

National Current Affairs

Bengal tops in rural job scheme, T.N. is second

West Bengal has become the best performing State both in terms of allotting jobs and utilising funds under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

- According to statistics recently provided in Rajya Sabha by the Minister of State for Rural Development Ram Kripal Yadav, West Bengal generated more than 28.21 crore work days under the scheme so far in 2017-18 and spent more than ₹7,335.31 crore for it.
- Tamil Nadu occupied the second spot with 22.17 crore work days and spent ₹5,981.75 crore. Andhra Pradesh was third with 18.16 crore work days, and funds worth ₹5054.17 crore.
- Goa is ranked at the bottom of the list with 94,000 work days and spent funds worth ₹2.47 crore. Gujarat generated 2.93 crore work days and spent funds worth ₹793.50 crore, while Uttar Pradesh generated 15.6 crore work days and utilised funds worth ₹3701.54 crore.

Founding Conference of International Solar Alliance, New Delhi

PM Narendra Modi, French President Emmanuel Macron and other distinguished world leaders jointly inaugurated the Founding Conference of International Solar Alliance in New Delhi.

- One of the key takeaways at the 2015 Paris Climate summit, ISA is aimed at tapping solar energy in the countries that lie partially or fully between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.
- The summit aims to mobilise \$1 trillion of investments needed by 2030 for massive deployment of solar energy, according to the 'ISA Mission' on its website. Efforts were under way to put together 121 projects, which can be signed in two phases — about 50 on March 11 and another 71 on April 20.
- At the event, PM Narendra Modi highlighted India's target to achieve 175 GW of renewable energy, out of which 100 GW would be solar energy.
- He noted that 20 GW of solar energy had already been achieved.
- The PM laid out about ten action points including developing low cost solar energy, increasing scope of solar in energy mix, promoting solar energy based innovations and concessional financing for solar projects.

First edition of 'Soldierathon' organised at Nehru stadium

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State for External Affairs General VK Singh and cricketer Gautam Gambhir attended the first edition of a special marathon 'Soldierathon'.

- Soldierathon aims to raise funds which will go towards welfare of soldiers and their families.
- With over 6,000 participants, the marathon began from Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium and was held in four categories - 10km, 5km, 3km and wheelchair categories.
- The proceeds from the event will be donated to Indian Army's Artificial Limb Centre (ALC), for differently abled/wounded soldiers to help them acquire state-of-the-art prosthesis at the Paraplegic Rehabilitation Centre, Pune, and for the education of martyrs' children.

Highlights of Maharashtra budget 2018

Maharashtra finance minister Sudhir Mungantiwar presented the state budget for 2018-19. This is the fourth budget of current Devendra Fadnavis government. Here are the highlights:

- Government proposes autorickshaw driver welfare board with a seed capital of Rs 5 crore
- Government tables revenue deficit budget of Rs 15,375 crore
- Rs 18 crore to reduce man-animal conflict and to be make food and water available for the animals
- Rs 1526 crore for treatment of solid waste in cities across the state
- Rs 335 crore for a new sewage treatment scheme for the rural areas
- Rs 13,385 crore for home department. Funds also to be used for modernisation and upgradation of police force
- Rs 165 crore for installation of CCTV's in other cities of the state
- Rs 10828 crore for road repairs and reconstruction
- Government to start a web portal on which literature on BR ambedkar, Annabhau Sathe, Savitribai Phule will be made available
- Rs 2963 crore for VJNT development
- 10 lakh youths will be trained in 5 year under skill development
- Scholarships for OBC, ST/ SC students doubled from Rs 2000 to Rs 4000
- To increase the state's share in UPSC, banking and other competitive exams, the government announces to set up one coaching centre in every district. Rs 50 crore budget for the initiative.
- Rs 40 crore for repair and reconstruction of ST bus depots across the state
- Rs 750 crore to ensure regular power supply for agricultural water pumps
- Rs 15 crore for tree plantation

- Rs 1500 crore for 'Jalyukt Shivar' water conservation projects
- Budget allocates Rs 8233 crore for irrigation department
- One runway of the proposed Navi Mumbai airport to be completed by 2019
- Rs 300 crore for the Shivaji Memorial statute
- Rs 150 crore For the Ambedkar memorial
- Rs 300 crore for the Shivaji Memorial statute

International Current Affairs

China scraps presidential term limit, enabling Xi Jinping to rule indefinitely

China's rubber-stamp parliament has amended the country's constitution to end term limits for the presidency, thus allowing President Xi Jinping to stay in power for an indefinite period.

- The amendment ends a 1982 system enacted by former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping that set a limit of two presidential terms in order to prevent lifelong dictatorship.
- The move, passed during the communist country's annual parliamentary session in Beijing, has raised concerns both inside China and internationally about 64-year-old Xi's ever-growing personality cult and authoritarianism.

Bolivia unfurls 'world's biggest flag' in row with Chile

Tens of thousands of Bolivians held a nearly 200-km long (124 miles) bright blue flag in a show of support for their landlocked country's demand that it be given a sovereign access to the sea.

- The so-called "flag of maritime revindication" stretched like a long blue ribbon between the towns Oruro and Apacheta, on the outskirts of capital La Paz.
- The display of patriotism comes just days before Bolivia is due to present its case for sovereign access to Chile's Pacific coast at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).
- The Bolivian government said the flag is the world's biggest, and extended between the cities of La Paz and Oruro.
- The banner is made of blue cloth decorated with Bolivian national symbols and is about three metres wide.

Awards & Recognition

India Won "Best Exhibitor Award" at ITB – Berlin

India has won the "Best Exhibitor Award " at ITB – Berlin on its last day. 'ITB- Berlin World Tourist Meet' was convened at Berlin, Germany from 7th March to 10th March, 2018.

- India was represented by the Minister of State (Independent charge) for Tourism Mr K. J. Alphons along with couple of Tourism Ministry officials.
- More than 100 countries participated in the ITB- Berlin meet with their respective Tourism Ministers.
- India's Incredible India (Ministry of Tourism) presented a short film named "Yogi of the Racetrack" in the meet. The said short film has got 3.2 million hits in 60 hours.

Science & Technology

Russian military tests nuclear-capable hypersonic missile

Russia successfully launched high-precision aeroballistic Kinzhal hypersonic missile from a MiG-31 supersonic interceptor jet.

- During the test, the missile launch was normal and it hit preset target on the test site. It also met its performance characteristics and time indicators.
- The Kinzhal missile is one of array of new weapons developed by Russia.
- It can fly 10 times the speed of sound and has range of 2,000km.
- It is equipped with high-precision aeroballistic missiles supporting air strikes without entering enemy's air defence zone.
- It can overcome air-defence systems.
- The missile system has no counterparts across globe owing to high flight performance characteristic of MiG-31 fighter jet and hypersonic missile with small radar signature and high maneuverability.
- The first air unit equipped with Kinzhal system was deployed in Russia's Southern Military District in December 2017.

Sports

Bishworjit Singh, Samira Abraham clinch gold medals at National Triathlon Championship

Bishworjit Singh of the Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) and Samira Abraham of Goa emerged the respective champions in the men's and women's sections of the Senior National Triathlon Championship

- Bishworjit Singh clinched the gold medal by clocking a timing of 2 hours, 09 minutes and 46 sec to complete the triathlon event comprising of 1.5 km of swimming, 40 km of cycling and 10 km of the run.
- Bishworjit took 21.53 mins for swimming, 1 hour 5 minutes and 06 seconds for cycling.
- Samira's net timing was 2 hours 30 minutes and 04 seconds.
- She took 27.45 min for swimming; 1 hour 10 minutes and 16 seconds for cycling event took 51.05 minutes for 10 km run.
- In the men's category, KSH Minachandra of SSCB and L Mahesh from Manipur clinched silver and bronze medals respectively by emerging second and third positions.
- In the women's section, the silver and bronze medals were bagged by Pragna Mohan.

Navjot Kaur climbs to World No. 2

Reigning Asian champion Navjot Kaur was rewarded for her recent gold medal effort as she became World No. 2 in the 65 kg category as per the latest rankings released by United World Wrestling.

- The top position belongs to 2015 World Championship silver medallist Petra Olli of Finland though both have 18 points each.
- Vinesh Phogat is No. 2 in the 50kg category behind Lei Chun of China, while Sakshi Malik is No. 4 in the 62 kg category.
- Other Indian rankings: Women: Sangeeta Phogat (59kg, 5th rank).
- Men: Freestyle: Sharvan (61kg, 8), Bajrang Punia (65kg, 4).
- Greco-Roman: Rajender Kumar (55kg, 4); Vikram Kurade (63kg, 8), Manish (67 kg, 8), Kuldeep Malik (72 kg, 5), Harpreet Singh (82 kg, 4) and Naveen (130 kg, 8).

Obituary

Comedy legend Ken Dodd dies aged 90

Sir Ken Dodd, the comedy legend and one of the most popular entertainers of his time, has died on 11th March just two days after getting married.

- Dodd began a career as a comedian in 1954, working in music halls, and achieved national fame and popularity by the 60s.
- His recording of Tears, was the UK's third-best-selling single back then, rivaling The Beatles, and he made it into the Guinness Book of Records for telling 1,500 jokes in three and a half hours.
- Ken was a regular face on television throughout the 70s and 80s and became an OBE in 1982. He received his knighthood in the New Year Honours in 2017.
- Among his many jokes he will be remembered for his fluffy 'tickling sticks' and his catchphrase, "How tickled I am!"

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