

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Lok Sabha passes IIIT Public Private Partnership Bill 2017

- A bill to grant statutory status to the **Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode** was passed through a **voice vote in Lok Sabha**
- The previous **United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government** initiated the opening of **20 IIITs** with private partnership of which **15 are already operational**.
- The 15 IIITs that are currently operational are located in Chittoor (Andhra Pradesh), Guwahati (Assam), Vadodara (Gujarat), Sonapat (Haryana), Una (Himachal Pradesh), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Dharwad (Karnataka), Kottayam (Kerala), Nagpur and Pune (both Maharashtra), Senapati (Manipur), Kota (Rajasthan), Tiruchirappalli (Tamil Nadu), Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) and Kalyani (West Bengal).

Recent Approvals by Central government

- Cabinet approves MOC in respect of tax matters between **India and BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa**
- Cabinet apprised of MoU between India and **Netherlands on cooperation in space technology**
- Cabinet approves **IRDAI's admission as a signatory to International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS)**, Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MMoU)
- Cabinet approves revalidation of permission to raise **Extra Budgetary Resource (EBRs) of Rs. 660 crore** as Government of India Bonds by Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) in 2017-18
- Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval for the promulgation of the **Central Goods and Services Tax (Extension to Jammu & Kashmir) Ordinance, 2017** and replacement of the Ordinance by the **Central Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2017**.
- **National Steering Committee on Climate Change (NSCCC)**, under the Chairmanship of Secretary Environment Ministry, Mr Ajay Narayan Jha, approved the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) submitted by Governments of **Rajasthan, Gujarat and Sikkim** for funding under the **National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC)**.
- Cabinet approves alternative mechanism for creation and launch of a **New Exchange Traded Fund**

Janahitha grievance redressal system launched in Telangana

- **Telangana government** has launched a portal "**Janahitha**" grievance redressal system. This portal will receive complaints from the public.
- The portal has been developed by Telangana's IT department, is a single window for all grievances and their redressal management.
- This program will **bring transparency and give efforts to resolve the issues of people living in the state's remote areas**.
- It is aimed for the public to submit their complaints online smoothly and get speedy redressal.
- The public can also apply for various welfare schemes through the facility.

- The public **can lodge their grievances through different means like portal, e-mail, WhatsApp or calling at the call centre from their homes.**
- The complaint redressal process would be **monitored by officials at the district headquarters and Secretariat in Hyderabad, who will send SMS to the citizens on their status.**
- In cases where officials fail to redress the grievances in the set time, negative marks will be given to them.

Telangana reduces 'education burden', caps school bag weight

- According to the Government Order, the **maximum weight of a school bag with textbooks and notebooks should not exceed 1.5 kg for Class I and II and 2 to 3 kg for Classes III to V.**
- The Telangana government has capped the weight of their school bags between 1.5 kg and 5 kg.
- According to some estimates, schoolchildren currently carry bags weighing anywhere between 6 kg and 12 kg at primary level and up to 17 kg at high school level.
- Government has also **barred** schools from **assigning homework to students of primary grades-I to V.**
- For Classes VI and VII, the **weight should not exceed 4 kg and for Classes VIII and IX, it should not be more than 4.50 kg. In the case of Class X, it should not be more than 5 kg.**
- According to the general guidelines schools should focus on making them understand concepts rather than make them learn by rote.
- Games and sports in the evenings must be encouraged rather than engaging the children just in tuition and homework.
- The government said there should be one notebook of 100 pages for each subject for undertaking formative assessment items such as textbook exercises and projects.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

India among 5 countries that faced most terror attacks in 2016

- According to a senior US counter-terror official more than half of **the terror attacks in the world in 2016 took place in five countries, including India and Pakistan.**
 - As per the Country Reports on Terrorism by the US State Department said that the total number of terror attacks in 2016 were lower than in 2015.
 - **55% of all attacks took place in Iraq, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and the Philippines.**
 - **75% of all deaths due to terrorist attacks took place in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Nigeria, and Pakistan.**
 - The total number of terrorist attacks in 2016 decreased by 9% and total deaths due to terrorist attacks decreased by 13% compared to 2015.
 - ISIS was responsible for more attacks and deaths than any other group in 2016. In 2015, it was the Taliban that was responsible for more attacks and deaths.
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BUSINESS & ECONOMY

India on track to grow at 7.4 per cent in 2017: Asian Development Bank report

- According to ADB India is **expected to achieve the projected growth rate of 7.4% in 2017** and further up **7.6% on 2018**.
- According to the report, **South Asia will be the fastest growing of all sub-regions in Asia** and the Pacific, with growth on track to meet original projections of **7% in 2017** and **7.2% in 2018**.
- ADB has upgraded its growth outlook in the Asian region to 5.9% in 2017 from 5.7% and to **5.8% for 2018** from 5.7%.
- The growth prospects in developing Asia for 2017 have improved than expected export demand in the first quarter of this year.

Rs 20 notes in Mahatma Gandhi 2005 series soon: RBI

- The **Reserve Bank of India** will shortly issue bank notes of denomination **Rs 20 in Mahatma Gandhi series 2005**.
- The design of these banknotes to be issued now is similar in all aspects to the Rs 20 banknotes in the same series issued earlier.
- All the banknotes in the denomination of Rs 20 issued by the Bank in the past will continue to be legal tender.

ICRA, IIFCL launch rating system for infra projects

- **ICRA has launched a new system for rating of infrastructure projects** in association with the India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL).
- The new system will **focus on the overall recovery of dues by the investor and lender over the lifecycle of the project**.
- The system has been developed that would enable more long term monies flow into the infrastructure sector.
- The new rating system will **emphasise on the overall recovery of external funds given to the lender**.
- The new credit rating system for infrastructure projects was being launched at a time when banks are under stress and there is a enormous need to diversify the source of funding and attract long-term monies into infrastructure projects.

ICICI Bank offers up to Rs 15 lakh instant personal loan via ATMs

- **ICICI Bank** will be offering **personal loans of up to Rs 15 lakh through its ATMs**. It can be availed by salaried customers even if they haven't previously applied for one.
- The lender will pre-qualify select customers for personal loans using data from credit information companies.
- A customer can get personal **loans of upto Rs 15 lakh for a fixed tenure of 60 months**.
- Money will get **transferred to the customer's account instantly on completion of this procedure**.

- Customers can also avail personal loans from the Bank's website, iMobile.
- It will help customers receive money conveniently once they opt for a personal loan.
- Such customers will get a message on the ATM screen after completing a transaction, informing about their eligibility for personal loans.

Gujarat continues to have highest investment potential – NCAER study

- According to the second edition of **National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) State Investment Potential Index (N-SIPI 2017)** report, Gujarat has retained the top position in the list of 21 states and UTs with most investment potential.
- Gujarat is followed by Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Haryana and Telangana** have moved rapidly up the ranks to finish among the top five, while **Gujarat topped on the indicator of economic climate and perceptions**, **Delhi ranked first in infrastructure**.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

Ram Nath Kovind elected as India's 14th President

- BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) nominee **Ram Nath Kovind** was elected as the **14th President of India**. Mr. Kovind defeated Opposition candidate and former Lok Sabha Speaker **Meira Kumar**.
- 71-year old Ram Nath Kovind is a lawyer from **Madhya Pradesh**. Before contesting presidential election, he was the **Governor of Bihar**.
- He has served as a BJP MP in the **Rajya Sabha** as well. He will be the **second Dalit President of India** after KR Narayanan.

Mayawati resigns from Rajya Sabha for not being allowed to raise issue of Dalit atrocities

- **Mayawati** has resigned from the **Rajya Sabha** for not being allowed to speak about atrocities against Dalits
- Mayawati told media persons that she had to quit as a Rajya Sabha member after deputy chairman P J Kurien asked her to stop speaking as she was exceeding the time given to her.
- The decision to accept Mayawati's resignation lies with the chairman. The format states that the resignation letter should be brief and should not mention the reasons.

AWARDS

L K Advani receives Lifetime Achievement Award for contributions in Lok Sabha

- Veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader **L.K. Advani** received the **Lifetime Achievement Award** for his contributions as a parliamentarian in the Lok Sabha.

- The other awardees from the Lok Sabha included Revolutionary Socialist Party MP **K. Premachandran** (Best Parliamentarian), Congress leader **Kumari Sushmita Devi** (Best Woman Parliamentarian) and BJP leader **Meenakshi Lekhi** (Best Debut Woman Parliamentarian).
- The awardees from the Rajya Sabha included CPI-M leader **Sitaram Yechury** (Best Parliamentarian), Samajwadi Party MP **Jaya Bachchan** (Best Woman Parliamentarian) and Congress MP **Rajni Patil** (Best Debut Woman Parliamentarian).

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Google introduces recruiting app 'Hire' for Businesses

- Google has launched 'Hire', a recruiting app for small- and medium-sized businesses
- Hire app can help to identify talent, build strong candidate relationships and efficiently manage the interview process end-to-end.
- 'Hire' integrates seamlessly with G Suite apps like Gmail and Google Calendar that are being used by over three million businesses to drive recruiting efforts.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

In a first, Telangana to have eco-friendly bridges for movement of tigers

- The Telangana Irrigation Department has already given permit for the construction of the eco-bridges.
- The recommendations on the size and locations of the bridges are awaited from the National Board of Wildlife.
- Telangana will have eco-friendly bridges over a canal cutting across the tiger corridor linking the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) in the Chandrapur district of Maharashtra with the forests in Telangana's Kumram Bheem Asifabad district.
- The eco-bridges will be constructed at key spots along the **72 km-long right flank canal of the Pranahita barrage in the Bejjur and Dahegaon mandals.**