

National Current Affairs

Odisha govt approves Bijepur lift irrigation project

Odisha government gave its nod to Bijepur lift irrigation project and construction of sewerage system for Bhubaneswar.

- The project is named after renowned poet Gangadhar Meher.
- The lift irrigation project in Baragarh district will irrigate 32,000 hectares – 19,000 at Bijepur, 8,000 at Sohela and 5,000 at Barpali. It will improve agricultural output in the area
- The cabinet also gave its approval to a sewerage project for Bhubaneswar's sewerage district-II (mostly comprising Old Town areas).

Hyderabad to host CFSI's Intl Children's Film Fest next month

The 20th International Children's Film Festival (ICFFI), also called 'The Golden Elephant', will be held in Hyderabad between November 8 and 14. It is being organised by Children's Film Society, India (CFSI), will be hosted by the Telangana government jointly with CFSI and the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

- The theme for this year's festival is 'New India'.
- A series of workshops and open forums on various aspects related to filmmaking and storytelling would be organised in the festival. These would be followed by Q&A session, which would help children to grasp various aspects of film-making and related fields.
- The 20th Golden Elephant ICFFI is a biennial festival that would screen features, shorts, live action and animation films.

Haryana govt plans 'PGs for cattle' to boost milk production

Haryana government has decided to set up 'PGs for cattle' for people living in high-rises, or in urban areas, who want to rear their own cattle and produce "quality milk" for their consumption.

- 50 to 100 acres of land will be earmarked for dairy business, like we have industrial areas near the cities.
- In these earmarked areas, there will be two types of dairies. One will be traditional, and in the second case, PGs for cattle', will be set up.

- People who live in high rise buildings in a big city where rearing cattle is not possible, but still want to consume milk of their own cow or buffalo, can rear their own cattle and get quality milk by taking up plots reserved for 'PGs for cattle' in the earmarked dairy areas.
- Haryana Government is taking several measure to boost dairy industry in the state with an objective to make Haryana as the best state in milk production.

CISF to analyse social media trends & data in monitoring security

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) will analyse Social media trends and data for first time in monitoring security.

- This project is being done on experimental basis and based on the experiences this smart centre will be further strengthened.
- The data will be used to monitor the country's most vital assets such as airports, aerospace and nuclear installations.
- Special team of CISF men and women has been trained to track social media trends, news, reports and indicators across various platforms, collate them and dish them out as vital pieces of actionable intelligence to its various airports and other vital units.

ONGC plans to raise oil output by 4 MT by 2020

State-run Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has drawn a blueprint to raise crude oil production by 4 metric tonne (MT) and almost double natural gas output by 2020.

- It is in line with Government's call to cut country's oil imports by 10% from 77% in 2013-14. by 2022.
- Under this roadmap, ONGC, nation's biggest oil and gas producer will raise its crude oil production from 22.6 MT in 2017-18 to 26.42 MT in 2021-22.
- India has spent almost \$1 trillion on crude imports from financial year 2005-06 to 2015-16.

International Affairs

4th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus to be held in Philippines

The fourth edition of ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM)-Plus will be held in Philippines.

- India will be represented by Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. It is her first foreign visit as Defence Minister.
- The ADMM Plus meeting is expected to discuss ways to enhance defence and security co-operation among the member nations to effectively counter various transnational security challenges facing the region.
- It is also likely to discuss enhancing maritime security cooperation among the member countries.
- It will also deliberate extensively on the situation in Afghanistan and Syria besides China's growing military presence in the disputed South China Sea.
- The ADMM-Plus is platform for ASEAN and its eight dialogue partners to strengthen security and defence co-operation for peace, stability, and development in the region.

2nd World Congress on Marxism to be held in Beijing

The 2nd World Congress on Marxism is scheduled to be held in Peking University in Beijing next May.

- The congress, to be held from May 5 to May 6, is expected to attract more than 300 Marxism researchers to discuss Marxism in the 21st century and its developments in China.
- The congress coincides with the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx's birth and 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening-up, said Gu Hailiang, head of the academic board of the organising committee.
- It will be a significant event for the world Marxism research and scientific socialism.
- The conference, with the theme of "Marxism and the current world and China", will have 17 subforums covering topics like Chinese solution and modernization approach by the developing countries

India's new chancery complex opened in Dhaka

India's new chancery complex opened at Baridhara diplomatic enclave in Dhaka, capital city of Bangladesh.

- It was inaugurated by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on the last day of her Bangladesh visit.
- She also inaugurated 15 development projects of Bangladesh being funded by India.
- These projects cover priority infrastructure in health, education, water and social welfare with an outlay of 71.64 crore takas and will be completed within a period of one month.

Banking & Finance

HRD Ministry pushes for cash-free campuses

The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) is aiming to make financial transactions completely digital in all higher education institutions.

- Under this initiative, all public and private institutions including Central and State universities will be fully digitised.
- The HRD Ministry is aiming to fully digitise all campus processes including admissions, assessments, result declaration. Moreover, all canteens and business establishments on campus are also encouraged to resort to digital modes using e-wallets by linking the bank accounts with Aadhaar.
- The higher education regulators like All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and University Grants Commission (UGC) have been taken on board to help facilitate this transition.
- The HRD Ministry has asked universities to appoint nodal officer for this purpose and send a monthly report to the UGC.
- The HRD Ministry had launched Vittiya Saksharta Abhiyan (VISAKA), a digital financial literacy campaign aimed to actively engage youth and students of Higher Education Institutions to encourage and motivate all payers and payees to use a digitally enabled cashless economic system for transfer of funds.

PMLA: Banks to now match original IDs with photocopies

As per the latest notification issued by Department of Revenue under the Finance Ministry, banks and financial institutions will have to mandatorily check the original identification documents of individuals dealing in cash above the prescribed threshold.

- As per the notification, in case the identification document does not contain updated address, a utility bill like electricity, telephone, post-paid mobile phone, piped gas or water bill which is not more than two months old can be considered as a proof of address.
- This notification by Department of Revenue is an amendment to the Prevention of Money-laundering (Maintenance of Records) Rules.
- Prevention of Money-laundering Act (PMLA) is Indian Government's framework to curb money laundering and generation of black money.
- Reporting entities like banks, financial institutions and intermediaries have to comply with PMLA guidelines by verifying identity of their clients, maintain records of their

transaction and furnish information to Financial Intelligence Unit of India (FIU-IND) in specified format.

- For various financial transactions such as cross border wire transfer, purchase/sale of immovable property and cash dealing, a specific threshold amount has been prescribed, above which such transaction have to be mandatorily reported.

Awards & Recognition

Maruti becomes top exporter of passenger cars from India

Maruti Suzuki India has become the largest passenger cars exporter from India in the first half of the ongoing fiscal, dethroning Hyundai Motor India Ltd which has now been pushed to the fourth spot behind Volkswagen and General Motors.

- According to the latest data by Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), in the April-September period this fiscal, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) exported 57,300 units of passenger cars as against 54,008 units in the year-ago period, up 6 per cent.
- The long-running number one exporter, Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) on the other hand shipped 44,585 units as against 63,014 units in the year-ago period, a decline of 29.25 per cent.
- In terms of export of passenger cars from India, HMIL now ranks at 4th position behind Volkswagen and General Motors.
- During April –September 2017 period, Volkswagen exported 50410 units, whereas General Motors India exported 45222 units.

11-Year-Old Gitanjali Rao Named America's Top Young Scientist

11 years old Gitanjali Rao from Lone Tree, Colorado, is the winner of this year's Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge for her sensor that can detect lead levels in water better than traditional methods.

- Gitanjali after winning will take home US\$25,000 for her innovative idea, which she said that she developed approximately five months ago in response to learning about the ongoing water crisis in Flint, Michigan.
- "The idea just came to me when I saw my parents testing for lead in our water," she told.
- Lead-contaminated water is a problem for more than 5,300 water systems in the US, according to 2016 data.
- If people want to test their water, they generally rely on one of the two methods.

- They can either use lead-testing strips, which are fast but not entirely accurate or they can send the water to the EPA for analysis, which is time-consuming and requires expensive equipment, she explained. She wanted to devise a smarter, more effective solution and that's how she worked on this new idea.

Appointments & Resigns

Government appoints ex-IB Chief as its representative on Kashmir dialogue

The Union Home Ministry has appointed former director of Intelligence Bureau (IB) Dineshwar Sharma as central government's representative to initiate dialogue with all stakeholders in insurgency-hit Jammu and Kashmir.

- The initiative has been taken as per Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day address Dineshwar Sharma is 1979-batch (retired) officer of the Indian Police Service (IPS).
- He had served as the IB director between December, 2014 and 2016.

Jayant Rikhye to take over as HSBC India CEO

London based Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp (HSBC) has appointed Jayant Rikhye as India CEO effective from December 1, subject to regulatory approvals.

- He will succeed Stuart Milne, who held the CEO position for five years.
- Indian born Rikhye is currently group general manager, head of strategy and planning and regional head for the bank in 11 markets in Asia Pacific, based out of Hong Kong.
- Rikhye has worked across various divisions in HSBC, including corporate banking in Taiwan, institutional fund services in Hong Kong and head of securities services for the Middle East and North Africa, based in the United Arab Emirates.

Government appoints ex-IB chief Dineshwar Sharma as interlocutor

Dineshwar Sharma, the Former director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), has taken charge as the interlocutor, for peace talks with Assam's insurgent groups, including the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA).

- Dineshwar Sharma was already posted in Kashmir in early 1992, when militancy there was at its peak.

- Thereafter, he handled Kashmir issue from IB headquarters in Delhi. He was also director of IB between December 2014 to 2016.
- Home Minister Mr. Rajnath Singh addressed to the media that the rank of the former IB Director, Dineshwar Sharma, will be equivalent to that of a Cabinet Secretary.

Bureaucratic reshuffle: Rakesh Asthana appointed as CBI Special Director

- On 22nd October 2017, the Government promoted senior IPS officer Rakesh Asthana as Special Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Other appointments were also made as a part of bureaucratic reshuffle.
- The government has promoted senior IPS officer Rakesh Asthana as Special Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Earlier he was Additional Director in CBI.
- It has promoted Gurbachan Singh as Special Director of Intelligence Bureau (IB). Earlier he was Additional Director in IB.
- Deepak Kumar Mishra and Sudeep Lakhtakia have been promoted as Special DG in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). Earlier they were earlier Additional DG in CRPF.
- Rajesh Ranjan and A.P. Maheshwari have been promoted as Special DG in the Border Security Force (BSF). Earlier they were Additional DG in the Border Security Force (BSF).

Ngangom Sarat Singh appointed as member of the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) for Manipur and Mizoram

On 23rd October 2017, Ngangom Sarat Singh was appointed as member of the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) for Manipur and Mizoram.

- Ngangom Sarat Singh took oath as member of the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) for Manipur and Mizoram in the presence of Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, RK Singh.
- The JERC is a two member Commission. Each member represents the respective participating State. Ngangom Sarat Singh has been appointed as the member from the Manipur side for a period of 5 years, or till he attains the age of 65 years, whichever is the earliest.
- Ngangom Sarat Singh holds B.Sc. degree in Electrical Engineering. He has retired from the post of Superintending Engineer (Electrical) in the Electricity Department of Government of Manipur.

Shinzo Abe's coalition wins supermajority in Japan election

In the snap election held in Japan, ruling coalition headed by incumbent Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has won two-thirds “super majority” in the 465-member lower house.

- This electoral victory will boost Abe’s chances of winning another three- year term next September.
- The ruling coalition comprising Shinzo Abe’s Liberal Democratic Party and its junior partner Komeito now have two-third majority in upper house as well as the lower house of Japanese parliament.
- In September 2017, lot of confusion was prevailing in opposition camp. Abe spotted this opportunity to solidify his position and dissolved the house forcing a snap election.
- Shinzo Abe will now focus on pursuing the Japanese lawmakers to revise Japan’s pacifist constitution.

Science & Technology

World War II shipwreck of SS Thistlegorm recreated with virtual reality

Scientists have developed a new online virtual reality experience that lets users explore a Second World War shipwreck of SS Thistlegorm.

- Researchers from University of Nottingham in the UK, have combined a 3D model of the sunken ship SS Thistlegorm, based on thousands of photographs, with 360-degree underwater video of divers exploring key sections of the wreck.
- Archaeologists collected thousands of photographs and videos from the site. The team processed and combined images of the shipwreck with photogrammetric software.
- The result was the highly detailed 3D model of the ship wreck, based on 24,307 photographic images, which provides a virtual reality experience to explore the shipwreck of SS Thistlegorm.

NASA extends Dawn mission at dwarf planet Ceres

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has announced a second mission extension for Dawn spacecraft which is currently in an orbit around dwarf planet Ceres. Dwarf planet Ceres is the largest object in the asteroid belt (located between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter).

- Dawn arrived in orbit around Ceres in 2015 and thereafter provided important information to scientists that helped in understanding its properties.

- Primary mission of Dawn ended in June 2016, however till date it remained in orbit around the dwarf planet and continued to monitor and study its surface.
- With this latest mission extension, Dawn's flight team will try to take it in a new orbit around Ceres, which could take it to less than 120 miles above its surface.
- During earlier mission tenures, lowest orbit attained by Dawn was within 240 miles above the surface of Ceres.
- Gamma ray and neutron spectrometers on Dawn will be used to study the upper layer of Ceres' crust to see how much ice it contains.

Sports

2017 Denmark Open Super Series Premier – Kidambi Srikanth wins Denmark Open to Clinch Third Super Series Title of 2017

Kidambi Srikanth of India defeated Lee Hyun-il of South Korea by 21-10, 21-5 in the Men's singles finals. Kidambi Srikanth won the Men's singles title. This is his third Super Series title in 2017.

- Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand defeated Akane Yamaguchi of Japan by 14-21, 21-15, 21-19 in women's singles finals. Ratchanok Intanon won the women's singles title.
- Liu Cheng and Zhang Nan pair of China defeated Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo pair of Indonesia by 21-16, 22-24, 21-19 in the men's doubles finals. Liu Cheng and Zhang Nan won the Men's doubles title.

Gaganjeet Bhullar wins Macao Open golf

On October 22, 2017, Indian Golfer Gaganjeet Bhullar won Macao Open 2017 at the Macau Golf and Country Club in Macau.

- This was eighth Asian Tour title of Gaganjeet's career and his first title this year.
- In the finals, Gaganjeet was leading with four shots which reduced to one in round three. However he drained five birdies on the front nine and won by three shots.
- He had last won Macao Open in 2012.
- Other Indian Golfers Ajeetesh Sandhu and Filipino Angelo Que shared second place. Taiwan's Hung Chien-Yao managed to finish fourth.
- First edition of Macao Open was held in 1998.