

# National Current Affairs

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## **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban Launches Smart Star-Rating for Garbage Free Cities**

The star-rating initiative, developed by the Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban will be rating cities on a 7-star rating system based on multiple cleanliness indicators for solid waste management, which will include Door to Door Collection, bulk generator compliance, source segregation, sweeping, scientific processing of waste, scientific land filling, plastic waste management, construction and demolition management, dump remediation & citizen grievance redressal system etc.

- Cities can be rated as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 star based on their compliance with the protocol conditions specified for each of the rating. Further city should be ODF (Open Defecation Free) before it could be given rating of 3 star or above.
- The most significant feature of the rating protocol is that it provides stakeholders with a single metric to rate a city's cleanliness, rather than separately evaluating multiple factors which contribute to a city's overall cleanliness and garbage free status.
- The distinctive feature of Star Rating System will be that many cities can have higher stars as compared to only one city can be "Cleanest city" under Swachh Survekshan.

## **Explained: Office of profit**

President Ram Nath Kovind on the recommendation of Election Commission of India (ECI) has disqualified 20 Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs from Delhi, citing that they held offices of profit.

- In 2016, the ECI had issued show cause notices to 27 AAP MLAs from Delhi who held offices as parliamentary secretaries, after petition was filed seeking their disqualification.
- Office of profit is a position in government which cannot be held by Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) or Member of Parliament (MP).
- The post can yield salaries, perquisites and other benefits.
- It has not been defined in Constitution or Representation of the People Act, 1951.

## **Ban on use and sale of pet coke in NCR**

The environment ministry has banned the use and sale of imported petroleum coke in the national capital region, in the latest effort to curb air pollution.

- Cement plants functioning in the NCR, which use pet coke as fuel, will have to take permission from state pollution control board.

- Even the industrial units allowed to use pet coke will not be permitted to store it for more than its three months consumption
- Import of pet coke for purposes of trading shall not be permitted in NCR States
- The restrictions have been made under relevant section of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- However, only consented and registered industrial units in the region shall be permitted to directly import pet coke
- The consignment shall be in the name of user industrial units for their own use only, it said.
- Refineries and their authorised dealers will sell pet coke to only consented and registered industrial units in the NCR according to the quantity permitted by the state pollution control board, it said.
- The state pollution control board shall develop an electronic record system for uploading of consents, registration, record of sales by oil refineries.

### **Amit Shah launched 'Yuva Udghosh programme' in Varanasi**

BJP chief Amit Shah launched the "Yuva Udghosh programme" and addressed nearly 17,000 youths at the sports ground of Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth.

- The programme focuses on enrolling youths, aged above 17, who will be eligible for voting in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.
- Shah will also inaugurate Indian Institute of Gems and Jewellery there.
- The institute was envisaged by the Union government as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'skill India' programme to help youths get employment.

### **100 divyang-friendly websites launched to empower disabled**

In a path breaking initiative to empower Persons with Disabilities, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot launched 100 accessible websites for Divyangs.

- 900 such websites will be launched in a phased manner. The divyang-friendly websites, especially for visually impaired, use features such as screen readers and screen magnifiers, which can relay website content to the user in audio format.
- The Minister urged the states to increase the pace of the work which is being done in favour of divyangs. He said, the Centre is extending all assistance to empower divyangs and bring them into the mainstream.
- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) initiated a "Website Accessibility Project" for State Government/Union Territories under Accessible India Campaign through ERNET India, an autonomous scientific society

under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), to make total 917 websites accessible and providing funds for the same.

#### **Fourth India International Science Festival to be held in Lucknow**

The fourth edition of the India International Science Festival will be held in Lucknow.

- The decision to hold the Festival in Lucknow was taken at the first preparatory meeting for the 4th India International Science Festival (IISF) chaired by Union Minister for Science & Technology, Environment, Forest & Climate Change and Earth Sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan.
- Officials of Ministries of Science and Technology, Earth Sciences and DG, CSIR and representatives of Vijnana Bharti (VIBHA), the partner organisation for the festival, were among those who attended the meeting.
- The 1st IISF was held at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) New Delhi in December, 2015. The mega S&T expo attracted more than 3 lakh people. India had also set a Guinness Book of World Records, when 2000 school students performed two experiments at the Festival.
- The second Festival at CSIR-National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi in December 2016 showcased Indian achievements in various fields of science and technology. The third in the series was held in October 2017 in Chennai.

#### **Bengal nets over Rs 2 lakh crore of investment proposals**

The two-day Bengal Global Business Summit organised by the state government has so far received new investment proposals worth Rs 2,19,925 crore

- According to the state government, the 2015 summit had fetched investment proposals of Rs 2.43 lakh crore and the 2016 edition received over Rs 2.5 lakh crore of investment proposals.
- Over 2.35 lakh crore of business announcements were received by the state in the last edition of the summit.
- Around 1,040 B2B and 40 B2G meetings were held in the summit and 110 MoUs were signed.

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## **International Current Affairs**

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#### **Malta's Valletta becomes Europe's Capital of Culture**

Valletta has been officially inaugurated as the European Capital of Culture. Over 140 projects and 400 events have been planned in 2018 around three main themes: island stories, future baroque and voyages.

- With about 6,000 inhabitants, Valletta is the smallest capital in the European Union.
- It is located in a fortress and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- The Maltese capital is sharing the role with Leeuwarden, a city in the Netherlands.

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## Acquisitions & Mergers

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### **ONGC to acquire government's 51.1% stake in HPCL for Rs 36,915 crore**

Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) has agreed to acquire the government's entire 51.11% stake in Hindustan Petroleum for about Rs 37,000 crore in an all-cash deal that would close by month-end.

- The share sale will help government exceed its divestment target of Rs 72,500 crore in 2017-18 - a first for the government ever. The government has already raised Rs 54,337 crore so far this year.
- This acquisition will make ONGC India's first vertically integrated oil major, having presence across value chain in sector.
- The integrated entity will have advantage of having enhanced capacity to bear higher risks, take higher investment decisions and neutralising impact of volatility of global crude prices.
- As for HPCL, deal will help it in further.
- It also will enable ONGC to mitigate risk of crude price volatility.
- ONGC has been exempt from making an open offer to HPCL's minority shareholders, the company said in the filing, adding that no other regulatory approval is required for the transaction.

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## Appointments & Resigns

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### **Om Prakash Rawat appointed New Chief Election Commissioner**

President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Election commissioner Om Prakash Rawat (64) as new Chief Election Commissioner. He will succeed Achal Kumar Joti who has retired from post.

- Moreover, President also appointed former finance secretary Ashok Lavasa as Election commissioner.
- Both will have tenure of six years in office or till he or she attains the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- Om Prakash Rawat was appointed to Election Commission in August 2015. He has held several important portfolios at Centre and state level during his long bureaucratic career.

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## Awards & Recognition

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### **63rd Jio Filmfare Awards 2018**

The 63rd Jio Filmfare Awards 2018 was held on January 20 at the NSCI Dome in Worli, Mumbai.

- Best Film - Hindi Medium
- Critics' Award for Best Film: 'Newton'
- Best Director - Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari
- Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male) - Irrfan Khan
- Critics' Award for Best Actor (Male): Rajkummar Rao for 'Trapped'
- Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female) - Vidya Balan
- Critics' Award for Best Actor (Female): Zaira Wasim for 'Secret Superstar'

### **AP IT minister receives Kalam Innovations in Governance Award**

Andhra Pradesh IT minister Nara Lokesh today received Kalam Innovations in Governance Award (KIGA) at an event here organised by the APJ Abdul Kalam International Foundation.

- The foundation was set up in the memory of former President A J Abdul Kalam. It works in various areas for development of the society.
- The award was conferred on him by Rajya Sabha Secretary General Desh Deepak Verma for exemplary work in improving governance.

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## Science & Technology

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### **China launches 2 remote sensing satellites, 4 small satellites**

China launched two high-resolution optical remote sensing satellites into a preset orbit from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China.

- The two commercial satellites, Jilin-1 Video 07 and 08, were independently developed by Chang Guang Satellite Technology Co. Ltd., and will provide remote sensing data and products for government and industry users in conjunction with the eight previously launched Jilin-1 satellites.
- Friday marked the fourth launch for the Jilin-1 satellite family, and the satellites were carried by a Long March-11 rocket. This was the 264th mission of the Long March rocket series.
- Also at this launch, four other small commercial satellites were on the Long March-11 rocket, including one for Canada.

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## Sports

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### **Blind Cricket World Cup: India beat Pakistan**

Team India beat arch-rivals Pakistan by two wickets in Blind Cricket World Cup final at Sharjah to lift the title for the second time.

- Chasing 309 for victory, India rode on Sunil Ramesh's fine 93 and captain Ajay Reddy's 63 as they overhauled the total with more than one over to go.
- India successfully defended the coveted title and lifted the title for the second consecutive time. With this win, the Reddy-led team also remained unbeaten in the tournament.
- Pakistan, batting first, scored 308 for eight in their allotted off 40 overs.
- For Pakistan, Badar Munir top scored with 57 while Riasat Khan and Nisar Ali chipped in with a handy 48 and 47 runs respectively.

### **U-18 TT Rankings: Manav Thakkar rises to world No. 2**

Manav Thakkar became the first Indian paddler to grab the world No.2 spot in the boys' under-18 category of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) rankings. Li Hsin-Yang of Chinese Taipei holds the No. 1 spot while China's Wang Chuqin is in third spot.

- The 17-year-old Surat boy has been in brilliant form for the last one year and has bagged two Pro-tour gold medals in Slovenia and Indian Open and finished runners-up in Thailand Open last year.
- Apart from Manav, there are as many as 17 India players broke into the top-50 of the world rankings in different categories.

- Among other successes, recently crowned junior national champion Payas Jain has climbed to the 11th spot, and right behind him is Jeho H at No. 12. Another entrant into the top 50 - Yashansh Malik - is at the 46th spot.

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## Obituary

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### **Senior journalist Anindya Sengupta passes away**

Journalist Anindya Sengupta died Saturday at a private hospital in Kolkata.

- Sengupta started his career with Bengali newspaper 'Bartaman', and then worked with English dailies 'The Statesman' and 'The Telegraph'.
- He had served as the secretary of Kolkata Press Club for six terms, and was presently the secretary of the Indian Journalists Association (IJA).

### **Zimbabwe opposition figure Roy Bennett dies in US helicopter crash**

Prominent Zimbabwean politician Roy Bennett was killed with his wife in a helicopter crash in North America.

- Mr Bennett, was a former white farmer who became a stalwart of the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).
- A former coffee farmer, he was fluent in the local Shona language and quickly rose within the party.
- Mr Bennett earned the nickname Pachedu ("between us"), which is a colloquial reference to childhood secrets.