

National Current Affairs

Rajasthan passes bill for death penalty for child rape of girls below 12

Rajasthan Assembly has passed Criminal Laws (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill, 2018 by voice vote to amend Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860 to add provisions providing for death penalty for those convicted of raping girls of 12 years and below. The bill will become a law after it gets Presidential assent.

- With this, Rajasthan became second state in the country after Madhya Pradesh approving death sentence for those convicted of such rapes.
- The Bill aims at protecting girl child by laying down deterrent punishment, including death sentence, to offenders of child rape of girls below 12.
- It inserts sections 376-AA and 376-DD in IPC, 1860. These sections provide, that whoever commits rape or gang-rape on a girl upto 12 years of age shall be punishable with death or rigorous imprisonment.
- The capital punishment under it will be not less than 14 years and 20 years respectively for sections and which may extend to imprisonment for life, which means imprisonment for remainder of offenders' whole life, and with fine.

SC allows passive euthanasia

In a historic judgment, the Supreme Court on Friday held that the right to die with dignity is a fundamental right, saying that an individual could make an advance "living will" that would authorise passive euthanasia under certain circumstances. The apex court's Bench held that passive euthanasia and living will were legally valid.

- The apex court said on its verdict that a person could prepare a "living will", under which the withdrawal of life-support system could be authorised if he reached an irreversible stage of terminal illness in the medical view.
- However, while a five-judge Constitution Bench, headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra, allowed an individual to prepare the advance directive, or living will, it attached strict conditions for executing the "will", which would be made by a person in his or her normal state of health and mind.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan announces pension for single women above 50

On International Women's Day, chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced a pension scheme for single women above and widows above 50 years of age — one perhaps unique in the country.

- 'Mukhyamantri Mahila Kosh' has been set up for women who are above 50 years and unmarried. They will be given pension to ensure that they can take care of themselves," the CM said at a Mahila Sammelan.
- Also, women labourers will be given Rs 4,000 every month from their sixth month of pregnancy till childbirth and Rs 12,000 after delivery.

Banaswadi is first all-woman railway station in South Western Railway zone

Banaswadi railway station transformed into a facility run by an all-woman crew on International Women's Day.

- It's the first station in the South Western Railway (SWR) zone and the fifth in the country to achieve this distinction.
- The other all-woman stations in the country are Matunga (Mumbai), Gandhi Nagar (Jaipur), Chandragiri (Tirupathi) and Ajni (Nagpur).
- Henceforth, the Banaswadi station will be operated by its female staff, including the station master, booking clerks and reservation clerks. All 15 officials, including security personnel, posted at the station are now women.

Telangana launches 'WE Hub', India's first state-led incubator exclusively for women

The Government of Telangana launched Women Entrepreneurship Hub (WE- Hub) in Hyderabad.

- Unlike T-Hub, which is meant for technology startups, WE Hub will be open for all kinds of startups led by women. WE-HUB will promote women-led, women-owned enterprises in Telangana.
- It is a platform which is open to all kinds of innovations including a tech start-up, a start-up in social innovation or an idea which is completely and radically different.
- WE Hub will forge several partnerships and collaborate with all the 32 incubators in Hyderabad. It is also the first state-led incubator to partner with the platform for women entrepreneurs launched by Niti Aayog on the same day.
- Former Joint Director for Electronics Promotions (Electronics, Semiconductor and Business) for the State of Telangana, Deepthi Ravula has been appointed as the CEO of WE Hub.
- WE Hub will be temporarily based out of the office of T-SAT in campus in BR Ambedkar University in Hyderabad with 100 seats. It will eventually be moved to the phase 2 of T-Hub, which is currently under construction.

Diu becomes first Union Territory to run 100% on solar power

Diu has become the first and only Union Territory in the country to be fully run on solar energy. The UT generates total of 13 megawatts (MW) of electricity from solar power generating facilities daily. Of this, 3 MW is generated by rooftop solar plants and 10 MW by its other solar power plants.

- Diu's peak-time demand for electricity goes up to 7 MW and now it daily generates about 10.5 MW of electricity from solar energy, making it electricity.
- Despite scarcity of land, solar power plants have been installed over more than 50 acres.
- The solar power also has come as big relief for local residents as their monthly bill charges have fallen by around 12%.
- It also has significantly reduced electricity loss.

India's Biggest M&E Services Market, enTTech 2018 inaugurated in Mumbai

India's biggest Media & Entertainment Services Market – enTTech 2018 was inaugurated in Mumbai.

- The market, spread over two days (March 7 – 8, 2018) will see fast matchmaking between 100 international delegates and their Indian counterparts.
- SEPC has purposely ensured that this edition of enTTech is solely focussed on B2B matchmaking rather than on panels and sessions. This places the focus on the core business aspect.
- The aim of enTTech has been to be the one-source stop for service industry in the M&E market.
- The event was organized by SEPC in association with MEAI (Media & Entertainment Association of India) and TVAGA (Telangana VFX, Animation and Gaming Association) and supported by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India.
- Over 150 delegate registrations from 42 countries have been received in less than two months. Out of these, 100 delegates have been finalized and will be participating in B2B matchmaking with the Indian counterparts.

International Current Affairs

First ever 'crime-free zone' along India, Bangladesh international border launched

The director generals of Border Security Force (BSF), India and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) have declared 8.3 km stretch of Indo-Bangladesh border as first 'crime-free zone'.

- The stretch covers Gunarmath and Kalyani Border Out Posts (BOPs) in India and Puthkhali and Daulatpur BOPs in Bangladesh across border.
- Bangladesh and India share 4,156 km long international border. It is longest international border shared by India with its neighbours.
- The first 'crime-free zone' stretch is one of most vulnerable to crimes like cattle smuggling and others.
- Both border guarding forces with help of civil administrations of two countries, NGOs and local populace will help in ensuring that no crime takes place along stretch.
- Both forces will work together to ensure that no crime or anti-social activity occurs along this stretch.
- This is pilot project that will be reviewed after 5-6 months.
- It will be extended to other trouble-prone areas to target more difficult areas along 913 km of Indo-Bangladesh border under BSF's South Bengal Frontier.

CP TPP: 11 countries sign revised TPP trade pact without US

11 Pacific Rim countries have formally entered into Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership or CP TPP or TPP11 in Santiago, Chile.

- It is revised version of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) proposed by US, that was finalized after US withdrew from it.
- TPP11 includes Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.
- The combined population of these countries exceeds 500 million people and together their economies account for 13% of global gross domestic product (GDP). With US, it would have represented 40%.
- It will be world's third largest trade bloc after European Union (EU) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).
- It will come into effect 60 days after six of the 11 member countries ratify the agreement domestically.
It eliminates some requirements of original TPP demanded by US, including rules to ramp up intellectual property protection of pharmaceuticals.

US, Israel begin joint anti-missile operations in Juniper Cobra

Juniper Cobra, a joint air defense exercise with U.S. and IDF forces which was announced by the U.S. Department of Defense last month involving simulated missile attacks directed against Israel from multiple fronts has begun.

- Some 2,000 IDF Aerial Defense troops will be participating alongside 2,500 US troops, including some 1,400 Marines and 1,100 sailors, in the largest joint exercise with US Army's European Command (EUCOM).
- The Americans have also deployed the USS Iwo Jima and USS Mount Whitney as well as their Patriot missile defense system, Aegis ballistic missile defense system, communication systems, 25 aircraft, and three hovercraft.
- Over the course of the two-week long exercise troops will practice possible challenging and complex scenarios adapted to Israel's operational reality such as missile threats in various sectors simultaneously as well as the threat posed by precise missiles that Iran is trying to produce for Hezbollah

Banking & Finance

KVGB rolls out loan scheme for women entrepreneurs

Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB) has launched 'Vikas She Plus', a loan scheme for women to take up new ventures or for expanding/modifying the existing enterprises. This scheme provides loan up to a maximum of ₹2 lakh with a repayment period of 60 months.

- The bank has a target of reaching out to 5,000 women entrepreneurs under the 'Vikas She Plus' scheme across nine districts of its jurisdiction by this fiscal-end.
- The bank has disbursed loans amounting to ₹22 crore to about 2,500 women beneficiaries on the day of launch itself.
- The bank, which has 627 branches, will open 10 more branches before March 31.

Appointments & Resigns

Sitanshu Kar new PIB chief

The Press Information Bureau (PIB), the central government's publicity wing, will get a new chief from All India Radio's News Services Division (NSD) director general Sitanshu Kar will be the next head of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) after superannuation of Frank Noronha on April 30.

- Kar, a senior Indian Information Service (IIS) officer, will take charge as PIB head on May 1.

- Kar was serving as director general, news services division, at All India Radio.
- Kar was spokesperson of the defence ministry from 2005 to 2015 and worked with four defence ministers – Pranab Mukherjee, AK Antony, Arun Jaitley and Manohar Parrikar. During his stint in all India radio, Kar stated the social media unit of the broadcaster.

Awards & Recognition

Uber ropes in Virat Kohli as brand ambassador in India

Uber, the ridesharing app, has signed on Virat Kohli, captain of the Indian Cricket team, as its first brand ambassador in India.

- This is for the first time that Uber has signed any brand ambassador across the Asia Pacific region.
- Uber India's association with Kohli will lay the foundation for a host of brand-led interventions in 2018
- Besides being the face of the brand, Kohli will be actively involved in a series of marketing and customer experience initiatives to be rolled out by Uber India.

Obituary

Pyarelal Wadali, Sufi singer, passes away

Pyarelal Wadali, the younger of the famous Punjabi Sufi singing duo Wadali brothers, died of heart attack.

- Ustad Pyarelal, as he was fondly known in music circles, and his brother Puran Chand Wadali sang several hits, including 'Tu mane ya na mane dildaara, asaan tey tainu rabb maneya.'

Congress leader Patangrao Kadam passes away at Mumbai's Lilavati Hospital

Senior Congress leader and former Maharashtra minister Patangrao Kadam passed away.

- Kadam has previously helmed the forest ministry in the Maharashtra government. He was also an educationist and the founder of Bharati Vidyapeeth.

South Korea's 2012 bronze medallist Chung dies aged 35

South Korean badminton player Chung Jae-sung, who won bronze in the men's doubles at the London Olympics, has died at the age of 35.

- Chung was found dead by his wife at their home early on Friday; the cause of death was not yet known.

Books & Authors

President of India receives First copy of book 'Fulfilling Bapu's Dreams – Prime Minister Modi's tribute to Gandhiji'

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, received the first copy of the book 'Fulfilling Bapu's Dreams – Prime Minister Modi's Tribute to Gandhiji' from Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, who formally released it at a function held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

- This book underscores an important aspect of India's developmental process - linking sanitation with broad mass participation, making it a mass movement, giving central importance to the practical needs of ordinary citizens in policy, and establishing ethical ideals firmly in public life.