

National Current Affairs

ICIJ releases Paradise papers

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) has released 'The Paradise Papers', a global investigation that reveals the offshore activities of some of the world's most powerful people and companies.

- Among 180 countries represented in the data, India ranks 19th in terms of number of names. In all names of 714 Indians have figured in this largest ever black money data leak.
- The Paradise Papers are set of 13.4 million documents mainly from Appleby, an offshore law firm with offices in Bermuda and beyond related to offshore investment in some of the world's most secretive countries. T
- The files were first obtained by German newspaper Suddeutsche Zeitung, and shared with ICIJ and partner 95 media outlets.
- They contain the names of more than 120,000 people and companies across the globe. Big companies like Facebook, Apple, Microsoft, eBay, Uber, Glencore, Nike, Walmart, Allianz, Siemens, McDonald's and Yahoo were also named in it.
- The ICIJ is global network of more than 200 investigative journalists in 70 countries who collaborate on in-depth investigative stories.

Indian Railways launches main arch on world's highest bridge on Chenab

Indian Railways has launched the main arch of the world's highest bridge on the river Chenab in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district which will provide direct connectivity to the Kashmir valley.

- The bridge will stand 359 metres above the bed of the River Chenab and will be 30 metres higher than the Eiffel Tower in Paris.
- The bridge forms link in the 111-km distance between Katra and Banihal which is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla section of the Kashmir Railway project.
- The bridge could withstand winds up to 260 kmph and its lifespan will be 120 years.

Railways to introduce Aadhaar-based biometric attendance system for rail employees

On 3rd November 2017, the Railway Board issued a letter stating that, it will install Aadhaar-based biometric attendance system in all its zones and divisions by 31st January 2018.

- As per the order, the biometric attendance system would be first implemented in the offices of all divisions, zones, Metro Rail Kolkata, railways workshop, factories and production units by 30th November 2017.
- In the second phase, it will be implemented in all the offices of Railways, including public undertakings, attached and subordinate offices by 31st January 2018. Currently, the system is in practice in the railway board and few zonal headquarters.
- It will be monitored by the divisional railway manager's office. CCTV cameras will be provided with the biometric machine.

Hyderabad's signature cuisines to get India Post stamp

On November 3, 2017, Department of Post issued stamps with photos of three Hyderabad dishes – Biryani, Baghare Baingan and Seviyan.

- Postage stamps on these dishes are part of Department of Post's initiative to issue stamps on 24 different Indian dishes, including the famous Tirupati laddu.
- Exclusive postage stamps have also been issued to honor Andhra dishes — idli, dosa and pongal.

Three-Day International Conference FIPSPHYSIOCON 2017 inaugurated in University of Delhi

"FIPSPHYSIOCON 2017", Conference on Human Physiology – VII Congress of Federation of Indian Physiological Societies (FIPS) along with XXIX Annual Conference of the Physiological Society of India (PSI) was inaugurated at Vallabhbhai Patel Chest Institute (VPCI), University of Delhi on November 5, 2017.

- This event was organised by Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Science (DIPAS) of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The conference was held with an objective to update the scientific community about latest advances in human Physiology in extreme environments, Sport Physiology, Yoga, Neuroscience, and translational research. 16 sessions and 118 lectures were conducted on these subjects.
- Theme of "FIPSPHYSIOCON 2017" was "Integrating Physiological and Biomedical Science Approaches to Improve Performance, Health and Safety".
- Around 300 delegates from India, USA, UK, Kyrgyz Republic and Malaysia attended this conference.

Nobel Memorial Wall inaugurated at Delhi's Rajiv Chowk Metro station

On November 1, 2017, Embassy of Sweden and the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) Ltd jointly inaugurated the Nobel Memorial Wall at the Rajiv Chowk Metro station of the Delhi Metro network. The wall will be on display till November 7, 2017.

- The wall exhibits paintings of Indian Nobel Laureates – Rabindranath Tagore, CV Raman, Hargobind Khorana, Mother Teresa, Subrahmanyam Chandrasekhar, Amartya Sen, Venkatraman Ramakrishnan and Kailash Satyarthi.
- These painting have been made by the students from top Fine Art Colleges in Delhi. The paintings were selected through competition conducted by the Embassy of Sweden.
- The jury of the competition included Kaveree Bamzai , the Editor of India Today Group, Artist Naresh Kapuria and Josa Karre, the Head of Economic section at the Embassy of Sweden.
- Objective of exhibiting this wall is to spread awareness about all the Nobel Laureates from India and their contribution to the society.

India, Bangladesh joint military combat exercise “Sampriti” begins in Meghalaya

On November 6, 2017, ‘SAMPRITI 2017’, the seventh edition of Indo-Bangladesh joint military training exercise begun in Meghalaya.

- ‘SAMPRITI 2017’ will be held from 6th – 18th November, 2017. Firstly, Command Post Exercise (CPX) will be conducted from 6th – 11th November, 2017 in Umroi, Meghalaya followed by Field Training Exercise (FTX) at India’s Jungle Warfare School at Vairengte in Mizoram.
- 20 officers each from both the sides will participate in CPX, whereas one infantry company from both the armies will take part in FTX.
- Exercise ‘SAMPRITI’ is held alternately in India and Bangladesh every year.
- Objective of this exercise is to enhance interoperability between army personnel of India and Bangladesh while carrying out joint counter-insurgency or counter-terrorism operations.

International Current Affairs

China unveils Asia’s largest island-building vessel

On November 3, 2017, China unveiled ‘Tiankun’ a massive ship described as a “magic island maker” and considered the most powerful vessel of its type in Asia.

- 'Tiankun' was launched at Qidong in eastern Jiangsu province of China on November 3, 2017.
- Its displacement is 17000 metric tons and the deck is 140-meter-long.
- 'Tiankun' can break underwater rocks and then suck out sand, water and mud and transfer the substance up to 15 kilometers away.
- It can dredge up to 6,000 cubic meters an hour from a depth of up to 35 meters.
- This vessel has been designed by Marine Design and Research Institute in Shanghai.

Typhoon Damrey batters Vietnam

Typhoon Damrey hit Vietnam on 4th November 2017 and made landfall causing devastation. This was the strongest cyclone in Vietnam in 16 years. It weakened and fully dissipated on 5th November 2017.

- Typhoon Damrey killed at least 27 people and 22 are missing after it hit southern Vietnam. Winds of 140 kmph sunk around 228 vessels off the coast of Phu Yen Province and 17 of the crew of a cargo ship went missing.
- More than 36,000 people in the coastal Can Gio district of Ho Chi Min city were evacuated. Thousands of houses were damaged and 600 were destroyed. Hundreds of trees and electricity poles were felled. 40,000 hectares of crops were destructed.

China extends national anthem law to Hong Kong

On 4th November 2017, China adopted a new law enforcing a three-year punishment for disrespecting the national anthem, which would be enforced in the specially administered provinces of Hong Kong and Macau.

- China's National People's Congress (NPC) has passed an amendment to the country's criminal law to punish acts of gravely disrespecting the national anthem.
- It has also endorsed the adoption of the National Anthem Law to the Special Administrative Regions (SAR) of Hong Kong and Macau.
- Punishments are deprivation of political rights, criminal detention and imprisonment of upto three years.
- Those who modify the lyrics, or play or sing the national anthem in a distorted or disrespectful way in public, can be detained for up to 15 days, and also be held criminally liable.

Nepal opens bridge built with India's help near China border

On November 5, 2017, Nepal inaugurated a bridge on the Kaligandaki River at Jomsom area in Mustang district near China border.

- This bridge has been built with financial assistance of 44.5 million Nepali rupees provided by India. The financial assistance was provided as a part of India–Nepal Economic Cooperation (INEC) programme.
- INEC has an outlay of over 76 billion Nepali rupees under which more than 554 large and small development projects have been completed or are currently being implemented. INEC focuses on projects in education, health and infrastructure sectors.
- With the inauguration of this bridge, people of Mustang now have direct motorable connectivity. The bridge will also benefit thousands of tourists and pilgrims visiting the famous Muktinath temple and upper Mustang for trekking.

Banking & Finance

HSBC pledges \$100 billion of finance by 2025 to combat climate change

On 6th November 2017, HSBC pledged to provide \$100 billion in financing and investment by 2025 to help combat climate change.

- HSBC has promised \$100billion of finance for low-carbon technology and sustainable development by 2025 as part its commitment to tackling climate change and other “green” goals.
- It has also committed that all electricity used by HSBC would come from renewable sources by 2030, starting from 24 % today. It would achieve this through direct lending, bonds and project finance, alongside new products in asset management.
- HSBC also said it would become more transparent about risks to its business and to those of its clients from climate change by adopting recommendations made by the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures.

Business

Israel Centre opened at IIM, Bangalore

On 5th November 2017, the Israeli Consulate in Bengaluru launched the Israel Centre at Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) to mark 25 years of India-Israel partnership.

- The Israel Centre at IIMB is aimed to become a bridge of academic collaboration between India and Israel. The centre will be based on research by faculty and will also include faculty and student exchange programmes.
- The centre was inaugurated by the Ambassador of Israel to India, Daniel Carmon. It will act as a hub for research, technological innovations, business strategy, government policies, and culture.
- The chairperson of the Israel Centre is Professor Abhoy K Ojha.

Awards & Recognition

Best Urban Transport Practices Awards announced in Urban Mobility Conference held in Hyderabad

On November 6, 2017, Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs announced 'Best Urban Transport Practices' Award on the concluding day of the three day Urban Mobility Conference –cum-Exhibition at Hyderabad.

- Surat Municipal Corporation has won 'Best City Bus Services Award' for attracting 87% of the private vehicle and auto rickshaw users to use city buses. This feat was accomplished with Bus Rapid Transport System (BRTS) which was made operational in 2014. BRTS in Surat currently operates 275 buses on 28 routes.
- Mysuru's 'Public Bicycle Sharing' has been chosen for 'Best Non-Motorised Transport' Award.

Mohan Joshi honoured with Vishnudas Bhave award

On 5th November 2017, Veteran actor Mohan Joshi was honoured with the prestigious Vishnudas Bhave award for his contribution to theatre.

- Joshi has acted in a number of Marathi and Hindi films and plays.
- The award is instituted in memory of Vishnudas Bhave, the founder of Marathi theatre. The award consists of a trophy, a citation and a cash of Rs 25,000.

Banaganapalle mangoes, six others get GI tag

Banaganapalle mangoes of Andhra Pradesh and six other products have been granted Geographical Indications (GI) during this fiscal year, 2017-18 by the Indian patent office.

- Other six products which have received GI tag this year include Pochampally Ikat of Telangana; Tulapanji rice and Gobindobhog Rice of West Bengal; Chakshesang Shawl of Nagaland; Durgi Stone Carvings and Etikoppaka Toys of Andhra Pradesh.
- GI is a name or sign given to certain products which correspond to a specific geographical location or origin.
- GI tag grants exclusivity for using the name to the producer/manufacturer in the corresponding region and thereby testifies the origin, quality and reputation of the product/commodity.

Science & Technology

CATOBAR: India Navy to use US aircraft launch system in ship

Indian Navy is likely to use advanced catapult-based aircraft launch mechanism (CATOBAR) from United States for its second indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC-II), which is on drawing board.

- In this regard, both countries have held several rounds of discussions in joint working group (JWG) on Aircraft Carrier Technology Cooperation (JWGACTC) under Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) set up by them.
- For some time, India was exploring possibility of installing US electromagnetic aircraft launch system (EMALS). The US has offered India its latest EMALS technology, developed by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.
- EMALS uses electric motor-driven catapult instead, which allows launch of much heavier aircraft and reduces stress on aircraft whereas older-generation CATOBAR is powered by steam catapult. It will allow Indian Navy to operate heavy surveillance aircraft, in addition to heavy fighters. However, the system is expensive, something that needs to be factored in.
- The IAC-II has been envisaged to be around 65,000 tonnes and capable of carrying over 50 aircraft. Indian Navy is keen on nuclear propulsion, which will give it unlimited range and endurance, its development in time seems doubtful.

China launches two BeiDou-3 navigation satellites

China successfully launched two BeiDou-3 satellites named BeiDou-3 M1 and BeiDou-3 M2 into space on board of single carrier rocket Long March-3B from Xichang Satellite Launch Center in southwestern province of Sichuan.

- These two satellites and carrier rocket were developed by China Academy of Space Technology and China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, respectively.
- The two newly-launched satellites represent third phase of BeiDou Navigation Satellite System.
- They will reside in a medium-Earth orbit at an altitude of 21,500 kilometers, inclined 55.5 degrees.
- These two satellites represent third phase of BDS system (BeiDou-3). It is the final stage of the establishment of a Chinese space-based navigation architecture.
- This system will provide services for countries involved in Belt and Road Initiative and form complete global satellite navigation system by 2020 by which time China plans to have more than 30 satellites. It will make China third country in world after the US and Russia to operate its own navigation system.

Tokyo's AI 'boy' first bot to gain a residency

Having Microsoft as a joint developer, an AI character was made an official resident of a busy central Tokyo district in Japan. He doesn't exist physically. He is a virtual chatty seven-year-old boy.

- The virtual boy was named "Shibuya Mirai". Mirai, whose name means "future" in Japanese language.
- He can have text conversations with humans on the widely used LINE messaging app.
- This makes him Japan's first, and maybe the world's first, artificial intelligence robot to be granted a place on a real-life local registry and he is supposed to be a first grader at an elementary school.
- He can reply to messages and make light-hearted alterations to the selfies he is sent.
- His hobbies are taking pictures and observing people.

Pakistan naval ship 'PNS Saif' arrive in Sri Lanka on goodwill visit

Like INS Sujatha and INS Tir, Sri Lankan Navy welcomed the Pakistan Navy Ship PNS Saif, which arrived at the Port of Colombo on 05th November on a 4 days goodwill visit.

- The PNS Saif is 123 m in length and 13.2 m in width. The ship which has a replenishment capacity of 3,144 tons is comprised of 225 crew members.
- During the visit, the crew of PNS Saif will take part in several programmes including friendly sports events organised by the Sri Lankan Navy.
- The Pakistan Naval Ship is scheduled to depart from the Colombo harbor on 8th of this month.

Sports

National Cycling Championships organized in Delhi to promote fuel conservation

On 5th November 2017, the Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) organised Delhi's first 'Saksham Pedal Delhi' cyclothon event to promote cycling and conservation of transport fuel.

- The Saksham Pedal Delhi event started from the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Delhi. The event was supported by the Cycling Federation of India.
- The event was conducted in four categories – Elite Cycling (50km/30km), Amateur Ride (30 km), Open Ride (10 km) and Green Ride (5 km).
- More than 5,000 participants took part in the event including India's 150 elite cyclists. Main objective of event was spreading public awareness on fuel conservation.
- The event was inaugurated by Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Actor Farhan Akhtar was the brand ambassador of Saksham Pedal Delhi.

India beat China to lift women's Asia Cup hockey title

On 5th November 2017, India won the women's Asia Cup hockey title 2017 at Kakamigahara in Japan.

- India beat China to lift women's Asia Cup hockey title India wins women's Asia Cup hockey title 2017:
- The Indian women's hockey team 'Women in Blue' defeated China in the final of the Asia Cup 2017 with a score of 1-1. India has won the gold medal after 13 years.
- In the penalty shootout Rani scored twice and Monica, Lilima Minz and Navjot scored a goal each. Savita was selected as Goalkeeper of the Tournament and Monica won the Woman of the Match award.
- This is India's second title in the history of the tournament. India has finished at top place after 2004. With this victory, the Indian team has also booked a place at the 2018 Hockey World Cup.

Shiv Kapur clinches Panasonic Open title

On 5th November 2017, Shiv Kapur won his first Asian Tour title in India, bagging the Panasonic Open title 2017 at the Delhi Golf Club.

- Shiv Kapur won the Panasonic Open title 2017 by three strokes, after bringing home a card of four-under 68 in the fourth and final round at the Delhi Golf Club.

- It is the second Asian Tour title of the season for Shiv Kapur. He had won the Yeangder Heritage in April and finished second at the Thailand Open this season. He had won his first Asian tour title in 2005 at the Volvo Masters of Asia.
- Others who finished tied second are Karandeep Kochhar, SSP Chawrasia and Om Prakash Chouhan.

Obituary

Veteran Malayalam Actor Vettoor Purushan passed way

On 4th November 2017, Veteran Malayalam actor Vettoor Purushan passed away following old age illness, in Kerala.

- Malayalam actor and comedian Purushothaman was also called as Vettoor Purushan.
- Vettoor Purushan started his career on silver screen with the movie 'Nadee nadanmare avashyamund' which was released in 1974.
- He had acted in 'Athbhutha Dweep', 'Sooryavanam', 'Itha Innu Muthal' films. He had played various characters. He had also acted in television serials.

Important Days

International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict

On 6th November 2017, International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict was observed all over the world.

- On 5th November 2001, the UN General Assembly declared 6 November of each year as the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict.
- This day is an opportunity to take steps to reduce the damage from conflicts and protect the natural resources that are crucial for sustainable development.
- In regard to this day, the UN insists on the importance of including action plan on the environment as part of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building strategies.