

National Current Affairs

Government planning to set up of Cyber Warrior Police Force to tackle internet-related crimes

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has decided to set up Cyber Warrior Police Force (CWPF) and Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) to tackle internet-related crimes such as cyber threats, child pornography and online stalking.

- These divisions will be set up under MHA's newly created Cyber & Information Security (CIS) Division.
- The CWPF is likely to operate under National Information Security Policy and Guidelines wing of MHA's CIS division.
- It is proposed to be raised on lines of Central Armed Police Force (CAPF).
- So far, there has been no decision on the CWPF's jurisdiction, where it will derive its powers or personnel from and whether it will be empowered to make arrests.

NPPA fixes retail price of 30 drug formulations

Drug price regulator National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has fixed retail price for 30 drug formulations, including those used for treatment of diabetes, bacterial infections and high blood pressure. The prices were fixed/revised under Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 2013.

- NPPA is independent body under Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
- Essential medicines are those that satisfy the priority health care needs of the country's population.
- The calculation for essential drugs is based on simple average of all medicines in particular therapeutic segment with sales of more than 1%.
- In respect of medicines that are not under price control, manufacturers are allowed to increase the maximum retail price by 10% annually.

PM Narendra Modi, Benjamin Netanyahu inaugurate iCREATE facility

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu inaugurated iCREATE facility at Deo Dholera Village in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

- iCreate aims to develop an ecosystem in India to generate quality entrepreneurs.

- iCreate is an independent Centre established with an objective of facilitating entrepreneurship through blend of creativity, innovation, engineering, product design and leveraging emerging technologies.
- Its main purpose is to foster innovation to deal with major issues such as food security, water, connectivity, cyber security, IT and electronics, energy, bio-medical equipment and devices etc.

Maharashtra Government approves 1% reservation for orphans in government jobs

Maharashtra Government has approved 1% reservation for orphans in government jobs and education for orphans in the state under general category.

- Decision in this regard was taken at state Cabinet meeting chaired by Devendra Fadnis. This reservation provision is termed as parallel reservation.
- It will be provided under general category, which means government does not need to increase its caste reservation quota that has already reached 52%.
- Parallel reservation means, of total jobs available under general category, 1% will be reserved only for orphans.
- The recently approved reservation provision will help in the rehabilitation of orphan kids and help to secure their future.

President presents 2016 Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards

President Ram Nath Kovind presented Sangeet Natak Akademi's Fellowships (Akademi Ratna) and Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards (Akademi Puraskar) for the year 2016 at a function held at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.

- The Sangeet Natak Akademi's Fellowships and Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards are recognised as among most coveted national honours bestowed on performing artists as well as teachers and scholars of performing arts in the country.
- They are given by Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's National Academy of Music, Dance & Drama.
- Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards are given in categories of music, dance, theatre, other traditional arts and puppetry, and for contribution and scholarship in performing arts.

JK assembly passes grants of horticulture department

The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly passed with voice vote the grants of the horticulture department for the year 2018-19, amounting to over Rs 528.33 crore.

- The grants for the horticulture were passed after a thorough discussion involving 21 members.
- Horticulture sector generated a total wage employment of 7.71 crore mandays in the year 2016-17 under apple orchards and others, coming out as one of the major sources for direct and indirect employment generation in the state.
- It is one of the largest employment generating sectors as one hectare of an apple orchard generates almost 400 mandays per year, besides also generating healthy employment figures in horticulture as well as in other allied sectors.
- The government has taken an initiative of converting half the quantum of existing land under apple orchards -- 75,000 hectares -- into high density apple plantation to fetch better returns for the growers.
- Further, Market Intervention Scheme with the chief minister's intervention has also been launched during 2017-18 in order to prevent C-grade apples from coming to market and to inculcate the discipline of proper grading among growers to fetch better returns.

The 2017 India International Garment Fair (IIGF) held in Delhi

The 58th edition of India International Garment Fair (IIGF) will be held in New Delhi from January 18 – 20, 2017.

- It will be organized by Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) India.
- The IIGF is one of the largest and most popular platforms in Asia, from which overseas garment buyers can source products and forge business relationships with India's finest players in the apparel and fashion accessories domain.
- A total of 312 participants from 14 states of India are participating in the Fair.

14th Meeting of the Special Committee for Inter-Linking of Rivers held

Union Minister of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Road Transport & Highways and Shipping Shri Nitin Gadkari has called upon state governments to cooperate with one another and with the centre to expedite the projects for interlinking of rivers.

- Shri Gadkari stressed upon the need to design better technical models that aimed at bringing down construction cost while maintaining quality, so that projects do not languish for want of funds.
- He also called upon state governments to explore new financing models including low-interest loans from foreign agencies.
- The Minister however added that while implementing the river interlinking projects the rehabilitation of displaced persons must be fully ensured.

Madhya Pradesh achieves complete door-to-door garbage collection

Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to achieve the 100 per cent door-to-door garbage collection target in urban bodies.

- The door-to-door garbage management was carried out after the state got rid of “ill practices” like open defecation in urban areas.
- Works like solid waste management at landfill sites and processing through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode are being carried out in urban areas.
- A nodal officer has been appointed in each of the 51 districts in the state for monitoring the door-to-door garbage collection.

All 14 types of ₹10 coin valid, legal tender: RBI

All the 14 designs of ₹ 10 coin are valid and legal tender for transactions, the Reserve Bank said today amid reluctance by certain traders to accept the coins.

- These coins, it further said, have distinctive features to reflect various themes of economic, social and cultural values and are introduced from time to time.
- It has also asked banks to accept coins for transactions and exchange at all their branches.

Centre sanctions projects over Rs. 10,000 cr in North East for better network connectivity

The Centre has sanctioned projects over 10,000 crore rupees in the North East for better network connectivity.

- Two MoUs have been signed to cover the uncovered areas in the North East including Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Stress has been given to upgrade the network connection in border areas.
- The Centre will send two nodal officers to monitor the progress of the work.
- The laying of Optical Fiber Cable in the state is expected to be completed this year.

International Current Affairs

10th Global Forum for Food & Agriculture held Berlin

The 10th edition of Global Forum for Food & Agriculture was held in Berlin, Germany from 18th -20th January 2018.

- The theme of this year's event is "Shaping the future of livestock – sustainably, responsibly, efficiently".
- Indian delegation to the event is led by Union Minister of State (MoS) for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.
- The event was organised by Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMEL) in cooperation with GFFA Berlin e.V., Senate of Berlin and Messe Berlin GmbH. It also included 10th Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference.
- The discussions during the conference focussed on sustainable and productive animal production among other issues.
- The GFFA is international conference that focuses on central questions concerning future of global agri-food industry.
- It is world's largest conference of agriculture ministers. It is held during International Green Week (IGW).

Banking & Finance

Centre trims additional borrowing to ₹20,000 cr

The Finance Ministry on Wednesday announced that it would scale back its additional borrowing to ₹20,000 crore for the fiscal, from its earlier plan to raise an extra ₹50,000 crore from the market.

- The government has reassessed additional borrowing requirements taking note of revenue receipts and expenditure pattern.
- The Centre has not accepted borrowings of ₹15,000 crore in the last three auctions. "The remaining ₹15,000 crore would be reduced from the notified borrowing programme of the ensuing weeks, the reduction in the additional borrowing could also ease pressure on the Centre's fiscal deficit, which had breached the Budget estimate by 12 per cent by November end.
- With the announcement coming just two weeks ahead of the Union Budget 2018-19, analysts said the Centre is likely to meet its fiscal deficit target of 3.2 per cent for 2017-18, while setting a more relaxed target for next fiscal.

Science & Technology

Agni-5 ballistic missile successfully test-fired

Indigenously developed long-range surface-to-surface Agni-5 ballistic missile was successfully test fired successfully from Abdul Kalam Wheeler Island, Odisha.

- It was overall fifth developmental trial test of the long-range missile carried out by Strategic Forces Command of Indian Army to check its operational readiness.
- The last test of missile was conducted in December 2016 from same test range.
- The Agni-5 is three-stage solid propellant nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), indigenously developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It is about 17 metres long, 2 metres wide and has a launch weight of around 50 tonnes.
- It has strike range of over 5,000 kilometres and can carry nuclear warhead of more than one tonne.
- Thus, it can hit most northern parts of China and other parts of Asia, Europe and Africa. It has not yet inducted into the Services.

Xian smog tower: China builds world's biggest air purifier

China has constructed Xian smog tower, an experimental air purifying tower touted to be the world's biggest at height of over 100 meters (328 feet) in an attempt to fight air pollution.

- The tower is built in Xian in Shaanxi province and has brought positive effect on chronic smog problem in China. It is undergoing testing by researchers at Institute of Earth Environment at Chinese Academy of Sciences.
- Xian smog tower project was announced in 2015 to find low-cost method to artificially remove pollutants from atmosphere such as PM2.5, nitrates and sulphur dioxide which are the most harmful to human health.
- During the tests, the tower has managed to produce more than 10 million cubic metres (353 million cubic feet) of clean air day since its launch.
- It was able to bring down the smog to moderate levels the day when air quality was severe.
- However, the results were preliminary as of now. It has also improved quality of air after observations were made over distance of 10 square kilometers in the past few months.

Appointments & Resigns

Britain appoints Minister for Loneliness

British Prime Minister Theresa May appointed the country's first-ever minister in charge of tackling loneliness and combating social isolation.

- Tracey Crouch, currently minister for sport and civil society in the UK government, will take on the additional role created in memory of Labour MP Jo Cox, who was murdered by a right-wing fanatic in June, 2016.
- Jo Cox recognised the scale of loneliness across the country and had dedicated herself to doing all she could to help those affected.
- The new ministerial role will take forward the recommendations of the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness, with the post holder working with the commission, businesses and charities to create a government-wide strategy.

Obituary

Veteran Akali leader and SGPC ex-chief secy Manjit Singh Calcutta passes away

Veteran Akali leader and former chief secretary of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) Manjit Singh Calcutta passed away.

- In his decade-long stint at the SGPC, he occupied top posts such as its honorary secretary between 1988 and 2004.
- He was elected as an MLA from Amritsar South constituency in 1997 and became the minister for higher education.
- In his political career, he had been instrumental in raising Sikh issues.

Jo Jo White, NBA champion dies at 71

Jo Jo White, a member of two NBA championship teams and the NBA Finals MVP in 1976, has died at 71.

- White, who was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2015, also helped lead the U.S. men's Olympic team to a gold medal in the 1968 Summer Games in Mexico City. White was working as a director of special projects and community relations with the Celtics at the time of his death