017** was recently held in **New Delhi**.

The slogan of the first NIMCARE World Health Day Summit is, '**Unite for a Healthy Mind**'. The summit will focus on the importance of talking about depression as a vital component of recovery.

Out of all the mental health disorders, depression is the most common. Depression affects people of all ages from all walks of life and in all countries. As per the National Mental Health Survey 2015-16 conducted by NIMHANS, **5.2% of the Indian adult population suffers from depression in some form or the other.** The problem of depression often gets ignored due to lack of understanding on the part of family members. The social stigma attached to a mental disorder, even if it is easily treatable, is also a major problem in India.

NIM CARE is a non-profit organisation founded in the year 2009, a registered Charitable Trust under the Government of Tamil Nadu.

Sarin gas

The United States believes the Syrian government employed a **sarin-like nerve agent** in recent deadly attack in the country's northwest.

The name sarin comes from the chemists who discovered it by chance: Schrader, Ambros, Ruediger et Van der Linde.

Originally conceived as a pesticide, sarin was used by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's regime to gas thousands of Kurds in the northern town of Halabja in 1988.

Inhaled or absorbed through the skin, the gas kills by crippling the respiratory center of the central nervous system and paralyzing the muscles around the lungs.

The combination results in death by suffocation, and sarin can contaminate food or water supplies, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Symptoms of exposure to the agent include nausea and violent headaches, blurred vision, drooling, muscle convulsions, respiratory arrest and loss of consciousness.

Sarin is 26 times more deadly than cyanide gas. Even when it does not kill, sarin's effects can cause permanent harm —damaging a victim's lungs, eyes and central nervous system.

Heavier than air, the gas can linger in an area for up to six hours, depending on weather conditions.

QUESTIONS

1. The recent increase in the Minimum Support Price of Jute will benefit the Jute industry which supports the livelihood of around 40 lakh farm families. These farm families are mainly concentrated in the states of

- a) Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar
- b) Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh
- c) West Bengal, Odisha and Chattisgarh
- d) Assam, West Bengal and Bihar

Solution: d.

2. Several Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) were entered into by India and Bangladesh recently. Which one of the following is NOT one of them?

- a) Defence Cooperation Framework
- b) Peaceful uses of Outer Space
- c) Sharing of Teesta Waters
- d) Peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy

Solution: c.

3. Which Indian state became the first to establish a cashless system for distribution of food grains through its Public Distribution System?

- a) Gujarat
- b) Maharashtra
- c) Kerala

- d) Madhya Pradesh

Solution: a.

4. India's first ever training centre dedicated for Para Athletes is set to come up in which one of the following states?

- a) Gujarat
- b) Manipur
- c) Kerala
- d) Odisha

Solution: a.

5. India Rankings 2017 as compiled under the National Institutional Ranking Framework is based upon certain parameters. The least weightage is assigned to which one of the following parameters?

- a) Teaching, Learning and Resources
- b) Outreach and Inclusivity
- c) Graduation Outcomes
- d) Research and Professional Practice

Solution: b.

6. Which one of the following tiger reserves became the first in India to officially introduce a mascot – 'Bhoorsingh the Barasingha'?

- a) Keoladeo

- b) Buxa
- c) Kanha
- d) Dampa

Solution: c.

7. The web portal “nakshe”, set up by The Survey of India, was recently launched. The Survey of India is

- a) The principal mapping agency of the country
- b) Under the aegis of the Ministry of Earth Sciences
- c) Both a and b
- d) Neither a nor b

Solution: a.