

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Government Set to Launch India's First Sign Language Dictionary Soon

- The government has planned to soon launch **India's state of the art dictionary** depicting the sign languages used by hearing and speech impaired people across the nation to **bring uniformity and bridge the communication gap**.
- **Indian Sign Language (ISL) dictionary** is being developed by the **Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC)** in both print and video format.
- ISLRTC has so far compiled 6,032 Hindi and English words and their corresponding graphic representation of the signs which are used in daily life.
- The ISL dictionary consists of graphic representations of popular signs used by the hearing impaired and will also include regional variations along with legal, technical and medical terms.

Assam Government approves recommendation of 7th Pay Commission

- The Assam state government has approved the recommendation of the Seventh Pay Commission and also decided to give the **six months'** arrear salary to its employees.
- This new pay structure would be effective from **April 1, 2016**.
- It will make Assam exchequer bear an additional burden of over **three thousand crore rupees** in FY 2018

BIRAC's 5th Foundation Day Celebrated on March 20-21, 2017

- Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) has celebrated its fifth foundation day on March 20-21, 2017 with the theme **"BIRAC@5: Impacting the Biotech Ecosystem"**.
- BIRAC was incorporated on 20th March, 2012 as a non-profit Public Sector Enterprise under the aegis of Department of Biotechnology (DBT).
- **Vision** : "To Stimulate, foster and enhance the strategic research and innovation capabilities of the Indian biotech industry, particularly start-ups and SME's, for creation of affordable products addressing the needs of the largest section of society"

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

4 Indian Cities Among Cheapest Global Cities to Live In: EIU Report

- According to the **2017 Worldwide Cost of Living Index** released by the **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)**, **four Indian cities** are among the cheapest cities to live in globally.

Rank	City	WCOL Index (100)
1	Almaty (Kazakhstan)	38
2	Lagos (Nigeria)	39
3	Bangaluru (India)	42

- **Singapore** was the most **expensive** city to live among 133 for the fourth consecutive year while **Almaty in Kazakhstan** was the **cheapest** city in the world, placed at the bottom of the list at 133.

2nd India-UAE Conference On Globalisation Held In Dubai

- **Theme:** "Resetting Globalisation: Collaborating in a Fast Changing World."
- The conference held various sessions includes healthcare, technologies to encourage competitiveness, the banking and financial sector's financial technologies transformation, and the growing role of technology and innovation in the retail sector
- UAE's commitment to invest USD 75 billion in Indian infrastructure is of particular significance to the growing relationship between two countries.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

RBI Proposes To Fix Upper Limit in PPIs At Rs 1 Lakh

- As per the draft notice issued by RBI, the amount in PPI should not exceed Rs 1 lakh at any point of time if the customer provides full KYC and Rs 20,000 if the customer provides minimum KYC details to the PPI issuing entity.
- The decision was taken due to the growing usage of PPIs for purchase of goods and services as well as funds transfer.
- Cash loading to PPIs should be limited to Rs 50,000 per month subject to overall limit of the PPI. It could be loaded/reloaded by cash, by debit to a bank account, by credit and debit cards, and other PPIs.
- PPIs are payment instruments that facilitate purchase of goods and services, including financial services, remittance facilities against the value stored on such instruments.

Centre Approves Merging Bharatiya Mahila Bank With SBI

- Government of India has decided to merge **Bharatiya Mahila Bank (BMB)** with India's largest lender, the **State Bank of India (SBI)** to ensure greater banking services outreach to larger number of women at a faster pace.
- All the **103 branches of BMB** and business of approximately Rs. 2,000 crore would be merged with SBI.
- Since the establishment of the Bharatiya Mahila Bank in 2013, women have been extended loans of **Rs. 192 crore** by BMB Bank and about **Rs. 46,000 crore** by SBI group.
- Although the merger would not make significant impact on the branch network and business levels of SBI but it will be ensured that the merger strengthens and reinforces SBI's focus on financing of women entrepreneurs in order to fulfil the objectives behind setting up of Bharatiya Mahila Bank.

NBCC to execute social housing project in Mauritius

- India and Mauritius have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to execute a **US \$ 20 million (Rs.130 cr) social housing project** in Mauritius
- According to the agreement NBCC will construct **700 duplex type houses** with 50 sq.mt net floor area with two bedrooms, living and dining rooms, kitchen, bathrooms and toilets each in 18 months in Dagotiere and Mare Tabac.
- It will also undertake the construction of new **Supreme Court Building** at a cost of US \$ 33 million (Rs.220 cr) in Port Louis in 24 months.
- **US \$ 353 million** has sanctioned by Indian government to execute the five projects in Mauritius including Metro Express Project, new ENT Hospital and supply of digital tablets to primary school children.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

ICMR head Soumya Swaminathan named to UN group on antimicrobial

- Indian Council of Medical Research director **Soumya Swaminathan** has been inducted to the ad hoc Interagency Coordination Group on **Antimicrobial Resistance**.
- Swaminathan is presently working as the head of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). She also Secretary of Department of Health Research in India's Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- She is well known for her research on tuberculosis.

Madhabi Puri Buch Appointed As Sebi Whole-Time Member

- **Madhabi Puri Buch** has been appointed as a **Full-Time Member** of Mumbai based Securities and Exchange Board of India (**SEBI**) for a period of three years
- Puri currently working at the New Development Bank, China. She is founder-director of **Agora Advisory Pvt Ltd**

Mukesh Ambani Tops the Forbes's Billionaire List in India

- India has fourth highest number of billionaires in the World and the Indian group is led by Reliance Industries chief **Mukesh Ambani**.
- **Top Three Billionaire**

Name	Company	Asset
Bill Gates	Microsoft Co-Founder	\$ 86 billion
Warren Buffet	Berkshire Hathaway Chief	\$75.6 billion
Jeff Bezos	Amazon	\$72.8 billion

- **Top 3 Indian Billionaires**

Name	Company	Asset
Mukesh Ambani (33)	Reliance Industries	\$ 23.2 billion
Lakshmi Mittal (56)	Arcelor Mittal	\$ 16.4 billion
Azim Premji (72)	Wipro Ltd	\$ 14.9 billion

AWARDS

Canadian Teacher Maggie MacDonnell Wins \$1-million Global Teacher Prize 2017

- **Maggie MacDonnell**, a Canadian school teacher was awarded the **2017 Global Teacher Prize** worth **\$1 million**
- Maggie was among 10 finalists chosen from 20,000 nominations and applications from 179 countries.
- Maggie MacDonnell is a teacher at the **Ikusik School in Salluit**, a remote Inuit village, in **Quebec province**, Canadian Arctic.
- She was chosen for the award for changing the lives of her students and transforming her community.
- Salluit is home to the second northernmost Inuit indigenous community in Quebec, with a population of just over 1,300, and can only be reached by air.

Major Rohit Suri awarded Kirti Chakra for PoK Surgical Strikes

- **Major Rohit Suri**, the leader of the army team that carried out **surgical strike in PoK in 2016**, was presented the **Kirti Chakra**
 - Member of the surgical strikes team **Naib Subedar Vijay Kumar** was conferred the **Shaurya Chakra** for his daredevilry in killing two terrorists in the operation despite coming under fire.
 - **Corporal Gursevak Singh of Indian Air Force** was posthumously conferred the Saurya Chakra for putting up a valiant fight against terrorists who had attacked the frontline Pathankot air base in January 2016.
 - Kirti Chakra is the second highest peacetime gallantry award equivalent of the Maha Vir Chakra. It is given for valor, courageous action or self-sacrifice away from the field of battle.
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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

ISRO Commissions Two Major Facilities at VSSC

- **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** commissioned two major facilities, a **Hypersonic Wind Tunnel and Shock Tunnel** at the **Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre** at Thiruvananthapuram.
- Such facilities would provide adequate data for **design and development** of current and **future space transportation systems** in the country.
- These facilities are the **World's third largest** in terms of **size and simulation** capability and have been indigenously designed, developed and 'Made in India' with the support of **Indian industries**.
- The new facility would help aerodynamic characterization of advanced space transportation systems.

SPORTS CURRENT AFFAIRS

Tamil Nadu Beats Bengal to Win Vijay Hazare Trophy

- **Tamil Nadu** won the **Vijay Hazare Trophy 2017** at the **Feroz Shah Kotla, Delhi** by beating **Bengal by 37 runs** in the finals.
- With this win, they become the only team to win the tournament **five times** out of which one was shared with Uttar Pradesh in 2004-05.

India's Vidya Pillai Wins Silver in World Women Snooker Championship

- India's Billiards Champion **Vidya Pillai** settled for **silver medal** in the **2017 World Women Snooker Championship**.
- This is Vidya's first international medal for India in 2017.
- Vidya Pillai, an **eight-time women's national snooker champion**, previously won gold at the IBSF World Team Snooker Championship in 2013.

National Champion K T Irfan Wins Bronze in Asian 20km Race Walk Championships

- India's **KT Irfan** won the **bronze medal** in men's 20km race walk event at the Asian Race Walking Championships in Nomi, Japan
- In the women's category of 20km event, India's **Priyanka** finished fourth with a time of 1:37:42.

Cheteshwar Pujara becomes first Indian to face 500 balls in Test innings

- Indian Cricketer **Cheteshwar Pujara**(29) became the first Indian batsman to face **500 balls** in the second innings of the 3rd Test against Australia at Ranchi.
- Pujara has played **525 balls** in his 202 run innings. With this he breaks **Rahul Dravid's** record who faces 494 balls in 2004.