

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Lok Sabha passes 123rd Constitution Amendment Bill 2017

- This amendment bill seeks to grant constitutional status to **National Commission for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes**.
- The amendment bill seeks to insert **Article 338B** in the Indian Constitution. This article will list out the structure and functions of the proposed National Commission for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes.

Survey General Of India completes 250 Years

- Topographic Maps or Open Series Maps (OSM) is prepared by Survey of India **since 1767** and is in conformity with the National Map Policy-2005.
- The center launched a website which allows the **public access to 3000 maps** which are prepared by Survey General of India.

Parliament passes Constitution (SC) Order (Amendment) Bill 2017

- The Bill seeks to amend the constitution (Schedule Castes) order, **1950 and the constitution (Pondicherry) Scheduled Castes Order, 1964**.
- The Bill seeks to modify the list of SCs for the state of Odisha.
- The castes Sualgiri, Swalgiri will be introduced to the Sabakhia caste in the list of the SCs for the state of Odisha.

Government sets up inter-ministerial panel to monitor UDAN

- Government has set up an inter-ministerial committee to monitor the regional air connectivity scheme UDAN which seeks to make flying affordable by connecting unserved and under-served airports.
- The Inter-Ministerial Monitoring-cum-coordination Committee would be responsible for overall monitoring of the schemes.
- The panel would be responsible for coordination among the stakeholders including state government.
- In the flights operated under RCS (Regional air Connectivity) around 50% of the seats would have a fare cap Rs2500 per seat/hour.
- The cap on fares would be revived periodically based on Consumer Price Index for Industrial workers under RCS.
- Other benefits include zero airport charges for the operators and three years restricted on the routes.

Centre releases nearly 23500 Crore to States under MGNREGS

- The GOI emphasized solely on Water Conservation and Water Management works under MGNREGS.

- All the states have been advised to ensure that such works are taken up wherever required with appropriate technical and scientific channel.
- Rural development has requested them to give top most priority to Water Conservation works under MGNREGS.
- It is to be ensured in drought regions and in districts, blocks where inadequate rainfall is there.

Government reduces number of centrally sponsored schemes to 28

- The Government has **reduced** the number of **Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS)** from **66 to 28** and effective from the financial year 2016-2017.
- The GOI has rationalized Centrally Sponsored Schemes based on the recommendation of the sub group of chief ministers.
- The minister has mentioned that **6 Schemes have been categorized as Core of the Core 20 Schemes as Core Schemes and remaining 2 as Optional Schemes.**
- The related Schemes could be merged and implemented as **“Umbrella Schemes”** to administer the satisfactory component in the line with state specific requirements.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

First rail freight service to China departs UK

- The **first rail freight service** from **U K to China** has departed on a journey of **7500 mile** from Essex. Thirty containers will carry British goods which include whiskey, soft drinks, vitamins pharmaceuticals and baby products.
- The service is a part of **China’s One Belt, One Road program** of reviving the ancient Silk Road.
- It is used to ensure import and export products from the UK via ship or train to make fast safer and more reliable.
- It travel over **7500 miles** to reach Yiwu(China)a framed wholesale market town in the eastern province of Zhejiang in 17 days.
- The train will pass through the seven countries which include France, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

ESAF Small Finance Bank launches social deposit scheme Hrudaya deposit

- The deposit scheme is related with social cause through which ESAF bank provides the customers an opportunity to be a part in social welfare projects.
- In this scheme whosoever customer deposit in it will become a part in national building.
- Their deposits are used for the welfare and infrastructure developments of the underdeveloped sections of the society.

- An individual or a legal entity can join the Hrudaya deposit scheme with a minimum **deposit amount of Rs 15 lakh** and for a **minimum period of 2 years**.
- Customer will also get an opportunity to gain first-hand experience of how their money is used to improve the lives of the ordinary people in the country.
- The Hrudaya deposit scheme includes the development of the rural farmers, fisherman, vegetable, vendors etc.

Align Bank Pay to CPSEs : Bank Board Bureau

- The Bank Board Bureau has recommended that government bring reforms in the compensation process in Public Sector Banks similar to Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs).
- BBB set up in Aril 2016 to select board members including MD & CEO in PSBs put out the list that was submitted to the government on its website.
- To attract high quality talent for non-executive directors and chairman, BBB suggested a platform with the private sector in relation to role, responsibility and remuneration.
- BBB is an autonomous body of eminent professionals and officials PSBs. Its function is to give recommendations to the government for appointment of full time directors as well as non-executive chairman of PSBs.

Flipkart Buys eBay India Business, Gets \$500 Million as Investment

- India's **largest e-commerce company buys eBay's India business** and closing \$1.4 billion fund raising from Tencent, eBay and Microsoft.
- \$1.4 billion deal is led by China's Tencent with an investment of \$700 million while eBay Inc will contribute \$500 million and also receive Flipkart stock worth of \$200 million.
- The eBay merchants outside of India can sell to Flipkart shoppers and flipkart Sellers can more easily sell to eBay shoppers outside of India.
- **EBay** mentioned it is **investing \$500 million** and selling its India business in exchange for a stake in Flipkart.
- Flipkart will own and operate the eBay.in as an independent business upon the close of the transaction. It will maximize the opportunity for both companies in India.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

Pakistan sentences Indian spy Kulbhushan Jhadav to death

- A Pakistani army court awarded death sentence to Indian national **Kulbhushan Jhadav** who was arrested last year on charges of spying.
- Jhadav was arrested in March last year in Balochistan accused of being a Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) agent.
- He was supplying the Baloch separatist movement and attempt to damage the \$46 billion China Pakistan economic corridor(CPEC)
- He confessed in front of court and magistrate that he was tasked by **RAW** to plan, coordinate and organize destruction activities that aims to weaken the wage war against Pakistan by hinder the efforts of law enforcement agencies.

- India will consider it is case of Premeditated murder if Jhadav will be awarded capital punishment.

AWARDS

Colson Whitehead wins Pulitzer prize for *The Underground Railroad*

- A speculative history novel “**The Underground Railroad**” written by **Colson Whitehead** has won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction.
- The Novel was published in August 2016 and became an instant bestseller. It won the 2016 National Book Award for Fiction (US) in November 2016.

National Hindi Sevi Samman Awards announced

- Professors from Japan, USA to be honoured for promoting Hindi.
- 6 writers including 2 Japanese and American Professors Hindi Sevi Samman for their efforts to promote the language.
- **Fujii Takeshi (Japan)** and **Gabriela Nik Ilieva (USA)** will be presented George Grearson award in the foreign Hindi writers category.
- In the NRI category Pushpitaavasthi (Netherland) and Padmesh Gupta (London) will be presented the award.
- Writers from non-Hindi speaking states who have been chosen for the award are S Shesharatnam (Vishakhapatnam) M. Govind Rajan (Chennai) Harmahendra Singh Bedi(Amristar) and H Subadani Devi (Imphal)
- Rahul Dev and Baldev Bhaisharma will be presented the Ganesh Shankar Vidhyrthi for their contribution to Hindi journalism.

SPORTS CURRENT AFFAIRS

Marouane Fellaini becomes the first muslim player to captain Manchester United

- Marouane Fellaini is a Belgian professional football player who plays as a midfielder for Premier League Club Manchester United and the Belgium national team.
- He is the world’s most expensive player.