

National Current Affairs

Telangana to set up the world's first IT Campus for differently-abled persons

The Telangana Government is going to set up the world's first Information and Technology (IT) Campus for differently-abled persons (divyangs) in state capital Hyderabad.

- On the occasion of World Disability Day (WDD), state Government has signed agreement with Vindhya E-Infomedia Private Limited to set up IT campus to focus on creating employment opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWDs).
- The proposed first of its kind differently-abled friendly campus will be set up in area of 10 acres near IT park developed by state Government near the Hyderabad international airport. The campus will have all amenities like Training, Delivery centres and Residential facility that will cater to various clients both domestic and International.
- The campus is expected to create 2000 jobs in next 5 years by providing required training and skills.

11 Annual MedTech Summit of Biodesign Programme held in New Delhi

The XIth Annual MedTech Summit of Biodesign Programme was held in New Delhi.

- It was inaugurated by Minister of Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Environment, Forests & Climate Change Dr. Harsh Vardhan.
- The summit was organised by Department of Biotechnology (DBT) under the Bio Design Programme.
- Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology is implementing Bio Design Programme to develop innovative and affordable medical devices to cater to clinical needs of country. It aims to train next generation of medical technology innovators in country.
- It is implemented by DBT at All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) and IIT Delhi in collaboration with international partners.

Tendu leaf bonus festival inaugurated in Bijapur

On December 2, 2017, Tendu Leaf Bonus Festival was inaugurated in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh.

- It is to be noted that collecting Tendu Leaves is the primary means of livelihood for a huge population from Bastar to Sarguja of Chhattisgarh.

- Under the bonus scheme, Chhattisgarh State Government will also provide free clothing and insurance to tendu leaf collectors, and scholarship and healthcare to their children.
- Besides, Chhattisgarh State Government has also announced increasing the tendu leaves collection rate from Rs 1800 to Rs 2500 per sack.

Madame Tussauds Wax Museum opens in New Delhi

On 1st December 2017, India's first Madame Tussauds wax museum was opened at Regal Building, Connaught Place, New Delhi.

- Madame Tussauds Wax Museum in New Delhi is the 23rd edition of Madame Tussauds Wax Museum. It consists of 50 lifelike figures of personalities related to history, sports, music, films, and politics.
- The statues of following personalities are present: Narendra Modi, Sachin Tendulkar, Katrina Kaif, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Ranbir Kapoor, Asha Bhosle, Sonu Nigam, Marilyn Monroe, Lady Gaga, Will Smith, Justin Bieber, Kim Kardashian, Beyonce Knowles, Kapil Sharma, and APJ Abdul Kalam.

International Current Affairs

'Populism' is Cambridge dictionary's 'word of the year 2017'

The word "populism" has been announced as the Cambridge Dictionary 2017 Word of the Year.

- The word "populism" has been selected based on the criteria that the word should not only be the most searched-for words but is also reflected in spikes.
- Spikes means occasions when a word is suddenly looked up many more times than usual on or around a particular date.
- The dictionary defines populism as "political ideas and activities that are intended to get the support of ordinary people by giving them what they want". The dictionary definition includes the usage label "mainly disapproving".

Banking & Finance

Forex reserves claw back to \$400-bn mark again

According to the weekly data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's foreign exchange reserves crossed the \$ 400-billion mark again, in the week to November 24, 2017.

- As per RBI data, forex reserves increased by \$ 1.208 billion to touch \$ 400.741 billion.
- In the previous week, forex reserves rose by \$ 240.4 million to \$ 399.533 billion.
- The latest surge in forex reserves came solely on the back of increase in foreign currency assets.
- Foreign currency assets is a major component of the overall reserves and currently stands at \$376.304 billion in the week to November 24, 2017.
- For the reporting week, Gold reserves remained unchanged at \$ 20.666 billion while special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) marginally declined by \$ 0.1 million to \$ 1.497 billion.

Corporation Bank launches RuPay credit cards

On December 2, 2017, Corporation Bank launched its RuPay Select and RuPay Platinum credit cards.

- These cards were unveiled by Corporation Bank's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Jai Kumar Garg in Mangaluru.
- Corporation Bank's RuPay credit cards will be accepted at all RuPay-enabled 1.5 million plus point of sale (PoS) terminals and 80000 plus e-commerce merchants in India.
- Corporation Bank's RuPay Select Credit Card and RuPay Platinum Credit Card comes with Personal accident insurance of Rs.10 lakh and Rs.2 lakh respectively.

Business

India is biggest importer of U.S. oil refinery by-product 'petcoke'

India has become the biggest importer of U.S. oil refinery by-product 'petcoke', which in 2016 got almost a fourth of all the fuel-grade "petcoke" the U.S. shipped out.

- Petroleum coke called as 'petcoke', a U.S. oil refinery by-product, is cheaper and burns hotter than coal. But it also contains more planet-warming carbon and heart and lung-damaging sulfur.

- In 2016, the U.S. sent more than 8 million metric tonnes of petcoke to India. That's about 20 times more than in 2010.
- The Supreme Court recently banned petcoke use by some industries as of November 1, 2017 in the three states surrounding New Delhi.

Awards & Recognition

HDFC Bank's Aditya Puri only Indian on Fortune's Businessperson of the Year top 20 list

Aditya Puri, the Managing Director of HDFC Bank, is the only Indian on Fortune's 'Businessperson of the Year 2017' list.

- The Businessperson of the Year list is an annual ranking of world's top 20 heads of companies. At the 18th position, Aditya Puri is the only head of an Indian company on the list.
- Aditya Puri has been the Managing Director of HDFC Bank since its inception in 1994. Nvidia's Jensen Huang, a Taiwan-born American entrepreneur and businessman, has topped the list.
- Some others who made it to the list are: Jamie Dimon of JP Morgan Chase, Marc Benioff of Salesforce, Mary Dillion of Ulta Beauty, Francisco D'Souza of Cognizant, Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook, Shantanu Narayen of Adobe Systems.

Miss Korea Jenny Kim crowned as Miss Supranational 2017

On 1st December 2017, Miss Korea Jenny Kim was crowned as Miss Supranational 2017 in Krynica Zdroj in Poland.

- Jenny Kim is a 24-year-old model from Seoul. She succeeds Srinidhi Shetty of India as Miss Supranational.
- Tica Martinez of Colombia and Bianca Tirsin of Romania were named the first runner-up and second runner-up respectively.
- India's Peden Ongmu Namgyal, reached top 25, but failed to make it to the top 10. Sixty-five contestants competed in this year's competition.
- Jenny Kim competed at the Miss Universe 2016 pageant held in Manila, Philippines, where she won as Miss Congeniality.

India's Ajaita Shah is grand champion at GES 2017 Catalyst Pitch competition

India's Ajaita Shah has emerged as the Grand Champion in the catalyst pitch competition held by Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST) on the closing day of the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES2017) held in Hyderabad.

- Ajaita Shah is the founder of a startup named 'Frontier Markets'. This startup provides last mile distribution solution for energy products based on solar technology that empowers women.
- As the winner of the catalyst pitch competition, Ajaita Shah received several prizes in kind including \$50,000 in Amazon Web Services credits and a Dell laptop computer.
- Jainesha Sinha, founder of GyanDhan, from India, Vaishali Neotia, founder of Merxius Software, from India and Fiona Edwards Murphy, founder of ApisProtect, from Ireland were the other three finalists of the catalyst pitch competition.
- Semifinal pitch sessions were based on the four GES focus industries viz. Healthcare and Life Sciences, Energy and Infrastructure, Digital Economy and Financial Technology and Media and Entertainment.

Appointments & Resigns

Lieutenant General D R Soni takes over as chief of Indian Army's Southern Command

On 1st December 2017, Lieutenant General D R Soni assumed command of the Indian Army's Southern Command headquartered in Pune.

- Lieutenant General D R Soni was General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Army Training Command since September 2016.
- He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, and the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. He was commissioned in the Central India Horse in June 1979.
- He has done requisite Army courses including the Junior Command, Senior Command and Higher Command Courses.

S K Chourasia appointed as DGOF and chairman of Ordnance Factory Board

Sunil Kumar Chourasia, IOFS (Indian Ordnance Factories Service), has been appointed as the new Director General of Ordnance Factories (DGOF) and Chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) with effect from 1st December, 2017.

- Previously, S K Chourasia was Member of OFB and was in charge of Material & Components division. He joined Indian Ordnance Factories Service in 1981.

- He was selected to work in Government of India as Deputy Secretary and thereafter Director in Ministry of Defence from 1992 to 1997. He was Chief Vigilance Officer in PSUs from 2002 to 2005.
- From 2005 to 2008, he held the post of Director & Commissioner for Departmental Enquiries at Central Vigilance Commission.
- Before taking over as Member at OFB, he was the General Manager of Heavy Alloy Penetrator Project, Trichy & Senior General Manager of Ordnance Factory Kanpur.

Preet Didbal becomes first Sikh woman Mayor in US

Preet Didbal has been elected as the mayor of Yuba city in California and has thereby become first Sikh woman elected as mayor in the United States (US).

- Preet Didbal was elected to Yuba city council in 2014 and is currently serving as vice-mayor. She will be sworn in as mayor on December 5, 2017.
- Ravi Bhalla is another Sikh Mayor in US. He was elected as mayor of Hoboken, New Jersey in November 2017.
- The Sutter-Yuba region in California is home to one of the largest Sikh communities in the country. It is estimated that US has around 500000 people who follow the Sikh faith.

Pakistan's Law Minister Zahid Hamid resigns

On November 27, 2017, Pakistan's Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Zahid Hamid tendered his resignation to Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, following protests by hardline religious groups in Pakistan.

- Mr. Zahid Hamid had brought in a change in the wording of the oath of office. According to certain hardline religious groups in Pakistan, these changes undermined Islamic beliefs and linked it to blasphemy.
- Protesters took to streets demanding the reversal of these changes and demanding Mr. Hamid's resignation.
- During two-day clashes between protesters and security forces in Islamabad and other places in Pakistan, at least six people were killed and hundreds were injured.
- Zahid Hamid's resignation was a part of a deal reached between the government and the protesters.

Environment

Researchers discover 300 fossilised Pterosaur eggs in China

A team of Brazilian and Chinese palaeontologists have announced the discovery of about 300 fossilised eggs and skeletons of pterosaurs.

- The fossils, some of them of embryos with the bones preserved in three dimensions, were found in 2015-2016 in the north eastern Chinese region of Hami. They were analysed and described in a joint project by Brazilian and Chinese dinosaur experts.
- The research was published in the journal Science. Pterosaurs are a group of extinct winged dinosaurs that were the first known vertebrates to be able to fly.
- Molds and casts of the eggs and the bones found by the team will be on display from 1st December 2017 at the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro.

Cyclone Ockhi ravages Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Lakshadweep

On December 1, 2017, Cyclone Ockhi, originating near Sri Lanka over the Bay of Bengal, moved over the Arabian sea through Kanyakumari triggering heavy rains and high speed wind in Lakshadweep islands.

- Due to heavy rains along with strong winds on account of Cyclone Ockhi, several trees got uprooted and communication lines were disrupted in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and islands of Lakshadweep.
- Many fishermen from Kerala and Tamil Nadu have been reported to be missing.
- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister E Palaniswami has asked Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh to intensify search and rescue operation for the missing fishermen with the help of Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy.

Science & Technology

Noxeno: Nasal foreign body removal device launched

Government has launched Noxeno, a nasal foreign body removal device developed by start-up InnAccel Technologies Private Limited, Bangalore. It was developed by fellow trained under Biodesign program.

- Noxeno is It is first dedicated tool for anterior nasal foreign body (NFB) removal that allows doctors in any setting to quickly and safely remove objects that people (mostly children aged 2 to 10 years) put into their noses.

- Noxeno has been 100% invented, designed, engineered and manufactured in India. It has ergonomic handle along with built-in light source and hinge.
- This allows user to slip behind NFB and remove it in matter of seconds by simply squeezing the trigger and pulling the device.
- It is reusable device and is also both easy to use and cost-effective.

Important Days

December 3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed every year on December 3 to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development.

- It also seeks to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.
- The 2017 theme is “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all”.
- United Nations estimates that around one billion people are living with disabilities across the world and they are facing barriers of inclusion in many key aspects of society.

Books & Authors

Amitabh Bachchan launches book titled Bollywood-The Films! The Songs! The Stars!

On 2nd December 2017, Amitabh Bachchan launched Bollywood – The Films! The Songs! The Stars!, a book by S.M.M. Ausaja, Karan Bali, Rajesh Devraj and Tanul Thakur.

- It is a comprehensive illustrated guide and coffee table book, a tribute to India’s Bollywood, filled with trivia and facts about some of the most beloved actors, films and songs.
- The book was published by British multinational publishing company Dorling Kindersley (DK). Amitabh Bachchan has given the foreword to the book.