

# National Current Affairs

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## **Government launches E-Tribes India on e-commerce platforms**

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India, (TRIFED), under Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched E-Tribes India banners on e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Snapdeal, Paytm & GeM.

- It also launched TRIFED's websites-www.tribesindia.com, www.trifed.in and Retail Inventory Software and M-commerce app as part of Digital India Initiative.
- TRIFED's Handbook for Retail Trade and TRIFED's quarterly magazine 'Tribes Haat' was also launched.
- TRIFED has developed its own e-commerce (electronic commerce) website i.e., tribesindia.com for sale of all its products and app to tap m-commerce (mobile commerce) too.
- The purpose of going digital will help in expansion of tribal commerce and availability of tribal products over large area. It will result in reaping greater benefits for tribal artisans.

## **Surat: First district to have 100% solar powered health centres**

Surat district in Gujarat becomes first in country to have 100% solar powered Primary Health Centers (PHCs).

- All 52 PHCs in the district are now powered by solar system. With this, Surat sets an example for country by developing villages that use sustainable forms of energy at a time when global warming is mounting with each passing day.
- The solarification of all PHCs in Surat district will bring down electricity bill by 40% and also help fight global warming.
- Other than PHCs, there are 572 gram panchayats in district, out of which 150 are solar powered gram panchayats and soon other 422 panchayats will too be solar powered.
- 75% of the total expense of making gram panchayat solar powered is borne by state government and remaining 25% by district panchayats.

## **IRFC bonds: Govt extends guarantee of Rs5,000 crore**

The finance ministry has extended sovereign guarantee of Rs5,000 crore to Indian Railways Finance Corp.'s (IRFC) bonds to be sold to Life Insurance Corp. of India (LIC).

- The move will allow the public sector undertaking to raise funds from LIC, which was delayed due to restrictions posed by Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) rules related to exposure limits.
- The finance ministry has approved government guarantee of Rs5,000 crore in the current financial year for IRFC bonds and also waived the guarantee fee for the amount.

### **National Conference on Down Syndrome held in New Delhi**

The National Conference on Down Syndrome was held in New Delhi.

- It was organised by the National Trust under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Down Syndrome is a chromosomal condition associated with intellectual and learning disabilities. It leads to delayed development and behavioural problems in children suffering with it.
- The objective of conference was to provide excellent opportunities to parents to obtain information about latest development in education and skilling and inclusive living of persons with Down Syndrome.
- The conference brought intellectuals from all walks of life on one platform to spur ideas and channelized knowledge on Down Syndrome which was very beneficial to enable a positive change in people with Down Syndrome.

### **1 lakh toilets to be created across Assam under 'Mission Sambhav'**

Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), Assam launched a massive Campaign titled “Mission Sambhav” across the State on 26th March.

- The campaign was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Assam, Sarbananda Sonowal, at Gopal Krishna Tea Estate, at Nelli GP in Mayong block in Morigaon district.
- The Chief Minister flagged off the campaign by digging pit for sanitary toilet in the house of Romesh Paharia, a tea garden worker residing in Gopal Krishna Tea Estate.
- The central theme of the Campaign is to reach out to more than 1(one) lakh families without toilet on a single day for toilet construction, starting with pit digging.
- The launch of “Mission Sambhav” also witnessed donating of 10 nos of toilet by the dignitaries and officials present.
- SBM(G) promotes the concept of “Daan Toilet” which emphasizes on donating of a sanitary toilet to a person who does not have a sanitary toilet. Through this noble initiative, SBM(g) wants all the rural people of Assam to have access to sanitary toilet.

### **India's first insect museum opened**

A Rs 5 crore insect museum with the state-of-the-art amenities was unveiled by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswamy at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

- The museum, established at a 6,691 sqft area, is fully dedicated to insects and claimed to be the first of its in the country.
- It would display insects preserved as specimens as also live ones depicting their different developmental stages, images, videos and models of their unique behaviour, habits and habitats.
- The uniqueness of the museum is visible in the lobby, which depicts the theme, "BUGS ARE KINGS," while the exhibiting area comprises seven radial walls (bay) on the right side and an undivided wall on the left side.
- A souvenir shop and a mini auditorium to screen insect movies and documentary films are available.

### **ISA, India sign Host Country Agreement**

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) signed Host Country Agreement in New Delhi.

- The agreement gives ISA juridical personality an power to contract, acquire and dispose off movable and immovable properties and also to institute and defend legal proceedings.
- Under this agreement, ISA will enjoy such privileges, applicable tax concessions and immunities that are necessary for ISA's Headquarter to independently discharge its function and programmes.
- It will derive its status, privileges and immunities as per Article 10 of Framework Agreement.

### **GIFT, Deloitte sign MoU to promote IFSC operations**

GIFT City has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP (DTTILLP), which renders consultancy services, for mutual cooperation in areas related to international financial services.

- GIFT City is a global business district offering a platform for business opportunities in international and domestic business operations.

### **AAI signs MoU with Assam govt to develop villages in Kamrup**

The Airport Authority of India (AAI) signed an MoU with Assam government under its Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) initiative for sustainable development of human settlements at villages in Kamrup district, an AAI statement said here.

- The AAI would provide financial assistance under its CSR initiative of Rs 4.58 crore for the Kamrup district as per the estimates prepared by the UNDP to improve the resilience of communities around Guwahati Airport.
- The AAI through its CSR policy supports such initiatives for promoting infrastructure for convenience of the population with a view to improve the resilience of communities.
- The estimates of the financial assistance have been prepared by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to improve resilience of communities around.

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## International Current Affairs

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### **India ranks 67th in fixed line, 109th in mobile broadband speed: Ookla**

India is ranked 67th for fixed broadband and 109th for mobile internet speeds in February, according to internet speed testing analysis firm Ookla.

- India's performance in fixed broadband download speeds has gone up from average speeds of 18.82 megabit per second (mbps) in November 2017 to 20.72 mbps in February 2018; however, it remains below global average download speed of 42.71 mbps, as per the Ookla's Speedtest Global Index.
- As per the index, global average mobile broadband download speed was 22.16 mbps in February.
- India's neighbour China was ranked 26th with average mobile broadband download speed of 33.96 mbps, Sri Lanka 82nd, Pakistan 92nd, Bangladesh 115th and Nepal 118th.

### **India is the third largest electricity producer**

India's electricity production grew 34% over seven years to 2017, and the country now produces more energy than Japan and Russia, which had 27% and 8.77% more electricity generation capacity installed, respectively, than India seven years ago.

- India produced 1,160.10 billion units (BU) of electricity—one BU is enough to power 10 million households (one household using average of about 3 units per day) for a month—in financial year (FY) 2017.

- Electricity production stood at 1,003.525 BU between April 2017-January 2018, according to a February 2018 report by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), a trust established by the commerce ministry.
- With a production of 1,423 BU in FY 2016, India was the third largest producer and the third largest consumer of electricity in the world, behind China (6,015 BU) and the United States (4,327 BU).

### **U.S., India hold naval training**

Indian Navy's Talwar class frigate INS Tarkash carried out a "greeting and training" exercise with the U.S. Navy's Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group (TRCSG) which was until now involved in operations against the Islamic State in the Arabian Gulf.

- INS Tarkash sailed in formation with aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt , guided-missile destroyer USS Preble (DDG 88) and other ships on March 25 as part of the exercise.
- During the exercise, personnel from both sides "practised working together and strengthened their crews' ship handling.
- Exercises included drills in communications and navigating in several close formations.

### **UAE completes first Korean-built nuclear reactor**

The United Arab Emirates, with help from Korea Electric Power Corp., finished building the Arab world's first commercial nuclear reactor, a milestone in the oil-rich UAE's effort to curb its reliance on fossil fuels and develop cleaner sources of energy.

- Unit 1 of the Barakah complex plans to begin loading fuel in May.
- The Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation will issue an operating license for Barakah Units 1 and 2 "when the operator meets all regulatory requirements.
- The UAE government expects the four Barakah plants to contribute almost 25 percent of the nation's electricity after they're all operating.

### **Sri Lanka Navy sinks ship used by LTTE**

Sri Lankan Navy has sunk a ship used by erstwhile Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and captured by navy from Malaysia.

- The LTTE vessel, A522 named 'We Ling' was captured following the conclusion of the conflict and was anchored near the Colombo harbor under the navy's custody.

- As it was in an unusable condition, the government decided to sink it in the sea according to proper procedures.
- The Navy said the sunken ship will become a home to a number of aquatic animals and corals will grow inside making it an attraction for the divers and tourists.

### **Malaysia proposes jail for up to 10 years, fines for 'fake news'**

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak's government tabled a bill in parliament outlawing "fake news", with hefty fines and up to 10 years in jail, raising more concern about media freedom in the wake of a multi-billion dollar graft scandal.

- Under the Anti-Fake News 2018 bill, anyone who publishes so-called fake news could face fines of up to 500,000 ringgit (\$128,140), up to 10 years in jail, or both.
- The proposed Act seeks to safeguard the public against the proliferation of fake news whilst ensuring the right to freedom of speech and expression under the Federal Constitution is respected.
- The law, which covers digital publications and social media, would apply to offenders outside Malaysia, including foreigners, if Malaysia or a Malaysian citizen were affected.

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## **Banking & Finance**

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### **India to borrow Rs 2.88 Lakh Crore**

The Indian government will borrow a lower amount via bonds in the first half of the new fiscal year, in order to ease the pressure on the local debt markets. It will also borrow money for a shorter duration than it typically does.

- The government plans to borrow Rs 2.88 lakh crore between April-September in FY19 compared to Rs 3.72 lakh crore in the same period of FY18. There will be 24 issuances of Rs 12,000 crore each in the first half of the financial year.
- Along with changing the timing of its borrowings, the government has also yielded to the market's demand for shorter tenure borrowings.
- The government has introduced issuances in 1-4 year bucket for the financial year 2018-19.

### **Exim Bank extends \$500 million loan facility to 15-nation group in Africa**

The Export-Import Bank (Exim Bank) \\said it will provide a USD 500 million credit facility to ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) to fund various development projects in the western-south Africa.

- The line of credit of USD 500 million to EBID will finance various development projects in the ECOWAS region.
- The LoC of USD 500 million to EBID is an umbrella limit for financing developmental projects in 15-member countries of EBID in West African region -- Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

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## Business

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### **Microsoft opens Garage innovation site for employees in Hyderabad**

Technology giant Microsoft inaugurated Garage facility, a maker space for employees, its first in India and the second-largest in the world after its 11,000-sq-ft Redmond Garage facility.

- Spread over an area of 8,000 sq ft, the Hyderabad facility was in the process of being set up for the past 18 months. Upbeat on the increasing innovations from Indian centres, Microsoft is also planning a Garage facility in Bengaluru, which will be operational this year.
- Additionally, the global technology firm is also expanding its India development centre in Hyderabad to tap the growing market.
- This will be their second-largest and sixth Garage facility across the world. The Bengaluru facility will be our eighth facility and will be ready before the end of the year, after the Boston facility that will start from April 23.

### **Economy to double to \$5 tn by 2025; no risk to inflation target**

As per the finance ministry, India is on track to doubling the size of its economy to \$5 trillion by 2025, while asserting that the inflation target set by the Reserve Bank will not be breached.

- The country is well poised to click a growth rate of 7-8 per cent and with focus on start-ups, MSMEs and infrastructure investment it can step on to higher growth pedestal, Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg said.
- India's GDP in value terms currently stands at \$2.5 trillion -- making it the sixth largest economy in the world.



- With regard to inflation, Garg said its trajectory is well within the RBI's target of 4 per cent, plus/minus 2 per cent.

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## Appointments & Resigns

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### **VijayRaghavan appointed principal scientific advisor to govt**

K Vijay Raghavan, one of the most distinguished biologists of the country, was appointed Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India.

- The Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA), a post created by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 1999, is the topmost advisor to the government on all matters related to scientific policy.

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## Awards & Recognition

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### **London based organisation SACF wins Frederick Pincott Award for 2017**

South Asian Cinema Foundation (SACF), a London based organisation has received the Frederick Pincott Award for 2017 from the Indian High Commissioner, Y K Sinha for promoting Hindi cinema in Britain for the last 18 years.

- The institution has been active in boosting original research and books on Indian films, also inviting and honouring filmmakers from India, along with documentary film making and producing classic silent films with live music at the British Film Institute (BFI).
- The SACF was set up in London in January 2000 by Joshi, along with film archivist P K Nair, film critic Derek Malcolm and social historian-researcher Kusum Pant Joshi.

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## Sports

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### **Teen Anish Bhanwala clinches gold**



Rising shooter Anish Bhanwala secured India a third individual gold medal at the ISSF Junior World Cup when the 15-year-old finished atop the podium in men's 25m rapid fire pistol.

- Having qualified for the final with the highest score, Bhanwala prevailed over two of his India teammates – Anhad Jawanda and Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu – and three Chinese participants in the medal round.
- India are now placed second in the overall standings with 15 medals – comprising six gold, three silver and six bronze – behind China and ahead of top shooting nations such as Italy and hosts Australia.

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## Obituary

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### **Seo Minwoo, member of K-pop boyband 100%, dies aged 33**

Seo Minwoo of K-pop boyband 100% has died aged 33. The Korean singer, who performed as Minwoo, was found without a pulse at his home in Seoul on the evening of 25 March,

- The boyband 100% debuted in 2012 as a seven-piece in the K-pop genre, a highly visual form of Korean pop that incorporates elements of western music.
- Minwoo was the band's lead vocalist, but took a sabbatical from the band to complete mandatory military service in 2014. Minwoo had also worked as an actor, appearing in dramas such as Sharp 3 and The King and I, and making cameos in the TV series New Tales of Gisaeng and movies including Where Are You Going?

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## Important Days

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### **World Theatre Day – March 27**

World Theatre Day (WTD) is celebrated this year on 27 March 2018. It was initiated in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute.

- Since 1962 World Theatre Day has been celebrated by ITI Centres, ITI Cooperating Members, theatre professionals, theatre organizations, theatre universities and theatre lovers all over the world on the 27th of March.
- This day is a celebration for those who can see the value and importance of the art form “theatre”, and acts as a wake-up-call for governments, politicians and institutions which have not yet recognised its value to the people and to the individual and have not yet realised its potential for economic growth.