

## **April 13<sup>th</sup> news:**

### **National:**

#### **PM inaugurates India's mega defence exhibition - DefExpo 2018**

Indian Prime Minister Modi recounted the many initiatives and reforms brought about in the Defence sector. He inaugurated the tenth edition of Defence Expo at Mahabalipuram in Tamilnadu on 12<sup>th</sup> April. He highlighted how the country is taking rapid strides on the path of development under 'Make in India' program, especially in defence manufacturing sector. The PM noted that since 2014 India has gradually become self reliant by reducing its defence imports. In 2014 Defence export permissions stood at 118 worth about 577 million US dollars.

They have increased to 794 more export permissions, for a total value of over 1.3 billion dollars in less than four years. There has been an impetus for Export promotion in the Defence sector. Offset guidelines have been made more flexible. Government has de-notified some items to be manufactured by private sector, especially MSMEs.

### **Bilateral:**

#### **Foundation laid for Lusaka traffic Decongestion Project**

Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and his Zambian counterpart Edgar Chagwa Lungu on 12<sup>th</sup> April laid foundation stone of Lusaka traffic Decongestion Project. The cost of 93 km road is 289 million dollar India is providing 250 million dollar.

The project will be completed in three years. This project is aimed at redesigning the major road network for Lusaka city with a view to reducing traffic jam, travel distance and saving fuel. The road rehabilitation and construction will change landscape of Zambia's capital city.

#### **India, Morocco sign pact to promote mineral exploration**

India has inked a pact with Morocco under which focus would be laid on evaluation of potential mineral resources and promoting exploration and mining through participation of both public and private sector.

The focus of the MoU is on the development of the geological infrastructure for Geoscience Maps and geochemical maps, strengthening geological research and evaluation of the potential of mineral resources, promoting exploration and mining through participation of both public & private sector etc.

#### **India, China joins in negotiating oil producers**

India and China have decided to jointly draw up a strategy for sourcing crude oil from the international market. This grouping could expand, with South Korea and Japan as the other participants.

India and China have questioned on international platforms the practice of charging an Asian Premium by the oil producing nations.

According to the plan, the two countries might source crude oil jointly from the West Asian region. China, India, Japan, and South Korea are the top four consumers in the world other than the US, which is the second-largest consumer.

Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) Chairman Wang Yilin held a bilateral meeting in this regard on 12<sup>th</sup> April on the sidelines of the 16th International Energy Forum (IEF) in New Delhi.

Leadership feels Asian countries are paying a price of up to \$6 a barrel more than the US or the European refiners to the West Asian oil producers. This is termed the Asian Premium. The world's largest consumer, China, and the third-largest consumer, India, were vocal on international platforms about this issue.

The decision to cooperate on crude oil comes close on the heels of the elite league of Asian nations, China, Japan and South Korea joining hands to import liquefied natural gas (LNG). Japan's JERA, South Korea's state-run Korea Gas Corporation and China National Offshore Oil Corporation had signed a memorandum of understanding to discuss opportunities of collaboration in the LNG business early this year.

## **Economy:**

### **India's social sector spending 'woefully' below peers: Study**

India's social sector spending remains "woefully" below peers, including Latvia and Iceland, in terms of GDP, according to a study published in RBI's monthly bulletin.

The conclusion is based on an analysis of 17 countries, including India, with respect to their social sector expenditure as percent of GDP (2016).

The study titled 'Union Budget 2018-19: An Assessment' has been published in the latest monthly bulletin.

RBI said the views expressed in the study are that of the authors and do not pertain to the institution they belong to and "usual disclaimers apply".

The study has been prepared by two research officers under the overall guidance of an official at RBI's Department of Economic and Policy Research.

With the National Health Protection Scheme under the 'Ayushman Bharat' programme and the reform of the education system, the expenditure on health and education together is budgeted to grow by 4.6 percent as per the 2018-19 Budget, it said.

In terms of GDP, the social sector expenditure, primarily constituting health and education in India continues to remain woefully below peers, it said.

The other 16 countries whose data have been analysed are Korea, Latvia, Iceland, Israel, Ireland, Estonia, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Portugal, Spain, Greece, Italy, and Belgium.

As per the chart cited in the study, India's social sector expenditure as percent of GDP in 2016 was 7.5 percent whereas it was 29 percent in Belgium, 15.2 percent in Iceland, 14.5 in Latvia and 10.4 percent in Korea, among other countries.

### **India ranks 130 in Index of Economic Freedom**

India has jumped 13 places in the last one year to be earn 130th spot in the latest annual Index of Economic Freedom released by a top American think-tank.

In 2017, India with a score of 52.6 points was ranked at 143 among 180 countries, two spots below neighbour Pakistan, according to the Index of Economic Freedom.

China with 57.4 points was ranked 111 in the 2017 index of The Heritage Foundation, an American conservative public policy think-tank based in Washington.

As per the latest Index of Economic Freedom, China has jumped one spot and Pakistan is now at 131 position.

India's economic freedom score is 54.5, making its economy the 130th freest in the 2018 Index, the Heritage Foundation said. Noting that India is developing into an open-market economy, the Index said traces of its past autarkic policies still remain.

Economic liberalisation measures, including industrial deregulation, privatisation of state-owned enterprises and reduced controls on foreign trade and investment, that began in the early 1990s, accelerated growth

More recently, the government reformed one of its more opaque operational practices to make the auctioning of rights to exploit state-owned resources more transparent.

### **Science and Technology:**

#### **ISRO's PSLV Successfully Launches IRNSS-1I Navigation Satellite**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched the IRNSS 1I navigation satellite from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, on the 43rd flight of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), on 12<sup>th</sup> April

The IRNSS 1I mission is critical for the space agency as it is ISRO's second attempt to replace the IRNSS 1A satellite, after the failure of the IRNSS 1H mission in August ISRO's last mission is in jeopardy as the space agency lost contact with GSAT 6A a few days after launch on March 31.

The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) is a constellation of seven satellites that provides indigenously developed regional GPS services called NavIC.

The rubidium-based atomic clocks onboard the IRNSS 1 A failed and it was no longer useful for providing navigation services. The space agency has faced flak from the Comptroller and Auditor General for NavIC still not being fully operational, after more than 10 years of its launch and had cost Rs 1,284 crore

## **Sports:**

### **Sushil Kumar claims third straight CWG Gold**

Star wrestler Sushil Kumar gave India its 14th gold medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia on 12<sup>th</sup> April. A dominant Sushil registered a 10-0 win over South Africa's Johannes Botha in the Men's Freestyle 74 kg final at the Carrara Sports Arena 1. The two-time Olympic medallist entered the CWG final for the third consecutive time and won in style.

He had won gold in the now disbanded 66kg category at the 2010 edition in New Delhi before winning the 74kg title at the 2014 CWG in Glasgow, Scotland.

Sushil is the only Indian sportsperson with two Olympic medals to his name. He won bronze in the 2008 Beijing Olympics becoming the first Indian to win a wrestling medal at the Olympics since 1952. Four years on, he improved on his position after winning silver in the 2012 London Olympics.

The 2010 World Championship Gold medallist has won five gold and one bronze medals at Commonwealth Championships.

### **Kidambi Srikanth becomes World No 1**

Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth defeated Sri Lanka's Niluka Karunaratne of Sri Lanka in straight games to make it to the last-eight of Men's Singles badminton event at Commonwealth Games 2018. With this win, he also improved his ranking from third spot and became world number one.

In the Badminton World Federation (BWF) Rankings, Srikanth replaced Denmark's Viktor Axelsen. Srikanth has a total of 76,895 points in Men's Singles category.

This makes Srikanth first Indian male and only the second India player after Saina Nehwal to reach the number one spot in world rankings.

Srikanth won the mixed team gold for India at the ongoing 21st Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia. He is also hot favourite to win the gold medal in Men's Singles event.

Last year, he became only the fourth shuttler in the world to win all four Super Series titles -- Indonesia, Australia, Denmark, and France

## **Persons in news:**

**Balram Bhargava:** Balram Bhargava appointed as the new Director-General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Secretary of the Department of Health Research. Bhargava, currently a senior consultant cardiologist at the All India Institute of Medical Science, will carry out this role until 2021. He will succeed Soumya Swaminathan.

