

National Current Affairs

21st GST Council meet in Hyderabad

The 21st meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council was held at Hyderabad International Convention Centre, in Hyderabad on 9th September 2017,.

GST Council Meet:

- The meet was headed by Finance Minister Mr. Arun Jaitley. Finance Ministers of all states attended the meet.
- The issues discussed in the GST Council meet were – increasing tax for luxury products, lowering tax for commonly used products like idli & dosa batter, dried tamarind, custard powder and kitchen gas lighter, operation of GSTN (GST Network), tax on khadi and handicraft items etc.
- Telangana Government asked for rollback of GST on its developmental projects. It has also opposed the 12% tax on its pet projects such as Mission Bhagiratha and Mission Kakatiya.
- Apart from the projects, Telangana has requested tax reduction for certain products such as granite, beedi and 33 such products.

About GST (Goods & Services Tax):

- Indirect Tax
- Consists of State GST (SGST), Central GST (CGST) and Integrated GST (IGST)
- Implemented on 1st July, 2017

Anupriya Patel inaugurates 10th Medical Technology Conference in New Delhi

Anupriya Patel inaugurated the 10th Medical Technology Conference organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in New Delhi on 7th of Sept. 2017.

Key Points:

- Patel mentioned in her speech that the web based health management system introduced by the Government at the states' levels is creating a strong infrastructure for monitoring the progress made in the health sector.
- It also helps in minimizing the huge health losses being incurred in states due to inadequate health infrastructure.
- In the medical technology manufacturing sector 100% FDI is allowed and the new medical devices parks anticipated in States like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu etc would augment the production.

- The Health Ministry is already at the forefront of incorporating the benefits of digital technology towards achieving the goals elucidated in National Health Policy (2017) which are synchronous with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The National Health Mission (NHM) is already using throughout the country a web-based Health Management Information System (HMIS) to collect and collate data related to the health infrastructure.

Eastern Fleet Ships departed for Overseas Deployment to East and South-East Asia

In accordance with the India's 'Act East Policy', two Indian Naval Ships departed for deployment to East and South-East Asia.

Key Points:

- INS Satpura and INS Kadmat departed from Visakhapatnam on 8th of Sept. 2017 to visit 12 ports.
- The deployment aims to strengthen existing bonds between India and the regional countries.
- The ships will visit Singapore, Vietnam, Philippines, Cambodia and Brunei to celebrate the 25th anniversary of India-ASEAN dialogue.
- The two ships will be deployed for more than 3 months away from home port.
- The ships will be participated in the International Fleet Review hosted by the Association of South East Asian Countries (ASEAN) at Thailand.
- The ships will also participate in the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise at Malaysia.
- At Russia, the ships will participate in the annual India-Russia bilateral exercise INDRA.
- For the first time, Ex-INDRA will witness the joint participation of Army, Navy and Air Force of both countries.

About INS Satpura

INS Satpura with the formidable mountain range in Central India is a multi-role stealth frigate and is commanded by Captain Rahul Shankar.

About INS Kadmat

INS Kadmat, named after an island in the beautiful Lakshadweep chain, is an Anti-Submarine Corvette and is commanded by Commander Nithin Cariappa.

Rajnath Singh inaugurated the new HQs building of Bureau of Police Research and Development

The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the new HQs building of Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Ministry of Home Affairs on 8th of Sept. 2017 in New Delhi.

Key Points:

- The Union Home Minister awarded the Union Home Minister's Medal for best Police Trainer to Shri Sulkhan Singh, DGP, UP.
- He also gave away Police Medals to the officials of the BPR&D.
- This building has modern facilities, such as, state of the art auditorium with seating capacity for 250, 9 big and small conference/syndicate halls, modern library to house 3.5 lakh books, hostel facilities equipped with industrial kitchen having, 52 twin seater rooms.
- The BPR&D headquarters is fully air conditioned and follows green building norms and has rain-water harvesting system and the campus has sufficient green belt.
- BPR&D including the NCRB block has a total strength of more than 500 employees, for whom modular workstations have been provided.
- It has state of the art cafeteria equipped with industrial kitchen and officers lounge.
- Shri Rajnath Singh also released the volume on "Data on Police Organization as on 1.1.2017", flagship presentation of the BPR&D.
- It includes several achievements of the BPR&D in the fields of research and modernization of the Indian Police and introduced the latest initiative of BPR&D, i.e. e-Ustad Training e-Portal which was launched by the Union Home Minister.

First National Canine Seminar organised by NSG in Haryana

The first National Canine Seminar was organized by National Security Guard (NSG) in NSG Campus, Manesar (Gurugram), Haryana on 7th of Sept. 2017.

Key Points:

- The NSG, popularly known as "The Black Cats" of the country is organizing this two-day seminar.
- The theme of the two days National Canine Seminar is "Canine as Tactical Weapon in Fight against Terrorism".
- Its main objective is to discuss and deliberate on the techniques of dog training and strategies of deploying the dogs in Counter Terrorism and Counter Insurgency scenario.
- On the second day of the seminar, a workshop on "Emerging Tools and Practices of Canines Training" will be organized.
- It has been organized by demonstrations of the various nascent equipments by GIGN, the France Special Force.

- The Expedition team will traverse major cities of the country including NSG's regional hubs at Gandhinagar, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata to cover a distance of 7000 kms.
- The sole objective is to spread a message of collective responsibility towards the fight against terrorism.

ICAR to undertake major research works on agriculture with World Bank fund

On 8th September 2017, Deputy Director General of the National Apex Agricultural Research Body, Mr.Narendra Singh Rathore announced that ICAR (Indian Council for Agricultural Research) would undertake major research works on agriculture, in Chennai.

About the research works on Agriculture:

- The research work would be done in 2017.
- World Bank granted a fund Rs.1100 crore for this project.
- The funds would be allocated to each of the ten premier agricultural and veterinary universities in the country.
- The areas of research would include increasing availability of fodder for cattle and climate change challenges. Since, in spite of India leading in the global milk production, the milk yield per animal is very low compared to international standards.
- Two research centres would be established in Tamil Nadu for research on preserving and promoting domestic bull species.

About Ministry of Agriculture:

- Headquarters – New Delhi
- Minister – Radha Mohan Singh
- Ministers of State – Mr.S.S.Ahluwalia, Mr.Parshottam Rupala, Mr.Sudarshan Bhagat

International Current Affairs

Engineless glider Perlan 2 soars at 52,000 ft sets new world record

The Airbus Perlan 2 aircraft has set a new altitude world record for a glider, climbing to 52,172 feet on 9th Sep in El Calafate, Argentina.

Key Points:

- The Perlan 2 is a composite-intensive, engineless glider designed to fly at the edge of space using stratospheric mountain waves.
- The aircraft soared to an incredible 52,000 feet over the Patagonia region of Argentina, without the support of an engine.
- The previous altitude record was 50,727 feet set by Perlan 1 in 2006.
- According to Airbus, Argentina is one of the few places on Earth where the rising air currents can reach the stratosphere at a few times of the year.
- According to Airbus when the gliding season ends in Argentina, the mission will return to its base in Minden, Nevada to assess the data from the Perlan 2's flight recorders to improve the glider's design.

Banking & Finance

PNB, BSNL join hands for mobile wallet Speedpay rollout

Punjab National Bank and BSNL has joined hands to roll out open mobile wallet Speedpay across 10 states in the country announced on 8th Sept. 2017.

Key Points:

- PNBs Speedway wallet will operate like any other mobile wallet for paying bills, recharging phone. Its users will be able to deposit and withdraw money from authorized retail outlets.
- Under the agreement, BSNL will expand Speedpay services in Punjab, Chandigarh (UT), Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand.
- Speedway users will be able to operate Internet banking services from the application.
- This technology will help India moving towards less cash economy and provide services in tier 2 and 3 cities.
- SpeedPay also plays an important role for governments direct benefit transfer programme, to ensure quick and direct payment of subsidies to the citizens

About PNB

- Founded on 19th May 1894
- MD & CEO: Sunil Mehta
- HQ: New Delhi
- Tagline: The name you can bank upon

United Bank of India waives retail loan processing fees up to 100 per cent

On 8th September 2017, United Bank of India announced that it has removed processing fee for retail home loans, car loans and two-wheeler loans, in Kolkata

About the processing fee waiver:

- The processing fee waiver will be available till December, 2017.
- 100% processing fee waiver for:
 - Home loans
 - Car loans
 - Two-wheeler loans
- 50% processing fee waiver for:
 - Mortgage loans
 - Personal loans
 - Gold loans

About United Bank of India:

- Nationalized bank
- Headquarters – Kolkata
- MD & CEO – Mr. Pawan Kumar Bajaj

Business

Amazon India opens largest fulfilment centre in Hyderabad

Amazon has opened its largest fulfilment centre (FC) at the GMR-led Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad announced on 8th of Sept 2017.

Key Points:

- The new facility has a carpet area of around 4 lakh square feet, along with a storage space of close to 2.1 million cubic feet.
- The retail major plans to facilitate faster deliveries in the region.
- Retail major is also looking to expand its grocery sales initiative to over 20 cities across the country this year.
- It had recently opened an FC in Haryana with 1.3 million cubic feet of storage capacity. The FC will enable sellers to use local infrastructure, save capital and grow their business.
- Its online platform offers access to over 100 million products across multiple categories in India.

Appointments & Resigns

UIDAI Head A.B. Pandey Given Additional Charge as GSTN Chairman

Ajay Bhushan Pandey, the chief executive of the Unique Identification Authority of India will take over as the chairman of the Goods and Services Tax Network from immediate effect. Unique Identification Authority of India is the body that administers Aadhaar.

Key Points:

- He has been heading UIDAI since its inception in 2010.
- The tenure of Navin Kumar, Chairman, Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) completed on 29 August.

Abhay Firodia takes over as SIAM president

Force Motors Chairman Abhay Firodia has been elected as the new president of the automobile industry body Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM).

Key Points:

- Mahindra & Mahindra's President-Automotive Sector Rajan Wadhera has been elected as the new vice-president of the organization.
- Maruti Suzuki India Managing Director & CEO Kenichi Ayukawa has taken over as Treasurer for the year 2017-18.
- Force Motors is a pioneer in the automobile industry in India for last 60 years and manufactures Tempo, 3-wheeler auto rickshaws, matadors, and similar vehicles.
- The company also makes engines for BMW and Mercedes.

Acquisitions & Mergers

Tierra Agrotech buys Monsanto cotton seed business

On 8th September 2017, Tierra Agrotech Private Limited, a Hyderabad based company acquired Monsanto Holdings, a US based cotton seed company, in New Delhi.

About the acquisition:

- Monsanto has sold its cotton business in India to Tierra Agrotech Private Limited after license issue and price control issues with the Indian Government.
- Also it was locked in a dispute with Nuziveedu Seeds, which also uses Monsanto's Cotton technology.
- Tierra Agrotech would improve its breeding and research programmes and deliver high quality hybrid cotton seeds using this acquisition.

About Tierra Agrotech Private Limited:

- Headquarters – Hyderabad
- Founder & MD – Mr.Suresh Atluri
- Co – Founder & Director – Mr.Surinder K. Tikoo

About Monsanto Holdings:

- US based Bio-technology giant
- Headquarters – Missouri, US
- Chairman, President& CEO – Mr.Hugh Grant

Environment

New species of edible fish named as Labeo filiferus found in Pampa river

A new species of edible freshwater fish has been discovered in Pampa River in Pathanamthitta district of Kerala.

Key Points:

The two researchers, Mathews Plamoottil, Assistant Professor, Government College, Chavara, Kollam, and Primož Zupancic from the Dinaric Research Institute, Slovenia, Europe, have reported the discovery in the latest issue of research journal Bioscience discovery.

- It is named as Labeo filiferus and it belongs to Labeo genus.
- The fishes in the Labeo genus are widely distributed in the inland water bodies of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Burma, Malaysia, tropical Africa and Syria.
- They are medium- sized elongate fishes with rounded abdomen, swollen snout, finged lips and a straight lateral line.
- At present 31 species of Labeo are discovered in India.

- Among these species *L.rohita* is commonly known as Rohu, extensively used in aquaculture.
- The only other *Labeo* species reported from Kerala is *L.dussumieri*.
- According to the researchers, *L.filiferus* was found to be distinct from the other species of the genus.
- Its features including black coloured body and fins, prominent barbels, smaller eyes, longer snout and elongated dorsal and anal fins.
- The eyes are coloured with orange tinge. The specimens were 20 to 40 cm long and weighed four to five kg.

Sports

India's Sonam Malik bags Gold in Cadet World Wrestling Championship; Neelam settles for bronze.

Young Indian wrestler Sonam Malik bagged a gold medal at the World Cadet Wrestling Championship. It is held in Athens, Greece.

Key Points:

- Sonam Malik is competing in the 56kg category and she defeated Japanese Sena Nagamoto by 3-1 points in the final.
- Neelam bagged a bronze medal and competing in the 43kg category.
- She defeated Roxana Alexandra of Romania by 6-4 points.

Tottenham Hotspur will have world's first dividing retractable pitch

Tottenham have announced plans for the world's first dividing retractable football pitch at their new stadium on 7th of Sept. 2017

Key Points:

- The club's new ground will boast separate playing surfaces for NFL and football.
- The fully retractable grass surface will be used for football matches while the artificial pitch will be used for NFL matches.
- The music concerts and a range of other events will be there in order to protect the integrity of both playing surfaces.
- Each section will roll into place from underneath the South Stand and join together to create a playing surface in a process which is said to take 25 minutes.

- An artificial American football pitch will sit below a turf “soccer” pitch which slides out in three segments.
- Tottenham plan to move into the 61,000-capacity ground from the start of the 2018-19 seasons.

Obituary

Veteran kannada actor R.N. Sudarshan passed away

Veteran Kannada actor RN Sudarshan passed away in Bengaluru. He was 78.

Key Points:

- RN Sudarshan, has acted in many Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Hindi films.
- Sudarshan was last seen in the 2010 Kannada film Super (2010), directed by Upendra.