

National Current Affairs

India's tallest tricolour hoisted in Belagavi, dedicated to country, state

India's tallest tricolour, at a height of 110 metres, was hoisted with pomp and gaiety on the banks of Kotakere, by district in-charge Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi, in Belagavi district.

- At 110 metre height, the 120 X 80 square feet Indian tricolour at Belagavi is the nation's tallest.
- A 105-metre tall tricolour is being flown at the Wagah border. Another flagpole in Pune is 109 meters tall.
- The event was attended by thousands of government employees, religious heads, dignitaries and common people. Maratha Laghu band played the national anthem.

Government institutes Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Police Investigation

The Union Government has approved proposal to institute Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Police Investigation.

- The award aims to promote high professional standards of Investigation of Crime in State/UT Police and Central Investigating Agencies (CIAs) in the country.
- Officers from rank of Sub-Inspector to Superintendent of Police will be eligible for this honour.
- The names of awardees will be declared every year on 15th August.
- The awardees will get certificate signed by Union Home Minister along with medal and their names will be published in Gazette of India.
- Distribution of medals among States/UTs will be on basis of average of IPC crimes registered by them and crime data published by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for years 2013, 2014 & 2015. The distribution of medals will be reviewed after every 3 years based on average crime data.

Death penalty should stay: 12 out of 14 states/UTs

The 12 out of 14 states/UTs have replied to Home Ministry that capital punishment or death penalty should stay, as it serves to act as deterrent in cases of heinous crimes such as murder and rape.

- The Home Ministry had forwarded proposal to abolish death penalty to states/UTs based on recommendation of Law Commission of India (LCI).

- The states/UTs that vetoed abolition of capital punishment were Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Delhi.
- Only two states, Karnataka and Tripura, want practice to be done away with.

Jharkhand: Banlotwa becomes the first alcohol-free village in Ranchi district

Banlotwa becomes the first alcohol-free village in Ranchi district. The people of Banlotwa have joined hands to make the village 'nasa mukt' (alcohol-free).

- Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das has lauded the residents of Banlotwa for becoming the first "alcohol-free" village in Ranchi district.
- The Chief Minister also gave Rs. 1 lakh cash to the village head of Banlotwa, following his announcement two years ago that any village becoming alcohol-free would be given the money for its development.

Government forms committee to probe illegal cultivation of HT Cotton

The Department of Biotechnology in Ministry of Science and Technology has constituted Field Inspection and Scientific Evaluation Committee (FISEC) to investigate matter of illegal cultivation of Herbicide Tolerant (HT) or BG-III cotton in four states.

- The committee was constituted after there were several media reports and complaints regarding illegal or unauthorised cultivation of HT cotton in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- The cultivation of HT cotton (BG-III) is not approved by country's biotech regulator, Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of Ministry of Environment.
- The unofficial estimates put the extent of unauthorised cotton to be about 20% in the country.
- The commercial cultivation, sale, cultivation and seed production of unapproved HT cotton is punishable offence under Seeds Act 1966, Seed Rule 1968, Seeds (Control) Order 1983 with regard to Environmental Protection Act, 1986 and Environmental Protection Rules, 1989.

Key highlights of Assam state budget 2018-19

Assam government in the state budget 2018-19 presented announced ex-gratia to next of kin of who lost their lives during the Bodoland agitation. The budget has made provision for paying Rs 5 lakh each to the kin.

- The budget presented in state assembly is an e- budget. After Andhra Pradesh, Assam is the second state to have an e-budget. Budget is available in Google Play Store .The

budget also proposed to increase the tender fee from Rs 8.25 to Rs 100 for tenders up to Rs 20 lakh and Rs 500 for tenders beyond Rs 20 Lakh.

- Providing relief to small tea growers, the budget proposed to exempt specified land cess on green tea leaves.
- State budget has come up with a loan waiver. The Government will calculate the farmers' dues – both principal and interest– to the banks. After calculation, the State Government will deposit 25% of such outstanding dues subject to a maximum limit of 25,000 in each such loan account.
- In order to further promote digital literacy and usage, each line Sardar (head) in the tea garden will be provided with a smart phone of around Rs. 3,000.
- For sanitary napkin- Women in the ages of 12-20 years – and whose family income is below Rs. 5 lakh – can avail of an annual stipend of Rs. 600 which will be directly transferred to her bank account.

International Current Affairs

India placed 33rd worldwide in web-borne threats: Kaspersky

Global cyber security provider Kaspersky Lab stated that India ranks 33rd worldwide in the list of countries facing web-borne threats.

- The firm, in a presentation delivered on the threat management and defense landscape in India at the recent CISO Summit here further stated that India secured the 37th place worldwide in attacks by local threats and 13th place in incidents with malicious hosts located in India.
- Furthermore, 27.4 percent users were affected by web-borne threats, while 62.7 percent users were attacked by local threats.
- After giving a brief overview on India's threat incidents, Shrenik Bhayani, GM of Kaspersky Lab (South Asia) outlined the primary and most common targets for hackers, namely telecom, medicine, finance and state sectors.

Maldives Parliament has approved the anti-defection bil

The Maldives Parliament has approved the anti-defection bill with retrospective effect amidst boycott by opposition MPs.

- According to the bill, MPs elected on political party tickets will lose their seat if they leave their party, get expelled, or switch parties.

- The bill would take effect from 13th July 2017, meaning that the 12 MPs that switched to the Opposition last year would lose their seats.
- The bill was passed with 35 votes as opposition MPs continued to boycott the sittings.
- The anti-defection bill is yet another attempt by President Abdullah Yameen to take control of democratic institutions. The bill will give powers to election commission to unseat MPs in case of defections.
- The 12 MPs who earlier defected to opposition side will lose seats as the bill will be implemented with retrospective effect.
- Opposition continued to boycott parliament and only 35 ruling MPs were present to vote in 85 member Majlis.
- A former legal director has opposed the bill saying it is against the constitution.

Banking & Finance

DCB Bank launches online service to send money globally

Private sector lender DCB Bank has launched a remittance service to facilitate customers to send money online globally.

- Under DCB Remit, any resident Indian can register online and transfer funds across 20 countries, including the US, Canada, Australia, the UK, the UAE and Germany.
- After the exchange rate of money is fixed, customer transfers the funds from any account to DCB Bank account which is then transferred to the beneficiary account abroad latest by the next business day.
- DCB Remit has been launched in association with Avenues Payments, a technology product company specialising in facilitating cross border payments.

IBBI, RBI ink pact for increased cooperation

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) today inked an agreement with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for increased cooperation in effective implementation of the insolvency law.

- The pact, which provides for sharing of information as well as resources, among others, also comes at a time when the authorities are working on ways to address the huge amount of non-performing assets in the banking sector.
- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) provides for time -bound and market-determined insolvency resolution.

- IBBI and the RBI are interested in the effective implementation of the Code and its allied rules and regulations, through a quick and efficient resolution process.
- They have agreed under the MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) to assist and co-operate with each other for the effective implementation of the Code, subject to limitations imposed by the applicable laws.
- The MoU provides for sharing of information, subject to the limitations imposed by the applicable laws as well as sharing of resources available to the extent feasible and legally permissible.
- Among others, there would be cross-training of staff, capacity building of insolvency professionals and financial creditors.

Federal Bank makes more strategic tie-ups for Portfolio Investment Scheme

Federal Bank has entered into a strategic partnership with two new broking partners, M/s Celebrus Capital Ltd and M/s Fortune Wealth Management Co India Pvt. Ltd, for providing Portfolio Investment Scheme (PIS) services to Non-resident Indians (NRIs).

- A formal agreement was executed at Federal Towers, Marine Drive, and Ernakulam.
- With the introduction of these two new arrangements, the bank has partnered with nine broking companies, through which the bank facilitates NRI clients to invest in shares of Indian companies, in the secondary market for purchase/sale of shares or convertible debentures on the repatriable and non-repatriable basis.
- The tie-up with Federal Bank will immensely help Celebrus Capital to offer the available investment opportunities in the Indian capital market for NRI investors in a transparent manner through Portfolio Investment Scheme.

Business

Nasscom, FB, WeWork unveil design studio

IT trade body Nasscom, in collaboration with Facebook and New York-based co-working space company WeWork, unveiled Design4India Studio in Bengaluru.

- The facility would be a dedicated design studio for web, mobile, augmented reality and virtual reality platforms for start-ups and designers.
- The venture aims at bridging the gap between design and technology by offering spaces for start-ups and designers to explore, innovate and build together.

- The studio, built at WeWork's Bengaluru facility, will provide young firms access to user experience design process, user testing and augmented reality and virtual reality toolkits.
- The aim of this initiative is to introduce the element of design as early possible among the young companies and provide the skills and tools.

India attracts \$209 billion FDI in 2014-2017: Government

India has attracted reaching US \$208.99 billion foreign direct investment (FDI) during April 2014 to December 2017 period.

- The main sectors that received maximum FDI include services, computer software and hardware, telecommunications, construction, trading and automobile.
- Foreign investments are considered crucial for India as it needs around 1 trillion dollars for overhauling its infrastructure sector such as ports, airports and highways to boost growth.
- Strong inflow of foreign investments mainly helps to improve the country's balance of payments (BoP) situation and also strengthen the rupee value against other global currencies, especially dominant US dollar.
- To attract inflow of foreign investments, the central government has announced several measures including liberalisation of FDI policy and improvement in business climate.

IIP expands at 7.5% in January 2018

According to data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), India's factory output, measured by Index of Industrial Production (IIP) recorded overall 7.5% growth in January 2018, indicating early signs of industrial revival.

- Factory output grew at 7.1% in December 2017, before hitting 25-month high of 8.4% in November 2017.
- The cumulative IIP growth for period of April-January over corresponding period of previous year was 4.1%.
- Manufacturing sector: It increased to 8.7% in January 2018 as compared to 8.5% in December 2017.
- Mining output: It recorded growth of 0.1% in January 2018 compared to 1.2% in December 2017.
- Electricity generation: It recorded 7.6% growth in January 2018, as compared 4.4% growth in December 2017.
- Capital goods output: It was 14.6% in January 2018 compared to 16.4% in December 2017.

- Consumer durables output: It was 8% in January 2018 as compared meagre 0.9% rise in December 2017.
- Consumer non-durables production: It recorded 10.5% growth in January 2018 from 16.5% in December 2017.

Retail Inflation moderates to 4.4% in February

India's retail inflation eased more than estimated, indicating that the seasonal disruptions and one-off items that had pushed inflation upwards to a 17-month high are now starting to turn.

- CPI inflation in India rose 4.4 percent in February, according to data released by the Central Statistics Office today. Economists polled by Bloomberg had forecast retail inflation at 4.7 percent. Inflation stood at 5.2 percent in December and 5.07 percent in January.
- Food price inflation was at 3.26 percent compared to a 4.7 percent in January.
- Prices of pulses and products fell 17.35 percent year-on-year in February. Prices have softened for the fifteenth straight month.
- Fuel and light inflation stood at 6.8 percent in February compared to 7.73 percent in January.
- Housing inflation stood at 8.28 percent in February compared to 8.33 percent in January.
- Clothing and footwear inflation was at 5 percent in February compared to 4.94 percent in January.

Awards & Recognition

Anjani Kumar appointed as Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad

In a major reshuffle of Indian Police Service (IPS) officers in Telangana, the state government has issued orders of transferring 38 officers.

- Anjani Kumar, who was holding the post of Additional DGP(Law & Order), has been posted as Hyderabad City Police Commissioner, relieving VV Srinivasa Rao, IPS from the full additional charge .
- Director of RBVRR Telangana State Police Academy (TSPA), Jitender, a 1992 batch IPS officer was posted as new Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order). While Santosh Mehra, an 1987 batch IPS officer, was posted as director, RBVRR TSPA.

Global peace award conferred on woman pastor

The "Academy Award for Nobel Peace" from the USA has been conferred on Dr Ketzia David Prakasam, a philanthropist, social worker and spiritual worker here.

- Ketzia is the first Indian woman to receive this award, presented yesterday as part of International Womens Day celebrations here, a release said today.
- The award was conferred on Ketzia by founder Chairman of the Academy Award for Global Peace.

Science & Technology

Odisha forest department launches app to fight forest fires

The Odisha forest department has recently launched an app to track and fight forest fires during the coming summer.

- In addition, a Whatsapp group called 'Forest Fire Alert' has also been created for sharing alerts and information regarding tracking, preventing and fighting such fires between forest officials and locals who form squads to help the forest officials.
- The Forest Survey of India (FSI) keeps a close watch and whenever there is a fire, their officials inform the officials of the state forest department.
- On reaching the spot, a forest official will have to take a photo of the spot and upload it in the Whatsapp group, and also in the app as soon as possible.
- Apart from technology, the traditional methods to fight forest fire are also being used.
- In the traditional methods, forest squads - comprising forest department staff and local people draw fire lines by digging the earth to control the spread of fire.
- Blowers are also used to keep dry leaves away from a fire and controlled burning is also carried out.

Sports

India top medals tally in historic ISSF World Cup outing

India finished their best-ever campaign at the ISSF World Cup in Guadalajara, Mexico, at the top of the medals tally with four gold, one silver and four bronze.

- Among the three Indian shooters in the fray, Smit Singh shot 116 in the qualifying to be placed 15th, Angad Bajwa shot 115 to end in 18th spot while Sheeraz Sheikh secured the 30th spot with a score of 112.
- India, however topped the medals tally for the first time in an ISSF competition with four gold, one silver and four bronze for a total of nine medals.

Odisha to host TT nationals after 12 years

- Odisha will host the 80th Senior National Table Tennis Championships after a gap of 12 years.
- The state had hosted the event in 2001 and in 2006. It will be held in Cuttack in all probability.
- The decision to allot the event to Odisha was taken during the 81st AGM of the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI), held at Gurugram.
- The other decision the house approved was the national calendar for all five zonals, Inter-Institutional Championships, Cadet and Sub-Junior Nationals as well as Junior and Youth Nationals, taking into consideration India's participation in various international events including the Asian Games in August.
- The AGM also decided to continue with the existing ranking system for all categories sans men and women.
- Meanwhile, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has decided to host the Institutional Championships in 2018 and TTFI allotted the event to it.

Anindith Reddy is FMSCI Motorsports Person of the year 2018

Anindith Reddy was awarded the title of FMSCI National Motorsports Person of the Year 2017 at the FMSCI awards that were held in Chennai on Sunday

- The 26-year-old racer had an excellent season last year, managing to win both the MRF FF1600 championship and the Euro JK 17 Championship.
- The award was presented to Anindith by FIA WMSC member Gautam Singhanian, and FMSCI president Akbar Ebrahim.

Obituary

Telangana armed struggle fighter and veteran Communist leader Ch Kamamma (90) died

A native of Warangal district of Telangana, Kamamma, also a freedom fighter was suffering from age-related problems for the past over one month.

- She joined the post Independence armed struggle to fight the rule of erstwhile Nizams of Hyderabad and their army of Razakars as part of Telangana Liberation Struggle by Communist Party of India at the age of 15.
- Later Kamamma served as secretary of the CPI Mahila Samakhya for a long period.

Delhi's first Commissioner of Police dead

First Commissioner of Delhi Police and former Director General of Uttar Pradesh Police Jayendra Nath Chaturvedi passed away in Varanasi on 12th March.

- He was also Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC).
- He served as the first Commissioner of Police in the national capital from July 1978 to January 1980.