

National Current Affairs

PM Narendra Modi dedicates Sardar Sarovar Dam to nation

Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated interstate multi-purpose Sardar Sarovar Dam (Narmada dam project) at Kevadia, Gujarat to the nation on occasion of his 67th birthday.

Sardar Sarovar Dam is the highest dam ever built in India and second biggest concrete gravity dam in world in terms of volume after Grand Coulee Dam in US.

Key Facts

- The Sardar Sarovar Dam project was vision of India's first deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to arrest excess flow of water from Narmada River into Arabian Sea. The foundation stone of project was laid out by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on April 5, 1961.
- The dam has length of 1.2 kms and depth of 163 metres. Its height was recently raised to 138.68 metres, enabling usable water storage of 4.73 million acre feet (MAF). Four Indian states, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan will receive water and electricity supplied from the dam.
- It will irrigate more than 22,000 hectares of land, mostly from drought prone areas of Kutch and Saurashtra. Moreover it will provide drinking water to four crore people from Gujarat. About 57% of electricity produced from dam goes to Maharashtra, while Madhya Pradesh gets 27% and Gujarat gets 16%.
- The project was executed by Gujarat government's Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Ltd (SSNL).

India's First Lithium-Ion Battery Unit in Gujarat

To set up India's first lithium-ion battery facility in Gujarat, Suzuki Motor has invested more than Rs 1,150 crore along with Japanese partners Toshiba and Denso.

Key Points:

- Maruti Suzuki will hold half the stake and meanwhile, Toshiba will own 40% and Denso the remaining 10%.
- The proposed plant to be located in the supplier's park at Suzuki's Hansalpur plant in Gujarat is expected to be operational from 2020.

About Suzuki Motors:

- Chairman: Osamu Suzuki

- HQ: Hamamatsu Shizuoka Japan
- Founded: 1909

Intelligence wing of Sashastra Seema Bal launched

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has launched full-fledged intelligence wing of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). SSB is paramilitary force that guards India's borders with Bhutan and Nepal.

- The intelligence wing will gather actionable information in a bid to enhance operational efficiency.
- It will have 650 field and staff agents to gather actionable information. SSB's intelligence wing personnel will be deployed on India-Nepal and India-Bhutan borders where there are no restrictions on movement of people on either side due to visa free regime.

Background

- India shares 1,751 km-long border with Nepal and 699 km-long border with Bhutan. The border with Nepal touches Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim and border with Bhutan touches Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- India has visa free regime with both countries as border population on both the sides has strong regional, cultural and economic ties. Due to visa-free regime, there is trans-border movement of criminals and anti-national elements which pose major security challenge.

Comment

- The intelligence wing of SSB will help to institutionalise a well-knit intelligence network of highest capability that can play important role in comprehensive border management.
- Based on intelligence SSB can undertake essential operations to prevent criminals and smugglers from taking advantage of friendly borders with Nepal and Bhutan.

WARB Application

The Ministry also launched Welfare and Rehabilitation Board (WARB) application to facilitate retire CAPFs and Assam Rifles personnel to get their grievances redressed, seek skill development, re-employment and other relevant and important information.

Tez: Google's UPI-based digital payment service launched

Tech Giant Google's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) based digital payment service Tez (meaning fast in Hindi) was launched by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in New Delhi.

With this, Google become latest international giant to enter into India's fast growing digital payment ecosystem.

Key Facts

- Google Tez is standalone payments application, available on Android and iOS. The app can be used to pay for movie tickets, utility bills, and make other transactions online. It supports several local languages including Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu and will work with 55 banks.
- Google has partnered with Axis, HDFC Bank, ICICI, and State Bank of India (SBI) for backend processing. On security front, all transactions on Google Tez app are guarded by Tez Shield to detect fraud, prevent hacking, and verify identity.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

UPI is a payments protocol built by government-backed National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It facilitates the instant fund transfer between two bank accounts on the mobile platform using unique virtual address without putting details of card details, net banking, IFSC code, wallet password etc.

GSTN reopens composition scheme window for small trader

The GST Network (GSTN) has reopened composition scheme window facility for small taxpayers with turnover of up to Rs.75 lakh to opt for composition scheme, which offers easy compliance for business as returns are to be filed only quarterly. The window will be open for those taxpayers who have migrated from earlier excise, service tax or VAT regime as well as for the newly registered taxpayers.

Earlier, small taxpayers were given time deadline of August 2017 to opt for composition scheme. But, only 10.86 lakh taxpayers, out of total 85 lakh registered businesses had opted for the scheme.

Background

- Taxpayers who will opt for the composition scheme during the period will be given the facility from 1 October 2017.
- These taxpayers will be treated as normal taxpayer and will have to file monthly return.

About Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN)

- GSTN is a not for profit, non-Government, private limited company incorporated in 2013. The Union Government holds 24.5% equity in GSTN.

- It has been set up primarily to provide IT infrastructure and services to the Central and State Governments, tax payers and other stakeholders for implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- All States including two UTs (Delhi and Puducherry) and the Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers (EC) together hold another 24.5%. Balance 51% equity is with non-Government financial institutions-HDFC Bank Ltd (10%), HDFC Ltd (10%), ICICI Bank Ltd (10%), NSE Strategic Investment Corporation Ltd (10%) and LIC Housing Finance Limited (11%).
- The Revenue Model of GSTN after GST rollout will consist of User Charge to be paid by stakeholders who will use the system and thus it will be a self-sustaining organization.

International Current Affairs

Yudh Abhyas 2017: Joint India-US military exercise

The 13th edition Yudh Abhyas 2017, a joint military training exercise between India and United States was held at Joint Base Lewis McChord, Washington, US.

Yudh Abhyas is annual bilateral military exercise, alternately held by the two countries. In this edition of exercise, armies of both countries honed tactical skills in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations (CICT ops) under UN charter.

Key Facts

- ‘Yudh Abhyas 2017’ saw representation from 5th Infantry Battalion of 20 Infantry Regiment of US Army while Indian side was represented by soldiers of Gorkha Rifles from the Surya Command. During two-week exercise, soldiers from both countries will hone their tactical skills in counter terror and counter insurgency operations under a joint brigade headquarter.
- Both sides jointly trained, planned and executed series of well-developed tactical drills for neutralization of likely threats that may be encountered in UN peace keeping operations. Moreover, experts from both sides also held detailed discussions to share their experience and expertise on varied operational topics.

Business

HDFC Bank retains its No. 1 position in BrandZ India Top 50 for the fourth time

HDFC Bank has retained its No.1 position in the BrandZ India Top 50 report of the year 2017.

Key Points:

- According to the reports, the bank is stated to have doubled its brand value from \$9.4 billion to \$18 billion since 2014.
- The report stated that Airtel, State Bank of India, Asian Paints, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Maruti Suzuki, Bajaj Auto, Hero MotoCorp and Axis Bank comprise the rest of the top 10 brands report.
- The 2017 Best Countries Report states that India stands out for its history, cultural influence, distinction and reputation for entrepreneurship.
- The valuation behind the BrandZ Top 50 Most Valuable Indian Brands was conducted by Kantar Millward Brown which specialized in brand equity research and brand valuation.
- Since 2007, the ranking combines analyzed financial data from Bloomberg and Kantar World panel with the opinions of over a 100,000 Indian consumers.
- The eligibility criteria for each brand in the categories met the following:
 - They are consumer facing, the brand is owned by an enterprise listed on a stock exchange in India.
 - Bank brands derived at least 25% of the revenue from retail businesses.

National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute Signs MoU with Bonn to promote coloured wheat

An autonomous body of Ministry of Science and Technology, National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute has signed MoU with Ludhiana based Bonn Food Industries on 14th of Sept. 2017.

Key Points:

- The MoU has been signed to promote coloured wheat with antioxidant qualities beneficial for control of diabetes, cholesterol and obesity.
- The yield of coloured wheat compared to normal varieties would rise to 17 quintals per acre against normal 20 quintals per acre.
- It has been developed by routine way of plant breeding by crossing high yielding Indian cultivars PBW550, PBW621, HD2967 with colored wheat procured from Japan and America.
- This material has been registered with National Bureau of Plant genetic resources (NBPGR) and plant variety protection and farmers rights authority (PVPFRA).

Airtel launches 'Office-in-a-Box' connectivity solutions for Karnataka start-ups

Airtel has launched 'Office-In-a-Box' for start-ups which are registered under the Karnataka government's Start-Up Cell initiative.

Key Points:

- Airtel has been included in top priority as the preferred partner for the state government's initiative.
- Airtel's Office-In-a-Box offers a range of services to support the business requirements of start-ups.
- It is also available on a scale-as-you-grow model with easy payment options.
- The services include various facilities like voice and data solutions; audio and web collaboration; cloud services; payments bank services; go-to-market support across SMS, MMS, e-mail, voice, IVR and USSD; GPS and RFID-based tracking of assets.

About Airtel

- Founder: Sunil Bharti Mittal
- Founded: 7th July 1995
- HQ: New Delhi

Appointments & Resigns

Advertising Club appoints Vikram Sakhuja as President

On 14th September 2017, the Advertising Club elected Mr. Vikram Sakhuja, Group Chief Executive Officer – Media and OOH, Madison Communications as its President.

- Mr. Vikram Sakhuja would replace Mr. Raj Nayak, CEO, Colors, as the President of Advertising Club.
- Mr. Vikram Sakhuja said that his aim is to develop the existing leadership forums into large and global platforms.
- He also said that the Advertising Club would continue to serve as a networking platform and a great ideas exchange forum for advertising and media industry practitioners.

About Advertising Club:

- Organization that has various Advertising, Marketing, Media, Research and Communication Leaders as members
- Location – Mumbai

Abanti Sankaranarayanan elected as chairperson of ASCI

On 14th September 2017, Ms. Abanti Sankaranarayanan, Chief Strategy and Corporate Affairs Officer, Diageo India, was unanimously elected as the chairperson of the board of 'The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)'.

Appointment as Chairman of ASCI:

- She was a member of the ASCI board of governors for 4 years.
- She is also the Chief Strategy and Corporate Affairs Officer at Diageo India. She is also a member of its executive committee.
- Mr. D. Shivakumar, Chairman & CEO of PepsiCo India Holdings was elected as the Vice-Chairman. Mr. Shashidhar Sinha, CEO of Media Brands was re-appointed as the honorary treasurer.

Iceland PM resigns after coalition collapses

On 16th September 2017, Iceland Prime Minister Mr. Bjarni Benediktsson resigned from his position, in Reykjavik, Iceland.

- The Prime Minister resigned from his position after one party from its alliance quit and the other asked for a new election.
- The Prime Minister's father had written a letter requesting pardon for a child molester Hjalti Sigurjon Hauksson, who was convicted in 2004 of raping his stepdaughter almost every day for 12 years.
- When this came to revelation, the Bright Future party (one of the alliance parties) quit from the alliance and government positions.
- The Reform Party (one of the alliance parties) has asked for a new election.
- The alliance collapsed and the ruling government lost majority.
- The Iceland Prime Minister was also earlier accused in the panama papers issue.

About Iceland:

- Capital – Reykjavik
- Currency – Icelandic krona
- Official language – Icelandic
- President – Mr. Gudni Th. Johannesson

Sekhar Basu Gets 1 Year Extension as Atomic Energy Secretary

On 16th September 2017, scientist Dr. Sekhar Basu was given one-year extension as Atomic Energy Secretary, till 19th September 2018.

- Dr.Sekhar Basu's has been given extension for the second time.
- He was appointed as the Atomic Energy Secretary in October 2015. His period was to end in September 2016. In August 2016, he was given a one-year extension.
- Dr.Basu is a renowned scientist. He has been honoured with Padma Shri award.
- He was the Director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and chief executive of the Nuclear Recycle Board (NRB).
- Dr.Basu, played an important role in setting up reprocessing and waste management facilities at Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research in Kalpakkam.

About Department of Atomic Energy:

- Headquarters – Mumbai
- Secretary – Dr.Sekhar Basu
- Minister of State – Dr.Jitendra Singh

Awards & Recognition

Salman Khan honoured with Global Diversity Award in London

On 15th September 2017, Salman Khan was awarded Global Diversity Award at Britain's House of Commons, in London.

Global Diversity Award:

- The award was given to Salman Khan by Keith Vaz, the longest serving Indian-origin MP in British Parliament.
- The award was given for his contribution to the Indian film industry as an actor, producer, television personality, singer and philanthropist.
- Keith Vaz said that Salman Khan is a role model and a hero to millions of people worldwide.
- Other recipients who received this award previously are Indian actors Amitabh Bachchan, Aishwarya Rai, Shah Rukh Khan, Chinese actor Jackie Chan, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, American Civil Rights leader Jesse Jackson and Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton.

The Hindu wins the Best News Website award at WAN-IFRA awards

On 13th September 2017, The Hindu Group was awarded two gold and one silver at the South Asian Digital Media Awards at the WAN-IFRA (World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers) India 2017 conference, in Chennai.

- In the South Asian Digital Media Awards 2017 awards were given under 9 categories:
- **Best news website:** www.thehindu.com won the Gold award. Following The Hindu, silver and bronze were won by www.thequint.com and www.ndtv.com respectively.
- **Best innovation to engage youth audiences:** Youngworldclub.com won the gold award (belongs to The Hindu group).
- **Best lifestyle, sports or entertainment mobile services:** Sportstarlive.com won the silver award (belongs to The Hindu group).
- These awards were presented by WAN-IFRA and Google.
- It honours publishers who implement digital media and mobile strategies in their publishing.

About The Hindu:

- Type – Daily newspaper
- Headquarters – Chennai
- Owners – The Hindu Group & Kasturi and Sons Limited

69th Primetime Emmy Awards

The 69th Annual Primetime Emmy Awards ceremony honouring best US prime time television programming was held at the Microsoft Theater in Downtown Los Angeles, California.

The Handmaid's Tale became first web television series to win award for Outstanding Drama Series. HBO's science fiction western drama Westworld and NBC's sketch comedy Saturday Night Live were the most nominated programs for awards, each with 22 nominations.

Winners are:

- Outstanding Comedy Series: Veep
- Outstanding Drama Series: The Handmaid's Tale (first web series to win)
- Outstanding Variety Talk Series: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver
- Outstanding Variety Sketch Series: Saturday Night Live
- Outstanding Limited Series: Big Little Lies
- Outstanding Television Movie: Black Mirror ("San Junipero")
- Outstanding Reality-Competition Program: The Voice
- Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series: Donald Glover as Earnest "Earn" Marks on Atlanta
- Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series: Julia Louis-Dreyfus as Selina Meyer on Veep
- Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series: Sterling K. Brown as Randall Pearson on This Is Us
- Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series: Elisabeth Moss as June Osborne / Offred on The Handmaid's Tale

- Outstanding Lead Actor in a Limited Series or Movie: Riz Ahmed as Nasir “Naz” Khan on The Night Of
- Outstanding Lead Actress in a Limited Series or Movie: Nicole Kidman as Celeste Wright on Big Little Lies
- Outstanding Directing for a Comedy Series: Atlanta (Episode: “B.A.N.”), Directed by Donald Glover
- Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series: The Handmaid’s Tale (Episode: “Offred”), Directed by Reed Morano
- Outstanding Directing for a Variety Series: Saturday Night Live (Episode: “Host: Jimmy Fallon”), Directed by Don Roy King
- Outstanding Directing for a Limited Series, Movie, or Dramatic Special: Big Little Lies, Directed by Jean-Marc Vallée
- Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series: Master of None (Episode: “Thanksgiving”), Written by Aziz Ansari and Lena Waithe
- Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series: The Handmaid’s Tale (Episode: “Offred”), Written by Bruce Miller
- Outstanding Writing for a Variety Series: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver
- Outstanding Writing for a Limited Series, Movie, or Dramatic Special: Black Mirror (Episode: “San Junipero”), Written by Charlie Brooker

About Emmy Awards

- The Emmy Award is bestowed by Academy of Television Arts & Sciences in recognition of excellence in American primetime television programming in US.
- It was first given in 1949.
- The Emmy Awards are considered television equivalent to the Oscars or Academy Awards (film) Tony Awards (stage) and Grammy Awards (music).
- The awards are given in three categories Primetime Emmy Awards for television performance, Primetime Creative Arts Emmy Awards, and Primetime Engineering Emmy Awards.

Sports

PV Sindhu wins 2017 Korea Open title

India’s ace shuttler P V Sindhu (World no. 4) won women’s singles title at 2017 Korea Open Super Series badminton tournament.

- In summit clash held at Korean capital city Seoul, she defeated Nozomi Okuhara (World No. 7) of Japan in three sets 22-20, 11-21, 20-18.

- With this victory, Sindhu became first Indian to win Korea Super Series crown. It was overall her third super series title of her career. She had won 2016 China Super Series Premier and India Super Series and Syed Modi Grand Prix Gold this season.

PV Sindhu

- PV Sindhu received international fame after getting listed on the Top 20 list of Badminton World Federation rankings in 2012.
- In 2013, she created history by becoming first Indian women's singles badminton player to win medal at World Championships.
- Sindhu had won Silver medal in 2017 Rio Olympics. She was second Indian female shuttler to win Olympic medal after Saina Nehwal who had won bronze medal in 2012 London Olympics. Sindhu was awarded Padma Shri in 2015, India's fourth-highest civilian honour.

Sri Lanka Cricket bans Chamara Silva for 2 years on fixing charges

Former Sri Lanka batsman Chamara Silva has been banned for two-year from cricket-related activities and for breaching the spirit of the game during a Tier-B first class match.

Key Points:

- Silva, who had led Panadura, has been banned for two years from playing, coaching and administrating. He played in 11 Tests and 75 ODIs between 1999 and 2011.
- Captain of Kalutara club, Manoj Deshapriya was also banned for 2 years for match fixing.
- The rest of the players from the two teams and their coaches have been banned for a year and both clubs will also have to pay a fine of rupees 500,000 each.

About Srilanka

- Capital: Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte
- President: Maithripala Sirisena
- Currency: Srilankan Rupee

Virat Kohli remains on top, Bumrah climbs up to second in ICC T20 rankings

In the latest ICC T20 rankings of batsmen, Indian captain Virat Kohli has remained on top spot with 826 points.

Key Points:

- In the bowlers' list, Imad Wasim of Pakistan leads the table with 742 points and India's Ravichandran Ashwin is at the 10th placed with 626 points.

- The Indian skipper leads Australia's Aaron Finch by 39 points, who is in second place.
- In the bowlers' table Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah moved up to second place with 737 points as he overtook South Africa's Imran Tahir.
- Pakistan batsman Babar Azam achieved a career-best sixth position after climbing 21 spots and Evin Lewis of West Indies grabbed a career-best third position.
- In the team rankings, India remained on fifth as West Indies overtook England to be third on the list after England with 120 points.
- England have lost four points to slip from second to fourth with 119 points while New Zealand still leads the table with 125 points.

Pakistan beat World XI, clinch historic T20 series

Pakistan beat World XI to clinch the final Twenty20 match and the series at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on 15th of Sept. 2017.

Key Points:

- Pakistan claimed the series by 2-1.
- Pakistan's victory, though, was set up by Ahmed Shehzad and Babar Azam.

Obituary

BJP MP Mr.Mahant Chandnath dies of cancer at 61

On 17th September 2017, BJP MP, Mr.Mahant Chandnath, from Alwar, passed away at a hospital in Delhi.

Mr.Mahant Chandnath won the Alwar seat in Rajasthan in 2014 parliamentary elections by defeating Congress candidate and former Union Minister Mr.Jitendra Singh.