

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Two Schemes for Customers and Merchants to Boost Digital Transaction

- Launch of two schemes, '**Lucky Grahak Yojna**' and '**Digi Dhan Vyapar Yojna**', to give cash awards to for consumers and merchants who use digital payment instruments for any transaction.
- **Lucky Grahak Yojana (Consumers)**: This scheme is for the consumers who will conduct daily transaction using electronic medium.
- **Digi-Dhan Vyapar Yojana (Merchants)**: This scheme is applicable for those merchants who make digital transaction at merchant establishments.

Solar battery station & Community development centre launched in Assam

- The project implemented by Sri Sri Rural Development Programme (SSRDP) Trust of Art of Living Foundation in collaboration with Cooper Foundation has installed two solar battery charging stations of 6 kilowatt capacity, one of the biggest project in Assam.
- The two stations have been installed in two different buildings with a provision of two lights and one fan in each household along with one solar battery.
- It would fulfill power requirements of 287 households of four villages comprising of Mulukghat, Mirigaon, Gerekigaon and Tengabri.

Assam to Make Majuli Country's First Carbon Neutral District

- Assam government has initiated a project to make river island **Majuli** the country's first ever **Carbon Neutral district by 2020**.
- The project is titled '**Sustainable Action for Climate Resilient Development in Majuli**' (SACReD, Majuli)
- The aim of the project is to combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Centre sanctions Rs 30 crore for 21 states and union territories under the Solar Cities Development Program

- The funds were sanctioned since last three years. Out of the total sanctioned amount of Rs 30.36 crore, around Rs 12.98 crore have been released.
- 60 places have been included in the solar cities program including Gaya (Bihar), Mysore (Karnataka), Kochi (Kerala), Pune (Maharashtra), Panaji City (Goa), Howrah (West Bengal), Imphal (Manipur), Aizawl (Mizoram), Kohima (Nagaland), Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) and Moradabad (Uttar Pradesh).
- Atleast one city in each state would be included in the solar cities program for which Central Financial Assistance (CFA) of up to Rs 50 lakh is extended for each solar city.

Center to Extend e-TV to 161 Countries

- Government announced that it has extended the facility of **e-Tourist Visa** for citizens of 161 countries.
- number of foreign tourist arrivals on e-Tourist Visa (**e-TV**) during January to November 2016 was 9,17,446, registering a growth of **168.5 per cent** over same period of 2015.
- Government of India has extended the facility of e-Tourist Visa for the citizens of 161 countries including Japan for which facility of Visa on Arrival is also available.
- Under the scheme, an applicant receives an email authorizing him or her to travel to India after it has been approved. The tourist can travel with a print-out of this authorization.
- On arrival, the visitor has to present the authorization to the immigration authorities who would then stamp the entry into the country.

Supreme Court Bans Liquor Shops on National & State Highways

- **Supreme Court** passed an order to **ban all liquor shops** on **national** as well as **state highways** across the country as a measure to control the road mishaps that takes place every year.
- The bench also directed that all **signage** indicating presence of liquor vends will also be **prohibited** on national and state highways.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

5th Edition of India-Arab partnership conference

- The Conference was organized in collaboration with the Oman Foreign Ministry, Arab League Secretariat, the Ministry of External Affairs in India, the General Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the Arab Countries (GUCCIAC) and Federation of the Arab Business (FAB).
- Theme of the conference: **'Partnership towards innovation and cooperation in IT'**.
- **Aim:** to enhance flow of investments from both sides, accelerating the investment projects at a number of prioritized sectors, activate the existing joint ventures, provide conducive environment for export promotion and share expertise.

India Tops Asia, Third in the World as Innovation Destination

- **India** has emerged as the **tops** most country in **Asia** for **innovation** while **third** biggest country globally
- **Bengaluru**, which is 5th largest hub at global level, saw most of the innovations in 2016 including opening of 3 new centres between March and October 2016, apart from setting up of startup accelerator by Apple.
- **Jaipur, Pune and Hyderabad** each experienced opening of two new centres. The four cities accounts for **27% of Asia's** new innovation centres.
- **9** new innovation centres were opened in India in 2016, leading the total number of innovation centres to **25**.

- The **US** leads the list of global innovators with 146 centres, followed by **Britain** with 29 and India is at third place with 24 centres.

Seventh Edition of bilateral Exercise 'EKUVERIN' commences in Maldives

- Seventh edition of **India and Maldives** bilateral Exercise '**EKUVERIN**' began at **Kadhdhoo, Laamu Atoll**, Maldives
- The 14 day platoon level joint military exercise will conclude on December 28, 2016.
- The exercise is conducted between the Indian Army & the Maldives National Defence Force on a yearly basis.
- **Aim:** to enhance interoperability between the two armies by conducting military training with emphasis on amphibious & counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations.

Indus Waters Treaty processes between India & Pakistan paused by World Bank

- World Bank has paused the **Indus Waters Treaty** processes initiated by **India** and **Pakistan** to allow the two countries to consider alternative ways to resolve their disagreements.
- It was paused to resolve conflicting interests under the Treaty and its application to two hydroelectric power plants

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

India, ASEAN set target of \$100 billion trade to be achieved by 2020

- **India** and **ASEAN** have set a target of trading at **100 billion dollar** to be achieved by **2020** while current trading between India and ASEAN is 57 billion dollars.
- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations(ASEAN) is a regional organization comprising ten Southeast Asian states which promotes intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates economic integration amongst its members.
- Members : Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), and Vietnam

AWARDS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ranks among Forbes' Top 10 World's Most Powerful People

- **Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi** has been ranked among the top **10** most powerful people in the world by Forbes.
- Modi ranked **9th** on the Forbes list of **74 Most Powerful People** in the World.
- **Top 5 Most Popular People List**

Rank	Name	Country
1	Vladimir Putin	Russia

2	Donald Trump	United States
3	Angela Merkel	Germany
4	Xi Jinping	China
5	Pope Francis	Roman Catholic Church

PEOPLE IN NEWS

VK Sharma Appointed Chairman of LIC

- Managing Director of state-owned **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)**, **V K Sharma** is appointed as the **Chairman (LIC)** for five years by the Government of India.
- VK Sharma joined LIC as a direct recruit officer in 1981, and has served as the chief executive of its mortgage subsidiary LIC Housing Finance and zonal manager in charge of the south zone.
- He has been serving as LIC's MD since November 2013.
- LIC is the largest financial institution in the country with over Rs 22.10 lakh crore in assets, which is over 15 per cent of India's GDP of Rs 134 lakh crore. LIC is the most profitable entity in the country, next only to the RBI.

PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi inducted into US's advisory council

- Indian-American PepsiCo CEO **Indra Nooyi** (61) has joined Donald Trump's Strategic and Policy Forum to implement Trump's economic agenda
- Nooyi along with Uber CEO **Travis Kalanick**, and SpaceX and Tesla chairman **Elon Musk** are joined the member of 19-member President's Strategic and Policy Forum

Eminent Economist Thomas Schelling Dies in Maryland at 95

- **Thomas Schelling**, an **economist** who won a **Nobel Prize** for using game theory to explain nuclear strategy, died on December 14, 2016
- Schelling, was former Harvard University professor as well as University of Maryland professor
- Schelling was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics in 2005.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Pakistan Successfully Test Fires Babur Cruise Missile

- **Pakistan Army** successfully test-fired an enhanced version of an indigenously-designed cruise missile '**Babur**'
- It incorporates advanced aerodynamics and avionics that can hit targets at **700 kms** both at land and sea with high accuracy.

- It is a low flying, terrain hugging missile, which carries certain stealth features and is capable to carry various types of warheads.

SPORTS CURRENT AFFAIRS

Smriti Mandhana Named in first-ever ICC Women's Team of the Year

- Indian batswoman **Smriti Mandhana** has been named in the **Women's Team of the Year 2016** by the **International Cricket Council (ICC)**
- The 'Women's Team of the Year' is a new and novel award by ICC to acknowledge and appreciate the top performers in cricket in a 12-month period
- Mandhana scored 264 runs in five one day internationals at an average of 52.80 while in T20 Internationals, she scored 183 runs in 10 innings at 22.87 during the 12 month period
- She is the only Indian women player to be inducted in the team.