

National Current Affairs

Cabinet approves Enhancement of age of superannuation of doctors

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the enhancement of age of superannuation of doctors other than Central Health Service (CHS) doctors to 65 years.

- The decision would help in better patient care, proper academic activities in Medical colleges as also in effective implementation of National Health Programmes for delivery of health care services.
- Around 1445 doctors of various Ministries/Departments of the Central Government would be benefitted.
- This would also help in improving doctor-patient ratio in 11 Major Port Hospitals and will address the shortage of doctors.
- The decision will not have much financial implications as large number of posts are lying vacant and the present incumbents would continue to work in their existing capacity against sanctioned posts.

Cabinet approves revision of policy for providing Defence land to Communication Operators

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved a proposal for revision of policy of Ministry of Defence for providing Defence land to Communication Operators for construction of Shared Communication Towers and allied Infrastructure, based on experience in implementing the policy and guidelines issued by Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for issue of clearance for installation of Mobile Towers.

- The revised policy will cover allotment of Defence land on lease and grant of permission in Defence areas and Cantonments to Access Service Licensees and Companies registered with DoT as IP-I for setting up shared communication towers and allied infrastructure.
- This will improve the quality of communication services in the Cantonments and Military Stations.

Cabinet approves agreement on Cooperation between India and Ethiopia

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval to sign the Agreement between India and Ethiopia on “Cooperation in the field of Information, Communication and Media”.

- It aims to harness the growing power of Information, Communication and Media for information dissemination and enhancing outreach between the two countries for inclusive development.
- It will also enhance people to people contact through exchange programmes. It would also provide an opportunity for both the nations to share best practices and new innovations in the field of Information, Communication & Media.
- The Agreement will encourage cooperation between mass media tools such as radio, print media, TV, social media etc. to provide more opportunities to the people of both the nations and create public accountability.
- It will facilitate exchange of delegations, personnel between the two nations, providing them opportunities to learn from each other's best practices, bringing in equity and inclusiveness.

Indian Railways to launch 100 New Suburban Rail Services in Mumbai area

Indian Railways is going to introduce 100 additional local train services on its Mumbai suburban network of Western Railway and Central Railway zones.

- Out of these 100 services, 32 new services will be introduced on Western Railway while 68 services will be introduced on Central Railway, giving major boost to suburban rail services in Mumbai area.
- With these additional services, total suburban services in Mumbai will increase from existing 2983 services to 3083 suburban services.
- It will benefit around 77 lakh commuters travelling daily over Mumbai suburban network by providing faster commute and reducing congestion.

Directorate General of Quality Assurance celebrates its Diamond Jubilee

The Diamond Jubilee of Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA) was observed on 28 September 2017 as it completed 60 years of its existence.

- To commemorate the occasion, Minister of State (MoS) for Defence, Dr Subhash Bhamare released the 'First Day Cover' of DGQA. He also launched portal for e-registration of vendors.
- Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA) functions under Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence.
- DGQA's mandate is to provide Quality Assurance (QA) cover for entire range of Arms, Ammunitions, Equipments and Stores supplied to Armed Forces. It is also

responsible for import substitution and associates with Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in the development projects.

- It also ensures documentation, codification and standardisation action for minimizing variety of components/ equipments. It also renders services such as promotion of small scale industries, post procurement services, defect investigations and technical consultancy to users, production agencies and Defence Ministry.

CARA launches monthly Jan Sampark Program to facilitate adoption

The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) launched monthly Jan Sampark program to enable public to interact with its officials to obtain information related to child adoption.

- The first of its kind programme under it was held recently in New Delhi. Nearly 150 Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs), adoptive parents and representatives of agencies participated in session.
- The Jan Sampark program will now be held regularly every month apart from the quarterly Facebook live chat by CEO CARA. During the event, details pertaining to Immediate Placement and Special Needs Adoption Module of Child Adoption Resource Information & Guidance System (CARINGS) will be shared with all the stakeholders. The will serve as platform for counselling and motivating PAPs to go for adopting older children.
- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development established under Juvenile Justice Act, 2015. It is a nodal body for adoption of Indian children.

Cabinet approves installation of telecom towers in cantonments, military areas

The Union Cabinet has approved proposal for revision of policy of Ministry of Defence for providing Defence land to Communication Operators for construction of Shared Communication Towers and allied Infrastructure.

- Decision in this regard was taken based on experience in implementing policy and guidelines issued by Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for issue of clearance for installation of Mobile Towers.
- The revised policy will cover allotment of Defence land on lease and grant of permission in Defence areas and Cantonments to Access Service Licensees and Companies registered with DoT as IP-I (Infrastructure Providers – Category-I) for setting up shared communication towers and allied infrastructure.
- This move will help to improve the quality of communication services in the Cantonments and Military Stations and help address mobile call drop issues in these localities.

Maha signs pact with South Korea for infra projects

The Maharashtra government signed an MoU with South Korea for increased co-operation in infrastructure projects like development of smart cities, roads, airports and metros. The MoU is to help with implementation strategy, legal systems, policies, technologies and information in infrastructure development.

Israel to boost 'White Revolution' in Haryana

On 25th September 2017, Mr.Uri Ariel, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Israel, announced that Israel will provide increased support to Haryana's White Revolution, in Israel.

- Haryana's Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Mr.Om Prakash Dhankar, and Israel's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Mr.Uri Ariel agreed on further co-operation in the fields of horticulture, dairy and exchange of research among students and specialists in universities of agriculture, horticulture and animal sciences.
- Israel is already working on five centres of excellence in Haryana.
- Israel is the world's leading milk producer. The average milk production in Israel is 32 kg per day.
- Haryana would adopt techniques and experience of Israel to increase average milk production.

Vice President inaugurates 'Crusade for Toilets' in Karnataka

Vice President, Mr.M.Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the the "Swachhta Hi Seva" and "Shouchalayakkagi Samara" (A Crusade For Toilets) Programme in Karnataka.

- On the occasion, the Vice President also honoured 13 Village Panchayat Presidents and the Naragund Taluka Panchayat President, the achievers of "Shouchalayakkagi Samara". He also declared the rural areas of Naragund Taluk as an ODF block.
- The Vice President also inaugurated a "Shudda Kudiyuva Neerina Ghataka" (Purified Drinking Water Plant), visited the Janata Colony in the village, and addressed a "Shouchalayakkagi Samara" public gathering at the local high school.

World's tallest bamboo 'Maa Durga' idol

The artisans of the Guwahati-based Bishnupur Durga Puja Committee constructed a 100 feet bamboo idol of Goddess Durga, world's tallest bamboo idol, in Guwahati, Assam.

- It aims to break the Guinness World Records for the tallest bamboo sculpture.
- 5,000 bamboo poles have been used to make the idol.
- iv. The idol has been created by Art Director Mr.Nuruddin Ahmed and his team of 40 members.
- No metal or plastic bags have been used; the whole structure is made of Bamboo.

Steering committee formed to monitor drug de-addiction prog

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh today constituted a steering committee to monitor and coordinate the state's drug de-addiction and rehabilitation programme.

- The committee has been asked to meet frequently to streamline and stringently implement the programme in a time- bound manner, an official spokesperson said.
- The decision to set up the committee, headed by the state chief secretary, was taken by the chief minister at a meeting of the State Board of Drug De-addiction and Rehabilitation.
- Panchayats and NGOs, along with social, voluntary and religious organisations must be involved to take the programme forward

Govt sets up special fund for developing dairy sector

The government has set up the Dairy Processing and Infrastructure Development Fund (DPIDF) worth Rs 10,881 crore to boost the dairy sector.

- 95 lakh farmers from about 50,000 villages would be benefited.
- The government is trying to ensure that along with a special focus on dairy, animal husbandry and fishery, the agriculture Teducation, research, and expansion system also get strengthened.
- The NDDDB and the National Cooperative Development Cooperation (NCDC) will utilise DPIDF to provide the loan for building an efficient milk procurement system and other infrastructure.
- National Dairy Project (NDP) aims to increase the productivity of milch animals, which will lead to increase in milk production for meeting the growing demand.
- The government also aims to open a milk dairy in each district of the state.

International Affairs

WADA suspends French anti-doping lab

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has announced that it had provisionally suspended the WADA accreditation of the laboratory of the National Anti-Doping Organisation of France (AFLD).

- The suspension was linked to a contamination of a sampling robot after tests carried out on samples from bodybuilders that showed levels of testosterone up to 200 times the normal positive test.
- The suspension prohibits the Paris Laboratory from carrying out any anti-doping activities, including all analyses of urine and blood samples
- The Paris laboratory is the sole one in France and treated around 13,500 samples in 2016.

Banking & Finance

IDBI Bank launches 'Project Nishchay' to improve financial performance

IDBI Bank has launched 'Project Nishchay' in partnership with The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to accelerate its turnaround programme and improve financial performance.

- The project will be led by senior management at IDBI Bank along with BCG. BCG will assist IDBI to identify areas for cost containment and revenue maximization leading to sustainable growth and profitability of the Bank. With the support BCG, IDBI hopes to identify and address existing gaps, capitalize on core strengths and improve existing products and processes.
- Coordinating across multitude of initiatives, the Bank will focus on four key areas - revenue enhancement, cost control and reduction, asset productivity and overall program management in consultation with BCG.

Citibank and Standard Chartered Bank become shareholders of SWIFT India

SWIFT India, a part of the global network that enables trillions of dollars transfers each day, today announced that Citibank and Standard Chartered Bank have joined the Indian services as shareholders.

- Standard Chartered and Citibank become the first foreign lenders to invest in the platform.

- Both Standard Chartered Bank as well as Citi linked the investment to their respective efforts to promote digitization. This is its second round of capital raising.
- It will help to enable efficiencies in managing corporate-to-bank digital flows in India on a secure and robust platform.
- It will help clients to automate and digitise flows and gain efficiency through standardisation and process automation.
- Swift India was formed in 2012 as a joint venture between the global cooperative Swift SCRL and nine leading domestic banks.

ADB to increase Annual Lending to India to \$4 billion

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has decided to increase its annual lending to India to maximum of \$4 billion between 2018 and 2022 to help fasten inclusive economic transformation towards upper middle income status.

- The new lending programme also includes private sector operations. It is much higher than average \$2.65 billion a year in loans extended during 2012 and 2016.
- The ADB's programme in India will focus on three main pillars of activity during the 5-year period. These three pillars are
 - a) Boost economic competitiveness to create more and well-paid jobs,
 - b) Improve access to infrastructure and services, and
 - c) Address climate change and improving climate resilience.

Business

Maharashtra, Gujarat top in manufacturing: Assocham

According to a recent study conducted by the apex industry body Assocham, Maharashtra and Gujarat are the top States in manufacturing emergence in India.

- While Maharashtra has topped with the highest growth in entrepreneurs' memorandum (EM) part-II filed by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), Gujarat has performed very well on parameters such as change in capacity utilisation, operational ratio, value addition and input cost.
- Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) conducted a study titled 'Manufacturing excellence and emergence in India: The State-level analysis.'

- ASSOCHAM considered the following factors to prepare the ranking: number of factories, output value, working capital, net fixed capital formation, fixed capital, finished goods, capital invested and total inputs.
- Maharashtra has topped the ranking, with the highest growth in entrepreneurs.
- Gujarat has obtained the second position, with good performance on change in capacity utilisation, operational ratio, value addition and input cost.

Awards & Recognition

Classical singer Manik Bhide chosen for Bhimsen Joshi award

On 26th September 2017, famous vocalist Manik Bhide was chosen for the prestigious Bharatratna Pandit Bhimsen Joshi award for the year 2017-18, for her contribution to the field of music.

- The Bhimen Joshi Award is given by the Maharashtra government.
- It is the highest award in the category of performing arts. It consists of Rs.5 lakh cash prize.
- The selection committee consisted of Culture Minister Vinod Tawde, Pandit Keshav Ginde, Nathrao Neralkar and Kamlabai Bhonde.

Indian lawyer Colin Gonsalves wins prestigious Swedish rights award

Colin Gonsalves, a senior Indian advocate was selected for a prestigious rights award in Sweden for his innovative use of public interest litigation in securing fundamental human rights for India's most marginalised and vulnerable citizens.

- He will share the award and the prize money worth over USD 300,000 (SEK 3 million) with two other laureates — Khadija Ismayilova from Azerbaijan and Robert Bilott from the US.
- Gonsalves has been honoured by the jury "for his tireless and innovative use of public interest litigation over three decades to secure fundamental human rights for India's most marginalised and vulnerable citizens.
- The Right Livelihood Award is widely known as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize'.
- The three laureates were chosen from 102 nominations from 51 countries.

CISF wins 'best airport security' award for Mumbai airport

The security cover provided by the CISF at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport has bagged the best airport security award from the World Quality Congress (WQC).

- The awards, based on the independent evaluation by the WQC Jury, are considered as recognition of excellence demonstrated by agencies in the commerce and industry space of the country/globe.
- The Mumbai airport, which is the second busiest and hypersensitive aerodromes in the country after Delhi's Indira Gandhi International airport, handled 45.2 million passengers in the last fiscal.
- Recently, CISF was adjudged as the best security provider at the Delhi airport.
- In 2016, a survey was conducted by the Airport Service Quality (ASQ), in which security of Delhi Airport was judged best than the other international airports such as Dallas, Heathrow, Paris and Dubai.
- Security functions of the CISF at the Mumbai airport include passenger frisking, hand baggage screening, CCTV surveillance, Quick Reaction Team (QRT), anti-hijacking response team, VIP movement handling, among others.

Priyanka ranks 8th on World's Highest-Paid TV Actresses list

According to the world's highest-paid TV actresses 2017 list, Priyanka Chopra is among the world's 10 highest paid television actresses.

- It will be Priyanka's second year on the list and this time too she is the 8th highest paid TV actress.
- Colombian actress Sofia Vergara tops the list again. She stars in the hit sitcom Modern Family.
- This is the 6th year in a row that Sofia is the highest paid actress in the list.

Apple Named World's Most Valuable Brand for fifth consecutive year

Apple has once again topped the list of 100 Most Valuable Brands released every year by Interbrand for the fifth consecutive year.

- Google and Microsoft were the second and third respectively in the list. Amazon, Samsung, and Facebook were ranked fifth, sixth, and eighth respectively. In the top 10 list, IBM was the tenth brand.
- Apple has been valued at \$184 billion.
- But Apple was not included in the top five Growing Brands category, with Facebook (48 percent growth), Amazon (29 percent), Adobe (19 percent), Adidas (17 percent), and Starbucks (16 percent) leading that list.

Appointments & Resigns

Joao Lourenco sworn in as Angola's first new president in 38 years

Joao Lourenco has been sworn in as president of Angola, becoming the first new leader in the oil-rich southern African nation in almost four decades.

- The ruling MPLA won 61% of the vote in last month's election.
- Lourenco was recently the country's defense minister before becoming the ruling party's flag-bearer in the August 23 parliamentary election to replace long-term President Jose Eduardo dos Santos.

David Harquail appointed Chairman of World Gold Council

The World Gold Council has appointed President and Chief Executive of Franco-Nevada Corporation David Harquail as its new Chairman. Harquail has succeeded Randall Oliphant, who served as the Chairman for the past four years.

Acquisitions & Mergers

Flipkart acquires F1 Info Solutions

Flipkart has acquired F1 Info Solutions, a mobile and IT repair services \company with a pan-India presence of owned and franchised centres.

- It will expand Flipkart's offerings to the entire lifecycle of mobiles, IT products and consumer electronics, from sales to after sales and repair services.
- Flipkart customers can now walk into an F1 Info Solutions store to get their devices repaired.
- Shammi Moza, F1 Info Solutions co-founder and CEO, will be joining Flipkart as a Senior Director as part of the deal, and will continue to hold responsibility of the business.

Science & Technology

Scientists detect Gravitational waves for fourth time

Scientists have successfully detected gravitational waves for fourth time coming from merger of two massive black holes.

- It was for first time, these waves were simultaneously detected by US-based Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) and Italy-based Virgo detectors.
- The first two detection were made in September and December 2015 in quick succession and for third time it was detected in January 2017.
- The recently detected gravitational waves were emitted during final moments of merger of two black holes located about 1.8 billion light-years away with masses about 31 and 25 times mass of Sun.
- The newly produced spinning black hole has about 53 times mass of our sun i.e. about 3 solar masses were converted into gravitational-wave energy during merger.
- Gravitational waves are ripples curvature of spacetime which propagate as waves, travelling outward from source at the speed of light.
- Gravitational waves were first predicted in 1916 by Albert Einstein on the basis of his Theory of General Relativity.
- Russel Hulse and Joseph Taylor had discovered indirect evidence for existence of gravitational waves emitted from decaying orbital period of objects called binary pulsars in 1974,. Both of them for their discovery were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1993

Aquatic Rhabdops: New species of non-venomous aquatic snake discovered in Western Ghats

A new species of non-venomous aquatic snake named Aquatic Rhabdops, which was misidentified since 1863, was identified and described as new species from northern Western Ghats in Maharashtra, Goa and North Karnataka.

- Earlier the new species, Rhabdops aquaticus, was considered as variant of Olive Forest Snake, first described in 1863. But new study has confirmed that Aquatic Rhabdops has different colours and patterns and also vary in other features of size, shape and structure, and also genetic make-up.
- Aquatic Rhabdops snakes belong to genus Rhabdops which are endemic to India. It is named after its aquatic nature since adults of these species are mostly associated with

freshwater forest streams and juveniles are seen in water-logged areas, mostly on rocky plateaus.

- They are three-foot-long nocturnal snake and mostly prey underwater like other water snakes. Adult Aquatic Rhabdops have off-white bellies and black spots on their olive brown skin, juveniles are olive green, with yellow undersides. This colour difference in life stages may be due to different local habitats.
- Aquatic Rhabdops is found only in the laterite plateaus of the northern Western Ghats in Goa, southern Maharashtra and northern Karnataka which are mostly areas facing high human pressure.

Sports

India to host South Asian boxing Championship in Guwahati

According to the Boxing Federation of India (BFI), India will be hosting the South Asian boxing Championship for the first time in Guwahati from December 6 to 10.

- It is the first time India will host the South Asian Championship.
- Sub junior men and women will be seen proving their mettle from December 12th-20th in Pune, while elite women will be seen packing a punch from December 18th-24th in Trivandrum, youth men will vie for glory in the first week of January in Punjab..
- G Manoharan will be responsible for the Youth Men's team; Bhaskar Bhatt will be in charge of the Youth (Women) squad and MS Dhaka will be in charge of junior men.
- RK Sacheti has been elected as the new Executive Director of the federation.

Books & Authors

Union Finance Minister releases book on Financial Management

The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Shri Arun Jaitley along with the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu released the book titled "A to Z of Financial Management in Autonomous Institutions", authored by Dr. Rajat Bhargava and Shri Deenanath Pathak. The book covers almost all aspects of financial management in

Autonomous Institutions and offers an insightful perspective on the challenges of managing public money.

Important Days

NDMA's 13th Formation Day observed

The 13th Formation Day of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) was celebrated across the country. The theme of this year's Formation Day was School Safety.

- On this occasion, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh released National Disaster Management Guidelines on School Safety Policy with an aim to strengthen the risk resilience of schools across the country. Moreover, National Disaster Management Guidelines on Boat Safety and Cultural Heritage Sites & Precincts, and a study report on Chennai Floods of 2015 were also released.
- National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is apex statutory body for disaster management in India under aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- Mandate: Its primary purpose is to coordinate response to natural or man-made disasters and for capacity-building in disaster resiliency and crisis response. It is also apex body to lay down policies, plans and guidelines for Disaster Management to ensure timely and effective response to disasters..

Obituary

Veteran Bengali actor Dwijen Bandyopadhyay passed away

On 27th September 2017, Veteran Bengali actor Dwijen Bandyopadhyay passed away, at his residence, in Kolkata. He had acted in films like Chander Bari, Jekhane Bhooter Bhoy, Phoring, Autograph etc.