

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley presented the Union budget 2017-2018

- Shri Arun Jaitley presented the Union budget 2017-2018 in Lok Sabha. This is the fourth budget by the Narendra Modi government.
- It is the first budget after major changes in Indian economy like Goods and Services Tax and Demonetization in 2016.
- The Budget for 2017-18 contains three major reforms.
 1. Presented on February 1, 2017 instead of usual practice of being presented on last day of February.
 2. Merger of Railway Budget with the General Budget
 3. Abolition of Planned & Non-Planned Expenditure
- Agenda of Union Budget 2017-18
 - The agenda for the Union Budget 2017-18 is **TEC India**, where T stands for Transform, E stands for Energize and C for Clean.
 - The agenda seeks to transform the quality of governance and life of people; Energise various sections of society especially the youth and the vulnerable to bring out the best in them and Clean the country from the evils of corruption, black money and non-transparent political funding.
 - The **total Budget expenditure** allocated for 2017-18 is **Rs. 21.47 lakh crores.**
 - **10 Pillars of Budget 2017-18**

The Budget 2017-18 is based on 10 distinct pillars to meet the TEC India agenda.

 1. Farming sector
 2. Rural population
 3. Youth
 4. Poor and health care for the underprivileged
 5. Infrastructure
 6. Financial sector for stronger institutions
 7. Speedy accountability
 8. Public services
 9. Prudent fiscal management
 10. Tax administration for the honest

Government Clears that Beti Bachao Beti Padhao has no provision for cash transfer component

- The **Ministry of Women and Child Development** has clarified that there is no provision for **individual cash transfer** component in **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** scheme.

- The Scheme simply focuses on generating awareness about girl child and changing the mindsets and deep rooted patriarchy of the society and improve the efficiency of welfare services for girls.
- The clarification came after the report that some unauthorised sites, organisations, NGOs and individuals were distributing forms in the name of cash incentive under the scheme.
- The centre said that there is no cash incentive associated in any form for B3P scheme and distribution of such forms was completely illegal.

Union Cabinet Gives Green Signal to Amend Bill to Modify Scheduled Castes list in Odisha

- The Union Cabinet under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister gave its approval to amend the **Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 Bill** to make changes the list of **Scheduled Castes in Odisha**.
- The cabinet also approved amending the **Constitution (Pondicherry) Scheduled Castes Order, 1964** to change the name of the Union Territory Pondicherry to **Puducherry**.
- The amended Bill will be shortly introduced in the parliament under the name **Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Bill, 2017**.
- Additionally, **Sualgiri/Swalgiri** caste which is a part of already included Sabakhia caste has been made eligible to be included in the list of SC in Odisha.

High-Level Consultations on Counter-Terrorism Held Between India & Russia in New Delhi

- A **high-level consultation** was held between **India and Russia in New Delhi to share views on threats posed by terrorism**.
- Indian side was led by Preeti Saran, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs while Russia was led by H.E. Oleg V. Syromolotov, Deputy Foreign Minister.
- Both sides shared views on issues related to terrorism including state-sponsored, cross border terrorism faced by India.
- The two sides agreed to comply with the **UNSC 1267 Sanctions List** processes for blacklisting various terrorists and entities.
- They shared concerns related to the existence of **Af-Pak region** as the main centre of terrorism.
- A **joint action plan** has been agreed upon by the two countries to focus on enhancing capacity building, frequent expert-level meetings, sharing of insights, exchange of best practices in countering radicalisation and curbing terrorism.

Cabinet approves Extension of tenure of loans under the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) of PMAY from 15 to 20 years

- The Union cabinet led by PM has given its approval to extend the tenure of loans under the **Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS)** under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) Mission from the current 15 years to 20 years.

- Besides, the scheme has been introduced for the **middle income group (MIG)** category and an initial allocation of **Rs. 1000 crore** has been made at Budgetary Estimate stage in 2017-18 for the proposed CLSS for MIG.
- For **economically weaker sections of society/Lower Income Group (LIG)**, the scheme has been named as CLSS.
- The **Primary Lending Institutions (PLIs)** that have signed an MoU with the Central Nodal Agencies (CNAs), under the CLSS of PMAY (Urban) have also been directed to extend the necessary conditions of their MoU to CLSS for MIG with appropriate changes as applicable.
- The schemes aim to ensure greater participation amongst the Economically Weaker Section (EWS), LIG and MIG segment of the society to provide Housing for All by 2022.

Introduction of Indian Institutes of Information Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2017 in Parliament Approved by Cabinet

- The **Union Cabinet** approved introduction of the **Indian Institutes of Information Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2017** in Parliament.
- The Bill seeks to amend the **Indian Institutes of Information Technology Act, 2014**, which defines the status of Institutions of National Importance on the IIITs.
- The amended Bill aims to include Indian **Institute of Information Technology Design and Manufacturing (IIITDM), Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh** in the Act and declare it as an institute of National Importance with the power to award degrees to students.

Venkaiah Naidu Inaugurates Digital Radio Round Table Conference

- Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting inaugurated the Digital Radio or **All Round Table Conference** in New Delhi.
- **Aim is** to stimulate the interests of the key Indian stakeholders in the public phase launch of the project to **digitise radio in India**, following the successful installation of DRM digital radio transmitters by All India Radio.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

USD 3.3 billion assistance Launched by UNICEF

- The **UNICEF** launched an appeal for the year 2017 to help over **48 million children** across the globe who are driven from their homes due to conflict, disasters and climate change.
- The appeal was made with regards to the fear that US may cut down its funding which is the top donor contributing about **40 percent to the international organizations**.
- Among the UNICEF appeal for 2017, nearly **42 percent, USD 1.4 billion**, would be used to support children from Syria living as refugees across the borders in neighboring states.

- Besides, the assistance would also focus on countries like Yemen, South Sudan and Nigeria which heavily affected children due to wars.

World's Largest Battery Storage Plant Unveiled in California

- **Tesla Motor Inc. and Southern California Edison** have jointly launched **World's largest energy storage facilities** at the utility's Mira Loma substation in **Ontario, California**.
- The facility would reduce dependence on fossil fuels for generating energy and take advantage of wind and sun to deliver clean energy to power homes, businesses among other things.
- The new facility would reduce the reliance on gas speaker plants, prevent electricity shortages, provide energy security and reduce greenhouse gases.

Israel sanctions to build 3000 new settlements

- Israel Government decided to build **3000 units** for Jewish settlers in the West Bank, and in occupied East Jerusalem.
- The official added that the decision was made "in response to the Palestinian bid at the UN General Assembly" in which the Palestinians were voted in as a non-member state after 138 countries voted for the bid, while only 9 countries voted against and 41 countries abstained.

BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

India's fiscal deficit reaches 94% of the budget estimate in December

- **Fiscal deficit** in the first nine months of 2016-17 touched **93.9 per cent** of the Budget target against **87.9 per cent** for the same period a year ago.
- The fiscal deficit stood at **87.9 per cent** in the corresponding nine months a year ago, as per 2015-16 Budget estimates.

Arnab Goswami's Republic changes its name to Republic TV

- **Arnab Goswami**, managing director and editor-in-chief of ARG Outlier Media has changed the name of his proposed news channel **Republic** into **Republic TV**.
- This changes after BJP parliamentarian **Subramanian Swamy** raised issue against usage of the word 'Republic'.
- Subramanian mentioned that letting a private venture use the word 'Republic' will be illegal under **Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950**.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

Anushka appointed ambassador of Swachh Bharat campaign

- **Anushka Sharma** was appointed the **first female ambassador** of the campaign 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' by the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD).
- Anushka will work with Bollywood actor **Amitabh Bachchan** for a nationwide health and sanitation campaign.

AWARDS

Lucideus Wins Best IT Startup At National Entrepreneurship Awards 2016

- An IT Risk Assessment and Digital Security Services Providing Firm, **Lucideus**, was awarded the **best IT Startup** under the **IT (Information Technology) and ITES (Information Technology Enabled Services) category** during the National Entrepreneurship Awards 2016.
- The award function was organized at the DRDO auditorium in New Delhi by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

Rajasthan, Telangana bag eGov awards

- **Rajasthan and Telangana** are bagged the **eGovernance awards for Excellence** under the state category at the CSI -Nihilent eGovernance Awards held in Coimbatore.
- **Odisha and Nagaland** bagged the Award of Recognition for the year 2016.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

World's First Heat-Driven Transistor created by researchers at Linköping University

- Researchers at **Linköping University**, Sweden have created the world's first heat-driven transistor.
- The transistor is first in the world that changes its state by a heat signal rather than conventional electrical signal.
- This heat driven transistor can have wide applications like detecting small temperature differences, to produce circuits controlled by infrared light for use in heat cameras and using functional medical dressings in which the healing process can be monitored.

SPORTS

West Indies All rounder Andre Russell gets one-year ban for doping breach

- **Jamaican cricketer Andre Russell**(28) has been banned from all cricket for **a year** over a doping code violation by the Jamaican Anti-Doping Commission.
- Under World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) guidelines, elite athletes must file his/her details of whereabouts.
- Russell did **not file his whereabouts** on three occasions in 2015 as required, which constitutes a failed drugs test under WADA's whereabouts rules.