

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Footwear Design and Development Institute (FDDI) Bill, 2017 Introduced in Lok Sabha

- **Objective:** To enable FDDI emerge as Centre of Excellence to meet with the international standards and address the shortage of trained human resource in the sector.
- The Bill seeks to facilitate and promote teaching, training and research in all disciplines relating to design and development of Footwear and leather products.
- The existing FDDI institute is centrally-funded for meeting its capital expenditure. The bill proposes that FDDI shall be established as a body corporate.
- To enable the institute to discharge its functions efficiently the central government may pay to the institute in each financial year sums of money after appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf.
- The institute shall nurture and promote quality and excellence in education and research in the areas of footwear and leather products design and development and allied fields.
- It will develop and conduct courses leading to graduate and post graduate degrees, doctoral and post-doctoral courses and research in the areas of footwear and leather products design and development and allied fields thereof.
- The institute will undertake research, survey and studies for improved quality and design, testing and international marketing.
- The institute will conduct skill development programs and provide technical assistance to artisans, craftsmen, manufacturers, designers and exporters.

Inter-state River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2017 introduced in Lok Sabha

- Once the proposed legislation is enacted, the single permanent tribunal known as **Inter-State River Water Disputes Tribunal** will do away with all the existing tribunals including those on Cauvery, Mahadayi/ Mandovi, Krishna, Vansadhara and Ravi and Beas rivers.
- The **Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2017** proposes to ease the adjudication of inter-state river water disputes and make the present legal and institutional architecture stronger and robust.
- The Bill also proposes a setting up a **Single Standing Tribunal** (with multiple benches) instead of presently existing multiple tribunals and shall consist of one Chairperson, one Vice-Chairperson and not more than six other Members.
- The Bill also provides for the appointment of Assessors to provide technical support to the tribunal. They shall be appointed from amongst experts serving in the Central Water engineering Service not below the rank of Chief Engineer.
- The Bill also proposes to introduce mechanism to resolve the dispute amicably by negotiations, through a Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) to be established by the Central Government consisting of relevant experts, before such dispute is referred to the tribunal.
- The Bill also provides for transparent data collection system at the national level for each river basin and for this purpose, an agency to maintain data-bank and information system shall be appointed or authorized by Central Government.

Government Launches Rs. 52000 lakh Mission Fingerling to achieve Blue Revolution

- The Blue Revolution program focuses on creating an environment that envisages integrated and holistic development and management of fisheries for the socio economic development of the fisheries and fish farmers.
- The main motive behind this program is to enhance the fisheries production from 10.79 mmt (2014-15) to 15 mmt by 2020-21.
- Total expenditure of about **Rs. 52000 lakh** has been identified by the government for the program to establish **hatcheries and Fingerling rearing pond** to ensure the fish production of 426 crores fish fingerling, 25.50 crores Post Larvae of shrimp and crab in the country.
- The main focus of the program will be on **building relevant infrastructure** for the conservation of fisheries with equal focus on management **and conservation of the resources** through technology transfer to increase in the income of the fishers and fish farmers.
- **Productivity enhancement** shall also be achieved through employing the best global innovations and integration of various production oriented activities such as: Production of quality fish seeds, Cost effective feed and adoption of technology etc.

Government Establishes Banana Research Centre in Vaishali District of Bihar

- Bihar and particularly the Vaishali district is very suitable for the cultivation of bananas at large scale because of its ecological conditions which can change the fate of farmers.
- The new centre will work to find reasons behind less production in banana, enhancement in acreage for cultivation, suitable utilization of the various parts of the plants, different products, marketing and value addition.
- The new research centre at Vaishali will let the research work to get more momentum to bring a new era of banana cultivation in Bihar and surrounding states
- India is the largest producer of banana in the world. Among the states, Maharashtra is the largest producer followed by Tamil Nadu. The total production of banana in the India is around 14.2 million tons. Productivity of banana in Maharashtra is 65.7 ton/ha which is more than the average national production of 34.1 ton/ha.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Vienna World's Best City in Quality of Life; Hyderabad Best Indian City: Mercer

- According to the **Mercer's 19th annual Quality of Living survey**, **Vienna**, the capital of Austria has topped the list of cities offering the **highest quality of life** for the eighth year in a row.
- **Baghdad** was ranked the worst place at 230 to live due to continuous violence in the city.
- In India, **Hyderabad** emerged as the best city in terms of living standards among Indian cities for the third year in a row.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

RBI Likely to Open UPI Platform for Digital Wallets Soon

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** is set to open up the **Unified Payment Interface (UPI)** platform for **digital wallets firms** as part of the government's digitisation campaign.
- Presently, the digital wallets can access the UPI network through partner banks to facilitate bank-to-bank money transfers.
- The initiative will enable the digital wallets such as **Paytm and MobiKwik** to become interoperable and also help them to expand their business model.
- RBI is expected to issue guidelines shortly on interoperability and 'know your customer' (KYC) norms for digital wallet companies as well as the interchange fees to be levied between the wallets to access the UPI framework.

Madhya Pradesh Rewa solar plant to receive loan from World Bank

- World Bank has agreed to provide loan to develop internal transmission arrangements of the upcoming **Rewa Ultra Mega Solar (RUMS) project** in Madhya Pradesh.
- RUMS become India's first solar power project of the country to receive a loan under CTF
- It will provide 75% of the loan amount with an interest rate of only 0.25% and remaining **25 % of the loan amount** under its **Clean Technology Fund (CTF)**, money will be provided at an interest rate of only 0.25 per cent

PEOPLE IN NEWS

Former Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar Sworn in as Goa Chief Minister

- Supreme Court has given Mr. Parrikar 48 hours to prove his majority on the floor of the house on March 16, 2017. Portfolio allocation would be taken up after the trust vote.
- **Other Ministers who were sworn in includes**
 1. Ramkrishna alias Sudin Dhavlikar and Babu alias Manohar Azgaonkar (Both MGP)
 2. Francisco D Souza and Pandurang Madkaikar (BJP)
 3. Vijay Sardesai, Jayesh Salgaonkar and Vinod Paliengar (Goa Forward Party)
 4. Rohan Khavte and Govind Gaude (both Independents)

Manipur CM Ibobi Singh resigns, Biren Singh to be Sworn in Next CM

- Incumbent Chief Minister of Manipur **Okram Ibobi Singh** resigned from the post on March 13, 2017 giving way for formation of a new ministry under the BJP.
- In 60-member assembly of Manipur, BJP won 21 seats that was 10 seats shorts to prove majority, while Congress won 28 seats.

- The BJP's Nongthombam Biren Singh will take oath as Manipur's next chief minister on March 15, 2017 along with his council of ministers in the presence of BJP president Amit Shah and Union Minister Jitendra Singh.

Reliance Commercial Finance appoints Devang Mody as CEO

- **Devang Mody** was appointed as **CEO of Reliance Commercial Finance Ltd (RCFL)**, a subsidiary of Reliance Capital
- Prior to this, Mody served as president of consumer business at **Bajaj Finance**
- He has over 20 years of experience in the financial sector. He has worked at Mahajan & Aibara and GE Money Financial Services.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

Scientists Finds Natural Swings Responsible for Loss of Arctic Sea Ice

- As per the study conducted by United States based scientists, rapid loss of **Arctic sea ice** in recent decades is partly driven by **natural variation** and not just global warming caused by human activities.
- The researchers reported that the **random and chaotic change in wind patterns** is responsible for about 30-50 percent of the sea ice loss in Arctic Ocean since 1979.
- The research stated that based on previous findings, it was founded that changes in tropical Pacific Ocean have created a **hot spot** in recent decades over Greenland and the Canadian Arctic that has boosted warming in that region.
- The researchers believe that distinguishing the natural and human-caused parts of sea ice decline would help to predict future sea ice conditions in Arctic summer.

Scientists Discovers World's First Fluorescent Frog in Argentina

- A team of scientists have discovered the world's first **fluorescent frog** in **Argentina** that emits soft **green, yellow and red light** under normal light, but gives off a bright **blue and green glow in the dark**.
- As per the scientist, this phenomena is **rare in terrestrial animals** and was unheard in amphibians until now.
- Many ocean creatures exhibit fluorescence, including corals, fish, sharks and one species of sea turtle (the hawksbill turtle, *Eretmochelys imbricata*).
- On land, fluorescence was previously known in only parrots and some scorpions.

SPORTS CURRENT AFFAIRS

CAS Confirms Lifetime Ban on Sergei Portugalov

- The **Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS)** confirmed a lifetime ban on **Sergei Portugalov** from sports for his role in providing illicit substances to Russian athletes.
- Sergei Portugalov is a former chief of the Russian Athletics Federation's Medical Commission (Swimming)
- The Russian whistle blowers cited clear evidence that Sergei violated IAAF doping rules regarding **possession and trafficking of prohibited substances** and used to run a **doping consultancy** attended by Russian swimmers and coaches.

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