

National Current Affairs

7th Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav 2018 held in Karnataka

7th edition of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav (RSM) 2018 under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat programme was held in Bengaluru, Karnataka from January 14.

- The event was organised by Union Ministry of Culture, It was inaugurated by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Ananth Kumar in the presence of Minister of State for Culture Mahesh Sharma.
- Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav aims to celebrate national integration and idea of unity in diversity of country.
- It celebrates rich culture and heritage of India. It aims to provide platform to bring together artists from each corner of country.
- It covers events including art forms from classical and folk, music and dance, theatre to literature and visual arts.
- It also showcases gallery of Indian art forms and tradition for the discerning audience

Teen Murti Chowk renamed after Israeli city Haifa

The iconic Teen Murti Chowk in central New Delhi was renamed as Teen Murti-Haifa after Israeli City Haifa in solemn ceremony attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu.

- The idea of renaming Teen Murti road and chowk after Haifa was proposed in New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) council meeting during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Israel in July 2017. This year marks the centenary year of Battle for Haifa.
- The renaming of the iconic war memorial is aimed at being symbolic gesture of India's friendship with Israel.
- Teen Murti Chowk was named to mark role of the three cavalry regiments.
- The three bronze statues at Teen Murti represent Hyderabad, Jodhpur and Mysore Lancers who were part of 15 Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade in British Indian Army.

President of India Inaugurates Economic Democracy Conclave in Maharashtra

On January 14, 2018, President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the 'Economic Democracy Conclave' at Thane, Maharashtra.

- This conclave has been organised by Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini. Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini is a charitable organisation working in the domain of training of social-political activist.
- The objective of the conclave is to serve as a platform for young entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals and provide them motivation, mentoring and networking opportunities.
- On January 14, 2018, President Kovind also visited the Global Vipassana Pagoda in Mumbai.

Bhogali Bihu celebrated in Assam with traditional fervour & gaiety

On 14th January 2018, the Bhogali Bihu also called as Magh Bihu festival began in Assam.

- The Bhogali Bihu is a harvest festival celebrated in Assam. The festival kick-started with the burning of traditional Meji and Bhelaghar made from thatch and fire woods.
- People offered prayers to God Agni. Various cultural programmes and traditional sports are held as part of the celebrations.
- Traditional foods were prepared at houses marking the festival. Generally the celebrations last for a week.

Bikaner camel festival 2018 in Rajasthan

On 13th and 14th January 2018, the Bikaner camel festival was held in Rajasthan.

- The Bikaner camel festival is celebrated every year in Rajasthan to honour camels. The Bikaner camel festival 2018 started with a procession of camels adorned with decorations and folk artists.
- Both Indian and foreign tourists participated in the festival. The procession was held from Junagarh fort to Karni Singh stadium.
- During the festival, camel dances, camel races, camel rides etc. were also held. The camel festival was organised by the Department of Tourism, Art and Culture.

Chhattisgarh HC Makes Aadhaar Mandatory for Bail

Chhattisgarh High Court has issued a directive to all trial courts in the state to mandatorily obtain Aadhaar Cards of accused persons and sureties before issuing release warrant of a prisoner/accused.

- The order is an attempt to curb the rampant practice of obtaining bail on the basis of forged revenue papers or by impersonating the real surety.

- Chhattisgarh High Court has also instructed that trial courts should verify the genuineness of Aadhaar card and revenue papers. In case if these documents are found to be forged, a First Information Report (FIR) should be lodged against such person.
- However, some legal experts are of the opinion that this directive may hamper the rights of the prisoners/common people who have yet not enrolled for Aadhaar card.

International Current Affairs

India, Israel sign 9 agreements in space, defence, cybersecurity

India and Israel have signed nine agreements to boost cooperation in the areas of space, cyber security and oil and gas between both countries.

- The agreements were signed following delegation-level talks headed by Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu in New Delhi. Netanyahu is first Israeli Prime Minister to visit India in span of last 15 years and second one overall. Ariel Sharon was first and only Israeli Prime Minister to visit India in 2003.
- List of agreement signed:
 - Agreement on Film-co-production.
 - Protocol on Amendments to Air Transport Agreement.
 - MoU on Cyber Security Cooperation between India and Israel.
 - Memorandum of Intent (MoI) between Invest India and Invest in Israel.
 - Medical Centre on Cooperation in field of Research in Homeopathic Medicine.
 - Letter of Intent (LoU) between IOCL and Phinergy Ltd. For cooperation in area of metal-air batteries.
 - MoU between the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and the Ministry of Energy on Cooperation in Oil and Gas Sector.
 - LoI between IOCL and Yeda Research and Development Co Ltd for cooperation in the area of concentrated solar thermal technologies.
 - MoU between Central Council for Research in Homeopathy, Ministry of AYUSH and Centre for Integrative Complementary Medicine, Shaare Zedek.
 - MoU between Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) and Technion- Israel Institute of Technology for cooperation in field of space.

India ranks 30th on WEF's Global Manufacturing Index

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has ranked India at 30th position among 100 countries on its Global Manufacturing Index (GMI).

- The index was released as part of WEF's first Readiness for the future of production Report which analysed development of modern industrial strategies and urges collaborative action.
- The report was developed by WEF in collaboration with A.T. Kearney. It analyses and measures how well positioned 100 countries will shape and benefit from changing nature of production through adoption of emerging technology as part of Fourth Industrial Revolution in production. It calls for new and innovative approaches to public-private collaboration are needed to accelerate transformation.
- It has categorised 100 countries into four groups viz. Leading (strong current base, high level of readiness for future), High Potential (limited current base, high potential for future), Legacy (strong current base, at risk for future) or Nascent (limited current base, low level of readiness for future).
- Top 10 countries in GMI: Japan, South Korea, Germany, Switzerland, China, Czech Republic, United States, Sweden, Austria and Ireland.
- BRICS nations: China (25th), Russia (35th), Brazil (41st) and South Africa (45th). China was placed among 'leading countries', Indian and Russia were placed in 'Legacy' group while Brazil and South Africa are in 'nascent' ones.
- The 25 'leading' countries were placed in best position group to gain as production systems stand on brink of exponential change. No country was placed in frontier of readiness group.

Indian peacekeepers rebuild bridge in record time in South Sudan

Indian peacekeepers in UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) have re-built a key bridge in record time in strife-torn South Sudan's Akoka village.

- Rebuilt in record 10 days by the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in collaboration with the government, it has greatly benefited humanitarians, enabling faster aid delivery as well as security patrol and outreach activities by the Mission
- The major challenge was reconstructing the bridge through a submerged area with a depth of up to 4 meters in some places
- The Akoka Bridge lies between provincial capital Malakal and oil-rich Melut town on a major service road that also reaches Bunj and Renk, both in the country's northeastern part
- This bridge will enable people to cross the river and reach a town to access basic services. Besides it will also enable faster aid delivery and will smoothen other critical road repairs in the region.
- The next phase is installing appropriate structures and marram to bolster the bridge's strength to withstand the next rainy season.

Banking & Finance

NCDEX launches India's first agri-options trading in Guarseed

The National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Ltd (NCDEX) unveiled India's first agricultural-commodity options in Guarseed designed as hedge for farmers to safeguard against price risks. It was launched by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in New Delhi.

- NCDEX's guarseed option is one of the most liquid contracts on the exchange platform.
- Its three options contracts in guarseed will expire in February, March and April 2018 and will be made available for trading.
- Options are derivatives which give a buyer right but not obligation to buy or sell an underlying asset or instrument at specific price on or before a certain date.
- The option trading is powerful tool to hedge price risks and will boost the development of agri-commodity market.
- It is considered as one of major steps towards taking farmers out of situation resulting in drastic fall in prices of some agri-commodities due to higher production. This initiative will benefit farmers and ensure better prices for their produce in the coming days.

Awards & Recognition

Actor Sudhir Dalvi gets Janakavi P Sawlaram award

On 12th January 2018, actor Sudhir Dalvi was presented the Janakavi P Sawlaram award at a function in Thane, Maharashtra.

- The Janakavi P Sawlaram award is instituted by Thane Municipal Corporation in association with the Janakavi P Savlaram Kala Samiti.
- Dancer Jaishree T was awarded the Ganga Jamuna award. This award is awarded in memory of a popular song written by Sawlaram.

Appointments & Resigns

Vijay Kumar appointed as MD & CEO of NCDEX

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has approved appointment of Vijay Kumar as Managing Director and CEO of the country's largest agri-commodity bourse NCDEX.

- Kumar, a former chief business officer at NCDEX is an agro-industry veteran, having worked for Cargill and National Bulk Handling Corporation.
- Mr. Kumar will assume the office next week and will succeed Samir Shah who was appointed as MD & CEO of NCDEX in 2013.

Science & Technology

NASA discovers farthest known galaxy in the universe "SPT0615-JD"

NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) scientists have discovered "SPT0615-JD", the farthest known galaxy in the universe.

- "SPT0615-JD" galaxy is a cluster of 500 million year-old stars. The image of SPT0615-JD was captured by NASA's Hubble and Spitzer space telescopes.
- The images were captured through gravitational lensing. SPT0615-JD was found in Hubble's Reionization Lensing Cluster Survey (RELICS) and companion S-RELICS Spitzer programme.
- According to preliminary analysis SPT0615-JD has a weight of 3 billion solar masses. It is nearly 2,500 light-years away.

Environment

Elcysma Ziroensis: New moth species discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

Researchers from Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) have discovered a new species of moth, scientifically named *Elcysma Ziroensis* from Talley Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh.

- The discovery was published in the Journal of Threatened Taxa, an international journal on conservation and taxonomy.
- *Elcysma Ziroensis* is commonly called Apatani Glory, named after a local tribe called Apatani.
- It was discovered at an elevation of 1,700m in Ziro. This discovery represents the first record of *Elcysma* from Arunachal Pradesh.
- This species has only been seen during autumn, notably in month of September.
- This indicates that it is univoltine species, meaning it has one brood of young in a year.

Sports

Assam wins 8th Sub-junior National Hockey Championship

On 14th January 2018, Assam Hockey won the 8th Hockey India Sub Junior Men National Championship 2018 (B Division), at Hojai Hockey stadium, in Assam.

- Assam Hockey beat Hockey Rajasthan 3-2 in the final and won the 8th Hockey India Sub Junior Men National Championship 2018 (B Division).
- Hockey Rajasthan had a good start by scoring five goals. Assam Hockey recovered in the second half of the match. The Championship was hosted by Assam.

Hyderabad Hunters claim maiden title in Premier Badminton League 3

On 14th January 2018, Hyderabad Hunters won the 3rd edition of the Premier Badminton League championship at Gachibowli Indoor Stadium, in Hyderabad.

- Hyderabad Hunters won over Bengaluru Blasters 4-3 in the final and emerged as winners of the 3rd edition of the Premier Badminton League championship.
- The matches were tied three all. In the mixed doubles finals Hyderabad Hunters' R. Satwiksairaj and Pia Zebadiah defeated Bengaluru's Kim Sa Rang and N. Sikki Reddy 15-11, 15-12 and Hyderabad Hunters won the Premier Badminton League championship.

Obituary

Ex-Union minister Raghunath Jha passes away

On 14th January 2018, Raghunath Jha, former Union minister, passed away.

- Raghunath Jha was a former Union Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise.
- He was associated with various political parties like the Indian National Congress, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Socialist Party and Samajwadi party.

Important Days

70th Indian Army Day – January 15

On 15th January 2018, Indian Army Day was celebrated in several places of India.

Indian Army Day is celebrated on 15th January every year. On 15 January 1949, General K M Cariappa became the first Commander-in-Chief of Indian armed forces after independence.

- Indian Army Day is celebrated to honour Indian soldiers who fought and sacrificed their lives for India.
- Army chief General Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba and Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa paid tribute to soldiers at Amar Jawan Jyoti, in New Delhi.