

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Environment Minister launches plantation drive to mark Van Mahotsav

- **On July 5, 2017, Environment Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launched a month-long plantation drive to mark Van Mahotsav.**
- The plantation drive was organised at Ram Lila Park, C. C Colony and Model Town in Delhi
- Van Mahotsav (Festival of trees) is an annual tree-planting movement in India, which began in 1950.

Registration of marriage should be made compulsory – Law Commission

- **On July 4, 2017, Law Commission submitted its 270th report titled “Compulsory Registration of Marriages” to Law Ministry.**
- In this report, Law Commission has recommended compulsory registration of all marriages to deal with social evils such as child marriages, bigamy, marriage frauds, desertions of women by their husband and gender violence.
- Law Commission has recommended amending the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, to include marriages.
- The Commission suggested that the time limit to register marriages should be restricted to 30 days after which a penalty of Rs. 5/- per day could be imposed.

UDAY covers 97% of discom debt: Centre

- **On July 4, 2017, Union Government has announced that 97% of the total outstanding debt of all state power distribution companies (discoms) has been covered under the Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY).**
- As on September 30, 2015, the total debt of all state-owned discoms was Rs. 3.95 lakh crore.
- The 26 states and 1 UT which have joined the UDAY scheme account for total outstanding debt of Rs.3.82 lakh crore. Hence, about 97% of the total outstanding debt of all State discoms has been covered under UDAY.
- Total liability opted for restructuring by the states through the issuance of bonds was Rs. 2.69 lakh crore. So far, states have already issued bonds of the Rs. 2.09 lakh crore and discoms have issued bonds worth 0.23 lakh crore. Bonds worth Rs. 0.37 lakh crore are yet to be issued by various discoms. Hence, about 86% of the restructurable debt of states has been restructured so far under UDAY.

10th Session of the India- Jordan Trade and Economic Joint Committee (TEJC) held in New Delhi

- **The 10th India-Jordan Morocco Trade and Economic Joint Committee (TEJC) Meeting was held in New Delhi on 4th and 5th July, 2017.**
- On this occasion, the two countries emphasized the need for diversification of bilateral trade and widening their engagements for greater cooperation in investment sector.
- During the TEJC meeting, the two sides discussed the roadmap for cooperation in various fields such as Fertilizer Sector, Customs, Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, Visa and Consular issues, Health and Pharmaceuticals and many more.
- The main aim is to promote economic, trade and investment cooperation based on the principle of equity and non-discrimination.
- Both the sides also discussed the roadmap for promotion of trade and investment through B2B mechanism.
- The meeting is held under the co-chairs of Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Commerce and Industry, Government of India, and H.E Eng. Mr. Yarub Qudah, Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Sushma Swaraj inaugurates 9th edition Delhi Dialogue

- **External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj has inaugurated the 9th edition of Delhi Dialogue on 4th of July 2017.**
- Under this programme the premier annual track 1.5 event to discuss politico-security, economic and socio-cultural engagement between India and the Association of Sushma Swaraj inaugurates 9th edition Delhi Dialogue Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Delhi. The theme for Delhi Dialogue 9 is India-ASEAN relations: Charting the Course for the Next 25 Years.
- It is to be scheduled to take place in New Delhi on 4-5 July 2017.
- Political leaders, policy makers, senior officials, diplomats, business leaders, think tanks and academicians from both sides would be participating in the discussions.
- It is supported by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), CII, Assocham, All India Association of Industries (AIAI), Mumbai, and Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Kolkata.

Arunachal Pradesh celebrates 'Dree festival' with traditional pomp & gaiety

- **The Dree Festival of Arunachal Pradesh is an agricultural festival celebrated by the Apatani tribe of Arunachal Pradesh.**
- The Dree Festival of Arunachal Pradesh is celebrated on 5th July with the pre-celebration rituals starting from the evening of 4th July every year.
- It is the biggest festival of the Apatanis and celebrated with zest marked by sacrificial offerings and prayers.

- The main and the biggest celebration of this festival happens at Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh.
- During the Dree Festival prayers are offered to please the 4 Gods – Tamu, Harniang, Metii, and Danyi to bring in a bountiful harvest season.
- The Dree Festival of Arunachal Pradesh is a celebration of the agricultural way of life for the Apatanis.
- Traditional songs and dances are also displayed as part of the Dree celebrations.
- The festival is marked by grand ritual and community feasts served with delicious rice/millet beer.
- The day long festival is also an occasion where womenfolk brew wine and visit homes of their relatives and present them the wine as a symbol of love and affection.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

5th Meeting of BRICS Education Ministers held in Beijing, China

- **5th Meeting of BRICS Education Ministers was held on July 5, 2017 in Beijing, China. The Indian delegation was led by Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Prakash Javadekar.**
- While addressing the meeting, Mr. Prakash Javadekar appreciated the creation of institutional mechanism in the form of BRICS Network University and BRICS Think Tank Council.
- Beijing Declaration on Education was adopted in the 5th Meeting of BRICS Education Ministers in Beijing, China, on July 5, 2017.

US rolls out expedited entry for 'low-risk' Indian travellers

- **The United States of America has started rolling out its Global Entry programme for Indian citizens which allows for expedited clearance of pre-approved, low-risk travellers.**
- Global Entry programme is an initiative of US Customs and Border Protection (CBP).
- As per the initiative, once a traveller lands at one of the select airports, the programme members enter US through automatic kiosks, rather than queuing up to clear the immigration check by meeting an immigration officer. US rolls out expedited entry for 'low-risk' Indian travellers
- At these select airports, the specified members proceed to the Global Entry kiosks, present their machine-readable passport, place their fingerprints on the scanner for verification and complete a customs declaration.
- The Global Entry kiosk then issues the traveller a transaction receipt and directs him or her to the baggage claim and the exit.
- All applicants undergo a rigorous background check and in-person interview before enrolment.
- India has become the 11th country whose citizens are eligible to enroll in this initiative of Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

BUSINESS & ECONOMY CURRENT AFFAIRS

China-backed AIIB approves USD 329 million loan for Gujarat rural roads

- **China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has said its board has approved USD 329 million loan to build access roads to 4,000 villages in Gujarat on 5th of July 2017.**
- The AIIB has approved to build access roads to approximately 4,000 villages in all 33 districts of Gujarat, India.
- Through road connectivity these villages can access healthcare services, bring their goods to market and access transportation for their children to attend schools.
- This project will construct and upgrade district and farm-to-market roads for the villagers and provide approaches to educational institutions, schools and hospitals.
- The project will also better integrate rural population, tribal villages, business and industries with the national and state economy through better transport connectivity.
- This project will directly contribute to the economic development of Gujarat and India by improving the mobility of the rural population.
- To monitor the project's progress, the bank is piloting a software tool specifically developed for this.

Yes Bank clinches new pact with Santander in UK

- **Yes Bank has signed an MoU in London with Santander to promote India-UK trade and business opportunities on 5th of July 2017.**
- Yes bank is the India's fourth-largest private sector bank.
- The MoU covers access for Indian businesses looking to expand globally to access Santanders support network in the UK.
- The main objective of both the organization is to boost international trade links.
- The deal is aimed at Santander UK, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Spanish Santander Group, offering its clients in Britain access to banking facilities and on-the-ground support through Yes Banks network across India.
- In current era SMEs (small and medium enterprises) need cross-border partners and banks are one of the channels that can help open new markets for them.
- Santander and Yes Bank are looking at providing a collaborative platform to help SMEs penetrate new geographies.
- Yes Bank is planning to build expertise as a "preferred host country bank" for multinational corporations seeking to do business in India through its pan-India footprint, with over 1,000 branches across India.

- The bank follows a differentiated “Knowledge Banking” approach, offering customised, sector-specific solutions to corporates across sectors such as Food & Agribusiness, Yes Bank launches all-women branch in BengaluruRenewable Energy, Life Sciences, Urban Infrastructure and many more.
- It is also in the process of setting up an “India Desk” at its UK headquarters to provide a complete “eco-system” for UK companies looking to expand into India

Axis Bank launches super bikes loans; to fund 95% of costs

- **Axis Bank has introduced a special super bike loans for the bike lovers on 5th of July 2017.**
- The loan will offer funding up to 95% of their costs.
- The loans which are for Bikes with an engine displacement of over 500 cubic centimetres(cc) will come at a price tag of 10-11% per annum.
- The leisure biking segment is expected to grow at 30% per annum over the next three years.
- These bikes come with a price tag between Rs5 to Rs50 lakh. The segment had witnessed sale of over 3,000 units last year.
- According to the reports, people having average age between 30-40 years prefer to buy such kind of bikes.
- While calculating the loan to value ratio which has been capped at 95%, the bank will consider accessory funding along with the cost of the bike.

Karnataka launches ‘Elevate 100’ scheme for start-ups

- **In a bid to identify and nurture innovative start-ups, Karnataka government has launched the ‘Elevate 100’ scheme.**
- Karnataka Minister for IT and BT, Priyank Kharge has mentioned that aim of ‘Elevate 100’ scheme is to identify 100 most innovative start-ups in the state to elevate them to the next level of success.
- Under ‘Elevate 100’ start-ups will not only be provided funding, but will also be provided technical and business support including access to mentors, networking opportunities, idea validation, incubation facilities and sessions on accounting, legal and emerging technologies.
- So far Karnataka Government has identified 46 start-ups and has sanctioned Rs.15.68 crore. Out of these, 26 start-ups are from the field of biotech and have been sanctioned Rs.10.70 crore, 8 start-ups from tourism have got Rs.1.80 crore and 12 from IT have received Rs. 3.18 crore.
- The Elevate scheme is the brainchild of the start-up cell, Karnataka Biotechnology and Information Technology Services (KBITS).

Nokia and Xiaomi ink patent and equipment deal, Xiaomi buys Nokia patents.

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- **Nokia has announced that it has entered into a wide-ranging patent licensing and purchase deal with Xiaomi on 5th of July 2017.**
 - Xiaomi is the Chinese maker of smartphones, wearable and other hardware, which will also become a customer of Nokia's for networking equipment.
 - The deal covers three main areas:
 1. Nokia and Xiaomi have inked a cross licensing deal covering cellular standard essential patents.
 2. Xiaomi has acquired unspecified patents from Nokia.
 3. Nokia will provide network equipment to Xiaomi and will collaborate on building IP transport solutions.
 - Both the companies will cover further cooperation in other areas as well like Internet of Things, augmented and virtual reality and artificial intelligence.
 - Xiaomi will become a customer of Nokia's for network equipment — specifically “network infrastructure equipment designed to deliver the high capacity, low power requirements expected by large web providers and datacenter operators.
 - Xiaomi MIoT platform now has more than 60 million connected devices on it, with over 8 million daily active connected devices.
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PEOPLE IN NEWS

Pradeep Kumar Rawat appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Indonesia

- Pradeep Kumar Rawat has presently a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) here, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Indonesia.
- Rawat, an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of the 1990 batch, is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

Tata Global Beverages appoints N Chandrasekaran as Chairman

- **Tata Global Beverages Ltd has appointed Tata Sons head N Chandrasekaran as Chairman with immediate effect.**
- TGBL's board has approved the “appointment of N Chandrasekaran as an Additional Tata Son Chairman Director and as Chairman of the Board of the Company.
- N Chandrasekaran has replaced of Harish Bhat.
- The Board has also appointed Siraj Azmat Chaudhry as Non Executive Independent Director.
- On November 15, ousted Tata Sons Chairman Cyrus Mistry was voted out as chairman by the board of the Tata Global Beverages and Harish Bhat was appointed in his place.

- TGBL's total consolidated income for the fiscal year 2016-17 stood at Rs 6,862.65 crore. It has tea brand as Tata Tea, Tetley, Good Earth Teas, Vitax, teapigs and JEMCA

Drummer John Blackwell Jr dies at 43

- **Drummer John Blackwell Jr dies at 43** John Blackwell is best known for his work as a drummer for Prince, had died. He was 43.
- John Blackwell Jr. was diagnosed with brain tumors while in Japan playing at the Blue Note Tokyo in a featuring with top bassist Nik West.
- He is from U.S.A.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

World's most detailed scan of the brain's internal wiring produced

- The world's most detailed scan of the brain's internal wiring has been produced by scientists at Cardiff University, UK.
- The scanning was done in Cardiff, Nottingham, Cambridge and Stockport, as well as London England and London Ontario.
- The scan conducted on volunteers showed fibres in white matter called axons. These are the brain's wiring, which carry billions of electrical signals.
- Scan not only showed the direction of the messaging, but also the density of the brain's wiring. World's most detailed scan of the brain's internal wiring produced
- Conventional scans clearly show lesions – areas of damage – in the brain of multiple sclerosis (MS) But this advanced scan, showing axonal density, could help explain how the lesions affect motor and cognitive pathways which can trigger movement problems and extreme fatigue in MS patients.
- The extraordinary images produced in Cardiff are the result of a special MRI scanner – one of only three in the world.
- The scanner is being used for research into many neurological conditions including MS, schizophrenia, dementia and epilepsy.

Power Minister launches merit order dispatch of electricity App, portal for flexibility in coal supply for IPPs

- On July 5, 2017, Union Minister of State (IC) for Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy and Mines, Piyush Goyal launched the 'MERIT app (Merit Order Despatch of Electricity for

Rejuvenation of Income and Transparency)' and the e-bidding portal for providing e-Bidding solution to States to select Independent Power Producers (IPPs) for procurement of power by transferring their domestic coal under the scheme of flexibility in utilization of domestic coal.

- The app and the web portal would result in optimum utilization of Coal which would save the consumer close to Rs. 20,000 crores five years down the line.
- Empowerment of the consumer and participative governance, optimization of the power procurement costs and economy and efficiency in operations are some of the advantages of MERIT App.
- On July 5, 2017, Mr. Piyush Goyal also launched thee–Bidding portal, which has been designed to facilitate States in inviting bids for procurement of power from the prospective IPPs in transparent and fair manner

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