

## **February 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> news:**

### **International:**

#### **Saudi women to start own businesses without male permission**

As per the latest development in Saudi Arabia toward the empowerment of women, they do not need the permission of a male guardian to start their own business, Arab News reported, citing the Ministry of Commerce and Investment.

The Saudi women will no longer face more obstacles than a man does to establish their own business and government agencies will no longer require the consent of a guardian for a woman to complete the necessary procedures.

There is no longer any need to visit a notary to document the founding of a company. The Abshir system means this can all be done electronically.

Women can practice all their commercial transactions in the Ministry of Commerce and Investment without a guardian or a notary.

This new approach will open the door to women in Saudi Arabia to highlight their talents and ideas and translate them into a realistic business with a worthy financial return.

### **National:**

#### **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's India region conference concluded**

The two days Conference of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) of India Region concluded in Patna on 18<sup>th</sup> February. Over one hundred delegates from across the country and abroad including Australia, Britain, Uganda and Tonga participated in the conference.

Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan the Chairperson, CPA Executive Committee Emilia Lifaka, Secretary General Akbar Khan, speakers of state assemblies and chairpersons of legislative councils and delegates from across the country also took part in the conference.

The delegates discussed various aspects of Parliament's role in the development agenda. A brainstorming session was also organised on Legislature and Judiciary -Two important Pillars of Democracy.

### **Bilateral:**

#### **Botanical Survey of India inks MoU with UKs Natural History Museum**

The Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and UK's Natural History Museum (NHM) have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the field of genetic and taxonomic studies, research and training, conservation in India, including species and habitat conservation assessments.

The Open up mediums of collaboration in science, support further research and boost scientific study for benefit of both India and UK.

### **UK, India launch joint research projects on clean water & energy**

The UK- India Joint research projects on Water Quality Research and Energy Demand Reduction in Built Environment were launched in New Delhi on 19<sup>th</sup> February. The projects were jointly launched by NITI Aayog member Dr V K Saraswat, Department of Science and Technology Secretary Ashutosh Sharma and Research Councils UK- India Director Daniel Shah.

The Water Quality Research programme has eight projects and Energy Demand Reduction in Built Environment programme has four projects, with a total joint investment of up to 15 million British Pound.

These projects aim to deliver mutual benefits and research solutions not only to the UK and India but also to address shared global sustainable development goals of clean water and clean energy.

### **Economy:**

#### **Telangana unveils T-Fiber network**

The Telangana government on 19<sup>th</sup> February demonstrated the high-speed optical fibre connectivity project T-Fiber at the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT). It showcased the pilot being launched in four villages in Maheshwaram mandal near Hyderabad, where fibre connectivity is used to deliver e-governance, e-health and education.

After launching the pilot, the Technology Demonstration Network (TDN), on the sidelines of the WCIT meet here, Union IT and Electronics Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad interacted with the students of a government school in one of the villages. TDN is a pilot network to showcase government-to-government and government-to-citizen services and applications in sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education and entertainment that can be delivered over T-Fiber.

Earlier, addressing the conference, State IT Minister KT Rama Rao asked the IT industry to develop applications to help about 8 million Telugus.

A few houses, a school, a primary health centre and gram panchayat offices in Mansanpally, Thummaloor, Sirigipuram and Maheshwaram are connected to the State Secretariat, the Raj Bhavan, CM's Camp Office and State data centre.

Corporates like Cisco, Nokia and Tejas took part in establishing the network.

### **Science and Technology:**

#### **Indonesia's Mount Sinabung volcano erupts**

Indonesia has raised flight warnings around the Mount Sinabung volcano on Sumatra island to their highest level after it sent a towering plume of ash more than seven kilometres into the air on 19<sup>th</sup> February, its biggest eruption this year.

Areas around the crater of the volcano, located about 1900km northwest of the capital Jakarta, have been off-limits for several years because of frequent volcanic activity.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology's Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre in Darwin issued maps on 19<sup>th</sup> February showing an ash cloud heading in three directions from Sinabung, to the north, northwest and south-southeast.

Indonesia also upgraded its Volcano Observatory Notice for Aviation to red, its highest warning, and said the ash-cloud top had reached 23,872 feet (7,276 metres), according to a ground observer. Sinabung is about 75km southwest of Kualanamu International Airport in Medan.

Nur Isnin Istianto, head of the regional airport authority, said Kutacane airport in Aceh province had been closed, but the wind direction allowed the airport of Kualanamu, Meulaboh and Silangit to remain open.

#### **Environment:**

#### **India to host World Environment Day 2018**

India will host the global World Environment Day celebrations on 5 June 2018, the government and the UN jointly announced 19<sup>th</sup> February

The government has also committed to organizing and promoting the World Environment Day celebrations through a series of engaging activities and events generating strong public interest and participation.

From pan India plastic clean-up drives in public areas, national reserves and forests to simultaneous beach clean-up activities – India will lead the initiative by setting an example.

“Beat Plastic Pollution”, the theme for World Environment 2018, urges governments, industry, communities and individuals to come together and explore sustainable alternatives and urgently reduce the production and excessive use of single-use plastic that is polluting our oceans, damaging marine life and threatening human health.

India is emerging as a leader given it has one of the highest recycling rates in the world. It can be instrumental in combating plastic pollution. By hosting World Environment Day 2018, the Indian government is accelerating its leadership on an issue of tremendous magnitude.

World Environment Day is a UN Environment-led global event, the single largest celebration of our environment each year, which takes place on June 5 and is celebrated by thousands of communities worldwide.

### **Plastic Pollution facts:**

- Every year the world uses 500 billion plastic bags
- Each year, at least 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans, the equivalent of a full garbage truck every minute.
- In the last decade, we produced more plastic than in the whole last century
- 50 per cent of the plastic we use is single-use or disposable
- Plastic makes up 10% of all of the waste we generate

### **Sports:**

#### **Christian Coleman breaks world indoor record in 60 meters**

Christian Coleman has set up a world record in 60 metres race. The World silver medallist ran the distance in 6.34 seconds at the US indoor national championships in Albuquerque, New Mexico on 18<sup>th</sup> February

Fellow American Maurice Greene had held the record of 6.39 seconds for 20 years. The 21-year-old Coleman, who won the 100-metres silver medal at last year's world championships in London, said after winning the race that he wanted to go get it.

Now he will lead the American team to next month's IAAF world indoor championships in Birmingham, England.

Coleman clocked 6.37 seconds at a meeting in South Carolina last month but the time was not ratified for technical reasons.

#### **Roger Federer wins Rotterdam Open for 97th career title**

Roger Federer celebrated his return to the top of the world rankings by winning the Rotterdam Open on 18<sup>th</sup> February, his 97th career title. He defeated Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov

Federer, the record 20-time Grand Slam winner, will reclaim the number one ranking he last held in October 2012 when the new ATP rankings are published on 19<sup>th</sup> February. He has played two tournaments this year and won both—the other being January's Australian Open.

He is three years older than American Andre Agassi was when previously holding the record for oldest No.1 back in 2003. This was his third title in Rotterdam following successes in 2005 and 2012 and he now stands 12-0 for the season.

### **Persons in news:**

**Sanjiv Bajaj:** Business consultancy firm EY named Bajaj Finserv's Sanjiv Bajaj as the entrepreneur for 2017. Sanjiv Bajaj will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year award (WEOY) in Monte Carlo. The company also conferred E. Sreedharan, who spearheaded metro projects in Delhi, Kolkata, Kochi, and Lucknow, with the lifetime achievement award.

The awardees were selected by a nine-member jury led by Sun Pharmaceuticals' managing director Dilip Shanghvi.

**Arvind Jamkhedkar:** Archaeologist and historian Arvind P. Jamkhedkar will be the next Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR). He will replace Prof. K. Sudershan Rao.

The post fell vacant after Prof. Rao's retirement. Prof. Jamkhedkar is at present Chancellor of Deccan College, Pune, known in academic circles for its archaeology department.