

National Current Affairs

Government launches National Power Portal

The Union Ministry of Power launched National Power Portal (NPP), a Centralized Platform for Collation and Dissemination of Indian power sector information.

- The system has been conceptualized, designed and developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- It can be accessed at <http://npp.gov.in>. Central Electricity Authority (CEA) is nodal agency for implementation and operational control of NPP. National Power Portal (NPP) is centralised system for Indian Power Sector.
- It will facilitate online data capture, input (daily, monthly, annually) from generation, transmission and distribution utilities in country.
- It will also disseminate Power Sector Information (operational, capacity, demand, supply, consumption etc) through various analysed reports, graphs, statistics for generation, transmission and distribution at all India, state, regional level for central, state and private sector.
- NPP is integrated with associated systems of CEA, Power Finance Corporation (PFC), Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) and other major utilities.
- It will serve as single authentic source of power sector information to apex bodies, utilities for purpose of analysis and planning, monitoring and for public users.
- The NPP Dashboard has been designed and developed to disseminate analyzed information about sector through Geographic Information System (GIS) enabled navigation and visualization chart windows on capacity, generation, transmission, distribution at national, state, DISCOM, town, feeder level and scheme based funding to states.

Uttar Pradesh tops in mobilising Jan Dhan Account

Uttar Pradesh has topped in opening new Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts after demonetisation (post November 8, 2017).

- One-fifth of the more than five crore new PMJDY accounts, from November 9, 2016 to November 8, 2017 were opened in Uttar Pradesh. With this, the total accounts under PMJDY has crossed 4 crore in Uttar Pradesh.
- Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal cumulatively added another 2.2 crore new PMJDY accounts in the last one year.

Cornelia Sorabji: Google's Doodle honours India's first woman advocate

Search engine giant Google doodle celebrated the 151st birthday of Cornelia Sorabji, the first woman to practice law in India and England.

- She was pioneer who helped open up higher education as well as the legal profession to women.
- She was first woman to graduate in law from India as early as 1892 and first Indian national to attend British University.
- Her contributions include: She took cause of purdahnashins, veiled women who were forbidden to interact with men outside their families. She helped widowed purdahnashins get their rightful share of the property, helped them pursue education and secure employment. She succeeded in pursuing the government to appoint Lady Assistants to the courts to help women litigants.

Andhra Pradesh hosting its first ever hot-air balloon festival

Between 14 – 16th November 2017, Araku Valley of Andhra Pradesh will be hosting the first edition of its Hot Air Balloon Festival.

- The Hot Air Balloon Festival is organised by SkyWaltz and supported by Andhra Pradesh tourism. The festival will feature unique balloons from 13 countries. Some of the participating countries are India, Australia, USA, Brazil and South Korea.
- Extraordinary shaped balloons like the Seahorse, the Kiwi, the Bee and many more are lined up in the festival. This festival is being organised to promote tourism.
- A large team of over 100 photographers, nature lovers and students from across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana arrived at Araku to capture the scenes of the festival. Araku is known for its coffee plantations, rich cultural heritage and stunning waterfalls.

Bihar government to set up 'State Ayush Society' to boost alternative medicine

On November 14, 2017, Bihar State Government gave approval for setting up a 'State Ayush Society' with an aim to promote the usage of alternative medicine in the state.

- Approval for setting up a 'State Ayush Society' was given at a State cabinet meeting chaired by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.
- Bihar's 'State Ayush Society' will be set up as part of Central Government's "National Ayush Mission". It will be registered under the Society Registration Act.
- During this meeting of Bihar state cabinet, approval was also given for extending the contracts of those providing technical services in the health department till March 31, 2019, and to set up an industrial training institute in Banka district as part of the Skill Development scheme in districts affected by Left Wing Extremism.

Government launches BHARAT-22 Exchange Traded Fund

The Union Government launched BHARAT-22 Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) managed by ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund targeting an initial amount of about Rs. 8,000 Crore.

- Bharat 22 Index comprise of 22 stocks including those of central public sector enterprises (CPSEs), public sector banks (PSBs) and its holdings under the Specified Undertaking of Unit Trust of India (SUUTI).
- ETF has been created Index S&P BSE BHARAT-22 INDEX. It is unique blend of shares of key CPSEs, Public Sector Banks (PSBs) and also Government owned shares in blue chip private companies.
- It is well-diversified ETF spanning six sectors - basic materials, energy, finance, industrials, FMCG and utilities with a 20% cap on each sector and a 15% cap on each stock.
- The sector wise weightage in the Bharat 22 Index is basic materials (4.4%), energy (17.5%), finance (20.3%), FMCG (15.2%), industrials (22.6%), and utilities (20%). This combination makes the Index broad-based and diversified.
- It has retirement fund as separate category of Investors.
- The BHARAT-22 ETF is expected to benefit long term and retail investors by providing an opportunity of participation in equity stocks of Government run companies and earn stable returns.

Navy chief launches document on joint training of 3 services

On November 14, 2017, Indian armed forces released 'Joint Training Doctrine Indian Armed Forces – 2017', aimed at ensuring integration amongst the three defence services and optimum utilisation of resources.

- This document was released by Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba in presence of Army Chief, General Bipin Rawat, IAF Chief, Air Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa and Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC), Lt Gen Satish Dua.
- This training document flows from 'Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces -2017' which was released in April 2017.
- 'Joint Training Doctrine Indian Armed Forces – 2017' brings out Indian Armed Forces' approach to Joint training at macro-level, Fundamentals, Objectives, Joint Structures, Planning and Organisation.
- The concept of using 'joint training' for promoting 'diplomacy' and 'civil-military interface' has also been highlighted in the doctrine.

- Besides, this document will serve as a knowledge base from which directives and strategies will be issued by the Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee, Admiral Lanba, to the Integrated Defence Staff and Service headquarters.

International Current Affairs

31st ASEAN Summit held in Manila, Philippines

31st ASEAN Summit and Related Summits were held in Manila, Philippines from 10th – 14th November, 2017.

- Philippines President Rodrigo Roa Duterte chaired the plenary session of the 31st ASEAN Summit.
- ‘Partnering for Change, Engaging the World’, has been the theme of Philippines’ Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2017.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi represented India at the 15th India-ASEAN Summit and 12th East Asia Summit on November 14, 2017 in Manila, Philippines.

Syria signs up Paris Agreement on climate change

On 14th November 2017, United Nations announced that, Syria has officially signed the Paris Agreement on climate change. Syria signs Paris Agreement:

- Syria has become the 169th of 196 countries that are members of the UN climate convention to take the legal step of ratification.
- After Nicaragua signed up in October 2017, Syria was the only country not to have adopted the pact. Another 27 nations that have signed the treaty have yet to pass domestic laws required for full accession.
- The Paris agreement on climate change commits countries to limiting average global warming to under 2 deg C over Industrial Revolution levels, and 1.5 deg C if possible, to prevent unwanted climate change-induced storms, drought and sea-level rise.
- To support the agreement, nations submitted voluntary commitments to control greenhouse gas emissions from burning coal, oil and natural gas.

Indians second-highest public bingers in the world: Study

As per a survey released by online streaming platform Netflix, binge watching in public is on the rise among Indian population. Indians have been adjudged as the second-highest public bingers in the world, just behind Mexico. 'Binge' means excessive indulgence in an activity.

- As per the survey, number of Indians found to be binge watching in public has increased by 71% as compared to last year.
- Prevalence of binge watching in public is highest in Mexico (89%) followed by India (88%).
- The survey was conducted by Netflix through SurveyMonkey during August 24 – September 7, 2017. It was administered on 37056 adult online respondents who watch movies and TV shows via streaming services in public settings.
- Respondents were from US, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, India, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand and Turkey.
- The survey also highlighted that one in two Indians stream or download movies and TV shows for their daily commute.

US Consulate General launches for young entrepreneurs

On November 14, 2017, The US Consulate General, Kolkata launched 'Youth for Business-Y4BIZ', a support programme for young entrepreneurs in the eastern region of India.

- Under 'Youth for Business-Y4BIZ' programme, a group of 50 young entrepreneurs will be supported to transform their business ideas from the initial stage to a sustainable business model.
- This programme will be launched soon in three other cities of eastern India – Guwahati (Assam), Patna (Bihar), Ranchi (Jharkhand).
- The 50 entrepreneurs will be selected through a screening process after the programme is launched in all four cities.
- This programme is an initiative undertaken by US Consulate General in collaboration with social enterprise Contact Base and is part of a series of activities in the run up to the upcoming 8th Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) which will be held in Hyderabad from 28th – 30th November, 2017.

International meet on buffaloes held in Nepal

Four-daylong symposium to discuss ways to promote the economic and food value of buffalo, organised by Agriculture and Forestry University at Chitawan, Nepal begun on November 15, 2017.

- The symposium "Increase in buffalo production for food and economic growth" is being held in Nepal for the first time. It has been organised in collaboration with the

Government of Nepal, the Ministry of Livestock Development, Department of Livestock Service, Nepal Agriculture Research Council and Michigan State University, US.

- At this symposium, scientists from various nations, including India, Pakistan and the US will exchange views on various aspects of commercial rearing of buffaloes.

UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial conference 2017 held in Vancouver

UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference 2017 was held in Vancouver, Canada on 14th & 15th November, 2017.

- This conference was the largest gathering of Defence ministers of countries who support UN Peacekeeping operations.
- Over 500 delegates from more than 70 countries and international organizations attended this conference.
- During the conference, new pledges were sought from member countries, particularly in areas where the UN faces gaps, such as rapid deployment, helicopters and francophone units.
- Emphasis was laid on fostering pragmatic and innovative solutions to make UN Peacekeeping Operations more effective, by building on the “3Ps” – Pledges, Planning, Performance.

Japan to relax visa regime for Indians from January 2018

On 14th November 2017, the Japanese embassy said that, Japan will simplify its visa rules for Indians from January 2018 and issue multiple-entry visa for short-term stays.

- Multiple entry visas with a validity of maximum five years and stay of maximum 90 days will be issued to applicants who have travel records to Japan twice or more in the last one year.
- In this case, the eligible applicants may submit only their passports and visa application form. Their employment certificate and explanation letter will be exempted.
- Under this relaxation, Indian students, graduate students and alumni of universities in India may submit certificate of student status or graduation instead of the document to prove financial capability in the application for single entry visa for short-term stay.

Banking & Finance

BSE arm, Thomson Reuters launch 'BEST' new trading solution

On 15th November 2017, Marketplace Tech Infra Services, an arm of the premier exchange BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange), launched BEST (BSE Electronic Smart Trader).

- BEST (BSE Electronic Smart Trader) is an advanced hosted trading solution built on Thomson Reuters Omnesys NEST platform.
- In October 2017, Marketplace had signed a pact with Thomson Reuters to build the trading solution for BSEs members and customers.
- The new platform will facilitate smooth trading for BSE customers across multiple exchanges, including the BSE, NSE, MCX and NCDEX for a wide range of investment categories like equity, equity derivatives, bonds, currency and commodities on a single terminal.
- The platform aims to help traders make informed investing decisions and manage risks, along with the benefit of speed and accuracy, increasing the effectiveness of the transaction.

Business

International solar alliance announces setting up 1000 GW of solar energy by 2030

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) has announced a target to support setting up 1000GW of solar energy capacity by 2030 across its member countries.

- The 1000 GW solar energy capacity target by 2030 has been set by the ISA. It will be met through projects that ISA will support under its various work programmes.
- This target does not take into account renewable energy targets or projects that countries are pursuing on their own as part of their national efforts.
- This initiative by India to harness the untapped resource of sunshine-rich countries between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn was backed by France, and was launched at the Paris climate talks in 2015.
- Sixteen countries have ratified the framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and it will come into force on 6 December 2017.

Maharashtra government, Patanjali to partner in Rs 25,000 crore cow project

On 12th November 2017, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari announced that, Maharashtra government would raise a Rs 25,000 crore project on 800 acres at Heti (Kundi) village in Vidarbha, Maharashtra.

- This project is to be carried forward with the help of Ramdev's Patanjali group. According to Nitin Gadkari, Patanjali will purchase 10,000 cows to develop a breeding centre and to carry out dairy and allied activities at the site.
- Wardha Collector Shailesh Nawal said that, there is already a cow breeding centre of the state animal husbandry department at Heti (Kundi).
- Patanjali's Acharya Balkrishna said that, it is not a commercial project and will benefit the country. It will be operated on government land with an investment of Rs 500 crore.

Appointments & Resigns

Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) appoints S Ravi as its new chairman

Eminent chartered accountant Sethurathnam Ravi has been appointed as the chairman of the leading stock exchange BSE.

- S Ravi, who was a public interest director at the BSE, replaced Dharendra Swarup as chairman of BSE with effect from 13 November 2017.
- He has experience of holding a number of positions on the board of banks, financial institutions and asset management companies in the financial sector.
- Presently, Ravi serves as a director on boards of various companies such as IDBI Capital Markets Services, UTI Trustee Company, S Ravi Financial Management Services, SMERA Ratings, SBI-SG Global Securities, IDBI Bank, STCI Finance, Tourism Finance Corporation of India and BOI Merchant Bankers.
- Also, he is member of the working group, constituted by Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, for suggesting possible modalities for creation of an institutional structure on corporate social responsibilities matters. Also, he is a member of SEBI's takeover panel, and mutual funds advisory committee.

Science & Technology

US approves "Abilify MyCite", first pill with digital tracking device

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved “Abilify MyCite” the first drug in the United States with a digital ingestion tracking system, to ensure that patients with mental illness take the medicine prescribed for them.

- The drug Abilify MyCite was developed by Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. It was first approved by the FDA in 2002 to treat schizophrenia. The ingestible sensor, made by Proteus Digital health, was approved for marketing in 2012.
- The medication works by sending a message from the pill’s sensor to a wearable patch. Being able to track ingestion of medications prescribed for illness may be useful for some patients.
- The statement by FDA said that, Abilify MyCite should not be used to track drug ingestion in ‘real-time’ or during an emergency because detection may be delayed or may not occur.

Astronomers spot pair of rare hyper-luminous galaxies “ADFS-27”

For the first time, astronomers have spotted close encounter between two hyper-luminous galaxies, collectively known as ADFS-27, bright and massive galaxies in the early universe.

- Astronomers captured these two interacting galaxies, collectively known as ADFS-27, as they began the gradual process of merging into a single, massive elliptical galaxy.
- The study published in the Astrophysical Journal said that, the ADFS-27 system has approximately 50 times the amount of star-forming gas as the Milky Way.
- The ADFS-27 galaxy pair is located approximately 12.7 billion light-years from Earth in the direction of the Dorado constellation. At this distance, astronomers viewed this system as it appeared when the universe was only about one billion years old.
- Follow-up observations with the Atacama Pathfinder EXperiment (APEX) telescope confirmed these initial interpretations.

Sports

Aditi Ashok becomes first Indian golfer to qualify for LPGA Tour Championships

Aditi Ashok has qualified for the CME Group Tour Championship on the LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association), becoming the first from India to play in the prestigious meet.

- Aditi Ashok is one of the eight rookies to make it to the LPGA Tour Championships, one of the strongest fields in women’s golf. Also, Aditi has succeeded in keeping her LPGA card for 2018 after a sterling rookie season.

- She is 19 years old and hails from Bangalore. With a record of great performances, including a Top-10 and starts at all five Majors, it has been a remarkable year for Aditi.
- This year Aditi has played 20 events on the LPGA and made cut in 13 of them with tied 8th at the Marathon Classic as her best result.

Obituary

Former MP Abdul Mannan Hossain passed away

On 14th November 2017, former Murshidabad MP and senior Trinamool Congress leader Abdul Mannan Hossain passed away in Kolkata.

- Earlier he was an MLA of Congress from 1987. He joined All India Trinamool Congress in 2014 after he had differences with the Congress' state leadership.

Veteran Hindustani vocalist Jagdish Mohan passes away

On 14th November 2017, noted Hindustani vocalist of Kirana Gharana, Jagdish Mohan died in New Delhi.

- Jagdish Mohan was awarded the title of Sangeet Sartaj by Pracheen Kala Kendra, Chandigarh. He was a regular performer at the All India Radio and Doordarshan.