

National Current Affairs

Government Approves Solar Energy Scheme for Small Powerloom Units

- Government has approved a new scheme, **Solar Energy Scheme**, to provide financial assistance/capital subsidy to small powerloom units, for installation of **Solar Photo Voltaic (SPV) plant**.
- Aim: To mitigate the problem of power cut/ shortage faced by decentralized powerloom units in the country so as to improve utilization, efficiency, productivity to face both the domestic and international markets competitively.
- The Scheme is meant for Units having **04, 06 & 08 powerlooms** and subsidies for different SPV plants will be given in the range of **Rs 2,25,000 to Rs 8,55,000** depending upon the capacity of the SPV plant (4KWP, 6KWP, 8 KWP).
- Government of India shall provide financial assistance/capital subsidy to the extent of **50%, 75% & 90%** of the basic cost of the Solar Energy Plant (Cost of Solar Panel + Inverter + batteries) to the applicants of **General category, SC & ST** respectively.

India's Longest Road Tunnel, Chenani-Nashiri Tunnel Ready for Opening

- The longest road tunnel of India built at **Chenani in Jammu's Udhampur** district has successfully completed its **trail run** and is ready for public opening.
- The **9-km-long** tunnel passes through the Himalayas and is a part of the 286-km-long four-lane project on **Jammu- Srinagar National Highway**.
- It took nearly six years for the project's completion, since the work started in May 2011.
- The twin-tube tunnel has been built at an elevation of 1,200 metres and at a cost of over **Rs. 3,720 crore**.
- The tunnel is first in India to be equipped with world class integrated tunnel control system through which ventilation, fire control, signals, communication and electrical systems will be automatically actuated.

Five-Month Long Economic Blockade in Manipur by UNC Comes to Halt

- The lifting of the blockade was successful after a **tripartite talk** among the **Centre, Manipur government and United Naga Council**
- All the three sides have also agreed upon holding the next tripartite talks within one month.
- The Manipur economic blockade was imposed by the United Naga Council on the two National Highways, **NH-2 and NH-37** of Manipur nearly five month ago on November 1, 2016 to protest against the creation of seven new districts by the then Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh-led Congress government in the state.
- The UNC has opposed the decision to carve out new districts from tribal-dominated hill areas in Manipur which are predominantly inhabited by various Naga tribal groups and said that the decision violated the rights of the tribal in the region.
- The blockade led to steep rise in prices of essential commodities and severely affected the normal life.

Union Cabinet Clears 4 GST Supplementary Legislations for Introduction to Parliament

- The four supporting legislations are the Compensation Law, the Central-GST (C-GST), Integrated-GST (I-GST) and Union Territory-GST (UT-GST).
- Once the Parliament approves the Bill, the states would start taking their SGST bill for discussion and passage in the respective state assemblies.
- Once the new GST regime is into effect it will subsume central taxes like excise and service tax and state levies like VAT.
- A composite GST will be charged on sale of goods or rendering of services while the revenue would be shared between the Centre and the states in almost equal proportion.

International Current Affairs

Italy Ranked World's Healthiest Country by Bloomberg 2017 Index

- **Top 5 Healthiest Countries**

Rank	Country	Score (100)
1	Italy	97.44
2	Iceland	96.20
3	Switzerland	94.96
4	Singapore	94.11
5	Australia	93.88

- The least healthiest states comprised of **Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and West Virginia** and were considered that more than 35 percent of their populations faced obese
- Each country in the index was graded based on variables such as life expectancy, causes of death and health risks ranging from high blood pressure and tobacco use to malnutrition and the availability of clean water.

Business and Economy

FinMin Approves Capital Infusion Plan for 10 PSU Banks

- Union Ministry of Finance has given the green signal to the **turnaround-linked Rs.8,586-crore capital infusion plan** to support **10 weak and non-performing public sector banks (PSBs)**.
- The 10 Banks Include: Allahabad Bank (Rs.418 crore); Andhra Bank (Rs.1,100 crore); Bank of India (Rs.1,500 crore); Bank of Maharashtra (Rs.300 crore); Central Bank of India (Rs.100 crore); Dena Bank (Rs.600 crore); IDBI Bank (Rs.1,900 crore); Indian Overseas Bank (Rs.1,100 crore); UCO Bank (Rs.1,150 crore) and United Bank of India (Rs.418 crore).

- To avail for the capital support, the identified PSBs needs to enter a **tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between the government, PSB management and employees of the PSB concerned.
- The MoU aims to commit all the participants to the agreement for a time bound plan beginning 2017-18 onwards with **quantifiable and measurable milestones** which can be monitored on quarterly basis.
- The milestone identified to be achieved includes, Active bad loan management, strengthening of credit underwriting, arranging capital from market, plan for disposal of non-core assets, divestment of subsidiary stake, closure of loss making domestic/international branches.

Hazira's first private sector township to go cashless

- Essar Steel's Nand Niketan township at **Hazira, Gujarat** has become the first private township to go cashless with the help of Mumbai-based financial technology company, The Mobile Wallet (TMW).
- TMW will provide smartphone based application for mastercard-enabled mobile wallets and the wallet is powered by **RBL Bank Ltd.**
- All Essar employees got a nominal part of their salary as a credit into their TMW wallets. Essar employees and their families residing, merchants and shop owners in this township now using mobile wallet for their daily needs.

ICICI Bank launches new app 'Mera iMobile', for rural customers

- Mumbai based **ICICI Bank** launched first banking mobile application '**Mera iMobile**' to provide agricultural information in 11 Indian languages for rural people without internet connection.
- **Purpose:** To access banking services and get information on agricultural services
- Mera iMobile app provide services include Kisan Credit Card, Gold Loan, Farm Equipment Loan and loans to Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
- It will provide **agriculture related information** like crop-wise mandi prices of nearly 230 crop varieties across 460 mandis. It also displays taluka-wise weather update for close to 3700 talukas across and over 300 districts.
- **Idea approves merger with Vodafone India, to create India's largest telco**
- India's Idea Cellular Ltd approved its merger operation with Vodafone India Limited (VIL) excluding **Vodafone's 42% stake in Indus Towers Ltd**
- It will create India's largest telecom company with a total revenue of over Rs80,000 crore.
- After merger, Vodafone will hold **45 percent** in the combined entity while Idea promoters will hold **26 percent** in the combined entity.

RCOM gets CCI approval for Aircel merger

- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** has approved the merger of wireless operations of Reliance Communications and Aircel to create a combined entity with assets worth **Rs 65,000 crore.**
- Reliance and Aircel have announced its merger operation in September 2016.
- Both the companies will transfer Rs 14,000 crore of debt each to the joint venture, taking the total debt of the new company to Rs 28,000 crore.

- RCom and Aircel Ltd will hold **50 per cent each** in the merged entity, with equal representation on the board and committees.

People in News

Five Indians Named in WEF's 100 Young Global Leaders List 2017

- **Five Indians Include**
 1. Vijay Shekhar Sharma: Founder & CEO PayTm
 2. Shruti Shibulal: The Tamara Hospitality
 3. Ambarish Mitra: Founder and CEO of Blippar, a mobile phone app
 4. Hindol Sengupta: Editor-at-large, Fortune India
 5. Rwitwika Bhattacharya-Agarwal: Founder and CEO of Swaniti Initiative.

Snapdeal names Jason Kothari as new FreeCharge CEO

- **Jason Kothari** was appointed as Chief Executive Officer of Freecharge by Indian e-commerce company Snapdeal
- He is currently working as the Chief Strategy Officer of snapdeal since January 2017. Prior to this he has worked in Housing.com.

Government swaps chief executives of IDBI Bank, Indian Bank

- For the **first time**, the central government has swapped the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of state-owned Indian Bank and IDBI Bank
- It will be effective from the beginning of the next fiscal year.
- **Mahesh Kumar Jain**, MD & CEO of Indian Bank was shifted to IDBI Bank's MD & CEO
- **Kishore Piraji Kharat** has been appointed as Managing Director and CEO of Indian Bank.

Science & Technology

New Wi-Fi system to offer super-fast connectivity

- The new **infrared rays** based Wi-Fi system which is 100 times faster than the Wireless Fidelity networks.
- It uses safe infrared wavelength that does not reach the retina in the eye.
- The capacity of the new Wi-Fi system is more than **40 Gigabits per second** (Gbit/s).
- The network tracks the precise location of every device using its radio signal transmitted in the return direction.
- Different devices are assigned different wavelengths by the same light antenna and so do not have to share capacity.

Scientists at CERN Discovers Five New Sub-Atomic Particles Using Large Hadron Collider

- The Scientists at **CERN (European Organisation for Nuclear Research)**, have discovered a **new system of five particles** all in a single analysis using the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator, **Large Hadron Collider (LHC)**.
- The newly discovered particle states have been named as $O_c(3000)^0$, $O_c(3050)^0$, $O_c(3066)^0$, $O_c(3090)^0$ and $O_c(3119)^0$ according to the standard convention.
- The numbers indicate their masses in **megaelectronvolts (MeV)**, as measured by LHCb.
- The **Large Hadron Collider beauty (LHCb) experiment** is one of seven particle physics detector experiments collecting data at the Large Hadron Collider accelerator at CERN (European Organisation for Nuclear Research).

Environment & Ecology

West Bengal Has Highest Number of Arsenic Affected Persons in India: Report

- **West Bengal** was the top most state of India having highest number of arsenic-affected persons as on March 4, 2017.
- The total number of **arsenic-affected persons** in the state was more than **1.04 crore**.
- The state has 83 blocks in eight districts where ground water is affected by arsenic contamination.
- These districts include, Bardhaman, Malda, Hooghly, Howrah, Murshidabad, Nadia, North and South 24 Paraganas
- **Bihar** was second with 16.88 lakh persons affected by arsenic followed by **Assam** in third spot with 14.48 lakh victims.
- The report also stated that the total number of arsenic-affected people in **India** is about **1.48 crore**.
- According to the WHO's guidelines for drinking water quality (2011), the permissible limit of Arsenic in groundwater is .01 mg per litre. However, in India the permissible limit in drinking water has recently been revised from .05 mg per litre to .01 mg per litre.

Uttarakhand HC recognises Ganga as India's 1st living entity

- A trans-boundary river of Asia **Ganga** along with river **Yauna** has recognised as the 'first living entity of India' by the **Uttarakhand High Court**
- Now, both the rivers will have same legal rights as a human being as per the constitution.
- Recently **New Zealand** government had declared 145km long **Whanganui River** as a first living entity of the world

Sports Current Affairs

Roger Federer Beats Stan Wawrinka to Win 2017 Indian Wells Tournament

- Swiss Professional Tennis Player **Roger Federer** won his fifth **BNP Paribas Open Tennis Tournament** crown at the **Indian Wells Tennis Garden, California** by defeating **Stan Wawrinka**
- With this win, the 35 years and seven months, Federer became the oldest champion in the desert tournament's history, surpassing Connors, who was 31 years and five months when he won in 1981.
- The win also marks Federer's 90th tour-level crown and his **25th ATP World Tour Masters 1000 title**.