

# National Current Affairs

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## **World Sustainable Development Summit 2018 held in New Delhi**

The 2018 edition of World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS 2018) was held at VigyanBhawan in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. WSDS is flagship forum of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).

- It seeks to bring together global leaders and thinkers in the fields of sustainable development, energy and environment sectors on common platform.
- The theme of WSDS 2018 is 'Partnerships for a Resilient Planet'. It seeks to create action frameworks to resolve some of most urgent challenges facing developing economies in backdrop of climate change.
- The thematic tracks at WSDS 2018 included discussions on issues related to sustainability, including carbon markets and pricing, sustainable transport, resilient cities, solar energy and refrigerant technologies.
- It addressed wide variety of issues, including combating land degradation, effective waste management mechanisms to make cities free of landfills free.
- It also addressed issues related to combating air pollution effectively, measures to increase resource and energy efficiency, facilitate transition to clean energy and create financial mechanisms to enable effective climate change mitigation.

## **Government inks \$100 million loan agreement with NDB for Rajasthan Water Project**

Government has signed second Loan Agreement with New Development Bank (NDB) for financing of Rajasthan Water Sector Restructuring Project for the Desert Areas.

- This is the first tranche loan of \$100 million was approved by the NDB under Multi Tranche Financing Facility of \$345 million for this project.
- The objective of the project is to rehabilitate 678 km long Indira Gandhi Nahar Project (IGNP) built during 1958-63 to prevent seepage, conserve water, and enhance water use efficiency as mandated by both national and state level policies on water use.
- The project will enable arresting the seepage by rehabilitating the deteriorating canal lining of IGNP system which needs urgent attention. Its implementation period is of 6 years.
- The project is aimed at arresting seepage by refurbishing canal, modernisation of irrigation management practices by involving water users' associations, strengthening of drinking water supply and irrigation facilities and rehabilitation of waterlogged areas.

### **NITI Aayog, KPIT technologies tie-up to promote innovation in schools**

IT-based consulting firm KPIT technologies has announced its two-year statement of intent with National Institution for Transforming India- NITI Aayog to promote innovative skills among the students of senior secondary level as part of the government's Atal Innovation Mission(AIM).

- Under the (AIM), the Central government aims at creating open-ended workshops at select Atal Tinkering Laboratories(ATL), which will allow students to learn through the mode of 'do-it-yourself' and help them acquire critical skills.
- The purpose of this joint initiative is to push the students to understand the concepts of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through new-age technologies including robotics, Internet of Things (IoT) and 3D printing.
- KPIT will further provide two volumes of booklets named 'Chhote scientists' that will help around 2500 schools to prepare curriculum and teaching aids.
- Additional teacher's training programs will also be conducted for Atal Tinkering Laboratories.

### **India's biggest Annual Conference on Pharma Industry and Medical Devices - India Pharma 2018 and India Medical Device 2018 - begins at Bengaluru**

Union Minister of Chemicals & Fertilizers and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Ananthkumar inaugurated the third edition of India Pharma 2018 and India Medical Device 2018, International conference and exhibition in Bengaluru.

- The three-day event is being organized by Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, in collaboration with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).
- India Pharma & India Medical Device Awards were announced at the event to honour excellence and innovation in the field of pharmaceuticals and medical devices.
- Themed around 'Affordable, Quality Healthcare,' the three day conference has back to back sessions to discuss topics like Discovering Innovative Medicines in India; Making India a Part of Global Supply Chain in Medical Devices; Opportunities, Challenges and Regulatory Requirements in the Development of Biologics; Opportunities & Challenges for Stem cells & Regenerative Medicine; Emerging Global Trends in Self Care and Relevance of OTC Regulatory Framework for Indian Public Healthcare System; a Sub-sectoral Approach to Make in India; and Moving towards API Self Sufficiency.
- A key highlight of India Pharma & India Medical Device 2018 is a workshop by World Health Organization on "Regulatory System Strengthening and Prequalification updated by WHO."

- A conference will also be organized by NASSCOM on “Digital Transformation through Innovation in Pharmaceutical, Medical Devices and Healthcare Industries.”

### **Gopichand launches India's largest 'train the trainers' programme**

Former All-England champion and celebrated badminton coach Pullela Gopichand initiated the country's largest 'train the trainers' programme, inducting 1500 Physical Education (PE) teachers from across Gujarat for advanced training.

- The programme aims to develop the skills of PE teachers so that they can impart the right techniques to children aspiring to make it big at sports.
- This is the largest skill development programme at the grassroots level.
- It will impact over 45,000 children every year and change the Physical Literacy and Sports knowledge in schools in Gujarat.
- As per the plan, Gopichand and his band of experts will initially select close to 150 PE teachers out of 1500 to become master trainers.
- They will attend a week-long workshop in which they will learn all the modern sports techniques; thereafter, they will impart the same to the other teachers across the state in a planned and phased manner.
- The programme is looking at all-round development in sports, targeting the PE teachers, the students and the schools.

### **DP World signs pact with J-K govt to develop trade infrastructure**

Global ports operator DP World inked a pact with the Jammu and Kashmir government to jointly explore opportunities to develop trade infrastructure in the north Indian state.

- The government of Dubai, global trade enabler DP World and the government of Jammu and Kashmir have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore opportunities to develop trade infrastructure in the Indian state
- The agreement will see discussions take place on a multi-modal logistics park and hub in Jammu, comprising warehouses and specialised storage solutions that will also encourage inter-modal transfer of containers, bulk and break-bulk cargo,
- Bilateral trade between the UAE and India has grown from USD 128 million 30 years ago to more than USD 53 billion.

### **Madhya Pradesh's first butterfly park comes up in Raisen district**

Madhya Pradesh's first butterfly park, which houses 65 species of the colourful insect, has come up in Raisen district.

- Apart from providing a congenial atmosphere for breeding of butterflies, nearly 137 plant varieties are also part of the park spread over three hectares.
- The park will bring people, especially children, close to nature and help them increase their knowledge about butterflies and plant varieties.
- The park is an important initiative of the Forest Department to conserve nature.

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## International Current Affairs

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### **WADA suspends Romanian drug-testing laboratory**

The World Anti-Doping Agency has suspended Romania's drug-testing laboratory for six months, saying it didn't meet the required standard.

- WADA says it imposed the sanction on the lab in Bucharest "due to a number of non-conformities" with regulations, but it didn't specify the problems.
- The lab is now forbidden from testing any samples and must transfer any in its possession to another laboratory.
- The ban is backdated to November 29, when a provisional suspension was imposed after the faults were found.

### **Tropical Cyclone Gita smashes Tonga**

Cyclone Gita has caused severe damage throughout Tonga, being labelled the worst storm to hit the country in 60 years.

- Parliament house had been levelled; roofs had been torn off houses, trees knocked over and churches badly damaged.
- Gita was a category 4 cyclone at midnight, with the worst of the storm hitting Tongatapu between 11pm and 2am.
- The estimated sustained winds from the storm reached 230kmh, gusting to 278kmh.
- The country's meteorological office and national radio station were both taken offline.
- The storm had been labelled the strongest cyclone to pass close to the islands of Tongatapu and Eua in 60 years by the British Met Office.

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## Banking & Finance

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### **Centre to change base year for GDP, IIP to 2017-18, for CPI it will be 2018**

The government will change the base year to 2017-18 for the calculation of GDP and IIP numbers while for retail inflation the year will be revised to 2018.

- During 2018-19, the ministry is proposing to initiate steps to revise the base years of gross domestic product (GDP), Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) to accommodate and factor the changes that take place in the economic scenario of the country.
- The statistics ministry has proposed the new base year for GDP and IIP as 2017-18 while for CPI it will be 2018.
- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) has been allocated Rs 48.59 billion in the Union Budget 2018-19.

### **NABARD launches Rs 1,918 cr area development plan for Punjab**

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) announced area development plans worth Rs 1,918 crore for Punjab to supplement farmers' income.

- Under this plan, the activities like dairy, vegetable cultivation, bee keeping, mushroom growing will be promoted in order to provide income to farmers at sustainable basis
- The investment credit growth in Punjab went down from 37 per cent in 2013-14 to 18 per cent in 2016-17 while the overall investment credit growth in India has gone up from 25 to 35 per cent.

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## **Business**

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### **ONGC to introduce Asia's first large scale CO2 injection technique at Gandhar field**

State owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is planning to introduce carbon dioxide (CO2) injection technology in its Gandhar oil field in Gujarat. It will be first large scale CO2-injected project in Asia.

- Its purpose is to recover extra 20 million barrels of crude oil under enhanced oil recovery (EOR) programme.
- EOR programme aims at recovering up to 20% of residual oil from ageing oil fields to improve India's energy security.

- Under this project, ONGC plans to invest \$75 million in CO<sub>2</sub> capture and another \$200 million in injector producer network to recover an extra 15% of residual oil currently valued at \$1.36 billion.
- It will be operational in 20 months.
- ONGC is in talks with National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) for utilising nearly 5 million tonnes of emitted gas (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the latter's Gandhar plant.

### **Amazon becomes world's 3rd most valuable company, overtakes Microsoft**

On February 14, 2018, Amazon's market capitalisation touched \$702.5 billion. On account of this surge, Amazon became the third most valuable company in the world.

- Market value of a company's outstanding shares is referred to as market capitalisation (m-cap). It is calculated by multiplying the current market price of company's share with total number of outstanding shares.
- En route to grabbing third spot, Amazon surpassed Microsoft's market cap of \$699.2 billion.
- In terms of market capitalisation, Apple is the most valuable company with \$849.2 billion market cap, followed by Google's parent company Alphabet at \$745.1 billion.
- Surge in Amazon's stock prices has made its CEO, Jeff Bezos the richest man in the world. Bezos holds 78.9 million shares of Amazon.
- Bloomberg has estimated Bezos' net worth at \$106 billion while Forbes has put it at \$105 billion.
- Bezos is not just the richest man in world at present, but he has become the world's richest man ever. This record was held by Microsoft founder Bill Gates with \$100 billion in 1999.

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## **Awards & Recognition**

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### **Government to award former DG of Kapurthala science city Raghbir Singh Khandpur**

The Department of Science and Technology will award Raghbir Singh Khandpur for his contribution to science and his efforts to make the Science City in Punjab's Kapurthala into an international-level facility.

- He has been selected for a national award for his contribution in the field of science, technology and communication.
- It will be given to him in New Delhi on National Science Day (February 28).

- Khandpur is former Director General (DG) of the Centre for Electronics Design and Technology and Pushpa Gujral Science City in Kapurthala.
- He has served as scientist for 24 years at CSIO, Chandigarh as head of Medical Instruments Division and also as head of the Electronics Division.
- He is also the founder director of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) in Mohali.
- He has authored 10 books of international repute and is a holder of seven patents for innovative designs. He has published over 60 research and review papers.

### **Sanjiv Bajaj is 2017's EY Entrepreneur of the Year**

Sanjiv Bajaj, Managing Director, Bajaj Finserv, won the EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2017 award for solutions in lending, life and general insurance and wealth advisory.

- The consulting firm also named nine other category winners for the Entrepreneur of the Year Program.
- E Sreedharan, widely acknowledged for his invaluable contributions transforming public transport in India, was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award. He was instrumental in the planning and executing the Kolkata Metro, Delhi Metro, Kochi Metro and Lucknow Metro.

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## **Appointments & Resigns**

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### **Archaeologist Arvind Jamkhedkar to head ICHR**

Archaeologist and historian Arvind P. Jamkhedkar will be the next Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR).

- He will replace Prof. K. Sudershan Rao, whose term as ICHR chief was mired in controversy. The post fell vacant after Prof. Rao's retirement.
- Prof. Jamkhedkar is at present Chancellor of Deccan College, Pune, known in academic circles for its archaeology department.

### **JNU ex-professor Vinod Kumar Jain appointed as Tezpur University VC**

Former professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Vinod Kumar Jain, has been appointed as new vice-chancellor of Tezpur University.



- A seasoned academician, Jain has studied BSc from Agra University and completed MSc from Aligarh Muslim University.
- He was conferred DPhil from Sussex University, Brighton UK in 1982 for the Thesis: Electrostatic Wave Instabilities in Beam Plasma Systems.
- Jain will serve as a Vice-Chancellor of Tezpur University for a period of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office or until he attains the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.

### **Cyril Ramaphosa sworn in as new president of South Africa's**

- South African lawmakers selected Cyril Ramaphosa as the country's new president after scandal-tainted Jacob Zuma resigned under pressure from his own ANC ruling party. Ramaphosa was chosen without a vote after being the only candidate nominated

### **Ethiopia's Prime Minister Resigns Amid Political Turmoil**

- The prime minister of Ethiopia, Hailemariam Desalegn, resigned after deadly unrest pushed the government to release several high-profile political prisoners. Mr. Hailemariam came into office in 2012, after the death of Meles Zenawi.

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## **Science & Technology**

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### **Malacidins: Scientists discover new class of antibiotics from soil**

Scientists from The Rockefeller University in New York have reported discovery of a new class of antibiotics called malacidins.

- It has been produced by microorganisms living in soil and dirt and is capable of killing off several antibiotic-resistant pathogens.
- The new family of antibiotics comes from molecules present in large variety of soils.
- Malacidins are distinctive class of antibiotics that are commonly encoded in soil microbiomes.
- They have never been reported in culture-based NP (Natural Products) discovery efforts.
- Malacidins are active against multidrug-resistant pathogens, sterilise methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) skin infections in animal wound model and did not select for resistance in laboratory conditions.



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# Obituary

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## **UP ex-minister and SP leader Khwaja Haleem dies at 75**

Former Uttar Pradesh minister and senior Samajwadi Party leader Khwaja Haleem passed away.

- Haleem, who belongs to a family of freedom fighters, completed his masters from Aligarh Muslim University in 1969. He started his political career with the Youth Congress in the early 1970s.
- In 1990, Haleem was appointed the chairman of Uttar Pradesh Minority Commission and was the member of the Samajwadi Party Central Committee for nearly two decades. In 2014, he was appointed advisor in tourism department by then chief minister Akhilesh Singh Yadav.