

# National Current Affairs

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## **Government inks Loan Agreement with World Bank for Shared Infrastructure for Solar Parks Project**

The Union Government has signed a guarantee agreement for IBRD/CTF loan of US \$98 million and Grant Agreement for US \$2 million for Shared Infrastructure for Solar Parks Project with World Bank.

- The objective Shared Infrastructure for Solar Parks Project is to increase solar generation capacity through establishment of large-scale parks in the country.
- The project consists of two components viz. (i) Shared Infrastructure for Solar Parks and (ii) Technical Assistance.
- It will help to establish large-scale solar parks and support government's plan to install 100 Gigawatts (GW) of solar power out of total renewable-energy target of 175 GW by 2022

## **42nd International Congress of Military Medicine held in New Delhi**

The 42nd World Congress of the International Committee of Military Medicine (ICMM) was held in New Delhi. It was organised by Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS), Ministry of Defence (MoD).

- The theme of this edition of World Congress is "Military Medicine in Transition: Looking Ahead."
- The five-day event was being organised for the first time in India. It was the largest medical conference ever organised by AFMS. It was attended by around 350-400 foreign delegates from 80 countries.
- ICMM is international inter-governmental organisation established in 1921 after World War I to strengthen cooperation between the health services of the armed forces worldwide. Its secretariat is at Brussels, Belgium and currently has 112 nations as members.
- ICMM's main objective is to ensure that medical services personnel have means to work together, using similar practices, in operations involving international cooperation.

## **Maharashtra CM launches initiative to curb Childhood Obesity**

On November 16, 2017, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis launched a new initiative against childhood obesity in Pune.

- Under this initiative, schools will be given Body Mass Index (BMI) dialler, through which children will be able to know their BMI.
- This initiative has been taken by Rotary Club of Koregaon Park with JT Foundation.
- With the help of BMI dialler and a supporting documentary, not only school children, but their parents and teachers will also be given information about childhood obesity.
- According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), India is projected to be the second-largest country with childhood obesity by 2025.
- Around 6000 children in Pune will benefit from this campaign by gaining information about BMI. It is to be noted that Pune is among the top five Indian cities having high prevalence of obesity.

### **Haryana Government's new scheme offers domestic power connections on EMI**

On November 19, 2017, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar announced a new scheme offering Domestic Power Connections in rural areas On Equated Monthly Instalment (EMI).

- Currently it costs between Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 4000/- to get a domestic power connection. Under this new scheme, households in rural areas can pay just Rs. 200 and get a domestic power connection. The remaining amount can be paid in easy instalments of Rs. 100 to Rs. 200.
- Haryana State Government has initiated several schemes aimed at reducing losses of State Power Department. In certain villages, where line losses have been reduced by 20 per cent are now getting 24-hour power supply.
- Mr Khattar has stated that his government would fulfil its promise to provide 24-hour power supply all over Haryana in the next two years.

### **World's biggest toilet pot model unveiled at 'Trump village' in Haryana**

On 19th November 2017, the world's biggest toilet pot model was unveiled at Marora, popularly known as the "Trump village", in Haryana.

- On the World Toilet Day (November 19), a mega toilet pot made up of iron, fibre, wood and plaster of Paris, measuring 20×10 feet was unveiled at Marora, in an aim to create awareness towards sanitation and use of toilets.
- Sanitation expert and Sulabh International founder Bindeshwar Pathak and other dignitaries inaugurated the "biggest toilet pot of the world" model and dedicated another 95 new household toilets to the residents of the village.
- Bindeshwar Pathak said the large pot replica would be moved to Delhi's Sulabh Toilet Museum. Apart from inaugurating individual toilets, two books on the use of toilets and sanitation were also released.

### **Jammu & Kashmir celebrates 'Heritage Week' to preserve, protect its culture**

On 19th November 2017, Jammu and Kashmir Education and Tourism Minister Priya Sethi inaugurated 'Heritage Week' to generate awareness on preservation of the state's ancient culture and environment, in Jammu & Kashmir.

- Heritage Week is celebrated throughout Jammu and Kashmir from November 19 to 25, 2017. Special programmes are held showcasing the cultural heritage and rich biodiversity of the state.
- Illumination of heritage sites, heritage walks and special cleanliness drives are undertaken by involving tourism, culture, education, urban development and other concerned departments.
- On November 20, 2017, a symposium and painting competition was held along with a photo exhibition. This will be followed by 'Food Ethnic Day' on November 22, 2017.
- On November 22 and 23, 2017, an 'Ethnic Cultural Programme' promoting the local folk dances and music will be organized. 'Heritage Walk', showcasing composite culture of the state, will take place on November 24, 2017.

### **Government cancels Israeli missile deal worth \$500-million**

Indian Government has decided to cancel a \$500 million deal for procuring Spike ATGM (Anti-Tank Guided Missile) from Israel.

- The \$500 million deal to procure Spike ATGM from Rafael Advanced Defence Systems of Israel was expected to be signed after price negotiations completed last year.
- However, the deal was cancelled as India's Defence Ministry believes that importing a foreign ATGM at this stage would negatively impact the programme for indigenous development of the weapon system by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Ministry-of-Defence-scraps-500-million-Israeli-missile
- As per Union Defence Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, Man-Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) for the Indian Army should be indigenously develop and build by DRDO.
- Moreover, DRDO is confident about providing Indian Army with an MPATGM of 3rd generation missile technology, which will be similar to Spike, within three to four years.

### **Govt sets Rs 10000 min balance in bank accounts as rural poverty measure**

Central Government has set Rs 10000 minimum balance in bank account as one of the 21 parameters to assess poverty in gram panchayats under 'Mission Antyodaya'.

- Union Rural Development Ministry's 'Mission Antyodaya' aims to create 50000 poverty-free gram panchayats.
- The goal is to converge, all existing government initiatives and schemes in these 50000 gram panchayats so that every household within these panchayats is benefited which shall consequentially lead to elimination of poverty.
- 50000 gram panchayats will be grouped together in 5000 clusters. State wise list of gram panchayats selected for this mission has already been finalised.
- Overview of Parameters to assess poverty in a gram panchayats:
- 21 parameters which have been finalised to measure the poverty status of gram panchayats under 'Mission Antyodaya' are placed under three broad categories viz. "economic development and diversification of livelihoods", "social development and protection" and "infrastructure".
- One of the parameters to determine 'economic development' is number of households with a minimum Rs 10,000 in their savings account. Panchayats with higher number of households having minimum Rs 10000 in their savings account will be rated positively on the poverty index.
- Earlier, the threshold for minimum balance in savings account was set at Rs. 20000.
- Other parameters to measure "economic development and diversification of livelihoods" include number of families with bank loans for diversified livelihood, number of families employed in dairy and animal resources and those in non-farm employment with skills, markets and bank linkage.
- Parameters to measure "social development and protection" include prevalence of malnutrition among children up to three years, number of girls completing secondary education and percentage of children with full immunisation.
- "Infrastructure" development will be measured by considering all weather roads, open defecation free status, internet connectivity, community waste disposal system and number of families living in safe houses.

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## International Current Affairs

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### **Road-map for Talanoa Dialogue prepared at Bonn UN Climate Change Conference...**

The UNFCCC Climate Change Conference (COP23) was held in Bonn, Germany and was presided over by Government of Fiji. It concluded with countries putting in place a roadmap for 'Talanoa Dialogue', a year-long process to assess countries' progress on climate actions.

- The Conference also made progress on framing rules for implementing 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change and brought rich nations on board on their pre-2020 commitments as demanded by developing nations.

- The conference provided countries around world took opportunity to showcase their actions taken to fulfil pledges under landmark 2015 Paris agreement as well as took other decisions including 'Talanoa Dialogue'.
- It also made progress on framing rules for implementing Paris Agreement post-2020 and brought rich nations on board to walk the talk on pre-2020 commitments. However, the differences over climate financing continued.
- Talanoa is a traditional approach used in Fiji and other Pacific islands to engage in an inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue to resolve differences without putting any blame on any one.

### **India moves up one notch to 126 in GDP per capita terms': IMF Data**

As per data which forms part of the latest World Economic Outlook report of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), India ranks 126th out of 200 countries in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita.

- GDP Per Capita of a country is computed by dividing its gross domestic product(GDP) by the number of people in the country. In theoretical terms, higher GDP per capita results in to a higher standard of living.
- India's rank has improved by one spot as compared to previous year's rank. This improvement is on account of increase in GDP to USD 7170 in 2017, from USD 6690 in the previous year.
- However, India still ranks lower among BRICS nations on this parameter. Brazil's GDP Per Capita is USD 15500, Russia – USD 27900, China – USD 16620 and South Africa – USD 13,400.
- Despite of India's low rank, it is interesting to know that India is home to 2.45 lakh millionaires with a total household wealth of USD 5 trillion (as per Credit Suisse report).

### **India, China Hold First Border Talk After Doklam Standoff in Beijing'**

On November 18, 2017, 10th round of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) was held between Indian and Chinese officials in Beijing.

- This is the first meeting between Indian and Chinese officials under WMCC after the 70-day Doklam standoff which started in June 2017.
- Pranay Verma, Joint Secretary (East Asia) led the Indian delegation which comprised diplomats and military officials. The Chinese side was led by Xiao Qian, Director General, Department of Asian Affairs in the Chinese Foreign Ministry.
- At this meeting, India and China also exchanged views on confidence-building measures and strengthening of military-to-military contacts.

### **Modi Government third most trusted in the world after Switzerland and Indonesia**

Indian government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ranked as third most trusted government in the world as per Government at a Glance 2017 published by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

- As per the report, nearly 74 percent of Indians have expressed confidence in their national government.
- The confidence of people was assessed in context of economy, political upheaval, and headline-grabbing events like major corruption cases.
- This list is topped by Switzerland wherein 84% have expressed confidence in national government. Indonesia has ranked 2nd on this list.
- As per World Economic Forum (WEF), Indian masses' high levels of confidence in their government can be ascribed to the recent anti-corruption and tax-reform drive undertaken by the incumbent Modi Government.

### **Bengaluru joins 91-city network to collate climate change data**

Bengaluru has joined 91 cities across the globe in Datacity programme to collate data on climate change.

- Datacity programme was launched in Paris in 2015 with an objective to develop data which can help resolve climate challenges. This programme is led by French start-up accelerator NUMA and is supported by technology experts including Carto, OpenDataSoft and Dataiku.
- Under this programme, city governments, corporates, start-ups and technology entrepreneurs collaborate for deliberating on urban challenges and at the end arrive at sustainable solutions.
- So far, this programme has been successfully implemented in Paris and Casablanca (Morocco).
- Bengaluru has joined this network by signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with NUMA.

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## **Banking & Finance**

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### **Govt seeks Rs 13,000-cr surplus from RBI**

On November 19, 2017, Economic Affairs Secretary, Subhash Chandra Garg, stated that Central Government has only sought Rs 13,000 crore of surplus which Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has and has not asked it to pay any 'special dividend'.

- The fiscal year for RBI is June-July. For 2016-17 fiscal, ending in June 2017, RBI's profit was about Rs 44,000 crore.
- Out of this 44000 crore, in August 2017, it had paid a dividend of Rs 30659 crore and retained remaining amount of profit to contain risks and build reserves.
- As clarified by Mr. Garg, the government is seeking Rs. 13000 crore surplus which has been retained and is not asking for any additional amount over it as special dividend.
- This clarification comes in wake of media reports that government has asked for a special dividend from RBI (in addition to the surplus) to fund a part of its Rs 2.11-lakh crore plan to recapitalise public sector banks.

### **NSE arm launches SME Index to track firms on Emerge platform**

On November 20, 2017, India Index Services & Products (IISL), a National Stock Exchange (NSE) Group entity, launched Nifty SME Emerge Index, a new Nifty Index to measure the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) listed on NSE's EMERGE platform (dedicated NSE platform for small companies).

- This index represents about 62 per cent of the full market capitalisation of all SMEs listed on EMERGE.
- Launch of this index coincides with the listing of ANI Integrated Services, which has become 100th company to list on NSE EMERGE.
- December 1, 2016 is the base date for this new index and its base value has been set at 1000.
- Composition of Nifty SME Emerge Index will be reconstituted on a quarterly basis. Currently, it is a well-diversified basket of SMEs representing 14 sectors of the economy.
- The index value will be calculated and published at the end of every trading session and will thereby help investors to track the performance of SMEs listed on EMERGE.

### **Logistics sector gets Infrastructure Status**

The Union Finance Ministry has granted Infrastructure Status to Logistics sector. Logistics Infrastructure was included by insertion of new item in renamed category of 'Transport and Logistics'.



- The inclusion of “Logistics Sector” in the Harmonized Master List of Infrastructure Sub-sectors was considered in the 14th Institutional Mechanism (IM) Meeting chaired by Finance Minister.
- The proposal was mooted by the Commerce Ministry and was approved by finance ministry.
- Logistics Infrastructure means and includes.
  - Multi-modal Logistics Park comprising Inland Container Depot (ICD): Minimum investment of Rs. 50 crore and minimum area of 10 acre.
  - Cold Chain Facility: Minimum investment of Rs.15 crore and minimum area of 20,000 sq. ft.
  - Warehousing Facility: Minimum investment of Rs. 25 crore and minimum area of 1 lakh sq ft.
- Coming under infrastructure category will help logistics sector to get credit at competitive rates and on long-term basis with enhanced limits.
- It will also give access to larger amounts of funds as external commercial borrowings (ECB), longer tenor funds from insurance companies and pension funds.
- Besides, logistics sector will be also eligible to borrow from India Infrastructure Financing Company (IIFC). It can also put logistics sector on steady growth path and its benefits could spill over to other sectors such as food processing that use logistics services in a big way.
- The need for integrated Logistics sector development was felt in view of fact that logistics cost in India is very high compared to developed countries.
- High logistics cost reduces the competitiveness of Indian goods both in domestic as well as export market.

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## Awards & Recognition

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### **Girish Karnad conferred with 2017 Tata Literature Live Lifetime Achievement Award**

Actor-playwright Girish Karnad (79) was conferred with 2017 Tata Literature Live Lifetime Achievement Award for his outstanding contribution in field of theatre at the eighth edition of the Tata Literature festival held in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

- Girish Karnad is famously known for writing plays. His works translated into various Indian languages.
- Some of his critically acclaimed plays are Yayati (1961), Tughlaq (1964), Hayavadana (1971), Naga-mandala (1988) and Taledanda (1990).
- He also had made his acting impact through several films and theatre shows.



### **Nabaneeta Dev Sen honoured with Big Little Book Award**

Popular Bengali writer Nabaneeta Dev Sen has been declared as winner in 'Author in Bengali language' category at the second edition of Big Little Book Award.

- The Big Little Book Award honours authors and illustrators who have contributed to children's literature that are global in appeal and contextual in nature.
- The award has been instituted under Parag initiative of Tata Trusts to promote children's literature. The chief of Parag Initiative is Swaha Sahoo.
- Nabaneeta Sen is a recipient of the Sahitya Academy Award and the Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Award. She has been writing for children as well as general readers for the past three decades.
- Other category winners:
  - In the illustrator category, Proiti Roy received the award. Her work includes illustrations in translated fairy tale books.
  - Book of the year, non-fiction: 'Age of Anger: A History of the Present' by Pankaj Mishra.
  - Book of the year, fiction: Easterine Kire's 'Son of the Thundercloud'.

### **Veteran journalist Manik Banerjee gets IMF award**

Veteran journalist Manik Banerjee, who is also a renowned mountaineer was presented with the Life Time Achievement Award by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF).

- Manik Banerjee was presented the Life Time Achievement Award in recognition of his achievements in mountaineering over a period of four decades.
- Manik Banerjee is a former sports journalist. He has made invaluable contribution in promotion of mountaineering and allied adventure activities in various media besides his service in spreading the spirit of adventure activities among the under privileged.

### **Actor Trisha gets UNICEF celebrity advocate status**

On 20th November 2017, Tamil actor Trisha Krishnan was conferred the UNICEF celebrity advocate status for child rights at an event held in Chennai.

- Trisha Krishnan is the first actor from the South Indian film industry to receive the UNICEF celebrity advocate status. This was previously awarded to Bollywood actors Nandita Das, Madhuri Dixit, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Raveena Tandon.
- Trisha Krishnan will support efforts to address issues such as anaemia, child marriage, child labour and child abuse, especially in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- She will also promote education and health of adolescents and the value of girl child in family and society. After receiving the honour, she said that, educating girl children up to the age of 18 will help control child marriage and child labour.

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# Sports

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## **Grigor Dimitrov beats David Goffin to win the singles title of 2017 Nitto ATP Finals (tennis)**

On 19th November 2017, Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov beat Belgium's David Goffin and won the singles title of 2017 Nitto ATP Finals, at The O2 Arena, in London.

- Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov beat Belgium's David Goffin by 7-5, 4-6, 6-3 at the finals and won the singles title of 2017 Nitto ATP Finals.
- Grigor Dimitrov has become the first debutant for 19 years to win the singles title at the ATP Finals since Alex Corretja in 1998.
- Grigor Dimitrov collected £1.9m in prize money for coming through the tournament unbeaten in five matches across the group stage, semi-finals and final. He will end the year ranked third in the world, with David Goffin up to seventh.

## **Hockey Karnataka clinches Hockey India 5-a-side Senior Men's National Championship 2017**

On 19th November 2017, Hockey Karnataka won the second edition of the Hockey India 5-a-side Senior Men's National Championship 2017 title at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Stadium, in Balewadi, Pune.

- Hockey Karnataka won the Hockey India 5-a-side Senior Men's National Championship 2017 title after beating Hockey Haryana 4-3 in a tense penalty shootout.
- At the final between Hockey Karnataka and Hockey Haryana, the two teams went into a penalty shootout after 4-4 stalemate in the 30 minutes regulation time.
- Also, Hockey Haryana emerged victorious in the second edition of the Hockey India 5-a-side Senior National Championship (Women) after a nail-biting final against Hockey Maharashtra.

## **Ethiopian athletes clinch Gold medals in both sections of Delhi Half Marathon 2017**

On 19th November 2017, Ethiopia's current woman world athlete of the year Almaz Ayana and Ethiopia's Berhanu Legese won gold in the women's and men's event respectively at the Delhi Half Marathon 2017.

- Almaz Ayana, the world's leading woman long distance runner on track, clocked one hour, seven minutes and 11 seconds and became champion in her first half marathon race, securing the gold medal.
- In the men's elite race, 2015 winner Berhanu Legese bagged the gold in 59 minutes and 46 seconds. Another Ethiopian Anadamlak Belihu was second in 59:51.
- Both Ayana and Legese could not break the course record of 1:06:54 and 59:06 respectively. Around 35,000 runners participated in the Delhi Half Marathon.
- Among the Indian women, L Suriya bagged the gold in course record (for Indians) time of 1:10:31. Olympian Nitendra Singh Rawat won the Indian men's race, clocking a new course record time of 1:03:53.

### **Afghanistan clinches 2017 Under-19 Asian Cricket Cup**

On 19th November 2017, Afghanistan defeated Pakistan and won the Under-19 Asia Cup for the first time at the Kinrara Academy Oval in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

- Afghanistan has won its first Under-19 Asia Cup with a 185-run victory over Pakistan. Afghanistan's Ikram Ali Khelof scored a century. He was named the 'man of the match'.
- Afghanistan's Mujeeb Zadran took an overall 20 wickets in the tournament and was named the 'best player of the tournament'.
- Pakistan had won the toss and elected to field. They managed to restrict Afghanistan to 248 for 7 off 50 overs. However, the Pakistani players were all out on just 63 off 22.1 overs, with Afghanistan's M Rahman taking 5-13 and Q Kamawal 3-18.

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## **Obituary**

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### **Naim Suleymanoglu, Turkey's 3-time Olympic gold weightlifter, dead at 50**

On 18th November 2017, Naim Suleymanoglu, the Turkish weightlifter who won three Olympic Gold Medals and was known as "Pocket Hercules," died at an Istanbul hospital.

- Naim Suleymanoglu died at an Istanbul hospital where he was receiving treatment for cirrhosis of the liver.

- He was 50 years old. He earned his nickname “Pocket Hercules” for his strength and diminutive size of 4-foot-10.
- He won three straight Olympic gold medals for Turkey between 1988 and 1996. He could lift three times his weight. He also won seven world and six European championships.
- He won his first gold at Seoul, South Korea, in 1988.

### **Former Union Minister Priya Ranjan Dasmuni passed away**

On 20th November 2017, Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Priya Ranjan Dasmuni, in coma since 2008, died at Apollo hospital in Delhi.

- He was one of the Congress’s most popular leaders in West Bengal.
- He was union Parliamentary Affairs Minister when he went into coma. He was on life support for over a decade.
- In 2006, he was the first Indian to be a match commissioner in a FIFA World Cup game between Australia and Croatia. He was heading the Indian football governing body at the time of his stroke in 2008.

### **Justice Bhagwati Prasad passed away**

On 19th November 2017, Former chief justice of the Jharkhand High Court Bhagwati Prasad passed away at a private hospital, in Ahmedabad.

- Justice Bhagwati Prasad started his career as a lawyer at the Rajasthan High Court and served as the chief of the Rajasthan High Court Advocates Association and president of the Bar Council of India.
- He was appointed as a judge of the Rajasthan High Court in 1996 and of the Gujarat High Court on February 7, 2008. He was elevated as the chief justice of the Jharkhand High Court on August 22, 2010.
- He was appointed as the GSHRC (Gujarat State Human Rights Commission) chairperson on August 4, 2016.

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## **Important Days**

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### **Universal Children’s Day – November 20**

On 20th November 2017, Universal Children’s Day was observed all over the world.

- Universal Children's Day was established in 1954. It is celebrated on November 20th each year to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and improving children's welfare.
- The theme for Universal Children's Day 2017 is: It's a #KidsTakeOver.
- Since 1990, Universal Children's Day also marks the anniversary of the date that the UN General Assembly adopted both the declaration and the convention on children's rights.
- To celebrate the 2017 Universal Children's Day, UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) had invited children from around the world taking over key roles in media, politics, business, sport and entertainment to voice their support for millions of their peers who are unschooled, unprotected and uprooted on 20th November 2017.

### **Africa Industrialization Day – November 20**

On 20th November 2017, Africa Industrialization Day was observed in various parts of the world.

- The theme for 2017 Africa Industrialization Day is: "African Industrial Development: A Pre-Condition for an Effective and Sustainable Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA)".
- The purpose of Africa Industrialization Day (AID), marked each year on 20 November, is to raise global awareness of the challenges faced by the continent with regard to industrialization.
- It also aims to mobilize both African leaders and international organizations to advocate for the accelerated and sustainable industrialization of Africa.
- United Nations General Assembly, in 1989, proclaimed 20 November as "Africa Industrialization Day".

### **Qaumi Ekta Week being observed across India**

"Qaumi Ekta Week" (National Integration Week) is observed all over India, from the 19th to 25th November, 2017.

- The Qaumi Ekta Week is celebrated with a view to foster and reinforce the spirit of Communal Harmony, National Integration and pride in vibrant, composite culture and nationhood.
- The week long programmes to be observed during Qaumi Ekta Week are:
  - November 19, 2017 – National Integration Day
  - November 20, 2017 – Welfare of Minorities Day
  - November 21, 2017– Linguistic Harmony Day
  - November 22, 2017– Weaker Sections Day
  - November 23, 2017– Cultural Unity Day

- November 24, 2017– Women's Day
- November 25, 2017– Conservation Day
- The National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH), organises Communal Harmony Campaign coinciding with the Qaumi Ekta Week and observes the Communal Harmony Flag Day on 25th November 2017.

www.ambitionIAS.com