

# NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination 2017-22

- The Strategic Plan gives **year wise elimination targets** in various parts of the country depending upon the endemicity of malaria in the next 5 years.
- It is to be noted that **National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME)** that was launched last year outlined India's commitment for eliminating malaria by 2030.

## Maharashtra first state to have law against social boycott

- **Maharashtra Prohibition of People from Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2016.** Maharashtra has thus become the **first state in the country to bring a law making social boycott a crime.**
- In recent times, Maharashtra had witnessed an increased number of incidents of social boycott and violence at the orders of seniors in the caste panchayats, for not adhering to their rules.
- The movement, initiated by late **Narendra Dabholkar**, gained momentum after he was shot dead and the Maharashtra legislature passed the law unanimously in 2016.

## Government empowers Army to procure weaponry for short intense wars

- The **procurement** of critical **ammunition** will be done for most of **46 types of ammunition the Army uses.**
- Under the new scheme the **procurement of spares** will be for **10 different types of equipment.**
- The Army faces severe shortage in ammunition, mainly for artillery guns, tanks, air defence and certain infantry weapons, which will make it very difficult to fight a short intense war that lasts for **10 to 15 days.**
- To make up for the voids, emergency powers were given to the Army vice-chief for three months.
- The Army also intends to have enough ammunition to fight a **40-days intense war** or a full-scale war.

## DIPP to set up India's first TISC in Punjab

- **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India,** signed an Institutional agreement with the Punjab **State Council of Science and Technology** to establish India's first **Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC)** at **Patent Information Centre, Punjab**, under the **World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) TISC program.**
- The objective of the TISC is to stimulate a dynamic, vibrant and balanced Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) system in India to foster creativity and innovation, thereby promoting entrepreneurship and enhancing social, economic and cultural development.
- WIPO's TISC program provides innovators in developing countries with access to locally based, high quality technology information and related services, helping them to exploit their innovative potential and to create, protect, and manage their Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).

- Assistance in searching and retrieving technology information, training in database search, on-demand searches (novelty, state-of-the-art and infringement) and monitoring technology are some of the services offered by TISCs.

#### Training centre for high-speed rail to come up in Gujarat

- A **maintenance depot** for high speed rolling stock is also proposed to be **set up at the existing railway facility at Sabarmati**.
- The estimated cost is **Rs 600 crore** and the training centre will have a sample track fitted with the overhead electrical systems.
- The training centre is supposed to start operating by 2020 while India's first bullet train is proposed to come up in 2023.
- The training of **4,000 rail engineers has been anticipated before 2020** and approximately 300 of these will be trained in **Japan**, while the rest will undergo courses at the **Gandhinagar centre**.

#### Arunachal, Andaman and Nicobar Islands get exemption from SC highway liquor ban

- Supreme Court has allowed **Arunachal Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar Islands** to get exemption from the court's **ban on sale of liquor within 500 metres of National and State Highways**.
- Arunachal argued that it had lost 50% of its revenue following the December 15, 2016 ban, earmarking 500 metres alongside highways as liquor-free zones. The State said 80% of its roads are national highways.
- It is to be noted that the north-eastern States of Sikkim and Meghalaya got a full exemption from the 500-m no-liquor zone ban after the court took into consideration their hilly terrain and also the fact that 82% of its area was forest land and over 90% of its liquor shops would be closed if the ban was imposed strictly in its original form.

## INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

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#### To fight ISIS, India grants Rs 3.2 crore aid to Philippines

- **India has granted USD 500000 to the Philippines to fight ISIS**. It has been given for the rehabilitation and relief efforts in war-torn Marawi City.
- The Philippines is the only Southeast Asian nation where ISIS has established its presence.
- The **Marawi crisis** is an **armed conflict in Marawi** that started on 23 May 2017. The militants' main objective is to raise an ISIL flag at the Lanao del Sur Provincial Capitol.
- It is the conflict between Philippine government security forces and affiliated militants of the Islamic State of **Iraq** and the Levant including the Maute and Abu Sayyaf Salafi jihadist groups.

#### Malta becomes world's 24th country to legalize Gay Marriage

- **Malta**, the EU's smallest nation, **becomes the bloc's 15th member to legalise same-sex unions**.
- The Catholic church has opposed to the bill but gay rights activists hailed the result, rallying outside the premier's office in downtown Valetta.

- The Netherlands was the first European country to legalise same-sex marriage, in 2001.

**Model United Nations Regional Conference begins in Kathmandu, Nepal**

- The event is **organised by the US Embassy in partnership with the Youth Thinker's Society.**
- **Youths from 12 South and Central Asian countries including India are participating** in 5 day conference. The basic aim of the MUN is to provide a platform to young minds to channelise energy and resources for a more prosperous and peaceful world.
- The delegates are discussing a wide range of issues including environment and water security, promoting human rights of migrant workers, finance security, nuclear non-proliferation and countering youth radicalisation.
- The event is also providing an opportunity to youths to get familiar with the operations of UN conference and other agencies.
- The conference simulate **four UN committees-United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Economic and Financial Committee (ECOFIN), United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).**

## BUSINESS & ECONOMY

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**Andhra, Telangana and Gujarat top ease of doing business.**

- **Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam** are included **worst** in the rankings.
- The rankings is based on key development and social indicators across states and union territories during a national conference of Chief Secretaries.
- Based on **availability of electricity in rural households** the **best-performing states are Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu**, which have achieved 100% penetration.
- The bottom three are Bihar with 46% Nagaland with 45% and Jharkhand with 40%.
- In **nutrition, Kerala, Goa and Tripura are the best-performing states** while Meghalaya, Jharkhand and Bihar are the worst.
- In terms of **reading comprehension Tamil Nadu, Mizoram and Kerala come out on top** while Uttarakhand, Chattisgarh and Bihar are at the bottom.

**BRPL, TERI in MoU to explore opportunities in solar rooftops, e-vehicles**

- BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd (**BRPL**) and The Energy and Resources Institute (**TERI**) have signed an **MOU to explore collaboration opportunities for solar rooftop, electric vehicles, energy storage systems, energy efficiency and smart grid technologies**
- BRPL has implemented 8 mw solar rooftop in its licenses area and estimates addition of another 20 mw during 2017-18.
- he collaboration will **help in research and explore newer collaboration opportunities in the domain of emerging technologies.**
- The two organisations will also identify and finalize different areas of carrying out the studies related to rooftop solar PV development.
- It is used for assessment of various issues, including technical and commercial issues, with higher penetration of PV into distribution grid.

**Google acquires Bangalore-based artificial intelligence firm Halli Labs**

- **Google** has acquired Bangalore-based artificial intelligence firm **Halli Labs**. It focuses on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and Neuro-Linguistic Programming.
- Its primarily focused on mobile and aims to address issues such as low bandwidth and intermittent connectivity, conserving data usage, reducing battery consumption and many more.
- Halli Labs will develop multi-device content, supporting more digital payments systems, and creating localised content among others.

## PEOPLE IN NEWS

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**Sandeep Patil named Brand ambassador of Indoor Cricket Team**

- Former **Indian batsman Sandeep Patil** has named as the **brand ambassador of the Indian Indoor Cricket Team**
- Patil, a member of the 1983 World Cup-winning squad, will lead-up to the 10th edition of the World Indoor Cricket Federation (WICF) World Cup.

**Justice Vikramajit Sen appointed new BCCC chairperson**

- **Board of Directors of Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF)** has appointed **former Supreme Court judge, Justice Vikramajit Sen**, as the new chairperson of **Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC)**.
- Justice Vikramajit Sen will hold the position for the next three years.
- BCCC is an independent self-regulatory body **set up by the Board of Directors of Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF) in June 2011** to examine content-related complaints relating to all non-news general entertainment channels in India.

## AWARDS

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**Vijaya Bank MD Kishore Sansi gets Skoch award**

- **Kishore Sansi**, Managing Director and CEO of Vijaya Bank, has been conferred the **'Personality of the Year'** award by **Skoch Consultancy Services**
- The award is part of the **'Skoch Banking and Financial Leadership'** series.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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### *U.S. Successfully shoots down IRBM target with THAAD*

- The U.S. successfully shoots down a simulated intermediate-range **ballistic missile over the Pacific Ocean**.
- THAAD has proven more successful than the nation's Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system, which is designed to target an ICBM.
- The **THAAD system is designed to counter short, medium, and intermediate range missile threats**.
- The U.S. Missile Defense Agency released a statement claiming that the latest test bolsters the country's defensive capability against developing missile threats in North Korea and other countries around the globe.

## ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

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### *NGT declares 'No-Development Zone' near river Ganga*

- **National Green Tribunal** declared the area of **100 metres from the edge of the river Ganga as a 'no-development zone' in the stretch between Haridwar to Unnao**.
- NGT has **prohibited the dumping of waste within 500 metres from the river**.
- NGT has also declared that an **environment compensation of Rs. 50,000** will be imposed on anyone who dumps waste in the Ganga River.
- The NGT directed the **Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand** governments to formulate guidelines for religious activities on the ghats of the Ganga or its tributaries.
- NGT has said the Uttar Pradesh government should be duty-bound to shift tanneries within six weeks, from **Jajmau in Kanpur** to leather parks in Unnao or any other place it considers appropriate.

## SPORTS CURRENT AFFAIRS

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### *Mithali Raj creates history, becomes leading run-getter in Women's ODIs*

- **India Women's Cricket Team Captain Mithali Raj** scripted history as she became the **all-time leading run-getter in women's one-day internationals**
- She reached the landmark in her 183rd ODI, taking 164 innings – 16 less than Charlotte.
- Mithali broke another record when she became the **first player in the women's game to reach 6000 ODI runs** when she hit a six off Kristen Beams.
- Mithali **made her ODI debut against Ireland in June 1999**. So far, **Mithali has scored 6028 runs** with the help of five centuries and 49 half-centuries.

- Mithali is only the **second player in women's cricket history** to average over 50 in ODIs.

**India to host next edition of Theatre Olympics**

- **The Theatre Olympics**, being held in India for **the first time** and is being **organised by National School of Drama, under the Ministry of Culture**.
- The Theatre Olympics is the foremost international theatre festival, presenting the finest productions of well-known theatre practitioners from around the world.
- The allied activities like exhibitions, seminars, symposia, interactive discussions and workshops with well-known academicians, authors, actors, designers and directors will be held.
- India is firmly among the top nations in the world theatre map, the country is all set to host the next edition of the prestigious Theatre Olympics.
- The Theatre Olympics 2018 will **feature maximum number of Indian & International theatre groups, invitee eminent theatre personalities along with their performances**.

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