

National Current Affairs

Haryana opens four subsidised canteens under Antyodaya Aahaar Yojan

The Haryana government has opened subsidised canteens in four districts under the 'Antyodaya Aahaar Yojana' to provide healthy, nutritious and hygienic.

- These four districts are Faridabad, Gurugram, Hisar and Yamunanagar. The state government is planning to establish a total of 23 such canteens, one each at district headquarter.
- These subsidised canteens will serve food to registered construction workers and all other poor and needy persons at Rs. 10.
- Each food packet will weigh 730 grams and shall contain 1150 calories will have four chapattis, rice, dal, cooked seasonal vegetables, curd or raita, green chutney and gur.
- Each food packet would cost Rs 20 out of which Rs 10 would be shared by Labour Department.

Assam Govt plans to set up 3 Terminal Mart for agricultural products

Chairman of State Agricultural Marketing Board Palit Kumar Bora said that three Terminal Marts will be set up to give a boost to agricultural market in the state of Assam. Steps are being taken to set up such marts at Silchar, Jorhat and Guwahati.

- An MoU has been signed to develop the largest banana market of Asia which is situated at Darangiri in Goalpara district of Assam.
- 6 new Krishi Vigyan Kendras are being set up in Assam which will help the farmers in various agro-based sectors.
- The Board has increased the Minimum Support Price of paddy so that the farmers can get the maximum benefit.
- State government has stressed on encouraging organic farming in the state.

Fiji partners TERI for help in tackling climate change

Island nation Fiji signed a declaration of partnership with India's The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) for assistance in tackling climate change effects and achieving environmental sustainability. The declaration was made on sidelines of the ongoing World Sustainable Development Conference (WSDS 2018).

- The declaration provides a framework for technical collaboration and assistance by TERI to measure, manage, support and pilot activities and models towards achieving Fiji's environmental protection objectives as well as its Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement/
- Under the declaration, TERI seeks to provide technical assistance in a variety of areas including waste and pollution management, developing 'green' energy efficient buildings, remote monitoring and reporting of environmental impact assessments as well as aligning policies with environmental aims.
- This declaration follows the successful India-Pacific Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) held in Suva, Fiji in May 2017.
- TERI was the knowledge partner for the SDC, an event that was organised under India's Forum for India-Pacific Islands Co-operation (FIPIC) agenda.

LS Speaker Sumitra Mahajan inaugurates 6th India Region CPA conference

Lok Sabha Speaker, Sumitra Mahajan inaugurated the 6th India region Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference at Patna in Bihar. Addressing the gathering, the Speaker spoke about the objectives and role of the Parliamentary Association body.

- The conference will hold discussions mainly on two topics -- 'Parliament's role in the development agenda' and 'Legislature and Judiciary - Two important Pillars of Democracy'.
- The Speaker stressed upon the need to strengthen the legislature, executive and the judiciary in order to make democracy strong.

Sex ratio at birth dips in 17 large states, Gujarat tops list

According to a report released by the Niti Aayog, the sex ratio at birth (SRB) saw a decline in 17 out of 21 large states of the country, with Gujarat recording an alarming dip of 53 points.

- According to the report, among the 17 states which recorded substantial drop of 10 points or more, in Gujarat the SRB fell to 854 females from 907 females per 1,000 males born registering a drop of 53 points from 2014-15 (base year) to 2015-16 (reference year) in this indicator.
- Gujarat is followed by Haryana, which registered a drop of 35 points, Rajasthan (32 points), Uttarakhand (27 points), Maharashtra (18 points), Himachal Pradesh (14 points), Chhattisgarh (drop of 12 points), and Karnataka (11 points). According to the report, improvement in SRB was witnessed in Punjab, which registered a rise of 19 points, followed by Uttar Pradesh (10 points) and Bihar (9 points).

City Union loses \$2 million in cyberattack, retrieves half

About \$2 million was stolen from City Union Bank accounts last week after a cyberattack compromised the SWIFT messaging system with payment instructions being sent to other banks in multiple jurisdictions.

- The bank detected the transactions while reconciling accounts and about half the money has been retrieved, The payments were later traced to Turkey, China and Dubai.
- The ministry of external affairs and consulates in the respective countries have been alerted. The bank is hopeful of getting all the money back.
- The Reserve Bank of India had issued an advisory to banks and alerted them to the possibility of cyberattacks targeting SWIFT in the country. It had advised banks to step up monitoring of all systems in general, and SWIFT operations in particular.
- Rising instances of cyberattacks on banks had led to SWIFT introducing a Customer Security Framework mandating member banks to upgrade systems or face being named for not doing so.

Modi to address World Congress on Information Technology in Hyderabad today

The city is set to host two mega technology events — Nasscom India Leadership Forum (ILF) and the 22nd edition of the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) — concurrently from Feb 19.

- The WCIT is being organised for the time in the country and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver inaugurate the summit through a video conference.
- Since Nasscom is the host of the of WCIT, the 6th edition of ILF is a limited edition.
- Telangana is the state partner for both the events, the official added.
- Both the summit will be held at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre from 18 to 22 Feb.
- At least 20 CEOs from Fortune 500 companies and 100 other top executives besides over 5,000 delegates are expected to attend the conference.

International Current Affairs

India, Iran ink 9 agreements

India and Iran have signed nine agreements, including one on connectivity related to strategic Chabahar port and on double taxation avoidance.

- These agreements were signed after bilateral talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.
- The bilateral talks focused to boost cooperation in key areas of security, trade and energy.
- This was Hassan Rouhani's first official state visit to India after he was elected Iran's President in 2013.
- Signed Agreements are:
 - Agreement for Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on Income.
 - MoU on Exemption from Visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic Passports.
 - Exchange of Instrument of Ratification of Extradition Treaty.
 - Lease Contract for Shahid Beheshti Port- Phase 1 of Chabahar during Interim Period.
 - MoU on Cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine.
 - MoU on establishment of an Expert Group on Trade Remedy Measures to promote cooperation in areas of mutual interest.
 - MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Allied Sectors.
 - MoU on Cooperation in field of Health and Medicine.
 - MoU on Postal Cooperation.

Banking & Finance

PNB arm, IFC tie up to raise \$800 mn for affordable housing

PNB Housing Finance Ltd has tied up with International Finance Corporation (IFC), part of the World Bank Group, to raise \$800 million for green and affordable housing in India.

- IFC is in negotiations with two other housing finance firms to invest another \$150 million, as well as with property developers to assist the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) from both the demand and supply sides, the person said, requesting anonymity.
- The move comes as a big boost to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's housing for all scheme by 2022.
- Under PMAY, the government offers interest subsidy of 6.5% to economically weaker sections on their home loans. The scheme is for people with an annual income up to Rs3 lakh.
- As per the deal with PNB Housing, IFC will make \$400 million available for the new facility, of which \$150 million will be its own money and the rest will be mobilized from other sources.

- All of this money will be raised through masala bonds issued by PNB Housing. Masala bonds are rupee-denominated bonds issued in offshore capital markets.
- PNB Housing will put up another \$400 million on its own, taking the total amount to \$800 million.

Sports

Top of the world: Roger Federer, 36, becomes oldest number one

Roger Federer became the oldest world number one when the 20-time Grand Slam title winner reached the semi-finals of the Rotterdam Open.

- The 36-year-old Swiss overcame an early setback to beat Robin Haase of the Netherlands 4-6, 6-1, 6-1 and will replace old rival Rafael Nadal at the top of the rankings.
- Federer surpasses Andre Agassi, who held the top spot aged 33 years and 131 days in 2003, as the oldest man to claim the world number one spot.
- It is Federer's first time back at the summit since October 2012 having first claimed the top position in February 2004.

Virat Kohli first batsman ever to score 500 runs in bilateral ODI series

Indian skipper Virat Kohli continued his sublime form in the ongoing tour of South Africa and created yet another world record by becoming the first batsman ever to score 500 runs in a bilateral ODI series.

- Kohli achieved the feat during the sixth and final ODI of the series against South Africa when he reached on 71 with a cover drive boundary off Andile Phehlukwayo.
- Kohli went on to score his 35th ODI hundred, his third of the series and also the first by an Indian batsman in a bilateral series, off just 82 balls to help India register an emphatic eight-wicket victory over the hosts at SuperSport Park in Centurion.
- The 29-year-old Kohli surpassed his compatriot Rohit Sharma's tally of 491 runs against Australia in 2013-14 for the biggest run haul in any bilateral ODI series. Former Australia captain George Bailey is third in the list with 478 runs against India in 2013-14.

Jordan Thompson wins Men's Singles of Chennai Open

India's Yuki Bhambri finished runner-up in the Men's Singles in the Chennai Open ATP Challenger Tennis Championships.

- In the final clash, Jordan Thompson of Australia beat Yuki Bhambri 7-5, 3-6, 7-5 in three sets to win the Chennai Open ATP Challenger on 17th Feb 2018 at the SDAT Stadium.
- Yuki Bhambri put up a good fight to make for a riveting final for Chennai's tennis lovers, but Jordan Thompson was the superior player on the day.

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