

# NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## Govt merges NCRB with BPRD

- Government has taken this decision with an aim **to improve administrative efficiency and optimal utilisation of resources.**
- **The BPRD Director General (DG) will be the head of the merged new entity**, where the NCRB Director, an Additional DG rank post will report to the former.

## GST council approves hike in luxury car cess

- **Sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and luxury cars**, which became cheaper after the rollout of the goods and services tax (GST) from July 1, 2017, may now cost more as the **GST Council, has decided to raise cess on them from 15% now to up to 25%.**
- After GST was introduced, the total tax incidence on motor vehicles comprising the GST rate and the cess came down compared to the total tax incidence in pre-GST regime.
- The proposal to raise the ceiling of cess covers **large motor vehicles with capacity for 10-13 persons, mid segment and large cars, sports utility vehicles, mid segment hybrid cars and other hybrid vehicles**, all of which at present attract 15% cess.

# BUSINESS & ECONOMY

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## Mastercard, PayPal expand partnership into Asia Pacific

- **Mastercard and PayPal** have announced an extension of their **partnership into Asia Pacific for making Mastercard a clear payment option within PayPal.**
- PayPal will add Mastercard as a payment method to their e-wallet and consumers can make it their default payment option.
- Card Company will provide tokenization services and will **enable mobile payments using PayPal's digital wallet at more than 6.5 million contactless-enabled merchant locations** across the globe.
- The partnership will also **add Master pass as a payment option for merchants that process payments via Braintree.**
- The partnership will allow consumers and small businesses across Asia Pacific to cash out funds held in their PayPal e-wallet to a Mastercard debit card.

## PNB customers to pay higher charges for non-credit services

- **PNB customers** will have to **pay charges for depositing cash above Rs 5,000 in a non-base branch** even if it is located in the same city.
- Currently, the customers of Punjab National Bank (PNB) are levied charges only for depositing cash **over Rs 25,000** at a non-base branch within the same city.

- A customer will have to **pay Re 1 per Rs 1,000 for above Rs 5,000 cash deposit** or part thereof with a **minimum of Rs 25** per transaction.
- It has been decided to revise the non-credit related charges exclusive of GST with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2017 for cash deposit above Rs 5,000 at other than base branch within the same city.
- The bank has also revised upwards the cheque returning charges for a payment of **above Rs 1 crore to Rs 2,000** for first cheque and Rs 2,500 for subsequent bounces.
- Currently, for a cheque returns of above Rs 1 crore, the charges are Rs 1,000 for first cheque and Rs 1,500 for subsequent instances.
- At an **outstation branch, cash deposit up to Rs 5,000 will be free of cost from 1<sup>st</sup> of September**, which at present is limited for Rs 25,000.
- For **above Rs 5,000 cash deposit at outstation branch, the bank will levy Rs 2 per Rs 1,000** or part thereof with a **minimum of Rs 25 per transaction**.
- The **locker rent is being raised by 25% for small, medium, large and extra-large sizes to Rs 1,500, Rs 3,500, Rs 5,500 and Rs 10,000** respectively, for metro branches.
- PNB will levy a premium of 25% of the locker rent in 22 identified branches, 19 of which are in Delhi, one in Gurgaon and two in Faridabad.

**Government forms action plan for easy execution of trade facilitation agreement**

- Indian government has formulated **National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (2017-20)**, a detailed action plan with timelines for smooth implementation of **WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)**. Recommendations made by **four working groups on legislative changes, time release study, outreach program and infrastructure augmentation** have been included in this plan.
- Implementation of the plan, which also includes suggestions of the private sector, has been divided into **short term (0-6 months), medium term (6-18 months) and long term (18-36 months)**.
- The short term action plan includes augmentation of storage infrastructure for perishable goods and clearance of such goods within 12 hours of landing for import and 8 hours for export

**FMCG Britannia to set up largest plant in Maharashtra**

- The park would have the largest biscuits manufacturing plant with six lines, along with cake and rusk (rpt) rusk.
- The proposed JV plant with Greek company Chipita would also be located there and it would on stream from June 2018.
- The company was also planning to set up a dairy project at the food park with a **capacity of seven lakh litres per day**.
- Chipita would also be introduced to a new variety of croissants for Indian consumers.
- The **main focus** of the company would be **investments on new products and cost reduction**.

**Infosys to buy London's Brilliant Basics for Rs 63 crore**

- The acquisition of the firm that specializes in customer experience and product design and it would also **help in expanding design-based technology services in Europe and West Asia**.
- The acquisition cost included earn-out and employee retention amounts.

- It has also added '**Brilliant Basics**' design and customer experience capabilities and has already proven to be invaluable.
- Brilliant Basics will help to drive digital transformation solutions, which connect our clients' systems of record to new systems of engagement.

## PEOPLE IN NEWS

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### Aparna appointed as Executive Director of World Bank

- Senior bureaucrat **S Aparna**, presently **Principal Secretary to Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani**, has been appointed as an **Executive Director in the World Bank in the US**.
- As the Executive Director at World Bank, Ms. Aparna will represent the constituency of **India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka**.
- Aparna has been appointed in place of **S C Garg**, who has recently taken over as **Secretary, Department**

## AWARDS

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### Indian Philanthropist Firoz Merchant honoured by UAE Government

- **Firoz Merchant**, an Indian businessman in the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**, who has spent over USD 4 million to help free prisoners languishing in jails due to non-payment of debts, has been **honored with UAE's prestigious Community Service Medal**.
- The award, which is given in the form of a medal, was given to Merchant **in recognition of his efforts to serve the community in the country and beyond**.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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### IISc researchers developed low-cost sensitive carbon monoxide sensor

- **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** researchers from Bengaluru have **developed a highly sensitive, low cost nanometre-scale carbon monoxide (CO) sensor** with possible applications in **environmental pollution monitoring**.
- The sensor was developed using novel fabrication technique. It also does not involve costly and time consuming lithography technology.
- The **nanometer-sized sensor** was **made using zinc-oxide (ZnO) nanostructure on a silicon wafer substrate**. Tiny polystyrene beads were also used on the wafer.
- These beads were first added on the oxidised silicon wafer arrange themselves into and called a hexagonal close-packed structure.

**NASA's Hubble detects Exoplanet with glowing water atmosphere**

- The discovery shows that a common trait of most of the atmospheres in solar system, which is a warm stratosphere, can also be **found in the atmospheres of exoplanets WASP-121b with NASA's Hubble Space Telescope.**
- The program has been awarded 800 hours to study and compare 20 different exoplanets, representing one of the largest time allocations for a single program in the entire 27 year history of Hubble.
- This new research is the smoking gun evidence scientists have been searching for when studying hot exoplanets.
- The **discovery was made by an International team of researchers led by the University of Exeter by observing glowing water molecules in WASP-121b's atmosphere.**
- **About WASP-121b**
  - It is **located approximately 900 light years from Earth**, the exoplanet is a gas giant commonly referred to as a 'hot Jupiter'.
  - It has **1.2 times greater mass and 1.9 times greater radius than Jupiter**
  - It orbits around its host star every 1.3 days in very close proximity.

## SPORTS CURRENT AFFAIRS

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**ONGC beats Bengaluru Hockey 4-2, wins MCC-Murugappa Gold Cup**

- **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)** has beaten **Bengaluru Hockey Association (BHA)** by **4-2** in the final in **91st All-India MCC-Murugappa Gold Cup hockey tournament**
- The **ONGC team** received **Rs 5, 00,000 prize money** while **BHA** got **Rs 2.5 lakh**.

**Ankur Mittal Wins Gold Medal in Asian Shotgun Championship**

- Indian shooter **Ankur Mittal** has won the individual as well as the team **gold medal in Men's double trap at the 7th Asian Shotgun Championship**
- **India** managed to **bag the top prize** in the **team event** with scores of **Sangram Dahiya (43)** and **Mohammad Asab (34)** added to Mittal's final total.
- Mittal, a World Cup gold medallist, shot 137 in the qualification and was behind topper Dahiya (140) as well as Asab (138).
- Mittal had won a gold medal at the International Shooting Sport Federation World Cup in Acapulco, Mexico in 2016.
- He had also won silver in seasons inaugural World Cup in New Delhi.

**BCCI ordered to lift lifetime ban on cricketer Sreesanth by Kerala HC**

- Kerala High Court ordered Board of Control for *Cricket* in India (BCCI) to lift the life ban imposed on Cricketer Sreesanth in the wake of the 2013 IPL spot-fixing scandal.
- In 2013, Sreesanth faced allegations on spot-fixing issues in the Indian Premier League and was hence charged with the same alongside fellow cricketers **Ajit Chandila and Ankeet Chavan**.
- He soon received a **suspension form BCCI**.

- **Delhi Court had cleared his case in 2015** and acquitted him from spot-fixing charges.
- In March 2017, Sreesanth had filed a petition to challenge BCCI's decision to remove off the ban even after Delhi court has cleared his case.
- According to Sreesanth, not lifting the ban implied going against the constitutional rights of a citizen.

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