

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar Introduces IIM Bill In Lok Sabha

- The **Union HRD Minister** introduced the **Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) Bill, 2017 in the Lok Sabha** to provide 20 prestigious Management Institutes powers to grant degrees.
- As per the Bill, IIMs would be declared “**institutions of national importance**” and the Board of Governors will be the principal executive body of each IIM.
- Till now IIM had been registered as societies and were unable to grant degrees, including PhD, to their students.
- As per the Bill, the **Director** of each institute will be appointed by the **Board of Governors** out of a panel of names recommended by a search-cum-selection committee, which too would be constituted by the Board.

Cabinet Approvals-February 8, 2017

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister approved the ‘**Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan**’ (**PMGDISHA**) to make 6 crore rural households digitally literate by **March 2019**.
- The Union Cabinet has been apprised of the **Framework Agreement** between **India and Vietnam** on cooperation in the **exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes**.
- The Union Cabinet was also informed about the signing of the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** of Cooperation in the field of **science, technology and innovation between India and France** to ensure exchange of best practices and technology.
- The Union government approved signing a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between **India and Senegal** in the field of **Health and Medicine**.

2017 Desert Festival Begins in Jaisalmer

- The **three day long International Desert Festival 2017** started with great enthusiasm in **Jaisalmer, Rajasthan**.
- Famous **folk artists** coming from different parts of the country performed as the procession moved further.
- A cavalcade of 48 camels of Border Security Force (BSF) was the major attraction on first day of the festival.
- The major attraction of 2017 is the women wrestling which has been introduced for the first time.
- Other interesting events include kite flying competition, camel polo race, camel tattoo competition and the panihari matka race, camel decoration competition, shan-e-marudhara competition, tug of war, air warrior drill show by the Indian Air Force among others.

Water Resource Ministry Forms Committee to Expedite Namami Gange programme

- A **committee** has been formed by the government to accelerate the process of the implementation of **Namami Gange programme** under which it plans to make the River Ganga free from waste by 2018.
- The announcement regarding the committee was made by the **Union Minister of Water Resources** in New Delhi while chairing the first meeting of the empowered task force on Ganga.
- The committee would comprise of Ministers of **Water Resources, Environment and Forest, and Drinking Water and Sanitation** as its members and will be responsible to meet at least once every fortnight.

India and United States Agree to Sustain Defence Partnership

- **India and the United States** have agreed to maintain the pace of their partnership especially in the area of the defence ties.
- The Defence Secretary **James Mattis** held a telephonic conversation with the Indian Defence Minister **Manohar Parrikar** with the commitment to further strengthen the **bilateral defence cooperation** made in recent years.
- With emphasis on the strategic importance of the US-India relationship and India's role in advancing global peace and security.
- Also affirmed their commitment to sustain the momentum on key bilateral defense efforts to include the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

India Ranks 43 Among 45 Nations in International Intellectual Property Index

- In the 5th Annual International Intellectual Property Index released by US Chambers of Commerce's Global Intellectual Property Center (GIPC), India has been ranked very poor at **43rd position** out of 45 countries.
- The 2017 International Intellectual Property Index titled '**The Roots of Innovation**' revealed that though India showed slight improvement its performance in IP protections.
- Out of a total of 35 points, India could score only **8.75**

Rank	Country	Score
1	United States	32.6
2	United Kingdom	32.4
3	Germany	31.9

Shawna Pandya set to Become Third Indian-Origin Women to Fly to Space

- **Shawna Pandya** an Indian-origin woman will become the third woman after Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams to go into **space in 2018**.
- A **neurosurgeon** by profession, **32-year-old** Shawna Pandya will fly into space through the **Citizen Science Astronaut programme in Canada**.
- Dr Shawna Pandya is a neurosurgeon working as a general physician at the **Alberta University Hospital in Canada**.
- She is preparing for two space missions. Pandya will conduct experiments in bio-medicine and medical science.
- She will also work on Physiological, Health, and Environmental Observations in Microgravity.

BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

Bank of America opens Automated Branches in Select Markets

- **Bank of America Corp** has opened **three completely automated branches** over the past month with no working employee wherein customers can use ATMs and have video conferences with employees at other branches.
- New branches are typically smaller, employ more technology with less labour work.
- Aimed at selling mortgages, credit cards and auto loans rather than simple transactions such as cashing checks.
- The bank has opened one completely automated branch in Minneapolis and one in Denver.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

Government Appoints 3 Non-Official Directors On RBI Central Board

- The central government appointed three part-time **Non-Official Directors** on the **Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India** for a **four-year term** after an approval from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.
- The Cabinet has appointed economist **Ashok Gulati**, **Manish Sabharwal**, chairman of services provider Teamlease and **Rajiv Kumar**, economist and former FICCI secretary general.
- Further, the ACC has also approved the proposal of Department of Financial Services for appointment of three Members on the Local Board of RBI.
- Therefore Prasanna Kumar Mohanty (Southern Local Board), Vallabh Roopchand Bhanshali (Western Local Board) and Sunil Mitra (Eastern Local Board) have been appointed for four years on the local board of RBI.

Abdullahi Mohamed Farmaajo Elected New President of Somalia

- Former Prime Minister **Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo** was declared the new **President of Somaliam**.
- The dual Somali-US citizenship holder Farmaajo had been appointed the country's Prime Minister in 2010 and stayed on the job for eight months.
- During his tenure, he reduced the size of the government, paid the military regularly and campaigned against corruption.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

ISRO Collaborates with Drishti Lifesaving to Study Killer Rip Tides

- A team of scientist at ISRO along with a **private lifeguard agency** appointed by the Goa government is conducting a new study to understand the phenomenon of '**killer rip tides**' to safeguard beaches in Goa.
- ISRO Scientists have collaborated with **Drishti Lifesaving**, a private agency appointed by the state tourism ministry to conduct a study titled Ripex 2017 at Space Applications Centre, ISRO Ahmedabad.
- A Rip Tide is a **strong sea current** which pulls the water away from the shore often catching unawares swimmers and people too along with it.
- It is one of the most common causes for drowning in the shallow waters off Goa's popular coastline with a higher rate of incidents especially recorded at Calangute, Baga, Anjuna and Colva beaches.

SPORTS

Genzebe Dibaba Breaks World Record to Win Women's 2000 Metres

- Ethiopia's **Genzebe Dibaba** created the world's record by becoming the fastest athlete to complete the women's **indoor 2,000 metres** at the indoor Miting International de Catalunya meeting in Sabadell, **Spain**.
- The **25-year-old Dibaba** completed the race in **5:23:75 seconds**.

Cheteshwar Pujara Breaks Record for Most Runs in an Indian first-class season

- **Cheteshwar Pujara** broke the long-standing record on the first day of the Hyderabad Test match against Bangladesh at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Hyderabad, by taking his season tally to **1,605 in just 21 innings**.
- Earlier the record was made by **Chandu Borde in 1964-65** by scoring 1604 in 28 innings.
- Besides, Pujara also features twice in the top three on the list for most runs in an Indian season. He had made **1585 runs in 23 innings** in 2012-13.