

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Training program for women panchayat leaders

- Training program for Women Panchayat leaders so that they can give special emphasis on efficient usage of funds for achieving their overall development.
- They will get training under experts from the **National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD and PR)** in Hyderabad.

'Advanced Farming – Enriched Farmer' scheme announced by Maharashtra Govt

- The scheme will be launched in the upcoming **kharif season**.
- Major Tasks to be executed under 'Advanced Farming – Enriched Farmer' Scheme
 1. Raising production of major crops (up to the level of its genetic yield potential)
 2. Diversification of crops
 3. Introducing marketing techniques
 4. Uniting farmers through farm producers' companies and making them financially stable
- Maharashtra Govt. will spend **60% of the fund** available for mechanization of farming on tractors, power tillers, transplanters, and machines for polishing, grading, and packing the produce.
- A farmer outreach campaign will also be launched to inform farmers about the techniques to be used in agriculture ahead of the kharif season.

Global exhibition on services in New Delhi

- Objective: To highlight India's potential to boost its services exports across sectors.
- Participants: 550 exhibitors from 70 plus countries
- India's services exports increased from \$52 billion in 2005 to \$155 billion in 2015, with a share of 3.3 per cent in global services exports.
- In the first 11 months of 2016-17, services exports stood at \$146.5 billion, growing at 3 per cent.
- IT and software services contribute to over 48 per cent of India's overall services exports.
- India's services trade witnessed a surplus of \$59 billion in April-February 2016-17 with imports rising 12.1 per cent to \$87 billion.

Pension to circus artistes

- **Kerala** has decided to provide pension to former circus artistes in the state.
- Kerala State Govt. has allocated **Rs 1.13 crore** for this purpose.

IIT Kharagpur to introduce Vastu Shastra

- Vastu Shastra will be introduced to architecture students from the next academic session.
- It will be introduced to undergraduate students as part of courses on basic design and history of architecture.
- For undergraduate students at IIT Kharagpur will study the basics of Vastu Shastra.

- According to the faculty members at IIT Kharagpur believe that students who are studying architectural concepts prevalent in the West should also know and learn about ancient Indian architectural traditions.
- It includes principles, nine-circuit placements, sacred altars design semiotics and semantics for the post graduate students.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Australia abolishes 457 visas program largely used by Indians

- Australia has abolished a visa program that is used by over 95,000 temporary foreign workers and majority of them are Indians.
- Its **objective is to tackle the growing unemployment in the country.**
- Australia will adopt a new '**Australians First**' approach to skilled migration.
- The new "Temporary Skill Shortage Visa" program will comprise two streams—Short Term and Medium Term
- Short-term visas will be issued for two years and medium-term visas will be issued only for more critical skills shortages and for up to four years.
- The program known as **457 Visa which permits business to employ foreign workers for a period up to four years in skilled jobs where there is a shortage of Australian workers.**
- The 457 visa will replace new work visa that will require foreign workers to have better English language and job skills
- These changes will give Australian job seekers more opportunity to find work and prosper their business growth efficiently.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

SBI surpasses ONGC to become most valued PSU stock

- State Bank of India (SBI) surpassed ONGC to become the **most valued public sector undertaking (PSU)** state-owned firm in terms of market valuation.
- The shares of **SBI** rose by **2.33 per cent** to Rs 296.40 and **ONGC** lost 1.36 per cent to Rs 180.60
- SBI surged almost 16 per cent while that of ONGC fell by over 4 per cent.
- SBI m-cap stood of Rs 239,808 crore and ONGC having m-cap of Rs 236,003 crore.

PNB launches new products for customers on its foundation day

- The three new products which are launched by PNB are **automated electronic toll collection to facilitate hassle-free toll payment collection, a Credit card Mobile App and a scheme for financing a grid connected Roof Solar Power Project.**

RBI, Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan ink MoU to share information

- BI has signed **39 such MoUs** One Letter for Supervisory Co-operation and One Statement of Co-operation.
- It was signed for 'Supervisory Cooperation and Exchange of Supervisory Information' with few countries.

RBI opens new Ombudsman office for Chhattisgarh and Jammu

- The Reserve Bank has **started a new office at Raipur for Chattisgrah and for Jammu** to look into the grievances of residents and entities.
- File complaints ranging from non-payment or delay in payment or collection of cheques/drafts, failure to provide or delay in providing a banking services, on-adherence to prescribed working hours, non- acceptance of small denomination notes or coins, delays or non-credit of proceeds to parties' accounts to non-observance of RBI's directives on banking services.

ISRO, BHEL tie-up for lithium-ion batteries to have buyback agreements

- **MoU** has signed between **Indian space Research Organization (ISRO) and Bharat Heavy electrical Limited (BHEL)** to develop low-cost lithium ion batteries for electric vehicles and also an agreement of buyback commitment for such batteries.
- The main objective is to promote commercial production of lithium ion batteries that uses in **electric motor vehicles**.
- ISRO will provide support for scale-up, joint effort in cost optimisation, research and development.
- BHEL will develop the battery for commercial applications.

AP red chilli farmers to get Rs 1500 more per quintal above market price

- Chilli prices crashed from Rs12000-14000 per quintal last year to below Rs5,000 per quintal for this year
- Farmers can get an additional benefit of Rs1500 per quintal subject to a ceiling of 20 quintals.
- For availing this benefit farmers should produce photostate copies of their Aadhaar cards and bank accounts.
- The price per quintal should not exceed to Rs8000 inclusive of the Rs1500 per quintal being offered by the government.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

Guitar Pioneer Allan Holdsworth dies at 70

- Rock and Jazz fusion guitar pioneer **Allan Holdsworth** has died at the age of 70
- He first appeared on a record in 1969 and released his sole album with the Igginbottom's Wrench in 1969.

Former Andhra Pradesh minister Devineni Rajashekhar passes away

- Nehru began his political career as a student union leader and **founded the United Students Organization.**
- He served as the minister in N.T. Rama Rao's cabinet from 1994 to 1996.
- He was made the Education Minister in the NTR Cabinet in 1994.
- He won the state elections in 1985, 1989 and 1994 as a TDP candidate from **Kankipadu constituency** in Krishna district.
- He was elected to Andhra Pradesh assembly from Kankipadu in 1983 and retained the seat in 1985, 1989 and 1994.

AWARDS

Indian Engineer Tirupati Jain Wins 'Cartier Women's Initiative Award'

- Tirupati has given this award for providing innovative solutions of water management to the women those working on farms and small farmers against drought and flash floods.
- She is the winner from a pool of 1900 applicants and from over 120 countries.
- Her Gujarat based company has implemented 232 systems in India which benefitted 18000 small farmers and 100000 of the rural poor people.

Hanchinal receives 6th M.S. Swaminathan Award

- The 6th edition of **M.S. Swaminathan Award** for honoring outstanding contribution in the field of agriculture has been given to **Rayappa Ramappa Hanchinal – Chairperson of Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Authority.**
- This award has been given to Dr. Hanchinal for his contributions and continuous efforts in areas of seed production technology, crop improvement for hot and very hot dry environments and intellectual protection rights in plant varieties.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

INS Chennai dedicated, Chennai to become hub of Naval activities

- INS Chennai a P 15A Guided Missile Destroyer of Indian Navy was dedicated to the city of Chennai

Gupshup launches bot-to-bot communication platform 'InterBot'

- Ability to communicate will give bots human-like capabilities to transact, co-ordinate, compete, collaborate and negotiate with each other.
- Shopping bots can negotiate with merchant bots to find the best prices
- A taxi bot can ask the cafe bot to have the coffee ready by the time the user's taxi arrives
- To use InterBot, bots will first have to publish themselves on this new platform. These bots can exchange services and learn from each other.