

National Current Affairs

Tirumala Tirupati temple deposits 2780 kg gold with SBI

- Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, which is the famous temple of Lord Venkateswara and one of the richest Hindu temple in India has deposited 2,780 kg of gold with State Bank of India under long term deposit scheme.
- Key Points:
- The gold deposits have been converted into the Long Term Deposit Scheme at a rate of 2.5% per annum for a period of 12 years from the date of investment under the Gold Monetisation Scheme.
- The temple receives offerings from devotees in cash, jewellery, gold, silver, property deeds, and Demat share transfers.
- The certificate for the gold deposit was handed over by Amaravathi Circle SBI Chief General Manager Mani Palvesan to the TTD Financial Adviser and Chief Accountants Officer Mr. O. Balaji.
- During 2017-18, TTD expects to receive Rs 1,110 crore from capital funds (as kanuka), which would be the major source of revenue, from devotees.
- Other revenue streams include the Rs 300 special entry darshan, which is expected to fetch a minimum of Rs 256 crore for the financial year, Rs 124 crore from accommodations and Rs 55 crore through Arjitha Seva tickets.

About Tirumala Tirupati

- Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, abbreviated as TTD, is an independent trust which manages the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple at Tirumala, Andhra Pradesh.
- The trust oversees the operations and finances of the second richest and the most visited religious center in the world.
- It is also involved in various social, religious, literary and educational activities. TTD is headquartered at Tirupati.
- TTD was established in 1932 as a result of the TTD Act of 1932.

Government to launch Deep Ocean Mission

The Union Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is going to launch Deep Ocean Mission by January 2018 to spur research activities in ocean science and develop technology to harness ocean resources.

The proposed inter-ministerial and interdisciplinary project aims to explore and harness mineral resources beneath the ocean floor.

Need

- India has 7,500 km of coastline and 2.4 million square km of exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The oceans along Indian peninsula contain enormous opportunities in energy, food, medicine and a host of other natural resources.
- China has been working on a deep sea mission for mining mineral deposits in the Indian and Pacific oceans.

Deep Ocean Mission

- The mission is intended to harness ocean resources in responsible way and play important transformative role in prosperity and security of the nation.
- It will also seek to create jobs and business opportunities in ocean science.
- It will not only involve the MoES, but also departments of other ministries like science and technology and the biotechnology etc.

Government to hold Pan India Handloom and Handicraft camps under “Hastkala Sahyog Shivr”.

The Ministry of Textiles has organized Pan India camps in handlooms and handicrafts groups under the initiative “Hastkala Sahyog Shivr”.

Key Points:

- The camps will be organized between 7th October to 17th October 2017.
- This initiative is dedicated to Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Garib Kalyan Varsh, the birth centenary year of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay.
- Under these camps following services will be provided to the weavers and artisans.
 - a) Issuance of credit facilities through MUDRA scheme
 - b) Issuance of Yarn Pass Book
 - c) Distribution of modern tool kits and equipments
 - d) Assistance for technological upgradation under Hathkargha Samvardhan Sahayata
 - e) Enrolment under IGNOU/NIOS courses
 - f) Buyer-seller meets and exposure
 - g) Access to Common Service Centre facilities
- It has been planned to organize the camps in more than 200 handloom Block Level Clusters & Weavers’ Service Centres.
- There will also be the collaboration of 200 handicraft clusters with State Governments.

First Synergy Conference on Defence Pension organised by Defence Accounts Department was held in New Delhi

On 28th August 2017, the Defence Accounts Department (DAD) organized its first Synergy Conference on Defence Pensions. The conference was attended by all Defence Pensioners Associations and was open to all Defence Pensioners.

- The objective of the conference was to obtain feedback from the pensioners that would help the department to serve them better with constantly improving systems and procedures. Digitization of pension data and implementation of a pensions app were also discussed in detail.
- Joint CGDA (Pension) Shri Kanwaldeep Singh, gave a brief presentation on current status on important issues pertaining to pension. A panel was formed to interact with the pensioners it was headed by Addl. CGDA Shri UpendraSah.
- It had on the panel, Joint Secretary (Ex-Servicemen Welfare) Shri Ravi Kant representing the Ministry of Defence, Principal CDA (Pensions) Shri Praveen Kumar. Services representatives ACOP (CP) Rear Admiral KK Pandey and DDG (PS) Brig. JK Rao were also among the panelists.

West Bengal's Gobindobhog rice gets geographical indication status

The Geographical Indications Registry (GIR) has granted geographical indication (GI) status to Gobindobhog rice, a speciality from Burdwan district of West Bengal. The state government had applied for GI status for Gobindobhog rice in August 2015.

Gobindobhog rice

- Gobindobhog variety of rice is a short grain, white, aromatic, sticky rice having a sweet buttery flavor. It derives its name from principal ingredient usage in preparation of offerings to Govindajiu, the family deity of Setts of Kolkata.
- It is primarily cultivated in east Burdwan district – in southern basin of Damodar River in Raina 1, Raina 2 and Khandaghosh blocks. Burdwan region (now divided into districts of east and west Burdwan) is known as the rice bowl of Bengal. The south Damodar belt is traditional area of Gobindobhog rice cultivation.
- The rice variety has several advantages. It is cultivated late and therefore not much affected by rains. Its productivity per area is high and so farmers get better prices for Gobindobhog rice. It is less prone to pests as well.

Significance

- As a result of getting the GI tag, rice produced from other regions or rice of other varieties cannot be branded as 'Gobindobhog'.
- It will also strengthen marketability of this rice in the local, national and international markets.

About Geographical Indication (GI)

- GI tag is an insignia on products having a unique geographical origin and evolution over centuries with regards to its special quality or reputation attributes. The status to the products marks its authenticity and ensures that registered authorised users are allowed to use the popular product name.
- It is covered as an element of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property. At international level, GI is governed by WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- In India, GI registration is governed by the Geographical Indications of goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 which came into force in September 2003. It is granted by Chennai based GIR. Darjeeling tea was the first product to accorded with GI tag in India.
- Benefits of GI Status: (i) Legal protection to the products (ii) Prevents unauthorised use of a GI tag products by others (iii) Helps consumers to get quality products of desired traits (iv) Promotes economic prosperity of producers of GI tag goods by enhancing their demand in national and international markets.

International Current Affairs

IAEA opens world's first low Enriched Uranium bank in Kazakhstan

The UN global nuclear watchdog, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has opened world's first low Enriched Uranium (LEU) Bank in Oskemen in Kazakhstan.

The bank is owned and managed by IAEA. It will be the first of its kind LEU bank not to be under control of any individual country. The IAEA also manages 123 tons of uranium in Angarsk, Russia but it is under the control of Russian government.

Key Facts

- The LEU Bank has reserve capacity to store 90 tons of LEU, the essential ingredient needed to make the fuel for light-water nuclear reactors, which generate electricity. This reserve is enough to fully load a light-water reactor capable of supplying electricity to a large city for three years.
- The IAEA has established a series of strict criteria for member state purchasing uranium from the bank. The project was funded by donors, including the United States, European Union, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Norway and Nuclear Threat Initiative

Purpose of Bank

- **Last resort Supply:** It will serve as last resort source of LEU after IAEA member countries are unable to either produce fuel or if it becomes unavailable on the international market for whatever reason. It will ensure that in the event of an international crisis or similar circumstances, countries dependent on nuclear power would still have access to uranium.
- **Non-proliferation efforts:** It will discourage countries from developing their own uranium enrichment capacities as seen supposedly that peaceful use of enriched uranium can be converted into weapons-grade level.
- **No disruption to nuclear fuel trade:** It will not disrupt usual trade of nuclear fuel purchased in the open market or by bilateral agreement between countries.
- **Peaceful use of atomic energy:** It will ensure peaceful use of atomic energy without the need to develop a costly enrichment program. It will assure that suppliers in the international markets do not manipulate prices or when LEU ceases to be supplied for political reasons.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

- IAEA is an international organization that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons.
- It was established as an autonomous organization in 1957 through its own international treaty, the IAEA Statute.
- It is independent of the United Nations but reports to both the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and Security Council (UNSC). The IAEA has its headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

Kenya passes world's toughest plastic bag law

Those who are producing, selling or even using the non-degradable bags now face four years in jail or a \$40,000 (USD) / (£31,000) fine in Kenya.

- Kenya has passed the world's toughest law against plastic bags on pollution.
- Judy Wakhungu, Kenya's environment minister insisted the non-degradable bag manufacturers would be predominantly targeted first.
- Many bags drift into the ocean, strangling turtles, suffocating seabirds and filling the stomachs of dolphins and whales with waste until they die of starvation.
- Plastic bags can take between 500 and 1,000 years to break down.
- Kenya is a major exporter of plastic bags in Africa. The East African nation joins more than 40 other countries that have banned, partly banned or taxed single-use plastic bags, including China, France, Rwanda, and Italy.

Business

Government to release new industrial policy

The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) under the Commerce and Industry Ministry is going to release a new industrial policy by October 2017. It is expected to replace National Manufacturing Policy (NMP) released in 2011.

- The new policy aims at making India a manufacturing hub by promoting 'Make in India' with focus on encouraging Indian branded products with higher value addition.
- It will also review the existing foreign direct investment (FDI) policy regime to facilitate greater technology transfer.

Features of New policy

- The proposed policy will aim to set clear vision for role of industry and industrial growth in growth and development of economy. It will be comprehensive, actionable, outcome-oriented policy that will enable industry to deliver a larger role in economy and fulfil its role as engine of growth and add more value and jobs.
- DIPP has adopted consultative approach for formulating industrial policy by setting up six thematic focus groups. These six thematic areas are Manufacturing and MSME, Technology and Innovation, Infrastructure, Investment, Trade and Fiscal Policy, Ease of Doing Business and Skills and Employability for Future.
- The policy will aim to attract \$100 billion of FDI in a year, up from \$60 billion in 2016-17. It will also aim at retaining investments and accessing technology. It will also ensure that it facilitates greater technology transfer, leverages strategic linkages and innovation.
- It will incorporate measures to facilitate use of smart technologies such as the internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics for advanced manufacturing. A task force constituted on artificial intelligence under the chairmanship of V. Kamakoti will also provide inputs for the policy.
- The policy will aim to harness existing strengths in sectors like automobiles and auto-components, electronics, new and renewable energy, banking, software and tourism, and create globally scaled-up and commercially viable sectors such as waste management, medical devices, renewable energy, green technologies, financial services to achieve competitiveness.
- The policy will also push for reforms to enhance labour market flexibility with an aim for higher job creation in the formal sector and performance linked tax incentives. It will also take into consideration changing economic and business cycles of world and Indian economy, geopolitical trends and broad policy directions in country.

Awards & Recognition

NRDC wins two awards

NRDC, the technology transfer and commercialisation arm of the Ministry of Science & Technology has grabbed two awards on 29th Aug 2017.

Key Points:

- The award ceremony was held in Stockholm, Sweden.
- NRDC has won the Assocham Services Excellence Award 2017 and its Chairman and Managing Director, H Purushotham an international recognition.
- NRDC also won the Assocham Services Excellence Awards 2017 in the area of Technology Transfer Services.
- The International Association of Advanced Materials (IAAM) Sweden honoured Purushotham with the IAAM Medal 2017.
- He was honoured for his outstanding R&D contributions in the Advanced Materials Science & Technology.
- The award was presented during the three-day European Advanced Materials Congress held from August 22-24.
- About 800 researchers and scientists representing 92 countries had assembled.
- NRDC has transferred IPs and technologies to about 5,000 SMEs, start-ups and corporates.

About NRDC

- National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) was established in 1953 by the Government of India.
- Its primary objective to promote, develop and commercialise the technologies / know-how / inventions / patents / processes emanating from various national R&D institutions / Universities.
- It is presently working under the administrative control of the Dept. of Scientific & Industrial Research, Ministry of Science & Technology.

Lieke Martens named UEFA Women Player of the Year

Lieke Martens has won the UEFA Women's Player of the Year award after her player-of-the-tournament performance at UEFA Women's EURO 2017.

Key Points:

- The 2017-18 UEFA Champions League held in Monaco.
- Lieke Martens is from the Netherlands. Lieke Martens was named UEFA Women's Player of the Year after leading the Netherlands to the 2017 Women's Euro title.
- The UEFA Women's EURO 2017 winner, who recently signed for FC Barcelona from FC Rosengard, claimed a total of 95 points.
- Real Madrid and Portugal forward Cristiano Ronaldo was also awarded Men's Player of the Year award.
- He helped Real win the UEFA Champions League for a second successive time last season and also won European Championships with Portugal last year.
- Best Goalkeeper of the 2016-17 UEFA Champions League season: Gianluigi Buffon.
- Best Defender of the 2016-17 UEFA Champions League season: Sergio Ramos.
- Best Midfielder of the 2016-17 UEFA Champions League season: Luka Modric.
- Best Forward of the 2016-17 UEFA Champions League season: Cristiano Ronaldo.
- The UEFA Player of the Year awards are based on players' performances during the 2016/17 season in all competitions, both domestic and international, and at club and national team levels.
- UEFA President's Award: Francesco Totti.

Appointments & Resigns

Mohammad Mustafa took charge as Chairman and Managing Director of SIDBI

Small Industries development Bank of India (Sidbi) has appointed Mohammad Mustafa as the chairman and managing director.

Key Points:

- Mustafa, a 1995 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre, is at present Joint Secretary in Department of Financial Services.
- The Appointments Committee of the cabinet has approved his appointment to the post for three years.

About SIDBI

- Small Industries Development Bank of India is an independent financial institution aimed to aid the growth and development of micro, small and medium-scale enterprises (MSME) in India. Set up on 2nd April 1990.
- The purpose is to provide refinance facilities and short term lending to industries.
- It is headquartered in Lucknow.

- Presently Shri Ajay Kumar Kapur and Shri Manoj Mittal are the Deputy Managing Director of the organisation.

BSE board approves another 5-year term for Ashish Chauhan as CEO

BSE, a top stock exchange's board has approved another five-year term for its chief Ashish Chauhan.

- Ashish Chauhan joined BSE as deputy chief executive officer (CEO) in 2009. He became MD and CEO for a period of five years with effect from November 2, 2012.
- The board approved re-appointment of Ashish kumar Chauhan as BSE's Managing Director and CEO for another period of five years from November 2, 2017, to November 1, 2022.
- He is known for introduction of mobile trading, online real-time surveillance systems and for launching several new products across various market segments such as SMEs, currencies, mutual funds and corporate bonds.

Sports

14th World Wrestling Championships 2017 at Paris, France

On August 29, 2017, without winning any medal, India ended its campaign in 14th World Wrestling Championships (WWC) 2017 held at Paris, France. This is the second successive World Championship that Indian wrestlers have returned empty-handed (previous one was at Budapest, Hungary).

- A strong 24-member Indian contingent did not just fail to make it to the podium but everyone lost in the initial rounds of their respective weight categories. None of the wrestlers could win two consecutive bouts in the main round.
- The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh blamed the organisers saying that the lack of facilities in Paris resulted in wrestlers losing out on 15 days of training ahead of the mega-event.

Indian's who participated in WWC, 2017:

- Women's freestyle: Vinesh Phogat , Sakshi Malik, Sheetal Tyagi, Lalita Sehrawat, Pooja Danda, Shilpi Sheoran, Navjot and Pooja
- Men's Greco Roman: Gyanender, Ravinder, Yogesh, Gurpreetsingh, Harpreetsingh, Naveen, Ravinder Khatri.

- Men's wrestling squad: Bajrang Punia , Praveen Rana , Deepak, Sumit, Amit Dhankar, Kadiyan, and Satyawart Kadian.

Lewis Hamilton wins Belgian Grand Prix in F1 title race

On August 27 2017 Lewis Hamilton won Belgian Grand Prix in his 200th Formula One race.

- Vettel was second, Daniel Ricciardo was third, fourth-place was occupied by Kimi Raikkonen and fifth-place by Valtteri Bottas.
- Hamilton clinched his fifth win of the season and 58th overall, having equaled Michael Schumacher's pole record Lewis

Important Days

August 29: National Sports Day

The National Sports Day is observed every year on 29th august every year to birth anniversary of the legendary hockey player Dhyan Chand who was born on 29 August 1905.

- To celebrate the day, Government had conducted various programs throughout the country. On this occasion, President Ram Nath Kovind presented National sports Awards to 29 players.
- The President conferred Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, Arjuna Award and Dronacharya Award.

About Dhyan Chand

- The legendary hockey player was born on 29 August 1905 in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh. He is widely considered as the greatest field hockey player of all time. He had started playing hockey only after joining the Army at the age of 16.
- He was famously known as 'The Wizard' for his superb ball control and had scored more than 1000 goals during his international career. He is mostly remembered for his extraordinary goal-scoring feats, in addition to earning 3 Olympic gold medals in field hockey in 1928 (Amsterdam), 1932 (Los Angeles) and 1936 (Berlin).

August 29: International Day against Nuclear Tests

The International Day against Nuclear Tests was observed across the world on 29 August with an aim to raise awareness about the effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions.

- Observance of the day seeks to promote peace and security world-wide and calls for urgent need to prevent nuclear catastrophes to avert devastating effects on humankind, environment and the planet.
- It also highlights urgent need for cessation of nuclear weapons as one of the means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.
- To mark this day, various events were organised across the world such as symposia, conferences, exhibits, competitions, publications, instruction in academic institutions.

International Day against Nuclear Tests

- The International Day against Nuclear Tests was instituted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by unanimously adopting resolution 64/35 in December 2009.
- The resolution was initiated by Kazakhstan with support of large number of sponsors and cosponsors with a view to commemorate closure of Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test site on 29 August 1991.
- The Day was first observed in 2010 and since then observed annually to galvanize the necessity of banning nuclear weapon tests.

Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test site

- The Semipalatinsk Test Site (also known as The Polygon) was the primary testing venue for the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons.
- It is located on the steppe in northeast Kazakhstan (then the Kazakh SSR part of USSR), south of the valley of the Irtysh River.
- The Soviet Union had conducted 456 nuclear tests on this site from 1949 until 1989 including 340 underground and 116 atmospheric explosions (roughly the equivalent of 2500 Hiroshima atomic bombs) with little regard for their effect on the local people or environment.

Obituary

Legendary footballer and Olympian Ahmed Khan dead at 90

Ahmed Khan, a member of India's gold winning football team at the first Asian Games in 1951, passed away. He was 91.

Key Points:

- Khan represented India in two Olympic Games — 1948 in London and 1952 in Helsinki Finland apart from two Asian Games in Delhi and 1954 in Manila.
- Khan, who played as a striker represented India in 11 matches and made his debut against France in the London Olympics.
- He was also a member of the victorious back to back Quadrangular Trophy winning Indian squad in 1953 and 1954.
- Khan was also known for being an East Bengal legend and was a part of the famous 'Pancha Pandavas' of red and gold.
- He played for East Bengal from 1949 to 1959 and captained the club in 1954.
- He won the IFA Shield four times; the Calcutta League, the Durand Cup and the DCM Trophy thrice each; and Rovers Cup, the PK Nair Gold Cup and the HK Mookherjee Shield once each.