

National Current Affairs

India-Russia sign comprehensive anti-terror pact

India and Russia have signed comprehensive anti-terror pact agreement for enhancing bilateral cooperation in tackling all forms of terrorism and countering threat posed by narcotics.

- Both countries emphasized need to strength of relationship between them which has been consolidated in past 70 years in all areas.
- They underlined that cooperation in field of security is important aspect of bilateral relationship between them to further strengthen cooperation to combat terrorism, extremism and radicalism.
- They also agreed to cooperate in combating new challenges, cooperate in building a data base, and in training of police and investigative agencies and enhance exchange of information.
- Both countries signed
 - Joint Action Plan for countering threat posed by narcotics: It aims at countering threat posed by narcotics and agreement will provide legal framework for bilateral cooperation in this field. It will be for period 2018-20.
 - Updated and more comprehensive agreement on Cooperation on Security: The agreement provides a comprehensive approach for cooperation in security related issues.

Government launches intensive program to train Elected Women Representatives of PRIs

The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) launched intensive training program for Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Master Trainers in New Delhi.

- It is capacity building program organized by National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) of WCD Ministry.
- It aims to train approximately twenty thousand EWRs covering nearly 50 EWRs from each district by March 2018.
- The Capacity building of EWRs is critical to empower women to participate effectively in governance processes.
- This program will help them assume leadership roles expected of them and guide their villages towards a more prosperous future.
- The training will also include simple engineering skills to give them insight into women's issues as well as focus on education and financial matters.

INSPIRE 2017: International Symposium to Promote Innovation & Research in Energy Efficiency

The first edition of International Symposium to Promote Innovation & Research in Energy Efficiency (INSPIRE 2017) was held in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

- The five-day symposium was organized by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) in partnership with World Bank and Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE).
- INSPIRE 2017 is international conference that aimed to bring together various stakeholders such as policy makers, innovators, financiers, influencers to showcase best practices in sector.
- Its objective was to provide common platform for energy efficiency community to discuss energy efficiency policies, emerging technologies, market transformation strategies, delivery and business-model driven transformations.
- It also intended to create platform for deliberations and sharing of best practices around energy efficiency policy solutions, high-impact research, innovative financing and implementation that are driving large scale market transformations in India and across the globe.

Two-day Korea Tourism Festival 2017 opens in Haryana

On November 26, 2017, a two-day 'Korea Culture and Tourism Festival' showcasing Korea's rich art, culture and heritage was inaugurated in Gurugram, Haryana by Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO) Executive Vice President, Min Hong Min along with Suman Billa, Joint Secretary in the Union Ministry Of Tourism.

- The festival showcased famous tourist destinations, delicacies, art, culture and heritage of South Korea.
- With increased number of Indian tourists to South Korea, travel and tourism service providers in Korea will get more adaptable to Indian tourists' requirements.
- As per a report published by Integreon (a leading global provider of outsourced legal, document, business and research support), India is among the fastest growing outbound travel markets. By 2025, India is expected to be among top five countries in terms of international tourism expenditures.

India, Greece sign Air Services Agreement

India and Greece have signed Air Services Agreement (ASA) and MoU on Cooperation (MoC) in field of New and Renewable Energy.

- ASA is signed between countries to decide on number of flights that airlines can fly into each other's countries.
- The ASA between India and Greece will allow airlines from Greece to operate unlimited flights to six Indian metropolitan airports and Indian carriers can fly to Greece without any such restriction.
- It makes Greece first country with which India has open sky arrangement under our new civil aviation policy 2016.

Odisha launches Fish Pond Yojana to increase fish production

On November 27, 2017, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the 'Fish Pond Yojana' while inaugurating a workshop on 'Doubling of Farmer Income through Dairy and Allied Farming Practices' in Bhubaneswar.

- Aim of this scheme is to boost fish production in Odisha.
- The scheme has been launched with a budgetary provision of Rs 96 crore.
- Under the scheme, additional 2200 hectare of fresh water aquaculture farming will be created, for which farmers will be given 50 per cent financial assistance from state government.

President of India inaugurates the International Ambedkar Conclave in New Delhi

On 27th November 2017, President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the International Ambedkar Conclave, organised by the Forum of SC and ST Legislators and Parliamentarians, in New Delhi.

- The President emphasised the necessity of working within the purview of the Constitution and the rule of law.
- The President noted that Dr Ambedkar had said that the basis of the success of any constitution is not just its text. The success of the Constitution depends on the people and political parties, which are used by the people as instruments for the achievement of their aspirations and priorities.

International Current Affairs

WHO for first time releases guidelines on child sex abuse

The World Health Organisation (WHO) for first time has formulated clinical guidelines on responding to children and adolescents who have been sexually.

- The guidelines are grounded in human rights standards and ethical principles. They will assist frontline health care providers — general practitioners, gynaecologists, nurses and others — who may directly receive victim of sexual abuse or may identify sexual abuse during course of diagnosis and treatment.
- WHO's first of kind gender sensitive guidelines provide first line support to child or adolescent in response to the disclosure of sexual abuse.
- It offers HIV post-exposure prophylaxis and adherence support to those who have been raped and who present within 72 hours.
- It offers emergency contraception to girl child who has been raped and who present within 120 hours (5 days).
- It takes into consideration STI (sexually transmitted infections) presumptive treatment or prophylaxis in settings where laboratory testing is not feasible.
- It also takes in considerations cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) with trauma focus for those have PTSD symptoms and diagnosis.
- It also offers Hepatitis B and HPV vaccination.
- The guidelines put best interests of children first by ensuring confidentiality and privacy, respecting their autonomy and wishes and addressing needs with vulnerabilities such as LGBT adolescents.

IMMSAREX 2017: International Multilateral Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise held in Bangladesh

The 2017 International Multilateral Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise (IMMSAREX) was held in Bangladesh from November 26 to 28 2017.

- The exercise is taking place under the aegis of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). It was inaugurated by Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina.
- From India, Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba participated in the exercise to consolidate bilateral naval relations between India and Bangladesh and to explore new avenues for naval cooperation.
- Indian Naval Ships (INS) Ranvir, Sahyadri, Gharial and Sukanya along with one Maritime Patrol Aircraft P-8I participated in the exercise.
- Extraordinary Conclave of Chiefs (ECoC)' meeting of IONS was also held.
- It focussed upon activities being undertaken by IONS in-addition to review progress made by three IONS Working Group (IWG)- Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster relief (HADR), Maritime Security and Information Exchange and Interoperability.

Banking & Finance

BillDesk launches cryptocurrency exchange Coinome in India

Indian online payments firm BillDesk-owned Hatio Innovations has launched cryptocurrency exchange 'Coinome' in India offering trading of Bitcoin and Bitcoin Cash.

- To start trading on this exchange, the user has to follow an e-KYC process, under which, he/she is required to register his/her Aadhaar number. After registering Aadhaar number, one time password (OTP) will be sent for the verification and activation of the account.
- Unlike many other cryptocurrency exchanges, Coinome is an open order book cryptocurrency exchange which enables direct deals between buyers and sellers just like conventional stocks and commodities exchanges. Coinome doesn't buy or sell cryptocurrencies directly.
- Currently, users can trade Bitcoin on 'Coinome' for value as low as \$1.546 (INR 100).

Bank of Baroda launches digital Supply Chain Finance solution

On November 27, 2017, Bank of Baroda (BoB) launched digital Supply Chain Finance solution which provides working capital loan opportunities for the small and medium enterprises and large corporate clients.

- This new product provides a range of supply chain finance products such as pre- and post-shipment finance.
- BoB's digital Supply Chain Finance solution has been designed to ensure faster approvals, smoother transaction processing and availability of finance to the Small and Medium Enterprises.
- Management of Bank of Baroda is hopeful that this product will give the bank a competitive positioning in the market and will highlight its intent as a leader in the field of Supply Chain Finance.

Awards & Recognition

South Africa's Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters wins Miss Universe 2017 crown

South Africa's Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters (22) was crowned Miss Universe at pageant held at The AXIS at Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas, Nevada, United State.

- With this she becomes, second South African to win this crown after Margaret Gardiner who had won Miss Universe 1978.
- The runner-up of Miss Universe 2017 was Miss Colombia Laura Gonzalez, while second runner-up was Miss Jamaica Davina Bennett.
- This year's edition had the most contestants ever, including the first ever representatives of Cambodia, Laos and Nepal.

Health Ministry wins Bronze Medal at the India International Trade Fair 2017

Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has won Bronze Medal for its creative and informative display at the 37th India International Trade Fair 2017.

- 37th India International Trade Fair 2017 was held from 14th – 27th November, 2017 in New Delhi.
- Health Ministry pavilion highlighted various programmes and initiatives of the Health Ministry such as Pradhan Mantri Matritva Suraksha Yojana (PMSMA), Mission Indradhnaush for expanding full immunization coverage, Mother's Absolute Affection (MAA) for encouraging breastfeeding, introduction of new vaccines and Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) for strengthening the tertiary health sector.
- Health Ministry had also organised three Swasthya Chetna camps for providing free of cost health check-up. Nearly 62000 people visited these camps.

Ishaan Khatter wins Best Actor award at Turkish Film Festival

Actor Ishaan Khattar has won the Best Actor award for his debut film 'Beyond The Clouds' at the International Bosphorus Film Festival in Turkey.

- 'Beyond The Clouds' has been directed by Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi.
- It is a tale of a brother and sister, and how they find happiness in separation and turbulent time.
- Music for this film has been composed by A. R. Rahman.
- In India, 'Beyond The Clouds' is scheduled to release in early 2018. It was the opening movie of the 48th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) on November 20, 2017.

Ruskin Bond gets Lifetime Achievement Award

On 26th November 2017, the Chandigarh Literary Society awarded children's author Ruskin Bond its first Lifetime Achievement Award, at the Chandigarh Lit Fest 'Literati-2017' at the Lake Club, in Chandigarh.

- The Lifetime Achievement Award given to Ruskin Bond consisted of a citation and Rs 2 lakh cash.
- Ruskin Bond was born and brought up in India. He was sent to London in the 50s after his schooling, where he worked as well as wrote his first novel – "Room on the Roof" at 17 years.

Appointments & Resigns

Justice Ved Prakash Vaish takes oath as Allahabad High Court judge

On 27th November 2017, Justice Ved Prakash Vaish took oath as judge of the Allahabad High Court, taking total strength of the court to 109 against the sanctioned 160.

- Justice Ved Prakash Vaish was earlier appointed as Additional Judge of Delhi High Court on April 17, 2013. He later took charge as judge of Meghalaya High Court on May 23, 2016.

Nirmala Sitharaman elected IDSA President

On November 23, 2017, Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was elected as President of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA).

- IDSA follows a convention to have the incumbent Union Defence Minister as its President.
- Ms. Sitharaman succeeds previous Defence Minister, Manohar Parrikar who had resigned from the post of IDSA President after shifting to Goa as Chief Minister.
- Ms. Sitharama will now be the chair of IDSA's Executive Council which governs the Institute.
- IDSA Executive Council includes Prof Charan Dass Wadhwa, G.K. Pillai, Air Marshal M. Matheswaran, Lt. Gen. Prakash Menon, Gulshan Luthra, Swashpawan Singh and Vice Admiral Anup Singh.

Aegon Life Insurance appoints Vineet Arora as MD & CEO

Aegon Life Insurance has appointed Vineet Arora as the Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, effective from January 2018.

- Vineet Arora will replace K S Gopalakrishnan who had left the company on November 17, 2017. Chief People Officer of Aegon Life Insurance, Saba Adil, will serve as the interim In-charge and Principal Officer.
- Vineet Arora has had a long association with the ICICI Group. He has worked with ICICI Prudential Life and later helped build a profitable multi-channel distribution business as the Senior General Manager and Head of Product, Distribution, Marketing and Wealth Management at ICICI Securities.

Environment

Drought, heatwaves increasing in frequency, area in India: IISc Study

Researchers from Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have found that frequency of heatwaves accompanied by drought has increased in magnitude and in area over past three decades in India.

- The increases in cocktail of drought and heatwaves were seen particularly in Maharashtra and Southern Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Central India.
- Heatwaves (a prolonged period when temperatures approach record extremes) and droughts are destructive even when occurring in separate events, but their concurrence is far more serious. Both phenomena have a serious bearing on water resources, affecting agriculture and human settlements.
- The conclusion was based on analysis of rainfall and temperature data of 50 years.
- Researchers had compared Heatwave Magnitude Index daily (HWMId) — which combines duration and magnitude of heatwaves — and Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI), which defines meteorological drought from 1951 to 1981.
- The area affected by extreme of extreme incident has gone from almost nothing in 1951, to nearly 4% by 2010. Nearly 18% of country's area on average has been facing at least three days of temperatures above 85th percentile.

Surge in oxygen levels led to explosion of life on earth: Study

According to recently published study, boost in levels of oxygen may have caused three-fold increase in biodiversity (or bio diversification) during between 445 and 485 million years ago.

- The study was conducted using geochemical proxies, high-resolution data and chemical signatures preserved in carbonate rocks formed from seawater.
- Using it, researchers were able to identify oxygen increase during Middle (or Darriwilian Stage- 460-465 million years ago) and Late Ordovician period (mid-Katian stage- 450-455 million years ago).
- According to study, this oxygenation is supported by two approaches that are mostly independent from each other.
- Other changes — such as ocean cooling, increased nutrient supply to oceans and predation pressures – also worked together to allow animal life to diversify for millions of years.
- It was found that nearly 80% increase in oxygen levels where oxygen constituted about 14% of atmosphere during Darriwilian Stage and increased to as high as 24% of atmosphere by mid-Katian stage.

Sports

Valtteri Bottas beats Lewis Hamilton to win the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix

On November 26, 2017, Formula 1 motorist, Valtteri Bottas won the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

- Valtteri Bottas of Mercedes team defeated his fellow teammate, Lewis Hamilton who finished at second spot.
- This was Valtteri Bottas's third win of 2017.
- Third spot in Abu Dhabi Grand Prix was occupied by Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel.
- This race took place at Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

India wins 10 medals in Para-Badminton World Championships

Indian contingent to BWF Para-Badminton World Championships in Ulsan, South Korea has clinched 10 medals, including two golds.

- India's Parul Parmar defeated Thailand's Wannaphatdee Kamtam in the finals of the women's singles Standing Lower (SL3).
- Other gold was also won by Parul Parmar, who paired with Japan's Akiko Sugino in women's doubles (SL 3-4) final. Parul Parmar- Akiko Sugino pair beat Chinese pair of Cheng Hefang and MA Huihui in the finals.
- Tarun Dhillon and Manoj Sarkar won the silver in the men's singles (SL 4) and (SL 3) respectively.

- Raj Kumar/Rakesh Pandey, Raja Magotra/Ruhi Satish Shingade, Umesh Vikram Kumar (with Thailand's Chawarat K), Raja Magotra/ Mark Joseph Dharmai, Manasi Joshi and Pramod Bhagat won Bronze medal in different events at BWF Para-Badminton World Championships.

India claim 5 gold medals in AIBA World Women's Youth Boxing Championships

On 26th November 2017, India won 5 gold medals at the AIBA World Women's Youth Boxing Championships, in Guwahati.

- Nitu (48kg), Jyoti Gulia (51kg), Sakshi choudhury (54kg), Shashi Chopra (57kg) and Ankushita Boro (64kg) won gold medals for India in the finals. Jyoti Gulia also qualified for next year's Youth Olympic Games in Argentina.
- Also, two bronze medals were secured by Neha Yadav (+81kg) and Anupama (81kg). Ankushita was named the boxer of the tournament.

7th international military games to be held at Wuhan in China

The 7th international military games will be held in Wuhan city in the central China's Hubei Province.

- The International Military Sports Council (CISM)'s Military World Games is a top sport event for military personnel.
- It comprises 329 competitions in 27 categories and is expected to attract around 8,000 participants from more than 100 countries and regions.
- The event's emblem, mascot, slogan and website has been unveiled.

Mairaj Khan crowned skeet champion at 61st National Shooting Championship for Shotgun events

On 25th November 2017, India's top skeet shooter Mairaj Ahmad Khan was crowned national champion at the 61st National Shooting Championship Competitions (61st NSCC) for Shotgun events, at Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range, New Delhi.

- In a battle between India's present and future of men's skeet shooting, Mairaj Khan, representing Uttar Pradesh and Angad Vir Singh Bajwa of Punjab, both recorded 57 out of 60 hits in the final.
- Then they went through a marathon shoot-off before Mairaj Khan came through 26-25 to win Gold. Man Singh of Haryana won the Bronze with a score of 46 in the finals.

- Punjab's Gurnihal Singh Garcha won the Junior Team Gold with his Punjab teammates Abinash Pratap Singh Sidhu and Indereshwar Singh Sekhon recording a combined total of 336.

Indian men's and women's teams win 2017 Asian Kabaddi Championship

On 26th November 2017, the Indian men's and women's kabaddi teams were both crowned the champions of Asia at the 2017 Asian Kabaddi Championship, in Gorgan, Iran.

- In the men's finals, star raider Ajay Thakur led from the front, and India beat Pakistan 36-22. India led 25-10 at half-time.
- India won the match by a 14-point margin. India had beaten Pakistan 44-18 in the group stages of the tournament, along with recording wins over Iraq (61-21), Japan (82-16) and Afghanistan (103-25).
- The Indian women's team beat South Korea 42-20 in their final. At half-time, India had a seven-point lead at 19-12 before breaking away in the second. India eventually won by a 22-point margin.

Obituary

Jazz singer Jon Hendricks passes away

On 22nd November 2017, Jon Hendricks, the pioneering jazz singer and lyricist died at a New York City hospital.

- Jon Hendricks found fame in the 1950s and '60s teaming with Dave Lambert and Annie Ross. Their interracial trio became one of the most celebrated jazz vocal groups ever.
- The trio's first album, "Sing a Song of Basie," won acclaim for its use of vocalese. In the 1980s, Jon Hendricks collaborated with Manhattan Transfer on an album called "Vocalese" that won three Grammys, one for Hendricks himself. He won awards worldwide.