

# NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## **Government launches Swachh Swasth Sarvatra Initiative**

- The Union Government launched an initiative, **Swachh Swasth Sarvatra** to **strengthen health centers in open defecation-free blocks**.
- The initiative was launched by the Union Health Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Human Resource Development.
- The 'Swachh Swasth Sarvatra' initiative aims to meet the requirements of two complementary programmes namely, Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Kayakalp of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

## **4-Day World Bhojpuri Conference begins in Varanasi**

- The four-day World Bhojpuri Conference began in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh on December 29, 2016 and will continue till January 1, 2017.
- Aim: To strengthen the links of the people of Indian-origin, who once belonged to the Bhojpuri-speaking belt in India and had migrated to different parts of the world.
- A museum would also be set up along with a library and a committee hall for the preservation and promotion of the language.
- During the conference, a 'Bhojpuri Ratna' award and 'World Bhojpuri Karmayogi' award will be conferred on over 25 people including Mauritius Prime Minister Anerood Jugnauth, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh, Jharkhand CM Raghubar Das, BJP MP and Bhojpuri actor Manoj Tiwari, Bollywood actors Amitabh Bachchan and Shatrughan Sinha and other personalities.

### **Bihar Government approves 50% reservation of Backward Class in judicial services**

- Bihar government led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar approved an overall reservation of 50% in both, subordinate and superior judicial services, in the state after consulting with Bihar Public Service Commission and Patna High Court.
- Currently, there was a provision of only 27 percent overall reservations in subordinate services while no quota in superior services. Out of which the Extremely Backward Class (EBC) was getting 10 percent and Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribe were getting 16% and 1% respectively and zero percent for OBC.
- But after the decision, 50% posts would be filled through reservation in both services with 21% posts reserved for Extremely Backward Class (EBC), 12% for Other Backward Class (OBC), 16% for Scheduled Castes (SC) and 1% for Scheduled Tribe (ST).
- The 50 percent quota will be reserved in appointment of both services conducted by the BPSC to fill the posts of Judicial Magistrates and Munsif Magistrates along with appointments conducted by the Patna HC to fill the posts of Additional District and Sessions Judges.
- Besides, the cabinet also decided 35 percent reservation for women in each category, besides one percent post would be reserved for ortho-physically differently-abled persons.

### **Report Finds Tribal Community to Lag in Various Social Parameters than other Groups**

- According to latest released **annual report of the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs**, the **tribal population** in India **lags behind** other social groups on various social parameters such as **child mortality and infant mortality and women's health, education, poverty etc.**

#### **Findings of the Report:**

- As per the report a vast **majority** of tribal population is engaged in **agricultural labour** and **women face higher incidence of Anaemia** when compared to other social groups.

- The community also had the **highest child mortality and infant mortality** rates, when compared to other social groups.
- Though the educational achievements on the whole has improved but the data showed that the **gross enrolment ratio** among tribal students in the **primary school** level has **declined from 113.2 in 2013-14 to 109.4 in 2015-16 along with high dropout rate.**
- The overall poverty rates among the tribal population was found to be low when compared to previous years but still they remained relatively poorer when weighed against other social groups.
- The report found that the **health infrastructure** experienced vast shortage in tribal areas. At an all-India level, there is a **shortfall of 6,796 Sub Centres, 1267 Primary Health Centres and 309 Community Health Centres** in tribal areas as on March 31, 2015.
- The report also stated that there was a wide gap in rehabilitation of tribal community members displaced due to various development projects. Out of estimated 85 lakh persons displaced due to development projects and natural calamities, only 21 lakh were shown to have been rehabilitated so far.

### **Haryana Government inaugurates the first digital investigation centre**

- Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated the Digital Investigation, Training and Analysis Centre (DIATC) at a function at Gurugram to Haryana govt to give free laptops to first 500 meritorious students boost the state police's capabilities to solve cybercrime cases.
- The centre has been set up in collaboration with the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) of Government of India.
- The centre has a state-of-the-art cyber forensic laboratory and a high-tech facility in its premises to train officers from the state and other police forces.
- Apart from this, the Centre has a social media monitoring lab for enhancing technological capabilities of the Haryana police.

### **Haryana Signs MoU with Andhra Pradesh to Prepare Citizens Database**

- The state Government of Haryana signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Andhra Pradesh to assist the state in compiling a centralised database of

its population to ensure efficient and effective implementation of welfare programmes.

- Andhra already has such kind of database. It is a comprehensive portal for managing demographic (name, gender, age, photograph and address) and biometric information for facilitating “Unique ID” based identity authentication.

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

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### **India eases Visa Procurement Process for Bangladesh**

- In an effort to ease the process of securing Indian Visas for Bangladesh visitors, the High Commission of India will now allow all Bangladesh travelers with confirmed air, train or bus travel tickets to submit their tourist visa applications directly without prior appointments from January 1, 2017.
- The initiative also includes that the date of journey should be after 7 days but within one month of submission of the visa application form.
- The Indian Visa Application Centre in Mirpur will receive walk-in tourist visa applications India and Bangladesh from confirmed travellers and senior citizens from January 1.

### **Pakistan PM Inaugurates Chinese-Assisted Nuclear Power Plant Chashma-III**

- Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif inaugurated the Chinese-Assisted 340 MegaWatt Chashma-III nuclear power plant in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.
- This nuclear power project is a joint collaboration between the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and China National Nuclear Corporation.
- It was executed by the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission under the guidelines of the International Atomic Energy Agency.
- Under this project Chashma-IV, is expected to be completed in 2017.

# **BUSINESS & ECONOMY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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## **South Indian Bank Introduces SIB Mirror+ App for NRIs**

- Kerala headquartered South Indian Bank has launched a full-fledged NRI-focused mobile banking application called SIB Mirror+ across major mobile platforms.
- SIB Mirror+ enables the customers to perform almost all banking transactions from their smart phones.
- The app has self-registration facility for ease of activation and uses NEFT facility for interbank fund transfers. It also provides bill payment facility, instant mobile/DTH recharge, cheque book request and 24×7 'within bank' fund transfer.
- 'Social Money', an innovative feature of the app would allow customers to transfer money through social media channels like Facebook and Whatsapp.

## **RBI Extends the Loan Repayment Period by 30 days**

- To further provide some relief to people hit by demonetization, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) gave borrowers another 30 days in addition to 60 days for repayment of housing, car, farm and other loans worth up to Rs 1 crore.
- RBI had provided additional 60 days for repayment of loans worth up to Rs 1 crore in November. So, borrowers together get 90 days to get relief from getting the account classified under non-performing asset (NPA) category.
- According to the notification, the exemption will apply to dues payable between 1st November and 31st December and the running working capital accounts or crop loans with the sanctioned limit of Rs 1 crore or less would be eligible for the benefit.

### **World Bank approved USD 235 Million Credit for Bihar Rural Roads Project**

- World Bank has approved a USD 235 million credit for the Bihar Rural Roads Project to support the construction of about 2,500 km of rural roads in Bihar under the Mukhiya Mantri Gram Sampark Yojana (MMGSY)
- The fund is allocated from the International Development Association (IDA) with a maturity of 25 years, including a 5-year grace period.
- This project will provide all-weather road access to some 1.2 million people, most of whom belong to the poor and vulnerable sections of society.

### **BoB Signs MoU With HFL To Provide Dairy Loans To Farmers**

- Vadodara based Bank of Baroda signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Heritage Foods Ltd (HFL) to provide dairy loans to farmers through the lender's branches across the country on December 29, 2016.
- Aim : To increase farmers productivity and earnings
- Heritage Foods is in the business of procurement, processing and sale of milk and milk products.

### **BHEL Commissions 600 MW Coal Based Thermal Power Plant in Telangana**

- India's second largest coal mining company Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) informed that it has successfully commissioned second 600 MW coal-based thermal power plant in Telangana. The first unit of the project was commissioned in March 2016.
- The project has been developed by Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) and the unit has been commissioned at the 2×600 Mw Singareni Thermal Power Project (TPP) located in Adilabad district in Telangana.

### **Government removes Minimum Export Price on potato**

- The central government removed the Minimum Export Price (MEP) of potato.
- MEP of USD 360 per tonne on potato had imposed to increase domestic availability and cool prices in July 2016
- India was the world's second largest potato producer at 48 million tonnes (mt) in 2014-15. India exported nearly 0.18 mt of potato in the current year which is lower than the previous year

### **Chinese E-Commerce Firm Alibaba To set up Office in Mumbai**

- Chinese major e-commerce entity, Alibaba is to set up its first Indian office at Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) in Mumbai, to take the advantage of the growing e-commerce market in the city.
- Alibaba aims to have some share of the growing e-commerce market which is currently dominated by home-grown Flipkart, followed by Amazon and Snapdeal.

### **Facebook's Oculus has acquired an eye-tracking startup called The Eye Tribe**

- The virtual reality company of Facebook, Oculus has acquired eye-tracking software company The Eye Tribe for an undisclosed amount.

## **AWARDS**

### **Real Madrid's Ronaldo honoured at Globe Soccer Awards**

- Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo won the Best Player of the Year along with Goodwill Award at the seventh edition of the 2016 Globe Soccer Awards held in Dubai.

- Besides, Club's president Florentino Pérez was named as the Best President and the coach of the club, Fernando Santos, won the Best Coach of the Year while Real Madrid Club received the Best Club of the Year.

## PEOPLE IN NEWS

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### **Anil Baijal Takes over Najeeb Jung to become Delhi's Lieutenant Governor**

- Former home secretary Anil Baijal was appointed as the new Lieutenant Governor of Delhi by the President Pranab Mukherjee.
- The new Lieutenant Governor is likely to take oath on December 30
- Anil Baijal, a 1969 batch India Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Union Territories cadre, was removed as Union home secretary when the UPA government assumed power in May, 2004.
- The former bureaucrat has also been the vice-chairman of the Delhi Development Authority and had headed key public sector companies like Prasar Bharti and Indian Airlines.

### **Thomas Bossert appointed as top Counterterrorism adviser by Donald Trump**

- US's next president Donald Trump appointed Thomas Bossert to his national security circle, a figure from the Trump Organization to make international deals.
- Bossert will work as an assistant to the president for homeland security and counter terrorism.
- He is currently president of the risk management consulting firm CDS Consulting. He previously served as deputy assistant to the president for homeland security under Bush.

### **Ranveer Singh becomes new ambassador of Thums Up campaign**

- Coca-Cola India has roped Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh as brand ambassador for its new thematic campaign Thums Up campaign Toofani series
- Ranveer replaced Salman Khan.
- He was appointed as the Indian Ambassador For Switzerland Tourism in November 2016

### **Suresh Kalmadi Declines IOA's Life Time Presidency Proposal**

- Suresh Kalmadi has refused to accept the post of life president with the Indian Olympic Association following a notice from the Sports Ministry to the IOA.
- The former IOA presidents Suresh Kalmadi and Abhay Singh Chautala were unanimously appointed IOA life presidents on December 27 by 150 members.
- Objecting the appointment, the Sports Ministry issued a showcause notice to the IOA on December 28 and has said that all ties will be cut with the National Olympic body until Suresh Kalmadi Declines IOA's Life Time Presidency Proposal Kalmadi and Abhay Singh Chautala aren't removed.
- Sports Minister Vijay Goel and former sports head Ajay Maken have strongly opposed the decision to appoint them in the honorary role.

## **SPORTS CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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### **Serbian Tennis Player Ana Ivanovic Announces Retirement at 29**

- Former Serbian professional tennis player Ana Ivanovic announced her retirement from Tennis at the age of 29. As of 2016, she has career earnings of over \$15 million.
- Ivanovic became the first Serbian woman to win a grand slam tournament when she beat Russian Dinara Safina in the 2008 French Open final. The victory made her World No. 1 Player for a period of Nine Weeks.

- Ivanovic returned to the top five in 2014 after reaching the French Open semi-finals in 2015 but slipped to 63rd spot in 2016 after losing to the Czech player Denisa Allertova in the US Open first round, her final match on the WTA tour.

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