

National Current Affairs

Tripura is first state to set up district family welfare committees

On September 18, 2017, Tripura became the first state in the country to set up family welfare district committees to deal with the issue of fake and biased complaints by women against their husbands, in-laws and husband's relatives.

- These committees have been formed as per the directives of Supreme Court.
- The family welfare district committees may comprise para-legal volunteers or social workers or retired officers or even the wives of serving officers.
- The panel members will not be called as witnesses if the police or magistrate decide to investigate a particular case.
- After filing of complaint by a woman against her husband, in-laws and husband's relatives, the district family welfare committees would scrutinise the complaint, try to mitigate and mediate between the two sides to settle the dispute
- After the district family welfare committees have submitted their report, the police officials would start appropriate legal action. The police action will follow if the case is genuine.

International Yoga Festival starts in Kashmir

On Sep 18, 2017, Jammu and Kashmir governor, N N Vohra inaugurated the second International Yoga Festival and International Yoga Sports Championship 2017 in which about 300 people from various parts of India, Vietnam, Taiwan, Canada, Bulgaria, USA and Nepal are participating.

The festival is being organized by the Yoga Society of Kashmir at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre.

Infosys Foundation signs pact with Visakha Jilla Samithi for water supply systems in Visakhapatnam tribal villages

On September 19, 2017, Infosys Foundation has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Visakha Jilla Nava Nirman Samithi (VJNNS), an NGO to construct 100 gravity fed water supply systems in the tribal villages of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

About the Project:

- The endowment of Rs. 5.92 crore will be used to promote good sanitation practices and create efficient water management systems in all the villages.
- It aims at making potable drinking water available to remote tribal villages in the districts of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam.
- This will not only help enhance health but also aid in reducing water-borne diseases.
- Under this project, local communities will also be taught to manage a “village development fund.”

CCEA extends Special Industry Initiative for J&K- Udaan Scheme

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) extended time period “Special Industry Initiative for J&K” (SII J&K)- Udaan Scheme till December, 2018 without any modification and cost escalation.

UDAAN Scheme

- Udaan is national integration scheme with goal to mainstream J&K youth with rest of country. It not only provides skill enhancement and job opportunity but also connects bright youths from J&K with vibrant corporate sector of country.
- Udaan Scheme provides exposure to youth of J&K to best of corporate India and corporate India to rich talent pool available in State. So far, 109 leading corporate entities have partnered with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under scheme with commitment to train youth from State covering Banking, Financial Services, IT, ITES, Organized Retail, Infrastructure, Hospitality etc.

Cabinet approves revamped Khelo India Programme

The Union Cabinet approved revamped Khelo India programme that aims at mainstreaming sport as tool for individual development, community development, economic development and national development.

Salient features of programme

Pan Indian Sports Scholarship scheme: It will cover 1,000 most talented young athletes each year across select sports disciplines. Each athlete selected under scheme will receive annual scholarship worth Rs.5.00 lakh for 8 consecutive years.

Sports Universities: 20 universities across country will be promoted as hubs of sporting excellence, which will enable talented sports persons to pursue dual pathway of education and competitive sports. It also aims at creating an active population with healthy life-style.

National physical fitness drive: Under it, programme will cover about 200 million children in age group of 10-18. It will not only measure physical fitness of all children in age group, but also support their fitness related activities.

Significance

- The Khelo India programme strives to promote “Sports for All” as well as “Sports for Excellence”. This is for first time a long-term athlete development pathway will be made available to gifted and talented youngsters to excel in competitive sports. It will create a pool of highly competitive athletes who can compete to win at world stage.
- It aims to engage youth living in disturbed and deprived areas, in sporting activities, to mainstream them in nation-building process by weaning them away from unproductive and disruptive activities. It will also promote gender equity and social inclusiveness.
- It also includes use of latest user-friendly technology in all aspects of sports promotion such as, use of mobile apps for dissemination of sports training, interactive website for indigenous sports, National Sports Talent Search (NSTS) portal for talent identification, GIS based information system for locating and using sports infrastructure etc.

Cabinet approves rationalization and modernization of Government Press

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for rationalization/merger and modernization plan of 17 Government of India Presses (GIPs)/Units into 5 GIPs.

The five GIPs are located at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Minto Road and Mayapuri in New Delhi; Nashik (Maharashtra) and Temple Street (Kolkata, West Bengal).

Key Facts

- These 5 Presses will be redeveloped and modernised by monetisation of their surplus land. 468.08 acres Land of other merged Presses will be given to Land & Development Office, Ministry of Urban Development. Moreover, 56.67 acres Land Government of India Text Books Presses (GITBPs) at Chandigarh, Bhubaneswar and Mysuru will be returned to respective State Governments.
- The modernisation will enable these GIPs to undertake important confidential, urgent and multi-colour printing work of Central Government Offices all over country. It will be carried out at zero cost to exchequer and without any retrenchment.

India to hold first BIMSTEC Disaster Management exercise

India is going to conduct first BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise- 2017 (DMEx-2017) from October 10-13, 2017. It will be conducted by National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) as the lead agency in the National Capital Region (NCR).

The purpose of the exercise is to provide platform for sharing Best Practices on all aspects of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), strengthening regional response and coordination for Disaster Management among BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) member countries.

Key Facts

Delegates from all seven nations of BIMSTEC grouping, including India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand are participating in BIMSTEC DMEx-2017. The main focus of exercise is to test region's preparedness and resilience towards effective activation of inter-Governmental interaction and agreements for immediate deployment of regional resources for disaster response.

BIMSTEC DMEx-2017 will help create synergy and synchronise efforts to institutionalise regional cooperation among member countries. It will help strengthen effective utilisation of Search & Rescue Teams for Disaster Relief & Emergency Response, including Emergency Rapid Assessment Teams and Management of mass casualties, especially in situations involving breakdown of communication and infrastructure.

BIMSTEC

The BIMSTEC is a sub-regional grouping comprising of seven countries of South Asia and South East Asia. It is home to around 1.5 billion people, constituting around 22% of the global population with a combined GDP of \$2.7 trillion economy. Majority of the BIMSTEC countries are situated in South Asian Region (SAR) prone to natural disasters such as floods, cyclones, earthquakes, avalanches and drought.

Commemorative Coins on Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi released

Commemorative coins of Rs 100 and Rs 10 denomination were released on the occasion of 101st Birth Centenary of noted Carnatic musician Dr. MS Subbulakshmi by Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu.

Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi

- Madurai Shanmukhavadiyu Subbulakshmi was Carnatic singer. She was born 16 September 1916 in Madurai, Madras Presidency. She died on 11 December 2004 (aged 88). She was leading exponent of classical and semi-classical songs in the carnatic tradition of South India.
- She had many firsts to her credit, from being first musician to be awarded Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour in 1998, first Indian musician to receive the

Ramon Magsaysay award, often considered Asia's Nobel Prize in 1974 and first Indian musician to perform at UN General Assembly. In 2016, to mark her birth centenary, UN Postal Administration had issued stamp to honour her.

International Current Affairs

China issues stamp commemorating world's largest radio telescope

China has issued a commemorative stamp in honour of the world's largest radio telescope located in Guizhou province on 18th of Sep 2017.

Key Points:

- According to the Xinhua news agency, the State Post Bureau (SPB) has issued a set of five stamps.
- It includes one commemorating the Five-hundred-metre Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope priced at 1.2 yuan.
- The other four stamps include:
 - China's quantum science experimental satellite "Mozi".
 - The research vessel Tansuo-1
 - A national grain production project around the Bohai Sea
 - The Sunway TaihuLight supercomputer
- The telescope is designed to probe space for the faintest signs of life and is sensitive to any electromagnetic interference.
- It was built in the Dawodang depression, a natural karst basin in Pingtang county in Guizhou.

India Japan US Trilateral Foreign Ministerial Meeting held in New York

The Foreign Ministerial meeting among India Foreign Minister, US Secretary of State Tillerson and Japanese FM Kono was held in New York.

Key Points:

- The Ministers emphasized the need for ensuring freedom of navigation, respect for international law and peaceful resolution of disputes.
- They also exchanged views on maritime security, connectivity and proliferation issues.

- The three Ministers directed their senior officials to explore practical steps to enhance cooperation.
- India is among the 120 countries which have supported the reform efforts of the UN Secretary General.
- It brings the importance of basing them on universally recognized international norms, wise financing and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity was highlighted.

IDF, US Army inaugurates first American military base in Israel

The US Army and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) inaugurated a permanent base In Israel.

- This is the first time that a permanent American base has been opened in the Middle Eastern country.
- The base represents the long-standing partnership, the strategic commitment between the armies and the militaries of the United States of America and Israel.

Business

IFC to invest Rs 320 cr in Mahindra Lifespace industrial parks

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has announced to invest USD 50 million (about Rs 320 crore) in realty firm Mahindra Lifespace Developers industrial park projects.

Key Points:

- Mahindra Lifespace and IFC announced a partnership for the development of multiple industrial parks across Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra.
- Development of these parks will attract private investments and provide a boost to several flagship initiatives of the Government of India and create jobs.
- The company is developing two integrated business cities, under Mahindra World City brand, in Chennai and Jaipur.

Appointments & Resigns

Economist Mercedes Araoz sworn in as Peru's new Prime Minister

On 18th September 2017, Vice President Ms.Mercedes Araoz was appointed as new Prime Minister of Peru by President Mr. Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, in Lima.

Cabinet Reshuffled:

- President of Peru, Mr.Pedro Pablo Kuczynski reshuffled the cabinet after the Congress passed a no-confidence vote on the existing Prime Minister Mr. Fernando Zavala on 15th September 2017.
- This was a consequence of a dispute regarding teachers strike and the government's education policies that stressed gender equality in the school curriculum.

Akshay Kumar appointed as Brand Ambassador of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in Uttarakhand

On 18th September 2017, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Mr.Trivendra Singh Rawat announced the appointment of Bollywood actor Mr.Akshay Kumar as the brand ambassador of the Swachh Bharat Mission in Uttarakhand.

Akshay Kumar as Brand Ambassador:

- Mr.Akshay Kumar had produced and acted a film named 'Toilet: Ek Prem Katha' recently. It stressed the need to eradicate open defecation and the need for toilet in every household.
- This movie was made tax-free in Uttar Pradesh. Mr.Akshay Kumar was also appointed as the brand ambassador for the cleanliness campaign in Uttar Pradesh in August 2017.

Raquel Dodge became first woman General Prosecutor of Brazil

On 18th September 2017, Ms.Raquel Dodge became the first woman General Prosecutor of Brazil, in Brasilia.

- Ms.Raquel Dodge has replaced Mr.Rodrigo Janot as the first woman General Prosecutor of Brazil.
- She is held with the responsibility of investigating the Petrobras corruption ring, in which more than 100 politicians have been accused.
- Also, previous General Prosecutor Mr.Rodrigo Janot has lodged three charges of corruption against President Mr.Michel Tremor.

India-born Sriram Krishnan appointed as Senior Director of Twitter

Twitter a Micro-blogging website has appointed Indian-born Sriram Krishnan as Senior Director of Product.

Key Points:

- Krishnan has previously worked with Facebook and Snapchat.
- In Facebook he worked in building the company's ad network, Audience Network while at Snapchat he helped build out the company's ads API.
- At Twitter he would be responsible for core features inside the Twitter app, including timeline, direct messaging and search.

About Twitter

- Twitter is an online news and social networking service where users post and interact with messages, "tweets", restricted to 140 characters.
- Twitter was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams and launched in July 2006.

Awards & Recognition

Pune NGO "Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP)" for women farmers wins UN Equator Prize

On 18th September 2017, Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP), a Pune-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) working for women farmers, won 2017 UN Equator Prize.

- SSP is the only Indian organisation among the 15 winners of this year.
- The award honours SSP's efforts to empower more than 20,000 women farmers from a very poor region named Marathwada, in Maharashtra.
- SSP has promoted climate-resilient agro-ecological farming that solves issues like food security, income security and natural resource management.
- Women farmers were also trained in usage of biofertilisers and biopesticides, locally available seeds, and food crops that are water-efficient.
- In 2016, SSP won UNFCCC's Momentum for Change Lighthouse Activity Award.

About Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP):

- Purpose – Women Empowerment
- Location – Pune

- Chairperson – Mr.Adolph Furtado
- Secretary – Ms.Prema Gopalan

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust wins “Rajbhasha Kirti Award” for 11th consecutive time

On September 18, 2017, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) was awarded the “Rajbhasha Kirti Puraskar” for the 11th consecutive time. It won in the category of ‘B’ region for autonomous bodies and boards, for its excellent implementation of the Official Language.

Deputy Chairman of JNPT, Shri Neeraj Bansal accepted the award from President of India, Shri Ramnath Kovind. The award was presented at a ceremony at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on the occasion of Hindi Divas celebration on September 14, 2017.

S S Rajamouli receives ANR award

SS Rajamouli has received the ANR National Award from Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu on 17th of Sept. 2017.

Key Points:

- He has received the award for his contribution to the Telugu film industry in Hyderabad.

About SS Rajamouli

- S. Rajamouli is an Indian film director and screenwriter, known for his works primarily in Telugu cinema.
- Notable work:
 - Magadheera
 - Eega
 - Baahubali: The Beginning
 - Baahubali 2: The Conclusion
- Awards: Padma Shri (2016)

BCCI nominates MS Dhoni for Padma Bhushan award

The BCCI has nominated former Indian cricket team captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni (36) for Padma Bhushan, country’s third highest civilian award for his contribution to game. He is only cricketer nominated by BCCI for this years Padma Awards.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni:

- Dhoni is one of greatest names in contemporary cricket and has impeccable credentials to his name. He is only Indian captain to record two win at World Cup titles (2011 50-over World Cup and 2007 World T20).
- Dhoni is already a recipient of the prestigious Arjuna, Rajeev Gandhi Khel Ratna and the Padma Shri award.

Cricketers awarded with Padma Bhushan

If Dhoni is conferred with Padma Bhushan, he will be 11th Indian cricketer to get third highest civilian honour. Some of notable international cricketers, who have been recipients of Padma Bhushan are Kapil Dev, Sunil Gavaskar, Rahul Dravid, Chandu Borde, Prof DB Deodhar, Col CK Nayudu, Lala Amarnath and Sachin Tendulkar. The lesser known names also include Raja Bhalindra Singh of Patiala, and Vijaya Anand, Maharaja of Vizianagram.

Science & Technology

HP unveils secure, enhanced POS system 'ElitePOS'

On 19th September 2017, HP Inc India launched its new, all-in-one point-of-sale (POS) system HP ElitePOS at the "India Retail Forum 2017" event, in Mumbai.

Elite POS:

- It will be available with all HP authorised sellers from October 2017.
- It runs on Windows 10 OS (Operation System). It has fast DDR4 memory and 7th-Gen Intel Core processors with 'vPro' technology.
- It has hardware and integrated software security features like 'HP Sure Start Gen3', 'HP BIOSphere Gen3', fingerprint login and a bolt-to-counter configuration.
- It has a modular design that enables interactive signage, employee attendance and self-service applications like customer check-in apart from the normal payment services.
- It will help merchants improve their customer service by analysing customer buying behaviour.

About HP Inc:

- Headquarters – California, US
- Chairman – Chip Bergh
- President & CEO – Dion Weisler

Scientists for first time observe Optical polarisation phenomenon of fast spinning star

Scientists for first time have observed Optical polarisation phenomenon (polarised light emitted by rapidly rotating stars) after it was predicted by Indian astrophysicist and Nobel laureate Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar 70 years ago.

Optical polarisation phenomenon is a measure of the orientation of the oscillations of a light beam to its direction of travel.

Key Facts

- The phenomenon was observed using High Precision Polarimetric Instrument (HIPPI), world's most sensitive astronomical polarimeter to detect polarised light from Regulus, one of brightest stars in night sky about 79 light years away.
- The equipment provided unprecedented insights into star, which is in constellation Leo. It allowed scientists to determine its rate of spinning and orientation in space of star's spin axis. It was observed that Regulus is rotating so quickly with a spin rate of 96.5% of angular velocity (approximately 320 kilometres per second) for break-up.

Background

- Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar in 1946 had first predicted that some stars could be emitting polarised light from their edges.
- Based on his idea, Astronomers J Patrick Harrington and George W Collins II predicted in 1968 predicted that polarised light will be emitted by rapidly rotating star because its shape gets distorted into a squished oblate shape as it spins too fast.

Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar

He was Indian American astrophysicist who was awarded the 1983 Nobel Prize for Physics with William A. Fowler for his theoretical studies of physical processes of importance to structure and evolution of stars. His mathematical treatment of stellar evolution had yielded many of best current theoretical models of later evolutionary stages of massive stars and black holes. The Chandrasekhar limit (maximum mass of a stable white dwarf star) has been named after him.

Sports

Ana Carrasco of Spain becomes 1st female biker to win a World Championship race

On 17th September 2017, Ana Carrasco of Spain became the first female to win an individual World Championship motorbike race, in Portugal.

- Ana Carrasco won the 1st place in the Supersport 300 World Championship's round 10 in Portugal.
- She has become the first female to win an Individual Championship motorbike race.
- She rode a Kawasaki Ninja 300 in the race.
- She finished 0.053 seconds ahead of Alfonso Coppola from Italy, who finished in the second position.
- Ana Carrasco made her debut in the world motorbike championship in 2013.

British cyclist Mark Beaumont sets world record by cycling around the world in 79 days

On 18th September 2017, British cyclist Mark Beaumont set a new world record by cycling around the world in 79 days, in Paris.

Circumnavigated the world in 79 days:

- Mark Beaumont travelled around the world in 79 days. He beat the previous record of 123 days.
- He has cycled 18,000 miles (29,000 km) in total with an average of 240 miles per day.
- He has created 2 Guinness World Records – round-the-world record & the farthest distance cycled in a single month.
- He took the trip to raise money for Orkidstudio, an innovative architecture firm.

Obituary

Ex-Karnataka minister Qamarul Islam passes away

Veteran Congress lawmaker and former Karnataka Minister Qamarul Islam had passed away on 18th of Sept. 2017. He was 69.

Key Points:

- He was a six-term legislator and a one-term Lok Sabha member from Kalaburgi in the state's northern region.
- He was appointed in-charge of the party's affairs in Kerala in July.
- He joined the Congress in 1980. He was also a minister in the S.M. Krishna government from 1999 to 2004.