

National Current Affairs

Delhi is richest state, Jain wealthiest community: NFHS-4 wealth index

According to wealth index released on basis of data from fourth round of National Family and Health Survey (NFHS-4) Delhi is richest state and Jain wealthiest community in the country. The NFHS-4 was conducted among more than 6 lakh households in 2015-16.

- It was largest sample size and was carried out just couple of years ago that provided useful source of information in analysing India's socio-economic landscape.
- The wealth index as part of NFHS-4 was prepared on basis of information of scores on ownership of consumer goods such as television and bicycles and household characteristics such as availability of clean drinking water.
- State wise wealth Distribution: Delhi and Punjab are richest states with over 60% of their households in the top wealth quintile. They are followed by Goa with 54.5% households in top bracket.
- Bihar is poorest state half of its households in the bottom quintile.
- Rajasthan has most equitable wealth distribution with similar number of households in all quintiles.
- Wealth distribution in religious groups: Jains are the most prosperous religious community in India with 70% of its population in the top quintile. Only 1.5% of Jain households fall in lowest two quintiles.
- Sikhs follow next, with 59.6% of their people in the top wealth quintile. Hindus and Muslims have similar and also most equitable wealth distribution across all quintiles.
- Community wise wealth distribution: Upper castes in India have almost double families in top quintile as compared to any other caste. Scheduled tribes are the poorest with 45.9% of their people in lowest quintile.

Nitish Kumar launches schemes worth over Rs 200 crore during Vikas Samiksha Yatra

On 13th January 2018, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar launched schemes worth over Rs.200 crore during his state-wide "Vikas Samiksha Yatra".

- Nitish Kumar visited Rohtas and Bhojpur districts for the "Vikas Samiksha Yatra". He inaugurated and laid foundation stones for schemes valued at more than Rs. 200 crore.
- He inaugurated 257 schemes worth Rs. 222 crore, at a village in the Jagdishpur block of Bhojpur.
- He also visited a village under Amethi panchayat of the Sanjhauli block of Rohtas, which is the first panchayat in Rohtas to become ODF (Open Defecation Free).

Indian Army establishes skill training centre for Kashmiri youth

With an objective to empower the Kashmiri youth, the Indian Army has established a Skill Training Centre at sector 10 Headquarters of Rashtriya Rifles (RR) in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir.

- This skill training centre is a public-private venture and has state of the art equipments.
- Unemployed educated youths of Pattan and its adjoining areas of Baramulla district will be imparted highly skilled training under National Skill Development Centre (NSDC).
- Initially, this centre will offer courses in Food Processing and Information Technology. Selected youths will be provided two weeks of specialized training.

Forest Management Certification Standard launched

On January 13, 2018, Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) launched India's internationally benchmarked Forest Management Certification Standard (FMCS).

- The FMCS enlists measures to be taken for responsible utilisation of natural resources and trade of forest products.
- NCCF launched this standard in association with the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Textiles, Commerce and Industry and other forest-based stakeholders.
- FMCS envisages policy changes through commercial power, rather than central or local power. Besides, it lays emphasis on market acceptance rather than regulatory compliance as an enforcement mechanism.
- National Certification Scheme for Sustainable Forest Management was also launched on January 13, 2018.

International Current Affairs

India contributes \$50,000 to UN Youth Envoy's office

India has contributed \$50,000 to United Nations (UN) Secretary General Antonio Guterres's Office of Envoy on Youth to help with its mission of involving young people in the world body's goals.

- The contribution was handed over by Paulomi Tripathi, a First Secretary in India's UN Mission to the Youth Envoy Jayathma Wickramanayake.

- The contribution made by India is voluntary with no strings attached. It is in addition to regular payments India makes to UN's general and peacekeeping budgets.
- Jayathma Wickramanayake from Sri Lanka was appointed the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth in June 2017 at the age of 26.
- The Youth Envoy's works to raise international awareness and attention to youth issues among others.
- Its mission aims to promote engagement of youth and advocate for them across all the four pillars of UN's work –human rights, peace and security, sustainable development and humanitarian action.

India, UK ink MoUs to enable return of illegal Indian migrants and sharing of criminal records

India and United Kingdom (UK) have signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) dealing with return of Indians residing in Britain as illegal migrants and sharing of criminal records and intelligence.

- The MoUs were signed by India's Minister of State (MoS) for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju and UK's Minister of Immigration Caroline Nokes in London.
- MoU on return of illegal Indian migrants: It paves way for quicker and more efficient process for documentation and return of Indians who are illegally residing in United Kingdom. It also commits both countries to take more flexible approach to verify identity and nationality of individuals to speed up returns process.
- MoU on criminal records exchange: It will help in sharing of criminal records, fingerprints and intelligence between Indian and British law enforcement bodies. It will help police forces from both countries to strengthen their law enforcement and protect the public from known criminals including sex offenders. It will also allow courts of both countries to get access to more information to support tougher sentencing decisions.

WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange granted Ecuadorian citizenship

On January 11, 2018, Ecuador's Foreign Minister Maria Fernanda Espinosa announced that the country has granted citizenship to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

- In 2012, Assange, an Australian-Ecuadoran, had sought refuge at Ecuadorian Embassy in London to avoid extradition to Sweden, where he faced an investigation over rape allegations. He was granted asylum, and has been staying at Ecuadorian Embassy in London since then.
- The Swedish case against Assange has been dropped but Assange has not moved out as he may be arrested in Britain for jumping bail. Besides, he also fears a possible

extradition to US as he has been involved in leaking of classified State Department documents.

- Ecuadoran officials are trying to arrive at an agreement with British authorities for finding a way through which Assange can leave the Ecuadorean embassy in London without facing legal action.

Banking & Finance

IRFC's green bonds: India INX lists 1st debt security at IFSC

The India International Exchange (India INX) has listed the Indian Railway Finance Corporation's (IRFC's) green bonds on its debt listing platform-Global Securities Market (GSM).

- With this, IRFC green bonds became first debt security to be listed on exchange at International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in Gujarat's GIFT city.
- India INX's GSM segment is India's first debt listing platform.
- It allows raising funds in any currency of choice by both foreign and Indian issuers from investors across the globe.
- IRFC is finance arm of Indian Railway. It raises financial resources for expansion and running through capital markets and other borrowings.
- It raises money mainly through financial bonds and from banks and financial institutions.
- Bonds basically are debt instruments which help issuer to get capital while the investors receive fixed income in the form of interest.
- In case of Green Bonds, the issuer gets capital from the investors only if investment (capital) is being raised to fund green projects relating to renewable energy or emission reductions etc.
- India-INX is India's first international exchange at IFSC Gujarat International Financial Tech (GIFT) City, Gandhinagar.

Brazil regulator bans funds from buying cryptocurrencies

On January 12, 2018, Brazil's securities regulator prohibited local investment funds from buying cryptocurrencies.

- The prohibition has been imposed, citing the reason that Cryptocurrencies cannot be considered financial assets.

- Owing to this decision, Brazilian funds cannot directly invest in cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin. However, funds considering to indirect investment in cryptocurrencies by acquiring a stake in foreign funds have been advised to await further clarification from the regulator.
- In the context of this news, it is important to note that crypto currencies including Bitcoin are decentralised digital currencies which are not backed by any Sovereign Government, Central Bank or monetary authority.

Business

India's first-ever FDI in fertiliser sector: Yara acquires Tata Chemicals urea plant

Norwegian fertiliser giant Yara International has announced completion of its acquisition of Tata Chemicals' 1.2 million tonnes per annum production capacity urea plant at Babrala in Uttar Pradesh.

- The Rs. 2,682-crore acquisition deal includes transfer of all assets and liabilities (including working capital) relating to Babrala unit.
- It marks first foreign direct investment (FDI) in India's highly regulated urea sector.
- The acquisition represents a major step of Yara as it deepens its footprint in India, world's second largest fertiliser market after China.
- Moreover, a greenfield urea-ammonia plant of this size at Babrala will entail a setting up cost of \$1 billion.
- Yara is headquartered in Oslo, Norway. Current it does annual sales of \$35-40 million in India.

Johnson & Johnson partners with Maharashtra government on health interventions

On 11th January 2018, Maharashtra Health department and Johnson and Johnson signed a MoU to train rural midwives and social health activists regarding tuberculosis and maternal and infant mortality.

- The MoU was signed between Maharashtra state government and Johnson and Johnson in the presence of Deepak Sawant, Maharashtra Health Minister.
- Nearly 10,000 auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) and 60,000 Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) in Maharashtra will be trained by Johnson and Johnson at the district level.
- The districts included are Nanded, Beed, Jalgaon, Dhule, Aurangabad, Jalna, Gadchiroli, Hingoli and Nadurbar. Maternal and infant mortality rate is higher in these nine districts.

- They will also be trained to treat just born babies in the “golden minute” and protect them from infections. This agreement is valid for 2 years.
- Johnson and Johnson will also aid in spreading awareness about TB (tuberculosis) among mine workers and their families.

Appointments & Resigns

Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) appoints Pramod Agarwal as new chairman

The Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) has named Pramod Agarwal as its new chairman and Colin Shah has been appointed as the vice-chairman of GJEPC for the year 2017-19.

- Pramod Agarwal replaces Praveenshanker Pandya. Pramod Agarwal is also the chairman of Derewala Group based in Jaipur.
- He is also the Chairman of Indian Institute of Gem and Jewellery, Jaipur. He is a Member of Committee of Administration (COA) of GJEPC, Board of Director of All India Gems and Jewellery Trade Federation (GJF) and Executive Member of Jewellers Association, Jaipur.

Sports

Kagiso Rabada becomes world's highest ranked Test bowler

Kagiso Rabada, South African fast bowler, has become the number-one ranked bowler in the MRF Tyres ICC Test Player Rankings.

- Kagiso Rabada achieved this feat after helping his team win over India in the first Test at Newlands on 13th January 2018.
- Kagiso Rabada is the 7th South Africa bowler to top the ICC Test Bowling Rankings. In the MRF Tyres ICC Player Rankings for Test Batsmen, Australian Steve Smith has secured the first position.