

## NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

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### **Railways to launch Operation Swarn to revamp Rajdhani, Shatabdi Trains**

- “**Operation Swarn**” to improve services in **Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express trains**. The move has come as a response to repeated complaints of deteriorated services, low quality of food and poor sanitation in these trains.
- ‘Operation Swarn’ will be conducted in a phased manner. Under the **first phase**, the **Mumbai-Delhi Rajdhani Express and Mumbai-Ahmedabad Shatabdi Express** have been selected for upgradation, for which the work will start from September 2017.
- An **amount of Rs 50 lakh will be allotted to each Rajdhani and Shatabdi train** on various routes for the revamp.

### **EPFO signs MoU with HUDCO under new Housing Scheme of EPF & MP Act-1952**

- Under the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana** it enables members of its housing scheme to avail subsidy and interest subvention.
- Under the housing scheme, the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) allows its subscribers from societies for withdrawing up to 90% of their EPF accumulations to buy homes.
- The HUDCO is a nodal agency for implementation of credit linked subsidy scheme for middle and lower-income groups and economically weaker section under the PMAY.

### **Kerala becomes 3rd state to be open defecation free**

- Earlier, **Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim** had declared themselves Open Defecation Free.
- In Kerala over 1 lakh villages across the country have become ODF.
- Kerala becomes first high density populated state in the country to achieve Open Defecation Free status.

### **Mizoram launches scheme for better treatment of HIV-Hit people**

- Under the ‘Test and Treat Strategy’, the HIV affected people would be given **free Anti Retrovira Therapy (ART)** irrespective of the **CD4 count**.
- Anti Retrovira Therapy (ART) has been found to be able to resist TB and other bacterial diseases.

## INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

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### **UN report World Population Prospects – The 2017 Revision**

- The **population of India is expected to surpass that of China by year 2024**.
- The report said, the current world population of 7.6 billion is expected to reach 6 billion in 2030, 9.8 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion in 2100.
- Currently China with 1.41 billion inhabitants and India with 1.34 billion remain the two most populous countries, comprising 19% and 18% of the total global population.

**Estonia to open the world's first data embassy in Luxembourg**

- It will create the **world's first data embassy**. The data embassy should **start work at the beginning of 2018**.
- It will serve in the **field of transnational digital cooperation both in Europe and throughout the world**
- This will be the first data embassy in the world and its establishment is a part of the Estonian general strategy of data management and fundamentally a double guarantee to our data and services.
- Estonia is the world's first country that uses this method to double secure its digital consistency in close cooperation with Luxembourg.

**Beijing launches research project to compile data on disputed region**

- **China** has launched a research project to **compile historical data obtained during expeditions by its teams to the disputed South China Sea since the late 1950s**.
- Researchers will collect and compile valuable data and materials obtained during China's major ocean expeditions to the South China Sea. It is affiliated with islands and reefs.
- The **project** has the **participation of 193 scholars from 10 domestic research institutions and universities**.
- The project is one of the 14 resource investigation programs approved by the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- It will provide insight into the resources, environment and changes related to the South China Sea and its affiliated islands and reefs.

## **BUSINESS & ECONOMY**

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**RBI announces names of members of Overseeing Committee**

- OC earlier was a two-member committee consisting of former Chief Vigilance Commissioner **Pradeep Kumar** and former State Bank of India chairman **Janki Ballabh**.
- Another three members have been added – **former L&T Finance Holdings Chairman YM Deosthalee, former Canara Bank chairman MBN Rao and SEBI whole time member S Raman** whose appointment will be effective from 7th September, 2017.
- In addition to reviewing cases being restructured under the Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets (S4A), the reconstituted OC will also review resolution of cases where aggregate exposure of the banking sector to the borrowing entity is **greater than Rs 500 crore**

**Govt wants banks to deposit banned Rs 500, Rs 1000 notes at RBI by July 20**

- This is the second window the government has provided to banks, post offices and cooperative banks for depositing the junked notes with RBI.
- RBI will accept deposits collected by any bank or post office by December 30, 2016 or by any District Central Cooperative Bank from November 10-14, 2016 should be deposited within 30 days.

- Old Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes were junked from November 8, 2016 to eliminate black money and curb infusion and circulation of **fake Indian currency notes**.
- As on November 8, 2016, the total amount of currency in circulation was **Rs 17.7 lakh crore**, which included specified bank notes (SBNs) of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000.

#### **World Bank sanctions 44 million dollars for ASPIRe**

- ASPIRe project is based on three important components:
  - 1.Strengthening public finance institutional capacity
  - 2.Strengthening expenditure and revenue information systems
  - 3.On project management, monitoring and evaluation, and coordination.
- The project aims at **improving predictability and transparency in budget execution and efficiency in tax administration in Assam**.
- From people view point transformative benefits accruing to them through efficient processes, better service delivery such as electronic payments and collections for services.

#### **Bengaluru firm 1st in India to deliver diesel at home**

- **Bengaluru** has become the country's **first city where one can have fuel delivered at one's doorstep**.
- For up to **100 litres**, the one-time delivery charge is **Rs.99**.
- The startup has got 20 odd customers, including 16 schools (which have 250-300 buses) and a few apartments.
- The vehicles used for delivery have been specially made by a firm approved by the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation.
- It has already delivered more than 5,000 litres of diesel.

## **PEOPLE IN NEWS**

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#### **Major reshuffle in central bureaucracy, Gauba named new Home Secretary**

- The **Urban Development Secretary Rajiv Gauba** will be the next **Home Secretary** after incumbent Rajiv Mehrishi retires on August 30.
- **Yudhvir Singh Malik**, a 1983-batch Haryana cadre officer, has been appointed as **Secretary, Road Transport and Highways**.
- **Subhash C. Garg**, a 1983-batch Rajasthan cadre officer serving as Executive Director at World Bank. He has been made **Secretary of Economic Affairs**.
- Electronics and Information Technology Secretary **Aruna Sundarajan** has been **appointed as Telecommunications Secretary**.

#### **Kenneth I Juster set to become America's new ambassador to India**

- Kenneth I Juster is a 62-year-old who is the Deputy Assistant to the US president for International Economic Affairs and Deputy Director of his National Economic Council.
- According to the Walters Ken has been selected for this post because Ken has a strong and positive relationship with everyone in the White House, including the president.

- The move has been welcomed by widely respected Ashley Telis, the top India expert in the US.

**Indian-origin doctor appointed honorary VP of UK medical body**

- Indian-origin doctor **Kailash Chand** in the UK has been appointed as honorary vice-president of the country's prominent **medical body**.
- **Kailash Chand** is a general practitioner and has been **associated with the British Medical Association (BMA), for nearly 25 years**.
- Chand is a senior fellow of the BMA, which is a professional body and trade union representing over 160,000 doctors in the UK.
- He has been regularly named as being among one of Britain's top 50 most influential GPs in the annual '**National Pulse Power**' list.
- He had **awarded an Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his services to the NHS in 2010**.

**Russian Diplomat Vladimir Voronkov as Chief of United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre**

- Voronkov has over 30 years of experience with the Russian Foreign Service, working primarily within the UN.
- He had served as Russia's representative to UN organizations in Vienna, Austria, since 2011, including the **UN Office on Drugs and Crime**, which deals with counterterrorism.
- Voronkov has also served as Russia's deputy ambassador to the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)**, from 2005 to 2008, and on the board of governors of the UN's global nuclear watchdog, the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

## AWARDS

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**Anti-hunger hero Ankit Kawatra to be honoured by Queen Elizabeth II**

- Anti-hunger activist **Ankit Kawatra** has been selected for prestigious **Queen's Young Leaders Award** with 60 others from all 53 Commonwealth countries.
- The Queen's Young Leader Award recognises and celebrates **exceptional people aged 18-29 from across the Commonwealth**, who are taking the lead in their communities and using their skills to transform lives.

**Sonam Kapoor's fashion label Rheson wins PETA award**

- **Sonam Kapoor** and her producer-sister **Rhea Kapoor's fashion label Rheson** has won the **Compassionate Business Award from the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)**
- Rheson is setting trends by providing optimum quality fashion wear and accessories made of vegan materials, harming no animals.

**International Dublin Literary Award goes to José Eduardo Agualusa**

- The Dublin Literary Award is the **world's largest prize for a single novel published in English**.

- The €100,000 prize is divided between author and translator, with Agualusa receiving €75,000 and Hahn €25,000.
- A General Theory of Oblivion is about the story of a traumatized woman Luanda, who retreats from the world and history and stays in an apartment while Angola endures a civil war and a sequence of horrors. Her isolation is shared with an albino dog Phantom, whose spirit continues to sustain her after he dies.

## SPORTS CURRENT AFFAIRS

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### Luke Ronchi announces international retirement

- Wicketkeeper-batsman **Luke Ronchi**, who **played for New Zealand** and having earlier also **represented Australia**, has **announced his retirement from the international game**
- It became his hallmark when he hit a one-day half century from 22 balls, the equal third-fastest 50 by an Australian in ODIs.
- Ronchi played only one more Twenty20 international for Australia after that tour and returned to his birth nation in 2012.
- Ronchi played **4 tests, 85 one-dayers** and **32 Twenty20 internationals** for New Zealand.