

# National Current Affairs

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## **Karnataka Government approves state flag proposal**

Karnataka Government has decided to accept state flag proposed and designed by 9-member committee constituted by state Kannada and Culture department.

- It will be official flag in place of an unofficial red and yellow flag that is currently used in the state to signify local pride.
- The committee has recommended new tricolour having yellow (at top), white (in middle) and red (at bottom) colours, with state's emblem Gandaberunda (a two-headed mythological bird) in centre. The white colour in new flag symbolizes peace and captures Karnataka's image the best, while other two colours are synonymous with Kannada identity.
- The state government will make formal application to Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA).
- If adopted with clearance from MHA, Karnataka will be the second state after Kashmir to have an official state flag.

## **Government announces launch of 'SUVIDHA' – Rs. 2.50**

Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Ananthkumar announced the launch of 'Suvidha', the 100% Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin, under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).

- The affordable sanitary napkin will be available for Rs. 2.50 per padat over 3200 Janaushadhi Kendras across India and would ensure 'Swachhta, Swasthya and Suvidha' for the underprivileged Women of India.
- This step taken by the Department of Pharmaceuticals will ensure the achievement of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of Affordable and Quality Healthcare for All, the Minister said while addressing the media.

## **PM launches National Nutrition Mission, and pan India expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao**

On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi launched the National Nutrition Mission and Pan India Expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) covering all 640 districts of the Country at a mega event held at Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan.

- The NNM is a comprehensive approach towards raising nutrition level in the country on a war footing.
- It will comprise mapping of various Schemes contributing towards addressing malnutrition, including a very robust convergence mechanism, ICT based Real Time Monitoring system, incentivizing States/UTs for meeting the targets, incentivizing Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) for using IT based tools, eliminating registers used by AWWs, introducing measurement of height of children at the Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), Social Audits, setting-up Nutrition Resource Centres, involving masses through Jan Andolan for their participation on nutrition through various activities, among others.
- NNM targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively. Although the target to reduce Stunting is at least 2% p.a., Mission would strive to achieve reduction in Stunting from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 25% by 2022 (Mission 25 by 2022).

### **NITI Aayog launches Women Entrepreneurship Platform**

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog has launched Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) on the occasion of International Women's day (March 8, 2018). WEP's theme song 'Naari Shakti' composed and sung by renowned singer Kailash Kher was also released.

- Objective:
  - Build vibrant ecosystem for women across country to help realise their entrepreneurial aspirations, scale-up innovative initiatives and chalk-out sustainable, long-term strategies for their businesses.
  - Power vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem through an enabling network of industry collaborations, partnerships, mentors and peer-to-peer connect.
  - Address bottlenecks faced by both aspiring and established women entrepreneurs by streamlining information across government and private sector schemes and initiatives with informative, interactive website as a dedicated resource and knowledge base.
  - WEP aspires to substantially increase number of women entrepreneurs to create and empower dynamic new India by opening up avenues of growth and opportunity for women entrepreneurs.
- These aspirations of women entrepreneurs are manifested in three pillars on which WEP is built.
  - Ichha Shakti: Motivating aspiring entrepreneurs to start their enterprise.
  - Gyaan Shakti: Providing knowledge and ecosystem support to women entrepreneurs to help them foster entrepreneurship.
  - Karma Shakti: Providing hands-on support to entrepreneurs in setting-up and scaling up businesses.

### **SUVIDHA: Government launches 100% Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin under Janaushadhi Pariyojana**

The Union Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers has launched 'Suvidha', a 100% Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin, under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP). It was launched by Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers and Parliamentary Affairs Ananthkumar on the occasion of International Woman's day.

- The affordable Suvidha sanitary napkins will be available for Rs. 2.50 per pad at over 3200 Janaushadhi Kendras across India.
- It was launched under government's vision of providing Affordable and Quality Healthcare for All.
- It will ensure 'Swachhta, Swasthya and Suvidha' for underprivileged women.
- It will ensure affordability, hygiene as well as ease of use and disposal of sanitary napkins.
- SUVIDHA napkin has special additive added in it, which makes it biodegradable when it reacts with oxygen after it is used and discarded.
- It will be physically available at all Janaushadhi Kendras in country by World Menstrual Hygiene Day (May 28, 2018).

### **Swachh Shakti 2018 celebrated in Lucknow under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**

The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in association with Uttar Pradesh Government had organized Swachh Shakti 2018, a Women's Convention on occasion of International Women's Day in Lucknow.

- This year, Uttar Pradesh had hosted Swachh Shakti 2018, being largest state in country (in terms of population) with massive rural populace.
- In Swachh Shakti 2018, 8000 women sarpanches, 3000 women Swachhagrahis and women champions from across country were recognised for their outstanding contribution towards making Swachh Bharat.
- The event also included special exhibition, launch of film celebrating Swachh Shakti and flagging off of 30 Swachhata Raths that will travel across State, spreading the message of sanitation at the grassroots.

### **I – Metros: Government launches association of all Indian Metro Rail companies**

The Union Housing Ministry has launched I-Metros, an association of all Indian Metro Rail companies for mutual sharing of ideas & experiences for nurturing excellence their performance.

- It was launched by P K Sinha, Cabinet Secretary at Conference on “Indian Metros: Collaborating for Excellence” held at Metro Bhawan in New Delhi.
- I – Metros platform will be forum for exchange of ideas, sharing of experience and pooling of knowledge, best practices, innovations etc. among Indian Metro Rail companies to nurture excellence in performance.

### **Nari Shakti Puraskar 2017**

President Ram Nath Kovind presented Nari Shakti Puraskars 2017 to 30 eminent individuals and 9 distinguished institutions at special ceremony held in Rashtrapati Bhavan on occasion of International Women's Day.

- They were felicitated in recognition of their efforts in rendering distinguished services for cause of women, especially vulnerable and marginalized women.
- These awards aim to acknowledge achievement of women by bestowing awards on eminent women and institutions in recognition of their service towards the cause of women empowerment.
- It established in 1991 and since then it is conferred annually by President on the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8 every year.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development announces these national level awards for eminent women, organisations and institutions.

### **MP power utility starts 'Pink Electricity Zone**

On the Women's Day, Madhya Pradesh West Power Distribution Company (MPWPD) started a "Pink Electricity Zone" here to be managed by women staffers.

- The Pink Electricity Zone comprises 25 women staffers who would look after the energy maintenance work of 13,000 power connections in Aranya Nagar inhabited by 60,000 people.
- Assistant engineer, junior engineer, line supervisor, linepersons, metre readers, accountant, computer operators of the zone are all women.
- Donning pink uniform, these women will read power meters, recover dues and repair energy supply lines.

### **Wings India 2018 conference held in Hyderabad**

Wings India 2018 was inaugurated in Hyderabad on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

- On the second day, the Wings India conducted a round table conference, which invited various aviation stakeholders from different states and even Indian tourism to discuss about the civil aviation.
- Wings India was started in the year 2008, which took an initiative to conduct interaction between all the stakeholders from different states.
- For the first time it took an initiative to conduct a round table conference along with the tourism of India where we discussed what are the things to be made for benefit of tourism in association with aviation.

### **Floating Lab set up to monitor Manipur's Loktak Lake**

The Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Laboratory (IBSD), Imphal, set up a floating laboratory in northeast India's largest freshwater lake, Loktak to constantly monitor its water quality and eventually improve it.

- It is a joint venture between LDA and ISBD to launch the floating laboratory.
- A study will be carried out to convert the water plants into organic fertilizer along with studying the quality of life of the lake dwellers, accordingly recommending how to improve their life.
- This venture will be helpful in conservation and sustainable development of the lake thereby improving the life of the lake dwellers drastically."

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## **International Current Affairs**

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### **Mumbai is now the 16<sup>th</sup> most expensive city**

Mumbai ranks 16<sup>th</sup> among the top 20 costliest cities in the world, showed the Knight Frank Wealth Report 2018.

- The rise in Indian financial capital's ranking on this count is supported by the rapid wealth creation in the country.
- The index is drawn from four major indicators: wealth, investments, lifestyle and future.
- The report pointed out, however, that luxury property prices in New Delhi and Bengaluru fell 2.3% and 2.4%, respectively, while those in Mumbai saw a marginal rise of 0.57% last year.
- Indian cities have dropped in the ranking of cities based on price movements of luxury residential properties.

- While Mumbai slipped to the 57th spot from 30th in the previous year, Bengaluru ranked 84, down from 61.  
New Delhi was at the 83rd spot, up from 88th in the previous year.
- Guangzhou, a city in China, tops the list with property prices appreciating by 27.4% in the last one year.

### **WHO launches plan for cheaper TB drugs**

World Health Organization (WHO) has invited pharmaceutical companies around the world to submit proposals to manufacture affordable versions of newer medicines for treatment of drug resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB).

- It has now requested drug makers to submit Expression of Interest (EoI) for Bedaquiline and Delamanid, two new-generation drugs, recommended for DR-TB.
- The aim of this proposal is to replicate success of addressing HIV epidemic.
- Under WHO norms, drugs submitted upon such requests and complying with its standards will be included in list for procurement by UN and other organisations.
- EoI considered by WHO for two drugs will be key compounds to address challenges of DR-TB.
- It will encourage generic competition to start finding ways to make these medicines available in countries where they are not yet registered.
- It will also allow generics manufacturers interested in producing these two drugs and currently facing technical challenges.
- The pre-qualification will ensure greater numbers of manufacturers are supplying quality medicines, which, in turn, means a more competitive market and more affordable prices.

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## **Banking & Finance**

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### **Canara HSBC OBC Life Insurance ties up with Can Fin Homes**

Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance (CHOICE) has entered into a distribution alliance with Can Fin Homes. Can Fin Homes will distribute CHOICE life insurance products to the former's 1.2 lakh customers spread across the country.

- Both the companies aim to provide long term value creation for its customers.
- Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance has a pure bancassurance model and has access to around 11.5 crore customers and a pan-India network of over 10,000 branches of its partner banks.

- Can Fin Homes, the housing finance subsidiary of Canara Bank has a pan India network of 132 branches, 20 Affordable Housing Loan Centres (AHLCS) and 20 satellite offices with customer base of over 1.2 lakh.

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## Business

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### **Airbus signs contract with two Indian startups**

Airbus and its subsidiary Navblue announced contracts with two Indian startups Neewee and Eflight for solutions in the European plane-maker's manufacturing programmes.

- Neewee's solution, called procuSense, will enhance certainty to manufacturing supply chain and procurement operations at Airbus, using advanced analytics, machine learning and artificial intelligence
- Eflight's trip support solution will offer a comprehensive suite of services that allows business jet pilots to optimise plans for fuel, time, route and weather. The startup has also signed an exclusive partnership with an Airbus subsidiary to jointly address some opportunities in India.
- The two start-ups were part of Bizlab India, Airbus' startup accelerator programme. The Bengaluru-based companies were part of five startups chosen a year back from the second season of the Airbus Bizlab technology acceleration programme that got 137 applications from nine countries.

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## Appointments & Resigns

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### **Prince Charles appoints Indian-origin Steel tycoon as UK skills ambassador**

Indian-origin steel tycoon Sanjeev Gupta has been appointed by Britain's Prince Charles as an official ambassador for the Industrial Cadets programme designed to nurture manufacturing skills.

- Mr Gupta was appointed to the flagship programme to give children and young people direct structured experience of the industry while still at school or college.
- As the Executive Chairman of UK-based GFG Alliance, Mr Gupta has been on an acquisition spree in the steel industry over the past few months which has helped secure hundreds of jobs.



- His GFG Foundation is actively involved in funding and promoting the Industrial Cadets programme, through a partnership with the Engineering Development Trust.

### **Neiphiu Rio takes oath as Nagaland CM**

NDPP leader Neiphiu Rio was sworn in as Nagaland Chief Minister by Governor P B Acharya.

- This is Rio's fourth time as the chief minister of the Northeastern state. Rio is heading the 'People's Democratic Alliance' government in partnership with the BJP in the state.
- BJP's Y Patton was administered the oath as the Deputy Chief Minister.

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## **Awards & Recognition**

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### **India ranks 52 in Mastercard women entrepreneurs index**

India ranked 52 among 57 countries studied for the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE). The latest ranking for India remains unchanged from the previous year.

- The MIWE focusses on female entrepreneurs' ability to capitalise on opportunities granted through various supporting conditions within their local environments.
- India's low ranking in the index suggest that the underlying conditions for women business ownership/entrepreneurship in the country are less favorable as compared to the countries with high index score.
- India came significantly behind the United States (4) and China (29) in the latest MIWE.
- According to the report, the Indian women business owners, leaders or professionals exhibit less inclination towards business ownership due to cultural bias.

### **Indian volunteer wins Commonwealth Point of Light award**

Britains Queen Elizabeth II recognised Srishti Bakshi from India as the 26<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Point of Light in honour of her exceptional service to empowering women in India.



- Srishti is the founder of the CrossBow Miles movement. After seeing that India's National Crime Records Bureau recorded 327,394 cases of violence against women in 2015, Srishti decided to make a statement and spread her message of gender equality across the country.
- She is leading a team of hundreds of female volunteers on a 3,800-km walk through India across 260 days.
- During the walk, Srishti leads workshops for women in rural communities on digital and financial literacy, leadership and health.
- She has overseen the creation of a mobile app where people from across the world can upload steps collected from their phone pedometers and join the campaigns Billion Steps For Women drive.

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## Science & Technology

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### **Government launches Udyam Sakhi Portal for Women Entrepreneurs**

The Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises launched Udyam Sakhi Portal ([www.udyamsakhi.org](http://www.udyamsakhi.org)) for women entrepreneurs on the occasion of International Women's Day.

- The portal is network to nurture entrepreneurship and create business models for low cost products and services in order to empower women and make them self-sufficient and self-reliant.
- It will provide assistance to women entrepreneurs through its platform for entrepreneurship learning tools, training programs for fund raising, incubation facility, provide mentors, one-on-one investor meet, provide market survey facility and technical assistance.
- It will cater needs of around 8 million women from across country who have started and are running their own businesses and playing vital role in the growth of Indian economy.

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## Sports

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### **India finish with three gold medals at Archery Asia Cup**

Indian junior archers bagged three gold and three bronze medals to finish their Asia Cup Archery Stage 1 campaign.

- Indian trio of Akash, Gora Ho and Gaurav Lambe defeated Mongolia's Adiyasuren Baasankhuu, Otgonbold Baatarkhuyag and Gantugs Jantsan 27-26 in the tie-breaker to clinch the third gold in the recurve category.
- Earlier Promila Daimary defeated Natalia Erdynieva of Russia 7-3 to win a gold in the women's recurve individual where India also bagged bronze through Madhu Vedwan.
- India had bagged a gold in the women's compound individual section where Muskan Kirar prevailed over Nadhirah Zakaria Sazatul of Malaysia 139-136.
- Muskan also ended up pocketing a second medal in the form of bronze when she along with Divya Dhayal and Mrinal Hiwrale defeated their Indonesian opponents - Sri Ranti, Dellie Threesyadinda, Nina Bonita Pereira Yuri - 227-221 in the third place playoff.

### **2017-18 I-League: Minerva Punjab FC crowned champions**

Minerva Punjab FC beat Churchill Brothers FC 1-0 to win their maiden I-League title at the Tau Devi Lal Stadium in Panchkula.

- William Opoku Asiedu scored the decisive goal in the 15th minute and the Punjab-based outfit held on to the advantage till the end.
- This is Minerva's second season in the football league. They finished at ninth position last season.
- Minerva also became the first team from Punjab to win the title since the 1996-97 season when now defunct JCT claimed the inaugural National Football League (NFL), which was later re-christened as the I-League.

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## **Obituary**

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### **John Sulston, Human Genome Project Leader, Dies**

John Sulston, who championed the open access of Human Genome Project data as the leader of its UK-based team passed away on 6<sup>th</sup> March.

- Before contributing to the first human genome sequence, Sulston mapped the developmental trajectory of every cell in *C. elegans*, earning the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 2002.