

# National Current Affairs

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## **IPrism: CIPAM-DIPP launches IP competition for college & university students**

The Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM), Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), in collaboration launched 'IPrism' for college and university students.

- The one of its kind Intellectual Property (IP) Competition was launched by CIPAM-DIPP in association with ASSOCHAM and ERICSSON India.
- The IPrism competition aims to foster culture of innovation and creativity in younger generation.
- It will provide young creators unique opportunity to see their creations recognized on national platform.
- It invites students to submit films on piracy & counterfeiting under two categories of 30 and 60 seconds.
- In another category, there is competition is for mobile gaming app on IP.
- Winning teams will be awarded cash prizes worth INR 4 lacs. Winners will also get mementos, certificates and recognition on the official CIPAM website.

## **International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure held in New Delhi**

The International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDR) was held in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh.

- The workshop was organised by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).
- The workshop aimed to take this dialogue on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and global cooperation further.
- It had brought together countries from different parts of the world with different socio-economic backgrounds and geographical features. It provided great opportunity to learn from their unique experiences in their efforts towards building disaster resilient infrastructure.
- The workshop also saw participation of multilateral development banks, United Nations, private sector and academics to identify best practices in infrastructure sector as well as key issues in existing practices and ways to address them.

## **65th meeting of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) held in New Delhi**

The 65th Meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) was held under Chairmanship of Union Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar in New Delhi.

- Education Ministers of 20 States, representatives of 28 states/UTs, members of CABE, heads of autonomous organisations, Vice Chancellors of Universities attended the meeting.
- Resolutions adopted in meeting:
  - Operation Digital Board will be launched in all schools in five years and will be undertaken jointly by Centre, State, Corporate Social Responsibility and community. It will improve quality of education.
  - Under it, students will be empowered with 360 degree information with interesting learning experience and increase teacher accountability.
  - CABE also will ensure to provide Quality, Equity, Accessibility, Accountability and Affordability in education by pro-active action and plan.
  - It will also promote Swachh Bharat, Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat, Padhe Bharat, Sugamya Bharat and physical education.
  - It also resolved to promote human value education, life skill education, experiential learning to bring out good human beings out of education system.

### **3rd Raisina Dialogue held in New Delhi**

The third edition of the geo-political conference – Raisina Dialogue was held in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

- The event is jointly organised by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Observer Research Foundation (ORF). The theme of the conference for this year is 'Managing Disruptive Transitions: Ideas, Institutions and Idioms'.
- Raisina Dialogue is an annual conference held in New Delhi. It is envisioned to be India's flagship conference of geopolitics and geo-economics.
- The conference is held jointly by Ministry of External Affairs and the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), an independent think tank based in India.

### **West Bengal, Kerala, Odisha opt out of Centre's aspirational districts scheme**

Three opposition ruled states –West Bengal, Kerala and Odisha — have opted out of the Centre's Transformation of Aspirational Districts scheme, thus reducing the total number of districts under the programme to 102 from 115.

- While the West Bengal is ruled by All India Trinamool Congress (AITMC), Kerala and Odisha have CPI-M and BJD governments, respectively.

- The three states have objected to the criteria set up by the centre for identifying backward districts without taking states into confidence.
- The Centre has embarked upon a major policy initiative for rapid transformation of districts that are lagging on specific development parameters.

### **Union Home Minister inaugurates IWDRI 2018 in New Delhi**

On January 15, 2018, Union Home Minister, Rajnath Singh inaugurated the International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDRI) in New Delhi.

- This workshop was organised by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).
- Experts from about 23 countries, representatives from multilateral development banks, the United Nations, academia and other stakeholders participated in the workshop.
- Deliberations at the workshop focused on global cooperation for developing Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. The workshop also served as a platform for exchange of experiences, lessons and solutions in the area of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

### **UIDAI allows face recognition for Aadhaar authentication**

On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) approved authentication based on facial recognition in combination with fingerprint or iris scan for Aadhaar users.

- This move will benefit persons who have difficulty with other biometric authentications like fingerprint and iris. The facial recognition-based authentication will come into act from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018.
- The facial recognition-based authentication will be allowed only in fusion mode combined with fingerprint or iris or OTP (One Time Password) to authenticate Aadhaar user.
- Also, this facial recognition based-authentication will be permitted “on need basis”. Since photos of users are already available in the UIDAI database collection of new data is not required.

### **Punjab inks MoU with IOC to set up biogas, bio-CNG plants**

On January 15, 2018, Punjab State Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to set up bio-gas and bio-CNG plants in the state.

- The MoU with IOC was signed by Punjab Bureau of Industrial Promotion (PBIP) and Punjab Energy Development Agency (PEDA) in presence of Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh.
- This agreement is in line with Punjab State Government's efforts to find sustainable solutions to paddy straw burning, which has emerged as a major cause of air pollution in North India.
- Initially 42 plants will become operational in 2018. Over the next 3-4 years, total 400 such plants will become operational.
- Setting up these plants would entail investment of Rs 5000 crore, and will generate 4000 employment opportunities for people of Punjab.

### **Bar Council of India forms 7-member delegation to mediate between Supreme Court judges**

Bar Council of India (BCI) has announced that it has formed a seven-member delegation that will meet honourable judges of the Supreme Court and will try to bridge their differences with the incumbent Chief Justice of India (CJI), Dipak Misra.

- On January 12, 2018, the four senior most judges of Supreme Court – Justices Chelameswar, Madan B Lokur, Ranjan Gogoi and Kurian Joseph had called a press conference and alleged that CJI Dipak Misra has been arbitrarily assigning important cases to benches headed by junior SC judges, ignoring senior ones.
- It was stated that they were forced to hold the press conference as a letter they had sent to the CJI two months ago pointing out mistakes had gone unanswered.
- Justice Kurian Joseph, has stated that their difference with CJI will not lead to constitutional crisis in Supreme Court, rather these are only problems in procedure which they had objected to.

### **Odisha launches Mukshyamantri Kalakar Sahayata Jojana' (MMKSJ)**

Odisha Government has launched Mukshyamantri Kalakar Sahayata Yojana (MMKSJ) to provide financial assistance to the literature and cultural artists of state. It was launched by Odisha Chief Minister, Naveen Patnaik.

- The scheme is mainly for the welfare of literature and cultural artists of the state.
- It will provide monthly financial assistance of Rs. 1200 to literature and cultural artists of state.
- State government has also lowered age in the eligibility criteria as compared to previous artist assistance scheme, under which only 4000 artists were being given Rs 1000 per month.
- The scheme will facilitate the identification of artists from all districts. It will benefit around 50000 artists across the state.

- As per new eligibility criteria, male artist can get assistance under after attaining age of 50 years (earlier it was 60 years) and female artist can get it at age of 40 years (earlier it was 50 years).

### **Centre, Jammu & Kashmir sign MoU for education reforms**

On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Jammu and Kashmir government signed a MoU to create normalcy in Jammu & Kashmir by means of education reforms.

- The MoU is named, 'School Education Transformation Roadmap'. It was signed by Jammu & Kashmir's Department of School Education and Union Minister of Human Resource Development (MHRD) Prakash Javadekar.
- This MoU will facilitate nearly 9,000 Jammu & Kashmir students to take part in an exchange programme.
- Also, Information Communication Technology (ICT) and digital platforms will be established in Jammu & Kashmir schools.
- Jammu and Kashmir's potential school system to provide quality education to children was assessed and a roadmap was prepared by the Centre and Jammu & Kashmir government. This roadmap will be implemented in 3 years.

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## **International Current Affairs**

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### **India, Sri Lanka sign four agreements for collaboration in ICT sector**

India and Sri Lanka signed four agreements for collaboration in Information and communication technology (ICT) sector between both countries.

- The MoU for cooperation was signed by Union minister for Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad with his Sri Lankan counterpart in Colombo.
- The agreements were signed for collaboration in ICT sector and setting up of e-office system and connecting of National Knowledge network (NKN) for collaboration among universities and academics.
- With this, Sri Lanka became first country to be connected to NKN through Gigabyte (GB) optical fibre network.
- This will connect NKN to Lanka education & research network (LEARN) through which universities on both sides can share best practices and research ideas. National Informatics centre (NIC) has set up a model E-office system for Sri Lanka.

### **Coast Guards of India, Japan undertake joint naval exercise**

The biennial search and rescue exercise between Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Japan Coast Guard (JCG) was held near Chennai, Tamil Nadu in Bay of Bengal

- This was eighth such in series of 'National Maritime Search and Rescue Workshop and Exercise'. Ships and aircraft of Coast Guards from India and Japan, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force (IAF) and National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) took part in it.
- The aim of the exercise was to augment operational level interaction and capacity building in areas of search and rescue, pollution response and maritime law enforcement. It also aimed to share best management practices and continuation of personnel exchange.
- The two-day exercise comprised of workshop and search and rescue operations in Bay of Bengal.
- Observers from 27 maritime nations witnessed exercise, apart from representatives of National Maritime Search and Rescue Board from central and state departments.

### **BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement: India, Bangladesh, Nepal approve Passenger protocol**

Bangladesh, India and Nepal agreed on text of operating procedures for passenger vehicle movement (Passenger protocol) in sub-region under Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA).

- Decision in this regard was taken at meeting of High-level officials of three countries held in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- It was convened and chaired by India's Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH).
- The passenger protocol agreed upon is document detailing procedures for cross-border movement of buses and private vehicles for transport facilitation in subregion.
- It will be signed by three countries after completing necessary internal approval processes in their government.
- The delegations participating countries also agreed to continue to conduct trial movement of cargo vehicles along scheduled routes from April 2018 onwards, before finalizing protocol for cargo vehicular movement.

### **Vajra Prahar: Indo-US joint military exercise to be held in Seattle**

The Indo-US joint military exercise 'Vajra Prahar' will be held at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) in Seattle in third week of January in line with the increasing military cooperation between both countries.

- In this edition of bilateral exercise, Indian Army team from the Pune-headquartered Southern Command will participate.
- The exercise will mainly focus on special operations in urban areas.
- The aim of the Vajra Prahar exercise is to promote military relations between two countries by enhancing interoperability and mutual exchange of tactics between Special Forces. Its objectives are to Share best practices between two armies.
- Develop joint strategies by sharing expertise of conducting operations in a counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism environment.
- Capitalise on rich repository of experiences of each other armies.

### **Iran ‘lifts restrictions’ on Internet use**

On January 13, 2018, Iranian government lifted restrictions on the use of the Internet, including the messaging app Telegram across the country.

- In December 2017, protests against unemployment and rising consumer prices erupted in several parts of Iran.
- At least 22 people were killed and 1000 people were arrested during these protests.
- Iran imposed restrictions on internet and had shut down social networking platforms such as Instagram and Telegraph, citing the reason that protesters were using it to spread unrest.
- Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has admitted that the restrictions on internet are having a serious impact on the country’s economy.

### **India attends its first SCO military cooperation meeting in Beijing**

On 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018, India attended a meeting of the international military cooperation departments of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) for the first time, in Beijing, China.

- India joined Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2017. The Indian delegation was led by Major General Ajay Seth.
- Main issues discussed were related to practical cooperation among SCO countries. India and China consider SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) as an important platform to enhance bilateral ties.

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## **Appointments & Resigns**

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### **AB Singh takes over as Chief of Staff Western Naval Command**

On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh, AVSM, VSM took charge as Chief of Staff, Western Naval Command.

- Earlier, Vice Admiral AB Singh was the Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Strategic Forces Command.
- He is a specialist in Navigation and Aircraft Direction. He has commanded IN Ships Veer (Missile Vessel), Vindhyagiri (Frigate), Trishul (Guided Missile Frigate) and Viraat (Aircraft Carrier).
- He was honoured with Vishisht Seva Medal in 2011 and Ati Vishisht Seva Medal in 2016.

### **Romania's Prime Minister Mihai Tudose resigns**

On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Romanian Prime Minister Mihai Tudose resigned after his party (Social Democratic Party) withdrew its support.

- A vote was conducted in the executive committee meeting of Social Democratic Party (PSD) and Mihai Tudose failed to secure majority of the votes. Following this, the Social Democratic Party withdrew its support for Mihai Tudose.
- Mihai Tudose has resigned six months after he took charge as Romanian Prime Minister.
- The Social Democratic Party (PSD) announced that Romania's development minister Paul Stanesco will act as interim prime minister.

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## **Sports**

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### **Goldberg to be inducted into WWE's 2018 Hall of Fame class**

On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018, WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) announced that Goldberg will be inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame class at a ceremony in 6<sup>th</sup> April 2018, in New Orleans.

- Goldberg retired from in-ring competition in 2017. He is the first to be listed in the WWE's 2018 Hall of Fame class.
- He is 51 years old. He made his debut in WWE in 2003. Earlier, he was associated with the World Championship Wrestling (WCW).



### **Khelo India anthem launched by sports minister Rajyavardhan Rathore**

On January 15, 2018, Union Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore launched the official anthem and mascot of Khelo India School Games in Delhi. Mascots of Khelo India School Games are 'Vijay the tiger' and 'Jaya the black buck'.

- "Aur khelna chahte hain hum....." the official anthem of Khelo India School Games features several eminent sports personalities of India such as Sardar Singh, Devendra Jhajharia, Baichung Bhutia, Leander Paes, Pullela Gopichand, Mary Kom, Sakshi Malik and Saina Nehwal,
- The inaugural Khelo India School Games under the revamped Khelo India Programme will begin on January 31, 2018.
- Khelo India School Games is being held in collaboration with the School Games Federation of India and National Sports Federation.
- This event will serve as an avenue for identification of budding sporting talents in 16 sports disciplines including athletics, boxing, badminton, football, judo, hockey, kabaddi, shooting, kho kho, swimming, weightlifting, volleyball and wrestling.

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## Obituary

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### **Veteran journalist and writer Gnani Sankaran passes away**

On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Gnani Sankaran, Tamil writer and journalist passed away at his residence in Chennai.

- He was a dramatist and political analyst. He was the editor of Dheemtharikida, a Tamil magazine. He also worked with the drama troupe Pariksha.

### **Sarod maestro Pandit Buddhadev Dasgupta passes away**

On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Sarod maestro Pandit Buddhadev Dasgupta passed away following cardiac arrest at his home in south Kolkata.

- He was a recipient of Padma Bhushan award. He was also awarded Sangeet Mahasamman and Bangabibhusan awards.

### **Veteran journalist NK Trikha passes away**

On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018, journalist NK Trikha passed away at All India Institute of Medical Sciences following a long-time illness.

- He had worked with the newspaper Navbharat Times. He was also the editor of Navbharat Times' Lucknow edition.
- He was also a member of the Press Council of India. He also served as the president of the National Union of Journalists (India) two times.

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## Important Days

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### Goa celebrates Opinion Poll Day

On 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Goa celebrated the Opinion Poll Day as Asmitai Dis (Identity Day).

- 16<sup>th</sup> January is celebrated as Opinion Poll Day to mark the historic poll in 1967 in which people of Goa voted not to merge with Maharashtra.
- Recently Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar announced that 16<sup>th</sup> January will be celebrated as 'Asmitai Dis'.
- Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) celebrated the 51<sup>st</sup> Opinion Poll Day at North Goa District Office in Mapusa, Goa. The Goa Forward Party held a public meeting at Lohia maidan, Margao, Goa.