

# National Current Affairs

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## **Aviation Multi Skill Development Centre at Chandigarh launched**

A first-of-its-kind Aviation Multi Skill Development Centre (MSDC), a CSR initiative of Airports Authority of India (AAI) was inaugurated in Chandigarh today by the Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Shri P Ashok Gajapathi Raju.

- The Centre has been set up in collaboration with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and is supported by the Aerospace and Aviation Sector Skill Council (AASSC) of India.
- This Centre will train about 2,400 youth and women in 8 aviation job roles.
- With an outlay of Rs.5.25 crore, this project which is a unique CSR initiative of AAI.
- NSDC, the implementing agency of MSDE, in collaboration with the Bird Education Society for Travel & Tourism (BESTT) will undertake the training programmes.
- The course curriculum and assessments of the training have been designed by AASSC in accordance with the National Skill Qualification Framework.
- The Centre is equipped with modern training infrastructure to supplement an industry-relevant course curriculum. Upon successful completion of the skill training, the candidates will be certified by NSDC through the AASSC.
- The Training Provider –BESTT– has been mandated to ensure job placement in the aviation and allied fields for at least 70% of the successfully trained students.

## **Uma Bharti launches second Swajal Yojna project in Rajasthan**

To ensure availability of clean drinking water to every household, Union Minister Uma Bharti launched the second project under the 'Swajal Yojna' at Bhikampura village in Rajasthan.

- The Union Drinking Water and Sanitation minister had launched the first project in Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi district last week.
- Under the scheme, 90 per cent of the project cost will borne by the government and the remaining 10 per cent will be contributed by the community.
- Besides ensuring round-the-year the availability of clean drinking water to every household, the project would also generate employment.
- As per the plan, four reservoirs would be constructed in the village and common tap connection would be given to almost 300 households.

## **Government starts process to build India's first defence 'Quad'**

The Defence Ministry has started the process to set up the country's first defence industrial corridor linking Chennai with four other cities of Tamil Nadu to promote industries manufacturing weapons and military equipment.

- 'Quad' or quadrilateral corridor will connect Chennai, Hosur, Coimbatore, Salem and Tiruchirappalli and the ministry is finalising the broad contours of the project.
- The defence ministry will soon engage a top consultancy firm to draw up the detailed project report for the 'Quad'.
- Tamil Nadu Defence Quad will provide a major opportunity to the vibrant manufacturing sector in the State
- Interactions will be held with defence manufacturers in Coimbatore, Salem, Chennai and Tiruchirappalli in the next two weeks to take their views on the proposed corridor.

### **Haryana cabinet approves death penalty for rape of victim aged 12 or less**

Haryana State Cabinet approved a proposal to bring in legislation for awarding death penalty to those found guilty of raping girls aged 12 years or less.

- This decision was taken at Haryana State Cabinet Meeting chaired by Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar.
- As per the new legislation, individual/s found guilty of rape or gang rape of a girl up to 12 years of age, will be punished with death sentence or rigorous imprisonment of not less than 14 years which may extend to imprisonment for life.
- The proposal that has been approved also contains several amendments in existing criminal laws related to sexual offences. The amendments seek harsher punishments for sexual offences.

### **New facilities for UAN-Aadhaar linking introduced by EPFO**

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has introduced UAN-Aadhaar linking facility for the convenience of members using EPFO Link in UMANG Mobile App.

- This is in addition to the existing web facility already available at EPFO's website [www.epfindia.gov.in](http://www.epfindia.gov.in) >> Online Services >> e-KYC Portal >> LINK UAN AADHAAR.
- The facility on e-KYC Portal has further added a new feature to link UAN with Aadhaar online using biometric credentials.
- EPFO has also introduced e-Nomination facility for filing nomination form by members. This facility is offered at Member Interface of EPFO Unified Portal (<https://unifiedportal-mem.epfindia.gov.in/memberinterface/>).
- Members who have activated and Aadhaar seeded UAN, can utilise this facility.

- This facility is independent from employer. This will soon be made available on UMANG app also.

### **Second India-Korea Business Summit Held**

Second India-Korea Business Summit organized by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, in partnership with ChosunILbo, KOTRA, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Invest India, was held in New Delhi on 27<sup>th</sup> February.

- Aim of the summit is to strengthen the economic relationship, boost trade relations and increase investments between India and Republic of Korea.
- The summit highlighted the strategic partnership between India and Republic of Korea and the potential of increasing trade and investment between the two countries.
- The roundtable gave the Korean companies an opportunity to discuss their investment plans and resolve any pending issues being faced by the Korean companies in their India operations.
- The roundtable included delegates from both Governments and 25 CEOs from leading Korean companies with an estimated revenue of USD 575 billion.
- The summit addressed various issues across industries and was attended by over a thousand delegates, including 425 South Korean delegates from 90 Korean companies, senior government officials and political leaders.

### **Lamitye 2018: India, Seychelles conduct military exercise to fight counter insurgency, piracy**

The eighth edition Lamitye 2018, bilateral military exercise between Indian Army and Seychelles People's Defence Force was held at Mahe Island in Seychelles archipelago. The Seychelles archipelago falls on one of most significant and busiest sea transport routes of the world in Indian Ocean.

- The Lamitye exercise is conducted biennially between Indian and Seychelles with aim of enhancing military cooperation and interoperability between the two countries.
- "Lamitye" means friendship in Creole (local dialect of Seychelles).
- The aim Lamitye 2018 was fighting insurgency, terrorism and piracy threats.
- Indian Army was represented by team comprising of 45 personnel, including four officers, five Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and 36 Other Ranks.

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## **International Current Affairs**

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### **Inclusive Internet Index 2018: India ranks 47<sup>th</sup>**

India was ranked 47<sup>th</sup> out of 86 countries in Inclusive Internet Index (III) 2018 report. India has slipped by 11 positions compared to 36<sup>th</sup> rank in 2017 III report due to low internet usage and poor quality.

- The report was commissioned by Facebook in 2017 and is conducted by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- It provides rigorous benchmark of national-level Internet inclusion across four categories: Availability, Affordability, Relevance and Readiness.
- 2018 edition of report has covered 91% of the world's population and expanded data set of 86 countries, up from 75 countries in 2017.
- Key Highlights of 2018 III report:
  - India was ranked 62nd in Availability, 39th in Affordability, 37th in Relevance and 23rd in Readiness categories.
  - Singapore, Canada, Poland and Malaysia have topped in respective categories.

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## **Banking & Finance**

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### **Catholic Syrian Bank ties up with Celebrus Capital for online trading services**

Catholic Syrian Bank Ltd and Celebrus Capital Ltd have announced a new partnership to offer CSB's customers online trading and demat services.

- With this partnership, CSB's customers can open a Celebrus trading account free of cost and also enjoy preferred rates on brokerage charges/ AMC fees on the demat account.
- CSB customers will have access to Celebrus' mobile trading and investment platform – LEAP – created in association with Thomson Reuters, while enjoying seamless integration between deposits, demat and trading accounts.
- Celebrus will help educate and empower CSB customers with a number of strategies available in the equity and mutual funds markets. It will also deploy dedicated staff and a help-desk to cater to queries from CSB customers.
- The agreement also enables Celebrus to distribute other banking products through its marketing channels across the country.

### **IndusInd Bank ties up with Ripple to aid global payments**

Private sector IndusInd Bank has tied up with blockchain solution provider Ripple to enhance global payment transactions in and out of India.

- With this affiliation, Ripple can now provide instant access in emerging markets such as India, Brazil and China.
- IndusInd Bank which has significant interests in cross border remittances, plans to harness the power of blockchain technology for facilitating global payments.
- The bank strives to leverage the latest technology to build on its existing footprint in payments business through this alliance as the blockchain technology lowers both costs and transfer time for their customers.
- By joining Ripple, financial institutions are able to communicate information about a payment between each other and settle payments immediately.

### **EPFO makes online claims must for PF withdrawals above Rs 10 lakh**

Retirement fund body EPFO has made it mandatory to file online claims for provident fund withdrawals above Rs 10 lakh, taking another step towards becoming a paperless organisation.

- The Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has also made it mandatory to file online claims for withdrawals of above Rs 5 lakh under the Employees Pension Scheme 1995.
- Under the pension scheme, there is a provision of part withdrawal of pension, commonly known as commutation of pension money. At present, EPFO subscribers have the option of filing online as well as manual claims for provident fund withdrawal as also for pension.
- The field offices have been directed that the claims must be accepted online in case the amount of provident fund withdrawal is above Rs 10 lakh.
- Similarly, the claims must be online in case the amount is above Rs 5 lakh under employees' pension scheme.

### **AIIB approves \$1.5 billion in loans to India for infrastructure projects**

China-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved \$1.5 billion in loans to India for infrastructure-related projects in 2018.

- The funds will be used for investment in India's energy, roads and urban development projects.
- It also includes \$200 million commitment to India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) to spend on roads, housing and urban development.

- AIIB will let the Indian government decide how to use that money.
- AIIB is a multilateral development bank initiated by China. Its purpose is to provide finance to infrastructure development and regional connectivity projects in the Asia-Pacific region. It was officially established in December 2015 and opened for business in January 2016. It is headquartered in Beijing.
- Its goals are to boost economic development in Asia-Pacific region, provide infrastructure, and promote regional cooperation and partnership.
- It prioritises investment in energy, power generation, transport, rural infrastructure, environmental protection and logistics in Asia.

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## Appointments & Resigns

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### **K S Dwivedi appointed new Bihar DGP**

Krishna Swaroop Dwivedi will be the new director general of police (DGP) of Bihar.

- He will take charge from current DGP Pramod Kumar Thakur, who will retire on Wednesday
- At present, he is the director general (training) and chairman of the Constable Recruitment Board.
- Dwivedi was the SP of Bhagalpur during the 1989 communal riots. He later he went on central deputation. On his return, he became IG (operations) and later ADG (modernisation & wireless).

### **PNB appoints A K Pradhan as Group Chief Risk Officer**

Punjab National Bank (PNB) appointed its general manager A K Pradhan as the Group Chief Risk Officer.

- Although the functions and responsibilities of the Group Chief Risk Officer have not been disclosed by PNB, the decision for this appointment seems to be in wake of Rs 12700 crore fraud unearthed at one its branches.
- In response to the PNB fraud, Union Finance Ministry has asked all the state-owned banks to scrutinise all their non-performing accounts (NPAs) of over Rs 50 crore for possible fraud and report it Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

### **Sudhir Tripathy appointed as Jharkhand Chief Secretary**

Additional Chief Secretary Sudhir Tripathi has been made the new chief secretary of Jharkhand.

- Sudhir Tripathy replaces Rajbala Verma as Jharkhand Chief Secretary. Rajbala Verma retired from his position on 28th February 2018.
- Sudhir Tripathy is a 1985 batch IAS (Indian Administrative Service) Officer. He was the Additional Chief Secretary in the state health department.

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## Awards & Recognition

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### Laureus World Sports Awards 2018

Roger Federer won two awards, including the World Sportsman of the Year, while Serena Williams was named the World Sportswoman of the Year, at the 2018 Laureus World Sports Awards at the Salle des Etoiles in Monte Carlo, Monaco.

- Federer also won the World Comeback of the Year award and was congratulated by the International Tennis Federation.
- Other winners:
  - Sportsman of the Year: Roger Federer
  - Sportswomen of the Year: Serena Williams
  - Comeback of the Year: Roger Federer
  - Exceptional Achievement: Francesco Totti
  - World Action Sportsperson of the Year: Armel Le Cleac'h
  - Sport for Good: Active Communities Network
  - Team of the Year: Mercedes F1
  - World Breakthrough of the Year: Sergio Garcia
  - World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability: Marcel Hug
  - Sporting Inspiration Award: J.J. Watt
  - Best Sporting Moment: Chapecoense (Eternal Champions)
  - Lifetime Achievement: Edwin Moses

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## Science & Technology

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**CSIR-NIO Goa announces discovery of methane gas flares and active cold seeps in Krishna Godavari basin in Bay of Bengal**

CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa announced the discovery of methane gas flares and active cold seeps from the seabed in the Krishna Godavari basin in the Bay of Bengal.

- The seep sites are distributed over a water depth of 900 metres to 1,900 metres.
- These sites are characterized by high concentrations of hydrogen sulfide, calcium carbonate, unique faunal groups and shallow presence of methane hydrates.
- The discovery has put India on the global map of cold seeps and is a landmark finding in the history of gas hydrates in the country.
- Gas hydrates are a potential source of alternate energy and research is underway to establish the economic feasibility of commercial gas extraction from cold seeps.
- Uniqueness of anaerobic biological ecosystems around such resources also offers scope for research on life forms that may have originated in the sea in the absence of oxygen and for medical science.

### **Balong 5G01 chipset: Huawei unveils world's first 5G chip**

Chinese electronic device and smartphone maker Huawei has unveiled Balong 5G01, world's first 5G chip at Mobile World Congress 2018 held in Barcelona, Spain. The company also showed its 5G-ready CPE equipment.

- The chip has been designed and manufactured by Huawei. It offers 3GPP standard 5G connectivity and provides downlink speeds of up to 2.3Gbps.
- It supports 5G connectivity across all frequency bands including sub-6GHz and millimetre wave (mmWave) to offer a complete 5G solution suitable for multiple use cases.
- The chip is designed for multiple use cases and is claimed to be first to offer 5G connectivity at network, device, and chipset level.
- The 5G-ready CPE equipment will be available in two variants. The first will support low-frequency 5G bands and other will cater needs for high-frequency offerings.
- Compatible with both 4G and 5G networks, the CPE equipment can enable speeds of up to 2Gbps.
- 5G is wireless communication technology based on third-generation partnership project (3GPP).

### **Moon to get first mobile phone network**

Vodafone Germany, Nokia and Audi said that, they were jointly working on a project to set up mobile phone network on Moon by 2019.

- Vodafone has appointed Nokia as its technology partner. Nokia would develop a space-grade network.

- PTScientists, a Berlin-based company, is also working on this project. A launch has been scheduled in 2019 from Cape Canaveral on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.
- It has been decided to build a 4G network, as work on the advanced 5G network is still in testing and trial stage.

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## Sports

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## Environment

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### Chilika lake largest habitat of Irrawaddy dolphins globally

The Chilika lake in Odisha has emerged as the single largest habitat of Irrawaddy dolphins in the world with the spotting of 155 such animals.

- The finding is based on the preliminary report of the first ever 'Annual Monitoring' of the lake.
- The 'Annual Monitoring' was conducted by the CDA to count the number of the marine mammals and to study the hydrological impacts of removal of pen culture (locally known as gherries).
- The number is more compared to the last year's figure of around 100 dolphins during the annual census.

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## Obituary

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### **Veteran CPI leader Prabodh Panda passes away**

Prabodh Panda, former MP and State Secretary of West Bengal for Communist Party of India (CPI), died on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018,

- Prabodh Panda served as national President of the All India Kisan Sabha.
- He was a three-time MP from Midnapore. He was first elected to the Lok Sabha in 2001. Then he was re-elected in 2004 and 2009.

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## Important Days

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### **28th February: National Science Day**

The National Science Day is observed every year on 28<sup>th</sup> February with an objective to spread message of importance of science and its application among the people.

- The theme for National Science Day 2018 is "Science and Technology for a sustainable future."
- The day is observed to mark the discovery of Raman effect by Physicist CV Raman on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1928.
- For his discovery, CV Raman was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930.
- The National Science Day was instituted by Central Government in 1986 based on the demand of National Council for Science and Technology Communication.
- The first National Science Day was celebrated on 28 February 1987.
- It is celebrated to spread message about importance of science used in daily life of people and popularise science and technology.

- It also gives an opportunity to scientific-minded citizens in country to showcase their work in organized shows.

### **World Rare Disease Day Conference 2018 organised in New Delhi**

JP Nadda, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare inaugurated the World Rare Disease Day Conference 2018 in New Delhi on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

- World Rare Disease Day is celebrated on the last day of February every year. World Rare Disease Day was first introduced by EURORDIS and its council of National Alliances in 2008.
- The theme for World Rare Disease Day 2018 is Research. World Rare Disease Day 2018 was observed on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018.
- This day is observed to create awareness among public about rare diseases and their impact.
- At the World Rare Disease Day Conference 2018, a newsletter published by the “Indian Organisation of Rare diseases” was released.

www.ambitionIAS.com