

National Current Affairs

Varanasi tops the List of Country's Most Polluted City

According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, Varanasi's Air Quality Index (AQI) at 4pm on 10th November 2017 was at 491 at Ardhal Bazar monitoring station, making it the most polluted city of India.

- The Air Quality Index (AQI) of Varanasi was at 491, just nine short of where the AQI scale ends at 500. This indicates a public health emergency.
- This air quality could affect even healthy people and seriously impact people with existing diseases.
- The concentration of PM2.5, the prominent pollutant, was more than eight times the safe limit of 60 micrograms per cubic metre of air.
- Earlier, on 9th November 2017, Varanasi's AQI was 358, which placed it in the "very poor" category.

Odisha, West Bengal to hold joint coastal security exercise

In a bid to tighten the existing coastal security mechanism, Odisha and its neighbouring state West Bengal will soon organize a joint security exercise named as 'Sagar Kavach' along the 630 km long coastline.

- 'Sagar Kavach' will be a real-time security exercise, conducted with an aim to check the efficacy of the security parameters and preparedness of various security forces viz. Indian Navy, Marine police force, Indian Coast Guard (ICG), Forest Department, Fisheries and district administration.
- During the course of this two-day exercise, a simulated terror attack named 'red force' will be organised at a random place along the coast of Odisha or West Bengal. Effectiveness of response of security forces to this simulated threat will be assessed.
- Personnel from the Indian Navy, Coast Guard at Paradip and Haldia, 18 marine police stations in Odisha and 12 police stations of West Bengal will participate in this drill.
- Besides, teams of Customs and port officials, fisheries department officials will also take part in this exercise.

Indo-Bangla defense cooperation: Army training capsule in Patna

As a part of the ongoing Indo-Bangladesh defense cooperation, an army training capsule on counter-insurgency operations will be conducted in Patna's Danapur Cantonment from November 13, 2017 to December 10, 2017.

- This training capsule will be first of its kind being organised for the Bangladesh Army at Danapur Cantonment.
- Five officers and 25 other ranks of the Bangladesh Army will attend this training. Experienced Indian Army training team will provide them skill based training on handling counter-insurgency / counter-terrorism operations in hostile environment.
- Colonel D.D. Swain will be heading the Indian Army training team.
- State-of-the art weapons and equipment for close-quarter battle, explosives detectors, surveillance and tracking equipments and communication equipment will be fielded during this training event.

India will be hosting its first Military Literature Festival in Chandigarh

Punjab State Government has announced that the first Military Literature Festival would be held in Chandigarh from 7th – 9th December, 2017.

- The event is being organised to pay tribute to the armed forces and spread awareness about Military Literature among masses.
- It will be jointly promoted by the Punjab government and Chandigarh Administration.iii. On November 10, 2017, Punjab's Local Bodies and Tourism and Culture Minister, Navjot Singh Sidhu, unveiled Military Literature Festival's logo.

Gurugram to have North India's biggest butterfly park

On November 11, 2017, Haryana State Forests Minister Rao Narbir Singh, laid the foundation stone for a Butterfly Conservatory Park in Gurugram.

- Haryana State Forest Department is setting up this butterfly park to conserve the species of butterflies that are near extinction on account of urbanisation.
- This conservatory park will be developed on 15 acres in Sector 52 of Gurugram in association with a non-governmental organisation named Uthaan.
- Work of developing this park will take about one year time. On completion, it will be North India's biggest butterfly park.
- The park will be home to an information-cum-demo centre, cluster plots having host plant species, office-cum-record room, 'nakshatra' garden, glow worm conservation area, and a souvenir shop.

India's first cartoon network theme park to come up in Surat

Turner International India, the parent entity of Cartoon Network brand has announced that it has entered into a brand partnership with a Gujarat-based private firm to set up India's first cartoon network theme amusement park in Surat.

- Turner International India has entered into a brand partnership with Rajgreen (Gujarat based real estate, entertainment and hospitality group) for the launch of a 61000 square meter property Amaazia, in Surat.
- The amusement park will be set up at an estimated cost of Rs. 450 crore and is expected to be launched in the first quarter of 2019.
- Amaazia will have -a theme park, branded by Cartoon Network, a water park, a family recreational hub and a service apartment and retail shopping area.
- This project will be Cartoon Network's first brand association for an amusement park in India.
- It already has two such partnerships in Asia. One is Cartoon Network Amazon Water Park in Pattaya, Thailand and an entire Cartoon Network Zone in IMG Worlds of Adventure in Dubai.

Third edition of Russian film fest opens in Delhi

After the great success of the first two editions, the third edition of the Russian film festival titled 'Russian Film Days' is now open for cinema lovers in New Delhi until Sunday 12th Nov 2017.

- The fest opened here on Friday 10th of Nov 2017, in the presence of Russian actress Kseniya Ryabinkina, who worked with legendary actor Raj Kapoor in Mera Naam Joker, actress Hema Malini, who is also the head of Indo-Russian Friendship committee, actor-producer-director Randhir Kapoor and Russian Ambassador to India Nikolay Kudashev and the Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation Vlamidir Medinkiy.
- The Russian Film Days commences in Delhi from the 10th to 12th November, travels to Mumbai from 13th to 15th, and concludes at IFFI Goa from 21st to 28th of November.iii. The festival will screen movies across genres like Comedy, thriller, drama, Sci-Fi, etc.

International Current Affairs

APEC summit held in Vietnam

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit was held in Da Nang, Vietnam. The theme of summit was 'Creating New Dynamism, Fostering a Shared Future'.

- Leaders of 21 Pacific Rim countries attended this meeting.

- This was second time Vietnam hosted APEC summit, having hosted the event previously in 2006. Next year's APEC summit will be held in Papua New Guinea.
- The summit laid emphasis on collaborative activity, such as provision of support for small businesses, promoting sustainable growth and deepening economic integration.
- US and China, two economic powers in the region held opposing views on deepening economic integration.
- China expressed support to further globalisation, US called for support to 'fair trade'.
- APEC is regional economic forum of 21 Pacific Rim member economies that promotes free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

India sixth most vulnerable country facing extreme weather events – Report

India is the sixth most vulnerable country in the world in terms of facing extreme weather events with Haiti, Zimbabwe, Fiji, Sri Lanka and Vietnam taking top five positions in the fresh list of nations facing climate risk.

- The ranking was released here by the Germanwatch, an independent Berlin-based development and environmental organisation in its latest global climate risk index (CRI).
- The Index put the United States (US) at 10th position with Chinese Taipei, Macedonia and Bolivia being the other three vulnerable countries in the list of top ten.
- The Germanwatch comes out with the CRI by analysing number of deaths per 1,00,000 inhabitants, extent of financial losses and loss per unit of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of countries.
- India was at number four in terms of CRI ranking last year.

Air India gets Rs 1,500 crore loan from Bank of India

Air India has received a loan worth of Rs 1,500 crore from Bank of India to meet urgent working capital needs.

- Air India has received Rs 1,500 crore loan from Bank of India after the tender for the amount was floated in October 2017, in order to meet urgent working capital needs.
- Earlier, Air India had borrowed around Rs 3,250 crore as short tenure loans from two lenders – IndusInd Bank and Punjab National Bank. This loan was also for meeting urgent working capital needs and the tender was floated in September 2017.
- Air India has a debt burden of more than Rs 50,000 crore. In the last three months, two public sector banks – Bank of India and Punjab National Bank have provided loans to Air India.

Karnataka inks pacts with Chinese firms

Sixth China-India Forum meet was held in Bengaluru on November 10, 2017.

- This event was jointly hosted by the Government of China, Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), China-India Friendship Association (CIFA), and Podar Enterprise.
- During the course of this forum, several pacts were signed between Chinese firms, Chinese Government bodies, Karnataka Government and Podar Group of Companies.
- Semiconductor Alliance of China and Beijing Construction & Highway Development Group presented expression of interest (EoI) letters to the Karnataka government.
- Other important pacts: MoU between Podar Enterprise and Hebei Provincial Government for strategic cooperation. Tri-party MoU of cooperation between Podar Advisory and Consulting Enterprise signed, Baoding City Government and Hebei Information Investment Group.

Awards & Recognition

Olympic gymnast Dipa karmakar conferred with D.Litt. degree from NIT Agartala

India's gymnastic star Dipa Karmakar, who finished fourth in the final round of the women's vault event at the Rio Olympics Games in Brazil last year was conferred a D.Litt. degree by the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Agartala.

- The convocation ceremony was held at Rabindra Shatabarshiki Bhawan in Agartala.
- Besides Dipa, the NIT also conferred D.Sc. degree upon IIT Guwahati Director Goutam Biswas and Jadavpur University professor Biswajit Ghosh at its tenth convocation held on Saturday.
- Degrees were given to 950 students and 31 Ph.D scholars. 20 students were also given gold medals in various academic branches of the institute.
- The NIT honoured Bollywood actor Nana Patekar with a D.Litt. degree and Governor Tathagata Roy with D.Eng at last year's convocation.

Appointments & Resigns

Hyderabad Police Commissioner M. Mahender Reddy was appointed Director-General of Police (DGP) of Telangana

On 10th November 2017, Hyderabad Police Commissioner M. Mahender Reddy was appointed as Director-General of Police (DGP) of Telangana.

- M. Mahender Reddy has become the second DGP of Telangana.
- He has succeeded Anurag Sharma who superannuated on 11th November 2017. M. Mahender Reddy assumed charge on 12th November 2017.
- Anurag Sharma has been appointed as advisor to the Home department. Hyderabad police Additional Commissioner (law and order) V.V. Srinivasa Rao will be in-charge Hyderabad Police Commissioner.
- Mahender Reddy served as Assistant SP of Godavarikhani in Karimnagar and Guntur town, Additional SP of Bellampally in Adilabad and SP of Nizamabad and Kurnool districts. He was East zone DCP in Hyderabad commissionerate for three years from 1995.

Bhaskar Ganguly, former football captain, appointed AIFF ombudsman by Supreme Court

On October 11, 2017, Supreme Court appointed former football captain Bhaskar Ganguly as ombudsman of All India Football Federation (AIFF).

- Mr. Ganguly had served as captain of the Indian team at the 1982 Asian Games.
- Supreme court also appointed S Y Quraishi, former Chief Election Commissioner of India as the ombudsman of AIFF.
- Mr. Quraishi has also served as Secretary in the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India.
- Both Mr. Ganguly and Mr. Quraishi have been assigned the task to formulate the AIFF constitution within eight weeks.
- Supreme Court has also stayed the recent order of Delhi High Court allowing all AIFF elected committees to function on a regular basis.

Science & Technology

China to make first contact with Alien life using world's largest dish

China claims to be the first country to make contact with alien life using its radio dish named Five hundred metre Aperture Spherical Telescope (FAST), which is believed to detect alien signals coming from other galaxies.

- The Five hundred metre Aperture Spherical Telescope (FAST) is considered the world's largest radio dish.
- It is almost twice as wide as the America's Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico.
- Other leading experts into Alien Life including astrophysicist Andrew Siemion, the director of the Search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) research centre at Berkley University have been impressed by FAST.
- Radio transmissions are forbidden near the dish in order to stop human sources interfering with any signals coming from alien sources.

Sports

Bharat Khandare becomes first India-Born Fighter to sign with Ultimate Fighting Championship

On 11th November 2017, Bharat Khandare became first Indian-born Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighter to be signed by the UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship).

- Bharat Khandare will have his debut fight against Pingyuan Liu, who has won 12 fights in the tournament, in the UFC Bantamweight division at the UFC Fight Night in Shanghai on 25 November 2017.
- It will be the first UFC event held on mainland China.ii. Arjan Singh Bhullar was the first Indian-origin fighter to be signed by the UFC. Bhullar had represented Canada at the 2012 London Olympics.
- Khandare Bharat was introduced to Mixed Martial Arts through the Internet. He had a wrestling background and soon, he took up kickboxing.

Dhoni inaugurates his first global cricket academy in UAE

On 11th November 2017, Mahendra Singh Dhoni inaugurated his first global cricket academy in the United Arab Emirates.

- The academy was officially launched by Mahendra Singh Dhoni in the presence of trainees, parents and other key stakeholders of the facility.
- The academy was jointly launched by Dubai-based Pacific Sports Club and Aarka Sports Club.

- It has been in operation for a couple of months at the Springdales School in Al Quoz.
- The facility named the MS Dhoni Cricket Academy (MSDCA) will have coaches from India to train the wards.
- The academy has the following facilities: four turf, three cement and three matted pitches, spin and swing bowling machine, safety nets, lights for night practice, in-house sports shop for quality cricket gear and video analysis.

Teddy Riner remains undefeated and claims tenth World title

On 11th November 2017, Teddy Riner won his tenth World title in the 2017 Judo World Championships Open in Marrakesh and remains undefeated emperor in judo.

- French heavyweight judo champion Teddy Riner won his 10th world title with victory at the open-weight world championships in Marrakech.
- Teddy Riner is from Guadeloupe, France. He obtained his 144th consecutive win by beating Belgian Toma Nikiforov in the final.
- Teddy Riner won his ninth gold medal at the world championships in Budapest two months ago. He had already become the most successful judoka of all-time with his eighth title in 2015.
- He has not faced defeat since losing in the final of the open-weight championships to Japanese fighter Daiki Kamikawa in September 2010.

Obituary

Veteran Cyclist Ashok Khale passes away

On 11th November 2017, veteran cyclist Ashok Khale, who was recently injured in an accident on the Sion-Panvel highway, died in Bombay Hospital during treatment, in Mumbai.

- Ashok Khale met with an accident near Mankhurd recently when he was on cycling to Khopoli.
- He was injured in the hit-and-run case and was battling for life in the Bombay Hospital.
- He has won several medals for cycle-riding in state and national-level championships.
- He used to participate in the Giro d'Italia, an annual multiple-stage bicycle race primarily held in Italy and covered several countries in 5-6 days.
- He was also called as the King of the Ghats. He was also the recipient of the Shiv Chhatrapati award.

Former Nepal PM Kirti Nidhi Bista passes away

On 11th November 2017, Nepal's three-time Prime Minister Kirti Nidhi Bista passed away at Gyaneswor, in Kathmandu, Nepal.

- Kirti Nidhi Bista served as Prime Minister from 1969 to 1970, 1971 to 1973 and 1977 to 1979 during the party-less Panchayat system under two monarchs – King Mahendra and King Birendra.
- Later in 2005, he served as the Vice Chairman of the government under the direct regime led by King Gyanendra.

Hausla 2017: WCD Ministry to celebrate Child Rights Week

The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development will celebrate Child Rights Week (Hausla 2017) from 16th to 20th November, 2017.

- In India, Children's Day is celebrated on 14 November and International Child Rights Day is celebrated on 20 November every year.
- The period between these two important events will be celebrated as Child Rights Week by WCD Ministry).
- The commemoration of "Hausla 2017" festival will provide an occasion to showcase talents of children from Child Care Institutions (CCIs) from various child care institutions across country and provide them space to express their dreams and aspiration.
- Under this festival, children will participate in various events like Bal Sansad, athletics meet, painting competition, football, chess competition and speech writing.

Public Service Broadcasting Day – November 12

On 12th November 2017, Public Service Broadcasting Day was observed all over India.

- In the memory of the first and only address by Mahatma Gandhi on All India Radio (AIR) on November 12 in 1947, this day was announced as a Public Service Broadcasting Day.
- Mahatma Gandhi had stepped inside the studios of Broadcasting House on 12 November 2017 to address refugees camping in Kurukshetra in Haryana whom he could not personally visit.
- The All India Radio, Hyderabad, celebrated the Public Service Broadcasting Day on 12th November 2017 with a meeting at Bakaram village of Moinabad mandal in Ranga Reddy district, to make villagers aware on the need to listen to AIR programmes to enlighten themselves on various subjects.

12 November: World Pneumonia Day

The World Pneumonia Day is observed globally every year on November 12 to generate awareness about the 'pneumonia' disease.

- The observance of day aims to highlight the severity of pneumonia and bring together the people from all over the world to promote the prevention and treatment of the disease.
- Significance of the Day
 - Raise awareness about pneumonia, the world's leading killer of children under age of five.
 - Promote interventions to protect against, prevent and treat pneumonia and Generate action to combat pneumonia.
 - The World Pneumonia Day was first observed in 2009 after more than 100 organisations joined together form Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia. At present, global coalition comprises of over 140 NGOs, academic institutions, government agencies and foundations.