

# National Current Affairs

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## **PM Narendra Modi launches Khelo India School Games**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared the inaugural of first edition Khelo India School Games (KISG) open at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi.

- The first KISG were held under the Khelo India Programme to highlight India's young sporting talent and showcase India's sports potential.
- It was held across 16 disciplines in Under-17 age category. 5,000 school children from 29 states and seven union territories participated in mega sporting event held from January 31 to February 8, 2018.
- Total of 199 gold medals, 199 silver medals and 275 bronze medals were awarded at first KISG.

## **Punjab govt bans sale of Endosulfan, other insecticides**

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has approved a ban on the sale of Endosulfan and 19 other insecticides reported to be harmful for human beings as well as from the environmental sustainability and economic viability aspects.

- Acting on the recommendations of the Registration Committee, Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), and the Punjab State Farmers' Commission (PSFC), the chief minister, who also holds the agriculture portfolio, gave his nod to the ban, to be effective from February 1.
- Making it clear that no laxity would be tolerated in this regard, the chief minister directed that the ban be implemented meticulously and stringently.
- The agriculture department has issued detailed guidelines on the regulation of the sale of insecticides in the state.
- The department has been asked to review the licenses given for these insecticides and also not to issue fresh license for these insecticides from February 1.

## **Home Ministry allots ₹370 crore to strengthen border infrastructure**

Laying emphasis on building infrastructure along the Indo-Pak and Sino-India borders, the government has sanctioned nearly ₹370 crore to the BSF and the ITBP for construction of bunkers and special climate- controlled huts in forward areas.

- A total of ₹369.84 crore has been sanctioned by the Home Ministry for construction of infrastructure for Border Security Force (BSF) and Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).
- The amount will be spent for construction of bunkers, fortifying border out posts of the BSF along the Indo-Pak border, construction of climate-controlled huts, procurement of snow scooter for the ITBP besides other necessary works of the two forces.
- The BSF guards the 2,526.86-km-long Indo-Pak border, including 237.2 km of the Line of Control, and 4096.7 km of the Indo-Bangladesh border.
- ITBP guards the 3,488-km-long Sino-India border that runs through Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Railways to set up coach factory in Maharashtra's Latur**

The Indian Railways has announced the setting up of a coach factory in Maharashtra's Latur district to manufacture EMUs (electric multiple units) for suburban trains and coaches for metros.

- The project will bring massive employment opportunities and economic development to the Marathwada region, one of the most backward areas of Maharashtra.
- Besides, work on the project will be done on a high priority basis with fast track processing of all approvals.
- To implement the project, the Maharashtra state government has offered several concessions including land and taxes etc.
- The project will benefit 'Make in India' and bring employment to a large number of people.
- It will also create an industrial ecosystem in the drought prone region boosting shift from agriculture to industry.

### **Centre sanctions Rs 1,500 cr for organic farming in Uttarakhand**

Central Government has sanctioned Rs 1500 crore to promote organic farming in Uttarakhand.

- The amount was sanctioned by Union Agriculture Minister, Radha Mohan Singh during his meeting with Uttarakhand Chief Minister, Trivendra Singh Rawat in New Delhi on January 30, 2018.
- The amount of Rs. 1500 crore will be disbursed over a period of three years.
- This decision is to manifest Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to develop Uttarakhand as an organic state.

- The Union minister also cleared a proposal worth Rs 2,600 crore for the co-operative sector in the state. Of which, Rs 200 crore is meant for the reorganisation of sugar mills.
- The co-operation extended by the Centre would strengthen the co-operative sector in the state in a major way.

### **7<sup>th</sup> India Energy Congress begins in New Delhi on Feb 1st**

7<sup>th</sup> India Energy Congress focusing on the theme 'Energy 4.0: Energy Transition Towards 2030' will begin in New Delhi on February 1, 2018.

- India Energy Congress is the flagship event of World Energy Council India (WEC India), which functions under the Union Power Ministry.
- 7th India Energy Congress has been jointly organised by Union Ministries of Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy, Petroleum & Natural Gas, External Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy.
- Over the course of this two-day event, around 400 experts will deliberate on five sub-themes viz. Policy and Energy Environment 2030, Sustainable Mobility, Energy Investments in an Uncertain World, Variable Renewable Energy Integration and Reaching the Last Mile.

### **Maharashtra Government approves Ghodazari Wildlife Sanctuary**

The Maharashtra Government has approved Ghodazari in Chandrapur district as new wildlife sanctuary in the state.

- The formation of this wildlife sanctuary will help provide employment opportunities to the youths from 59 villages on the fringes.
- The sanctuary is located in the North East of Tadoba, will include 159 sq km of Brahmapuri forest.
- The wildlife sanctuary located North East of Tadoba Tiger Reserve will be carved out in total of 159 sq km area covering Nagbhir, Talodhi and Chimur forest areas. It will include hilly terrain, Saatbahini hills, Ghodazari lake, Muktai Deosthan, waterfall etc.
- The area is rich with flora and fauna. The area in the sanctuary is also important corridor for wild animals moving from Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve to Umrer-Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary and vice versa

### **Sammakka-Saralamma Jatara' kicks off to a grand start**

The unique and mammoth four-day tribal festival, Sammakka-Saralamma jatara' in the thick forests of Eturunagaram wildlife sanctuary kicked off to a grand start.

- It was marked by frenzied dances and chant of Sammakka on the lips of Koya and Chenchu tribals as their folk goddess Saralamma her spouse Govindaraju and Pagididdaraju (husband of Sammakka) were brought from their forest abode and installed at the popular Gadde ( platform) in Medaram village.
- The event is marked by the presentation of sari by the Tribal chenchu women of Nagarkurnool forests which is brought by over 1000 Chenchu women after special rituals performed at the District Collectorate.
- The helicopter service for an aerial tour of Medaram Jathara and ride from Warangal town to Jathara spot was also launched from the two helipads.

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## International Current Affairs

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### India ranks 42nd in 2017 Global Democracy Index

India, world's largest democracy was ranked 42nd among 165 independent states on annual 2017 Global Democracy Index (GDI) released by UK-based company, Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

- India's rank has slipped from 32nd in 2016 GDI and its overall score dropped 0.58 points from 7.81 to 7.23. Moreover, India was classified India as a flawed democracy in 2017 GDI.
- The index ranks 165 independent states and 2 territories on basis of 60 indicators grouped in five different categories viz. electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation and political culture.
- It categories countries into four broad categories viz. full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime and authoritarian regime based on their score on a scale from 0 to 10.
- Top 10 countries in 2017 GDI: Norway, Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand, Denmark, Ireland, Canada, Australia, Finland and Switzerland. Top three positions vc.
- Top-ranked Norway was given overall score of 9.87 with perfect-ten scores for electoral process and pluralism; political participation; and political culture. Only top 19 countries have been classified as 'full democracies'.
- Global Scenario: US (ranked 21), Japan, Italy, France, Israel, Singapore, and Hong Kong were named among 'flawed democracies'.
- The hybrid regimes classified by it includes India's neighbours Pakistan (110th), Bangladesh (92nd), Nepal (94th) and Bhutan (99th).
- Those named as 'authoritarian regimes' include China (139th), Myanmar (120th), Russia (135th) and Vietnam (140th). North Korea was ranked lowest at 167th and Syria second last at 166th place.

- India's overall score has fallen to 7.23 points, even as it scored well on electoral process and pluralism (9.17).
- It scored low on other four parameters—political culture, functioning of government, political participation and civil liberties.
- India was ranked 49th with regard to media freedom (measured this year by EIU), with its media being classified as 'partly free'.
- The rise of conservative religious ideologies in India is another factor that has affected the country's ranking.

### **Rwanda becomes first poor country to provide eye care for all**

Rwanda has become the first low-income country in the world to provide universal eye care for its 12 million citizens.

- Rwanda government has partnered with Vision for a Nation (VFAN), a UK-based charity organization, to train 3,000 eye care nurses in 502 local health centres.
- They would prescribe glasses to patients and direct them to national clinics in case of serious eye problems.
- The most common eye problem in Rwanda is short sightedness. Coffee bean sorting is one of the major means of income for Rwanda women. Their eye sight deteriorates as they reach 45 years, and hence their livelihood and means of income are affected.

### **United Arab Emirates opens world's longest zip line**

On January 31, 2018, world's longest zip line, measuring 2.83 kilometres in length opened in Ras Al Khaimah, the smallest state of United Arab Emirates.

- This 2.83km zip line allows thrill seekers to jump from the peak of Jebel Jais, UAE's highest mountain.
- It created a Guinness World Record for world's longest zip line.
- Jebel Jais mountain in Ras Al Khaimah, is at an elevation of 1934 m. above sea level and is considered the highest point of the United Arab Emirates.

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## **Banking & Finance**

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### **World Bank signs \$30 mn MoU with RUMSL to develop world's largest solar power plant**

On January 31, 2018, Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL) and the World Bank signed USD 30 million loan agreement to develop solar power plants in Rewa and Mandsaur in Madhya Pradesh.

- The agreement was signed between World Bank's – Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) – and Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL) in New Delhi.
- IREDA is the nodal project implementation entity for the loan.
- RUMSL is a joint venture between the Madhya Pradesh Urja Vikash Nigam Limited (MPUVNL) and the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) which is developing the world's largest 750 MW solar power plant in Rewa district and 250 MW solar power plant in Mandsaur.

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## Business

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### **India's GDP growth fell to 7.1% in 2016-17 from 8.2% in 2015-16: CSO**

According to the CSO's revised estimates of national income released on January 31, 2018, gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate for 2015-16 stood at 8.2% from the earlier estimates of 8% while for 2016-17, revised GDP growth remained unchanged at 7.1%.

- For 2015-16, this is the second revised estimate, while for 2016-17, this is the first revised estimate.
- Revised estimates are arrived at by taking into consideration a wider range of numbers, including employment data.
- Second revised estimate for 2015-16 has been arrived at by incorporating latest available data on agricultural production, industrial production and Government expenditure.
- First revised estimates for 2016-17 have been arrived at by using industry-wise/institution-wise detailed information.

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## Appointments & Resigns

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### **Neelam Kapoor appointed as Director General of Sports Authority of India**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed senior bureaucrat Neelam Kapoor as Director General (DG) of the Sports Authority of India (SAI). ACC was headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

- At present, she is Principal Director General of the Directorate of Field Publicity. She was Principal Director General of Press Information Bureau (PIB) in UPA Government headed by then PM Manmohan Singh.
- As PIB chief, she was in-charge of information officers attached to every central government ministry.

### **Shailendra Kumar Joshi appointed as Telangana Chief Secretary**

On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018, Shailendra Kumar Joshi was named the Chief Secretary of Telangana.

- Decision regarding Shailendra Kumar Joshi's appointment was taken by Telangana Chief Minister K.Chandrashekhar Rao.
- Shailendra Kumar Joshi is at present the Special Chief Secretary, Irrigation. He replaces S.P. Singh as Telangana Chief Secretary.

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## **Awards & Recognition**

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### **Magahi writer Anand Madhukar awarded Sahitya Akademi's Bhasha Samman award**

On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018, Magahi writer Shesh Anand Madhukar was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Bhasha Samman award. Samman Anand Madhukar – Bhasha Samman award:

- Shesh Anand Madhukar is the second Magahi writer to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi's Bhasha Samman award
- Sahitya Akademi President Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari presented this award to Shesh Anand Madhukar. The award consisted of a cheque for Rs 1 lakh and a memento.
- Shesh Anand Madhukar has created various remarkable literary works in both Magahi and Hindi. He started his literary creations in 1960.
- His books are present in the graduate and post-graduate syllabus of Vinoba Bhave University, Hazaribagh.
- Bhasha Samman award recognizes the languages that are equally spoken in different parts of India.



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# Acquisitions & Mergers

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## **Google seals \$1.1billion deal to acquire HTC's talent**

Google has announced its deal of USD 1.1 billion with HTC, and its acquisition of HTC talent.

- According to the deal, Google has acquired nearly 2,000 HTC engineers. The engineers are mostly from the smartphone R&D team. These engineers will shift to Google, and will work in Taiwan.
- This team of engineers has already worked closely with Google in the Pixel and Pixel 2 projects.
- This move has been made with the idea of expanding Google in the hardware sector and in the Asia Pacific region.

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# Science & Technology

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## **Health-tech startup mCURA launches India's first integrated mobility platform 'Smart OPD'**

On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018, mCURA, a Health-tech startup, launched 'Smart OPD', India's first integrated mobility platform that reduces waiting time in counters and provides e-prescriptions.

- 'Smart OPD' helps patients to escape long queues at admission and billing counters, labs, pharmacies and hospitals.
- Labs, pharmacy, doctors and patients are integrated through the mobile platform. By carrying the 'Smart OPD' card, patients can experience fast and smooth movement in the hospitals.
- Patients can avail Near-field communication (NFC) based "Tap and Pay" card (registration plus cash card) at the registration counter. They will be instructed to download the patient app.
- This app contains medical records, medical bills, payment transactions, etc. Using "Tap and Pay" card patients can pay for all hospital services without waiting in queues.



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# Important Days

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## **Indian Coast Guard (ICG) celebrates 41<sup>st</sup> Foundation Day**

On 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018, the Indian Coast Guard celebrated its 41<sup>st</sup> Foundation Day.

- The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) was established in 1978. It was started with only 7 ships.
- It was formed to enforce National Laws in the Indian waters and safeguard life and property at sea.
- They help and protect Indian fishermen. They also investigate foreign fishermen entering Indian waters.