

# National Current Affairs

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## **CCEA approves expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Yojana for a pan India coverage from 2017-18 to 2019-20. Its expansion has proposed outlay of Rs.1132.5 crore.

- It will cover all the 640 districts (as per census 2011) of the country to have a deeper positive impact on Child Sex Ratio (CSR). Currently the scheme is being implemented in select 161 districts have low CSR.
- The expansion of scheme was approved based on its successful implementation in 161 districts.
- The expansion includes multi sectoral intervention in 244 districts in addition to existing 161 districts. 235 districts will be covered through alert district media, advocacy and outreach, thus covering all 640 districts of the country.
- BBBPs scheme was launched by Prime Minister in January 2015 at Panipat, Haryana as comprehensive programme to address declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and related issues of empowerment of women over life-cycle continuum.
- The specific objectives of the scheme are preventing gender biased sex selective elimination, ensuring survival and protection of the girl child and ensuring education and participation of the girl child.

## **CCEA approves Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved 'Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra' scheme for a period 2017-18 to 2019-20.

- The scheme is part of Umbrella Scheme "Mission for Protection and Empowerment for Women" of the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- It aims at empowering rural women through community participation to create an environment in which they realise their full potential.
- PMMSK scheme is envisioned as one-stop convergence support service for empowering rural women with opportunities for skill development, digital literacy, health and nutrition and employment.
- The scheme aims to improve declining child sex ratio (CSR), ensure survival and protection of the girl child, ensuring her education and empowering her to fulfil her potential.
- It will provide an interface for rural women to approach government for getting their entitlements and for empowering them through training and capacity building.

- At national level, Mahila Shakti Kendra will provide domain-based knowledge support while at state level, it will cater to State Resource Centre for Women that will provide technical support on issues related to women at district and block level centres.

### **Government to initiate Safe city plan for women in eight cities**

Government will soon initiate a comprehensive 'safe city' plan for women in eight cities for women in eight metropolitan cities of the country.

- It will be implemented in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Lucknow, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.
- The Safe city plan will serve as robust emergency response system and provides police-verified public transport will come into place.
- The police and municipal corporations of these metropolitan cities will frame plan of action.
- The plan will be forwarded by respective State Level Committee headed by Chief Secretary of the state.
- Later it will be then assessed by Steering Committee headed by Home Secretary, which will make suitable recommendations.

### **PM Narendra Modi inaugurates 5th global conference on cyber space**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the fifth edition of Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS) in New Delhi.

- GCCS is one of world's largest conferences on cyber space. It is for first time organized in India.
- The theme of the two-day conference is "Cyber4All: A Secure and Inclusive Cyberspace for Sustainable Development".
- The National e-Governance Division (NeGD), under the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY) is main agency to organize GCCS 2017 on behalf of Government of India.
- Representatives from 124 countries and 33 Ministerial delegates from 31 countries are attending GCCS 2017.
- Objectives of GCCS 2017 are to promote importance of inclusiveness and human rights in global cyber policy, defend the status quo of open, interoperable and unregimented cyberspace, create political commitment for capacity building initiatives to address digital divide and assist countries, and develop security solutions in balanced fashion that duly acknowledge importance of the private sector and technical community.

- GCCS is prestigious global event where international leaders, policymakers, industry experts, think tanks, cyber wizards etc gather to deliberate on issues and challenges for optimally using cyber space.

### **Cabinet approves continuation of scheme on Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs.**

The Union Cabinet has approved continuation of scheme on Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) for another three financial years (FYs 2017-18 to 2019-20). This decision will make IICA self-sustainable by the end of FY 2019-20.

- IICA is an agency under the aegis and jurisdiction of Ministry of Corporate Affairs. It handles and deal with various subjects, matters and affairs of corporate affairs regulation, governance and policy.
- IICA works and operates to deliver as well as create avenues and opportunities for research, education, training and advocacy. It is first institution .in India to be formally set up as ‘think-tank’ for major Ministry of Government.
- It offers services to stakeholders in field of corporate laws, corporate governance, CSR, accounting standards, investor education, etc.
- It conducts training programs, research activities and projects in partnership with public and private sector in niche areas of Corporate Governance.

### **Cabinet approves promulgation of ordinance to amend Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code.**

Union Cabinet has proposal to promulgate an ordinance under Article 123 of Constitution to make certain amendments in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

- The ordinance is likely to be tabled during winter session of Parliament with view to getting its approval soon.
- The amendments seeks to strengthen IBC by explicitly preventing certain persons — including wilful defaulters, those who have indulged in fraudulent transactions, disqualified directors as well as promoters whose account is classified as non-performing assets (NPA) beyond prescribed duration from regaining control of defaulting company through backdoor in the garb of a resolution applicant.

### **Cabinet approves agreement on co-operation in customs matters between India and Philippines**

The Union Cabinet approved signing and ratifying of Agreement between India and Philippines on co-operation and mutual assistance in customs matters. The agreement will help in availability of relevant information for prevention and investigation of Customs offences.

- The Agreement is also expected to facilitate trade and ensure efficient clearance of goods traded between countries. It will enter into force after necessary national legal requirements have been fulfilled by both countries.
- The Agreement will provide legal framework for sharing of information and intelligence between Customs authorities of two countries. It would help in proper application of Customs laws, prevention and investigation of Customs offences and facilitation of legitimate trade.
- The Agreement has been finalized with concurrence of two Customs Administrations.
- It takes care of Indian Customs' concerns and requirements, particularly in area of exchange of information on correctness of Customs value declared and authenticity of certificates of origin of goods traded between two countries.

### **Cabinet approves revised salaries and pension for Judges of Supreme Court and High Courts**

The Union Cabinet approved revision in salaries, gratuity, allowances, pension etc. of Judges of Supreme Court and High Courts retired Judges of Supreme Court and High Courts. The decision follows implementation of recommendations of 7th Central Pay Commission in respect of Civil Servants.

- The increase in salary and allowances will benefit 31 Judges of Supreme Court (including the CJI) and 1079 Judges (including the Chief Justices) of High Courts. Besides, it will also benefit approximately 2500 retired Judges.
- The approval will pave way for necessary amendments in two laws viz. Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1958 and High Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1954, which govern the salaries of CJI, Judges of Supreme Court, Chief Justices and all Judges of High Courts. Government has proposed to introduce Bill in Parliament in ensuing Session for amendment in these relevant Acts for giving effect to the revision of salaries and allowances.

### **Karnataka passes diluted law Bill to regulate hospital policies, fees**

On 22nd November 2017, the Karnataka Assembly passed a diluted version of law proposed by the Congress government to regulate pricing and certain policies at private hospitals and medical establishments in Karnataka.

- The Karnataka Private Medical Establishments (Amendment) (KPME) Bill, 2017 was passed with some modifications, as demanded by private medical establishments during the course of protests held against the Bill last week.
- It is modelled on the West Bengal Clinical Establishments (Registration, Regulation and Transparency) Act, 2017. The proposed law originally prescribed stringent punishment, including six months to three years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs

25,000 to Rs 5 lakh for officials of hospitals charging fees in excess of costs fixed by the state. The final version of the Bill dropped the imprisonment clause.

- Karnataka government has also modified the structure of district-level public grievance redress committees initially envisaged. It has made a provision for representation from the private sector on these committees.

### **Government sets up Arvind Modi-led panel to overhaul, simplify income tax laws**

On 22nd November 2017, the government formed a task force to draft a new direct tax law to replace the existing Income Tax Act, which has been in force since 1961.

- Arvind Modi, Member, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), will lead a six-member panel. Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian will be a permanent special invitee on the panel.
- Other members of the task force are:
  - Girish Ahuja (chartered accountant)
  - Rajiv Memani (Chairman and Regional Managing Partner of EY)
  - Mukesh Patel (Practicing Tax Advocate)
  - Mansi Kedia (Consultant, ICRIER)
  - G C Srivastava (retired IRS and Advocate).
- The task force will submit its report to the government within six months. It would draft direct tax laws in line with tax laws prevalent in other countries, incorporating international best practices, and keeping in mind the economic needs of India.

### **Punjab Cabinet gives nod to amend Punjab excise Act & amendments to Co-operative Societies Act**

On 22nd November 2017, the Punjab cabinet approved amendments to the Punjab Co-operative Societies Act, 1961, a legislation governing co-operative societies in Punjab, to allow people to contest the mergers of some societies.

- The cabinet amended Section 13 of the Act, which provides for amalgamation of co-operative societies and allows the societies concerned and their creditors to object to the proposed order of amalgamation of more than one society by the Registrar.
- It has now been decided to give such societies and their creditors another opportunity to approach the government against the orders of the Registrar.
- Another amendment relates to Section 19(2), under which a society can nominate a committee member for voting in the work of another society of which it is a member.
- Under sections 26 (I-D) and 27, an administrator is appointed in case the managing committee of a society stops to exist or is suspended or dismissed.
- The cabinet approved that the period of delay due to court orders of shall not be counted at the time of computing the tenure of such administrator.

### **Odisha to launch new irrigation scheme – Nabakrushna Choudhury Seccha Unnayan Yojana**

On 22nd November 2017, Odisha government decided to launch “Nabakrushna Choudhury Seccha Unnayan Yojana” to provide irrigation facility to about 55,000 hectare of agricultural land across Odisha.

- The scheme, “Nabakrushna Choudhury Seccha Unnayan Yojana”, has been named after former chief minister and freedom fighter Nabakrushna Choudhury.
- The scheme would be implemented with an outlay of Rs 635 crore over a period of three years. Under the scheme, 46,296 hectare command area of 14 major and medium irrigations and 284 minor irrigation projects will be revived.
- The cabinet also decided to reduce the rate of VAT to 5 % on use of natural gas in industrial and domestic sectors and it will be 15 % when used as fuel in vehicles.

### **West Bengal government forms Hill Area Development Committee under Mann Ghising**

The West Bengal government has set up a four-member Hill Area Development Committee that will oversee work in the Hills.

- The Hill Area Development Committee will be headed by Mann Ghising, president of Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF). The remaining members are:
  - Mahendra Chhetri – vice chairperson
  - Ajoy Edwards – member
  - Subhomoy Chatterjee – member
- The new committee will supervise all the development works in Darjeeling and Kalimpong and will come into effect immediately. This committee will start functioning from Pintail village on the outskirts of Siliguri.

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## **International Current Affairs**

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### **Latin America is World’s most violent region for Women: United Nations**

As per a report presented by UN Women and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Latin America and the Caribbean is the most violent region in the world for women.

- Issue of violence against women in Latin America is so critical, that the region has been referred to as most violent region in the world for women outside of conflict zones.
- This region also has the highest rate of sexual violence against women outside of relationships.
- There is high prevalence of Femicide (killing of woman by a man on account of gender) in Central America, wherein two out three women murdered died because of their gender.
- The report outlined that 24 of the 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have laws against domestic violence, but only 9 of them have laws to punish other forms of violence against women in public or private.

### **World Trade Organization (WTO) sets up panel on Qatar-UAE crisis**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has established a panel to decide on Qatar's complaint against measures imposed on Doha by the United Arab Emirates for its alleged financial support for militant groups.

- Qatar insisted UAE's actions violate its rights and those of other countries by denying freedom of transit to Qatar. The UAE said the measures are allowed according to an exception under WTO rules for national security reasons.
- Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates launched an economic boycott of Qatar in June 2017 and closed land, air and sea access to it. Qatar has denied supporting extremists.
- The World Trade Organization has now established a panel to decide on Qatar's complaint against measures imposed on Doha by the United Arab Emirates.

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## **Banking & Finance**

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### **Royal Bank of Canada joins the global ranks of banks deemed 'too big to fail'**

Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) has become the first Canadian bank to be added to the Financial Stability Board's (FSB's) list of global systemically important banks (G-SIB) deemed 'too big to fail'.

- Royal Bank of Canada joins the global ranks of banks deemed 'too big to fail'. Financial Stability Board (FSB) is an international body based in Basel, Switzerland which co-ordinates the work of national financial authorities and international standard-setting bodies.



- FSB has added RBC and has removed French bank Groupe BPCE from the list. Currently, there are 30 added in this list, Royal Bank of Canada will now have to set aside larger capital buffers and will be subjected to more stringent supervision and compliance.
- RBC is Canada's largest bank by market capitalization and already has the necessary capital buffer to meet the institutions on Financial Stability Board's (FSB's) list of global systemically important banks.

### **UBI gets SEBI approval for Rs 1,000 crore equity issue via QIP**

On 22nd November 2017, United Bank of India (UBI) said it has received SEBI's approval for issue of equity shares worth Rs 1,000 crore by way of institutional placement.

- Union Bank of India (UBI) in January 2017, said it planned to raise up to Rs 1,500 crore through Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP), rights or public issue.
- UBI had raised Rs 127.49 crore through sale of shares to qualified institutional investors in May 2017. It approved allotting over 5.49 crore shares to qualified institutional buyers at issue price of Rs 23.22 per share.
- UBI had earlier said it plans to raise up to Rs 500 crore of Basel III-compliant listed additional tier-I debt instruments in the nature of bonds. UBI would seek approval for this amount from its board, which is scheduled to meet on December 6, 2017.

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## **Business**

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### **Samsung partners with UP govt to set up 20 healthcare centres**

On November 22, 2017, Samsung India announced a partnership with Uttar Pradesh State Government for 'Smart Healthcare Programme'.

- Under this programme, Samsung India will set-up 20 new smart healthcare centres across Uttar Pradesh to offer affordable and quality healthcare to patients from the economically and socially weaker sections of society.
- Since 2015, Samsung India has collaborated with 18 government hospitals across India under its 'Smart Healthcare Programme', which has so far benefitted over three lakh patients from the economically and socially deprived sections of society.
- Now with the latest partnership with Uttar Pradesh State Govt., additional 20 healthcare centres will be setup, taking the total number to 38 across India.
- Samsung India will also provide advanced equipments such as ultrasound and digital radiology (x-ray) machines to selected government hospitals across the state.



### **Facebook to help small businesses in India, train 5 lakh Indians by 2020**

On 22nd November 2017, Facebook said it expects to train about 5 lakh people in India on digital skills by 2020 and unveiled two programmes designed for individuals and start-ups.

- Two programmes: Facebook Digital Training and Facebook Startup Training Hubs were rolled out in India before any other country.
- These tools will help people learn digital skills and enable entrepreneurs and SMB (small and medium businesses) in digitising their business.
- Facebook is working with organisations like Digital Vidya, EDII, DharmaLife and StartupIndia to develop the curriculum that is designed to work in low network strength regions.
- The Startup Training Curriculum will cover subjects like, how entrepreneurs can protect their ideas, how to hire, how to go about getting funding, regulations and legal hurdles an entrepreneur needs to consider, etc.

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## **Awards & Recognition**

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### **Pondicherry University library bags the Highest Profile Registration category award**

Pondicherry University library has bagged the Highest Profile Registration category award for effective utilisation of the J-Gate@eShodhSindhu platform.

- University librarian R. Samyuktha received the award at the first J-Gate@eShodhSindhu Forum and Information and Library Network Centers (INFLIBNET) meet jointly organised by INFLIBNET and Informatics Publishing Ltd, held at Gandhi Nagar recently.
- Pondicherry University is a member of the consortia of leading universities in the country for access to e-resources including electronic journals and electronic databases for major publishers.

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## **Appointments & Resigns**

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### **Shubhangi Swaroop becomes first female pilot in Indian Navy**

On 22nd November 2017, Indian Navy inducted its first-ever woman pilot, Shubhangi Swaroop.

- The first batch of female officers passed out from the Indian Naval Academy at Ezhimala on 22nd November 2017. Shubhangi Swaroop, a native of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, has become the first woman pilot in the Navy.
- She will soon be flying Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft. Three other women cadets, Astha Segal from New Delhi, Roopa A. from Puducherry and Sakthi Maya S. from Kerala, also became the country's first women officers at NAI (Naval Armament Inspectorate), branch of the Navy.
- Shubhangi will be trained at the Air Force Academy at Hyderabad which trains pilots of the Army, Navy and the Air Force.

### **UBS India Chief Executive Officer Aashish Kamat quits**

Aashish Kamat has resigned as the Chief Executive Officer of Swiss banking giant UBS's India operations.

- Aashish Kamat will be replaced by Harald Egger, who is currently head of group corporate services and sourcing at UBS.
- Aashish Kamat took over as UBS India head in 2011. He was previously the chairman of UBS' financial institutions group in Asia. He is likely to continue till January 2018 to enable a smooth transition.
- His departure is said to have not been totally unplanned and he is said to have informed the senior management of his intentions to move on and pursue other interests.

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## **Science & Technology**

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### **PM Modi launches UMANG app for government services**

On 23rd November 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally launched UMANG, a state and central government services app, at the inaugural ceremony of the Global Conference for Cyberspace in New Delhi.

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) along with the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) has developed the app. UMANG expands to Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance.

- The app has 162 services from 33 state and central government departments and four states. The app is available on Android, iOS and Windows platforms.
- It integrates with the core government services of Aadhaar, DigiLocker, Rapid Assessment System, and Bharat Bill Payment System. A user signing up on the app has to digitally complete KYC (Know Your Customer) and link Aadhaar where required.
- It is currently available in 13 languages: English, Hindi, Assamese, Gujarati, Bengali, Kannada, Odia, Punjabi, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu, and Urdu.

### **CMFRI joins hands with ISRO to identify Potential Fishing Zone**

The (CMFRI) Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute has joined hands with ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) to identify Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ), an area in sea where fishes are seen in abundance.

- In the first phase, CMFRI and the Space Applications Centre (SAC) of ISRO have jointly launched a research project for identifying, forecasting and monitoring PFZ in coastal and offshore waters of Tamil Nadu.
- The project named “Samudra” is aimed at helping fishermen easily locate fish without wasting time and fuel.
- The project aims to develop a satellite-based numerical ocean model to forecast information about the fishing locations by closely monitoring and analyzing various physical changes occurred in ocean due to seasonal and climatic variations, high winds, rain and cyclonic conditions.

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## **Sports**

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### **Basel to become first city to jointly host Badminton and Para Badminton World Championships in 2019**

Basel will become the first city to jointly host the Badminton and Para Badminton World Championships in 2019.

- The Badminton World Federation (BWF) confirmed that the two tournaments: Badminton and Para Badminton World Championships will be held simultaneously for the first time.
- Basel beat off competition from Tokyo to land the 2019 Para Badminton World Championships in a vote which was delayed by the BWF Council to allow further discussions.

- The event will be the last held in the sport before Para Badminton makes its Paralympic Games debut at Tokyo 2020.

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# Obituary

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## **Sudip Datta Bhowmik, the noted journalist of Tripura shot dead**

On 21st November 2017, Sudip Datta Bhowmik, a senior journalist was shot dead under mysterious circumstances at a battalion headquarters of Tripura State Rifles (TSR) near Agartala.

- Sudip Datta Bhowmik was 49 years old. He was working for 'Syandan Patrika' and was also contributing to local television channel 'News Vanguard'.
- The investigative journalist went to the battalion headquarters for want of news when he faced a targeted attack.
- Reports said a TSR trooper shot dead Sudip Datta Bhowmik from point-blank range just outside the office of Commandant Tapan Debbarma.

## **Assam's legendary actor Biju Phukan passes away**

On 22nd November 2017, Assam's prominent film actor Biju Phukan passed away at a private hospital in Guwahati, after suffering cardiac ailments.

- Biju Phukan was considered one of the most prominent actors of Assam. He acted in over 80 films including some Bengali films during 1970s to 1990s. He had given several superhit films to the Assamese film industry.
- He made his debut in the movie "Dr. Bezbaruah" in 1970. The last film he acted in was "Door" released in 2016.