

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

'War room' set up to deal with GST crises

- A “mini war room” has been set up in the finance ministry **to deal with crises related to the implementation** of the Goods and Services Tax (GST)
- The **unit will act as a quick resource centre for Central and State government officials.**
- It will **address their queries on the historic tax reform** scheduled to be implemented from 1st of July .
- The room, equipped with computers and phone lines, will act as a single-window for anything and everything related to the GST.
- A team of tech-savvy young officers will be manning the “war room” to assist officials in resolving their GST-related queries.

India's first blood bank for Cattle to come up in Odisha

- The **first of its kind blood bank** would be established on the premises of OUAT at an estimated cost of **Rs 3.25 crore.**
- The **project will have a 60:40 sharing between the Centre and the state government**
- The storage facility would come in handy for the veterinarians to save lives of the domesticated animals.
- The blood bank will also go and collect blood from centres and the cattle farmers will provide blood voluntarily.
- Blood transfusion facility for cattle blood will also be done at the proposed blood bank.
- It will **prevent death of cattle during deliveries and other ailments.**

Election Commission joins hands with Facebook to Launch First Time Nationwide “Voter Registration Reminder”

- A notification of the ‘voter registration reminder’ will be sent on Facebook on July 1 to people who are eligible to vote.
- The **reminder will be sent out in 13 languages** – English, Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Punjabi, Bengali, Urdu, Assamese, Marathi and Oriya.
- By clicking on the ‘register now’ button, people will be directed to the national voters’ services portal (www.nvsp.in) which will guide them through the registration
- This is the first time Facebook has been used for enrolling new voters across India.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

PM Narendra Modi's foreign visits to Portugal, Netherlands, US – Overview

- During PM Modi's visit to Portugal, **India and Portugal signed 11 pacts** for cooperation in various areas including cooperation in outer space, double taxation avoidance, nano technology,

improving cultural ties, youth and sports, higher education, scientific research, and setting up of a Portugal-India Business Hub and an Indian Chamber of Commerce in Portugal.

- India and Portugal announced a **four million Euros joint fund to bolster research in science and technology**.
- India and USA agreed to continue strengthening coordination for ensuring peace and stability in **Afghanistan** as they expressed concern over rising instability in the war-torn country caused by terrorism.
- India and Netherlands signed following three agreements: **MoU on water cooperation, MoU on Cultural Cooperation and Agreement on Amending Social Security Arrangement**
- India ranks 93rd out of 128 in Social Progress Index 2017
- **India has ranked 93rd** among 128 countries on **2017 Social Progress Index**, 2017 by **Social progress Imperative (SPI)** with support from **Deloitte** and its strategic partners.

Top 5 Countries on Social Progress Index – 2017:

Rank	Country
1	Denmark
2	Finland
3	Iceland
4	Norway
5	Switzerland

UNESCO names Sharjah as World Book Capital 2019

- It has been given for the quality of its literary and cultural activities and for its efforts to make books accessible to the entire population of the nation.
- It has been selected because of its innovative and inclusive application, with a community-focused activity program.
- **Sharjah** has been **chosen for the quality of its literary and cultural activities**, and for its unflinching efforts to make books accessible to the entire population of the nation.
- Sharjah is the **19th city** to become World Book Capital.
- The recognition is an important addition to Sharjah's existing portfolio of milestones which includes Capital of Arab Culture (1998), Capital of Islamic Culture (2014), and Capital of Arab Tourism (2015).

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

India Signs Loan Agreement with the World Bank for USD 35 Million

- India has signed a Loan Agreement with the **World Bank for USD 35 Million for Assam State Public Financial Institutional Reforms Project**.
- The **program size is USD 44 million, of which USD 35 million will be financed by the Bank, and the remaining amount will be funded out of State Budget**.
- The program duration is **5 years**.
- The **objective of the project is to improve predictability and transparency in budget execution and efficiency in tax administration in Assam**.
- The project will benefit the citizens of Assam through efficient processes, enhanced transparency and better service delivery provided by public institutions.
- The services include electronic payments and collections for services, better public procurement, and enhanced taxpayer services.

World's first ATM machine turns to gold on 50th birthday

- The original cash machine was the brainchild of John Shepherd-Barron, who was commissioned by the bank to create six cash dispensers. They were based on vending machines.
- There now are an **estimated 3 million plus cash machines in the world**.
- The highest ATM is at 4,693 metres in Pakistan's Khunjerab Pass near the Chinese border.
- The world's most southerly ATM is at the McMurdo Station research base on Antarctica.

FSSAI issues draft regulations for organic food products

- In a bid to ensure authenticity of organic food, **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has come out with a **draft regulation for organic food products**.
- Organic foods will have to comply with the provisions under the **National Program for Organic Production (NPOP)** administered by the government or the **Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS-India)** run by the Agriculture Ministry or any other standards notified by the food authority.
- The draft regulation mandates that **labelling of organic foods should convey full and accurate information** on the organic status of the product.
- **Organic food products should also carry a certification mark** or a quality assurance mark given by any of the notified certification bodies.

NPPA announces provisional ceiling prices of 761 medicines including anti-cancer, HIV

- India's drug price regulator, **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** announced **provisional ceiling prices for 761 medicines**, including HIV, diabetes, anti-cancer and antibiotic.
- the actual increase or decrease in drug prices post-GST is expected to be in the range of 2-3% depending on states.
- Prices of drugs for treatment of HIV, diabetes, cancer and Hepatitis B have come down owing to the new ceiling prices.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

Kaushik Basu is new International Economic Association president

- **International Economic Association (IEA)** has chosen eminent economist **Kaushik Basu** as its president.
- The organisation consists of key economists which significantly **help in determining global economic policy and research**.
- Nobel Laureates like Robert Solow, Amartya Sen and Joseph Stiglitz have been among the past presidents of International Economic Association (IEA).
- Kaushik Basu, is an **Indian economist and academic**. He will serve a three-year term as the President.
- He has served as **India's chief economic adviser from 2009 to 2012**.
- He has also served as senior vice-president and chief economist at the World Bank from 2012 to 2016.

Union Government appoints Chetan Chauhan as NIFT Chairperson

- Former cricketer and two-time Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP, **Chetan Chauhan**, has been named the **chairperson of the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT)**.
- The **chairman is also part of the reviewing authority for a number of senior academic and administrative positions at the institute**.
- The appointment of the chairman and non-official members of the Board of Governors of the NIFT is a statutory body under the Ministry of Textiles.

Vidya named ambassador of Indian Film Festival of Melbourne

- Actress **Vidya Balan** has named an **ambassador of the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM)**.
- The films from India will include 30 Australian premieres.
- The IFFM will present films that explore diversity and the endless potential of humanity.
- The audience will immerse themselves in thirteen days of film, including Bollywood blockbusters, India films and documentaries from India and the subcontinent.

AWARDS

Uttarakhand gets award of excellence at international meet

- **Uttarakhand** has been conferred the **award of excellence** at the **2nd Global Skill Development Summit held in Paris**
- Uttarakhand has been **awarded for innovations and extensive use of IT for skilling the state's youth**.
- In Uttarakhand, a new initiative is being taken to impart high quality job oriented training to the state's youth so that they could avail of employment opportunities in the tourism, beauty and wellness, agriculture, health and security sectors.
- Training programs are being designed in accordance with the requirements of the industries and are being carried out in both rural and urban areas of the state.

- Uttarakhand Skill Development Committee was also running international language training programs for the state's youth to strengthen the prospects of their employability by foreign companies.

SPORTS CURRENT AFFAIRS

Roger Federer demolishes Alexander Zverev to win ninth Halle Open title

- **Roger Federer** won **ninth Halle Open title** by defeating **Alexander Zverev** in the final match played at **Halle, Germany**.
- On account of this victory against Alexander Zverev, Roger Federer became the first player to beat both Zverev brothers at the same event, having defeated older sibling Mischa in the round of 16.
- **Halle open**, played on the grass court, is **part of the ATP World Tour 500 series on the ATP Tour**

FIFA set to shift India's U-17 World Cup games to Delhi

- The **All India Football Federation (AIFF)** initially wanted **Mumbai** to host **India's home matches**.
- It has been later asked FIFA to shift them to Delhi due to pressure from the sports ministry as it felt it was appropriate that the capital hosts the home team's games.
- **India would normally be placed in Group A and will be the number one team A1 in the four-team group.**
- Navi Mumbai was originally scheduled to host Group A. The AIFF's request means Delhi could now host those while Navi Mumbai will have to settle for Group B games.

BCCI forms Committee to oversee Lodha Panel Reforms

- In a landmark judgment on July 18, 2016, the **Supreme Court accepted major recommendations of Justice R.M. Lodha-led panel on structural reforms in the BCCI** and had given six months deadline to the board for implementing the recommendations.
- **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** announced the formation of a special **seven-member committee** to analyse the few contentious **Lodha panel reforms** which are being opposed by the Board's state units.

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