

National Current Affairs

Government to launch Gobardhan Yojana nationally from Haryana

The Union Government will launch GOBARDhan Yojna, a central government scheme nationally from Karnal district of Haryana by end of April 2018. GOBAR is acronym for Galvanising Organic Bio Agro Resources. The scheme was announced by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his 2018 budget speech.

- The government aims to cover nearly 700 districts under the scheme in this financial year (2018-19).
- The scheme focuses on managing and converting cattle dung and solid waste from farms and fields to useful compost, biogas and bio-CNG. It will also help in keeping villages clean and generate energy while increasing income of farmers and cattle herders.
- Gram panchayats will play key role in implementation of this scheme under which bio-gas plants from cattle dung will be set up at individual or community level and also at level of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and NGOs like Gaushalas.
- The central and state governments will provide funds in the ratio of 60:40.

Government bans imports of hormone oxytocin

The Union government has banned imports of hormone oxytocin to stop its misuse in livestock industry, where it causes hormonal imbalances and shortens the lives of milch animals.

- The Government has decided to rely on domestic production to satisfy requirements of hormone.
- India had halted retail sales of oxytocin as prescription-only drug in 2014, but failed to curb illegal sales and the volume of imports was unclear.
- Even, Drug Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) in February 2018 had recommended import ban of oxytocin.
- It also had recommended that sale be limited to registered government hospitals and clinics and bar code system should be used on all forms of drug to ensure tracking and prevent abuse.
- For adopting its recommendations, DTAB proposal had proposed amendments to section 10 of Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and rule 96 of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945.

Uttarakhand's second Mega Food Park inaugurated at Udham Singh Nagar

Uttarakhand's second Mega Food Park- Himalayan Mega Food Park Private Ltd inaugurated at Mahuakhera Ganj in Kashipur in Udham Singh Nagar district. It was inaugurated by Union Food Processing Industries Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal.

- The first Mega Food Park in the state is located at Haridwar and has already become operational.
- The mega food park was set up in area of 50.14 acres at a cost of Rs 99.96 crore. It has central processing center (CPC) as well as three Primary Processing Centers (PPCs) at Ram Nagar, Ramgarh and Kaladungi.
- The park also has facilities for primary processing and storage near the farms.
- It will benefit around 25,000 farmers in Udham Singh Nagar and also nearby districts of Nainital, Garhwal, Almora and Champawat.

09-3x Dynamic Tamping Express: Indian Railways induct new machines for Mechanised Track Maintenance

The Indian Railways has inducted three 09-3x Dynamic Tamping Express machines for improved mechanised Track Maintenance.

- This advanced technology simulator is presently only available in five countries including India.
- These machines have been manufactured in India under Make in India initiative with imported components.
- Indian Railways is planning to induct 42 more such machines in its maintenance fleet over next 3 years.
- 09-3X- Dynamic Tamping Express is latest high output integrated tamping machine having multiple functions, so far being carried out by different machines.

Global Logistics Summit held in New Delhi

On 5th and 6th April 2018, Global Logistics Summit was held in New Delhi.

- The Global Logistics Summit was organised by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, along with FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry) and the World Bank Group.
- The Summit acts as a platform to hold discussions for global experts, academics, government officials and private sector and industry representatives.
- Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu said that 56 new airports will be ready for operation in the next few years.

First ever "Van Dhan Vikas Kendra" to come up at Bijapur, Chhattisgarh

Union Ministry of Tribal affairs has approved establishment of the first multipurpose “Van Dhan Vikas Kendra” in Bijapur District of Chhattisgarh for value addition of Forest Produce.

- Van Dhan Vikas Kendra will be an important part of Central Government’s scheme of “Mechanism for marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support price (MSP) and development of Value chain for MFP”.
- This scheme is for socio economic development of tribals living in forests, for whom, collecting Minor Forest Produce (MFP) is a major source of livelihood.
- The first “Van Dhan Vikas Kendra” in Bijapur District of Chhattisgarh will provide skill upgradation and capacity building training and will have primary processing and value addition facility.
- Initially, this Kendra will have processing facility for Tamarind brick making, Mahua flower storage facility and chironjee cleaning and packaging.

IHHC Sets up the First ICU Simulation Lab to Train Nursing Staff

IHHC, India’s premier Home Healthcare service provider became the first home health care company to set up a dedicated ICU simulation lab at their Bangalore facility to train nursing staff.

- This state of the art Simulation Lab will offer hands-on training modules and help nursing staff improve the quality of medical and healthcare services to homes.
- The ICU simulation lab has state of the art equipment designed to recreate real-life scenarios with the help of patient simulators, digitalized video, bedside computer charting, electronic supply, static mannequins that deliver a powerful hands-on training to the nursing staff.
- With this, IHHC will be launching their Critical Care at home services which often necessitates the use of complex Tracheotomy and Ventilator equipment for different medical conditions ranging from Ortho, Neurological, Transplant care, Cardio care, Post-operative care, where, highly trained nursing staff can be deployed to take care of a range of critical medical care services at the patients' home

Khadi Store Locator App Launched

The Minister of State for MSME, Giriraj Singh launched a mobile phone application for locating 4,000 Khadi stores in the country.

- There are more than 8,000 Khadistores in India, the rest of stores will also be available on the store locator by the end of this month.
- KVIC is also setting up export cells to promote overseas sales of Khadi products in order to make Khadi an international brand.

Exercise Gaganshakti 2018: IAF to conduct biggest combat exercise along Pakistan, China borders

Indian Air Force (IAF) is going to conduct Exercise Gaganshakti 2018, biggest air combat exercise along Pakistan, China borders between April 10 to 23, 2018.

- The aim of this exercise is real time coordination, deployment and employment of air power in short and intense battle scenario.
- Though it is IAF centric exercise, it will also be executed keeping in mind “Joint Operational Doctrine” so that requirements of other services are also met.
- The exercise is aimed at coordinating operations, maintenance and administrative responses to achieve stated objectives of IAF, in case of any contingency.
- This exercise will hone war fighting skills of air warriors in real time scenario thus affirming IAF’s role as cutting edge of India’s military capability.

International Current Affairs

Sahyog-Hyeoblyeog 2018: India, South Korea joint anti-piracy, search and rescue exercise

India, South Korea joint anti-piracy, search and rescue exercise ‘Sahyog-Hyeoblyeog 2018’ was conducted in Bay of Bengal off the Chennai coast in Tamil Nadu.

- The exercise was conducted between Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Korean Coast Guard (KCG) as part of proposed establishment of MoU between them to improve maritime security in Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- The exercise aimed at developing working level co-operation and enhanced inter-operability between coast guards of both countries in fields of maritime search and rescue.
- The exercise witnessed varied scenarios such as prohibition of a pirate vessel, cross boarding, fire fighting, hijacking of merchant vessel and its subsequent rescue and search and rescue (SAR) demonstration.

Banking & Finance

Government inks agreement with World Bank for Maharashtra Project for Climate Resilient Agriculture

Central Government, Maharashtra Government have signed US \$420 million loan agreement with World Bank for Project for Climate Resilient Agriculture to help small and marginal farmers in Marathwada and Vidarbha regions of Maharashtra.

- The loan will be provided from World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). It will have maturity of 24 years and grace period of 6 years.
- The project aims to help in increasing climate resilient practices in agriculture and ensuring that farming continues to remain a financially viable activity for them.
- It will be implemented in rural areas largely dependent upon rain fed agriculture. It will take up series of activities at farm and watershed level.
- It will help to scale up climate-resilient technologies such as micro irrigation systems, expand surface water storage and facilitate aquifer recharge, directly contributing to more efficient use of scarce water resources.

ICICI Bank becomes first Indian bank to go live on SWIFT's GPI service

India's largest private sector lender ICICI Bank became first Indian bank to go live on SWIFT's (Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication System) Global Payment Innovation (GPI), an improved cross-border payments service.

- SWFIT GPI was launched in May 2017 to help banks to track their global transactions at all times, keeping full vigil on payments activity.
- It improves customer experience by increasing speed, transparency and automatically provides status updates to all GPI banks involved in any GPI paymet chain.
- It allows banks to confirm when payment has been completed.

RBI constitutes inter-departmental group to study launching of fiat digital currency

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an inter-departmental group to study and provide guidance on feasibility to introduce fiat digital currency backed by it. It will be submitted by end-June 2018.

- Fiat currency is currency that a government has declared to be legal tender.
- It is different from cryptocurrency or virtual currency like Bitcoin which is not legal tender and not backed by government.
- Fiat Digital Currency (or Central bank digital currency) is the digital form of fiat money which is currency established as money by government regulation or law. As opposed to private digital tokens, fiat digital currency will be issued by central bank.

FPI investment limit in Govt Securities hiked

Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in consultation with the Central Government, hiked the foreign portfolio investors (FPI) investment limit in Central government securities (G-Sec).

- The FPI investment limit in G-Sec has been hiked from 5 per cent of outstanding stock now to 5.5 per cent in Financial Year 2018-19 and 6 per cent in Financial Year 2020.
- As per the current situation, 99.31 per cent of the upper FII investment limit in G-Secs, amounting to Rs.191300 has already been utilised.
- As per National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) data, only Rs.1311 crore investment could be accommodated to contain total FPI investments in G-Sec within 5 per cent limit.
- Although the hike in limit is lesser than market expectations, it would dampen bond yields in the immediate term.

Acquisitions & Mergers

HCL Technologies acquires C3i Solutions for \$60 million

Software services firm HCL Technologies has acquired C3i Solutions for USD 60 million, a move aimed at accelerating the Indian IT firm's growth in life sciences and consumer services.

- C3i Solutions is a wholly owned, independently operated subsidiary of Merck & Co, (known as MSD outside the US and Canada).
- It provides multi-channel customer engagement services for life sciences and consumer packaged goods (CPG) industries.
- With this acquisition, HCL will complement its broad-based IT and business services capability with the additional depth that C3i has in the life sciences and CPG verticals.
- C3i's expertise in the clinical, pharmacovigilance, and pharma sales support domains and the strong partnership will enable HCL's life sciences customers to become more patient-centric and offer services to IT and business stakeholders.

Appointments & Resigns

Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar will hold additional portfolio of Information, Public Relations and Languages department

A notification issued on this regard stated that, Haryana Governor Kaptan Singh Solanki has allocated the portfolio of Information, Public Relations and Languages to Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar with immediate effect.

- Earlier this portfolio was held by Haryana Women and Child Development Minister Kavita Jain.

Awards & Recognition

Chhattisgarh awarded 'State of the Year'

Chhattisgarh won the 'State of the Year' Award under the 'business leader' category at the India Business Leader Awards (IBLA) in New Delhi.

- The India Business Leader Awards (IBLA) was organised by CNBC-TV18 channel. Union Information Technology and Electronics Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad presented the award to Chhattisgarh Minister Prem Prakash Pandey.
- Chhattisgarh was awarded for remarkable increase in business and services activities in various sectors.
- Chhattisgarh's growth has been attributed to various policy decisions taken by Chhattisgarh Government in business sector and its effective implementation.
- Chhattisgarh occupies 4th rank in World Bank's list of 'Ease of doing Business'.

Science & Technology

RH300 sounding rocket launched for atmospheric studies

The RH-300 MKII sounding rocket developed by IRSO's Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) was successfully launched from Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

- The rocket was launched by VSSC under Sounding Rocket Experiment (SOUREX) programme for atmospheric studies.
- It utilises this rocket to study Equatorial E and lower ionosphere regions of atmosphere.
- The study will enrich available atmospheric data and refine models used for tropical weather prediction.

- The objective of experiment is to measure neutral wind in dynamo region (80-120 km) of equatorial ionosphere using indigenously developed Electron Density and Neutral Wind Probe (ENWi). It will also perform cross-validation using an independent Tri Methyl Aluminium (TMA) release technique.

GRSE handovers 4th Mark IV LCU vessel – L54 to Indian Navy

The fourth of eight Mark IV LCU vessels – L54, built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata was formally handed over to Indian Navy at GRSE, Kolkata.

- The first ship of Mark IV LCU vessels INS LCU 51 was commissioned into Indian Navy in 2016. Moreover, two more LCU ships L52 & L53 have been already delivered to Indian Navy.
- L54 is 62.8 meters long and 11 meters wide and has 90% indigenous content.
- It is fitted with 2 MTU 16V 4000 M 53 marine Diesel Engines each fitted with one Fixed Pitch Propeller generating 2 X 1840 KW power.
- It has displacement capacity of around 950 Tons. It has endurance of around 1500 nautical miles at 12 knots speed.
- It boasts of modern habitability conditions with accommodation for 216 personnel.

Important Days

7 April: World Health Day

The World Health Day (WHD) is observed every year on 7 April to mark anniversary of founding of World Health Organization (WHO) on this day in 1948.

- Observance of the day focuses on disseminating knowledge and awareness about human health, increasing life expectancy by adding good health to lives of people and promoting healthier living habits across globe.
- The day also provides with unique opportunity to mobilize action around specific health topic of concern to people all over the world.
- The theme for year 2018 is “Universal Health Coverage: Health For All”.
- It aims to ensure that everyone, everywhere should have access to essential quality of health services and should not experience any financial hardship while getting quality medical service.
- It seeks to provide an opportunity for UHC (Universal Health Care) 2030 partners to accelerate progress towards universal health coverage.