

National Current Affairs

UIDAI Brings Digitally-Signed QR Code With Photo For eAadhaar

The UIDAI has brought in secure digitally-signed QR Code on e-Aadhaar that will now contain photograph of the Aadhaar holder too, in addition to demographic details, to facilitate better offline verification of an individual.

- A QR code is a form of barcode label which contains machine-readable information, while e-Aadhaar is the electronic version of Aadhaar that can be downloaded from UIDAI website.
- The new feature, the digitally-signed QR code, will contain photo of the Aadhaar holder in addition to existing facility of demographic details, in turn allowing various user agencies like banks to verify authenticity of Aadhaar card offline.
- However, to ensure that a person is a bona fide owner of the Aadhaar card, there has to be a manual check of photo with the individual's face or through use of agency specific authentication scheme, he noted.
- Offline verification facility would add yet another option to the exception-handling mechanism at the ground level for ensuring that no denials on Aadhaar-based services take place.

FSSAI launches Project Dhoop to address vitamin D deficiency amongst youngsters

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched 'Project Dhoop' to address rising incidence of Vitamin D deficiencies (VDD), particularly amongst the young people.

- The project aims to encourage schools to shift their morning assembly to around noon-time, mainly between 11 am to 1 pm to ensure maximum absorption of Vitamin D in students through natural sunlight.
- The concept of noon school assembly under it is an innovative and effective concept to ensure that school students get adequate Vitamin D through sunlight, while also opting to choose food products like milk and edible oils that are fortified with Vitamins A and D.
- The launch of project comes in backdrop of rising incidence of Vitamin D deficiency in country as the studies have found that over 90% of boys and girls in various Indian cities are deficient in Vitamin D despite most part of India receiving abundant sunshine all the year through.

EPCES launches new membership software application

On 9th April 2018, Export Promotion Council for EoUs and SEZs (EPCES) announced that, it has launched a new membership software application.

- The new membership software application will help EPCES members to digitally interact with the council. The facility is available at <https://membership.epces.in>
- It will also help to reduce delays and paperwork for the members. The new facility allows members to renew their membership, apply for new membership or to download certificates, also.
- Officiating Chairman EPCES, Vinay Sharma said that, this move has been made with an aim to save paper and create a better work environment.

Eighth Regional 3R Forum in Asia and Pacific held in Indore

The Eighth Regional 3R Forum in Asia and Pacific was held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. It was co-organized by Ministry of Housing and Affairs, Japan's Environment Ministry, and United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD).

- Government of Madhya Pradesh, Indore Municipal Corporation and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) were Organizing State Partner, City Partner and Industry Partner of the event.
- The theme of this edition of forum was "Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air through 3R and Resource Efficiency– A 21st Century Vision for Asia-Pacific Communities". The event saw participation of around 40 mayors of cities around the world and mayors of more than 100 cities across India.
- The Regional 3R Forum in Asia and Pacific was launched in 2009 in Tokyo, Japan with objective of integrating 3Rs– reduce, reuse and recycle in policy, planning and development.

Haryana Government launches Water ATM policy for urban areas

The Haryana government has come up with Water ATM Policy to provide clean drinking water to people at public places in cities.

- The residents of cities in Haryana can now look forward to having a water ATM every 400 metres.
- The municipalities would identify public places, such as bus-stands, railway stations, parks, bus stops, parking areas and markets, and start installation of water ATMs.
- The municipality would install water ATMs and ensure that these functions properly, or the civic body would install it and hand it over to an agency for its smooth

functioning. Corporate Social Responsibility would also be available to ensure functioning of water ATMs.

Goa govt to launch app-based taxi service by May-end

The Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) is almost ready with its app-based taxi service, which it is likely to roll out by May-end.

- With this, the government is hopeful of solving the vexed tourist taxi issue that has been plaguing the state's tourism sector for several years.
- The GTDC had announced the app two months ago following the tourist taxi operators' strike.
- Goa Electronics Limited (GEL) will run the back-end software while GTDC will run the front-end applications.

International Current Affairs

President of India concludes visit to Equatorial Guinea

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, today (April 9, 2018) concluded his visit to Equatorial Guinea and left for Swaziland for the second leg of his visit to three African nations –Equatorial Guinea, Swaziland and Zambia.

- The visit, the first by a President of India to Equatorial Guinea, saw the signing of three MoUs yesterday – in the fields of AYUSH and traditional medicine; medicinal plants; and an action plan for Information and Communication Technology.
- In his discussions with the President of Equatorial Guinea, they reviewed the spectrum of bilateral relations and discussed regional and global issues of mutual interest.
- Both sides agreed that they should expand the India-Equatorial Guinea partnership to accelerate growth and development for the people of the two countries.

India, Bangladesh sign six MoUs including 129.5 km oil pipeline deal

India and Bangladesh signed six pacts including one for the construction of a 129.5 km-long oil pipeline between Siliguri and Parbatipur.

- India-Bangladesh Friendship pipeline between Siliguri (on Indian side) & Parbatipur (on Bangladesh's side) is aimed at transporting 1 million tonnes diesel per annum from India to Bangladesh.
- Other pacts include, an MoU on cooperation between Prasar Bharati and Bangladesh Betar, agreement between Department of Atomic Energy, India and Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission and an MoU for setting up an Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Urdu Chair in Dhaka University.
- Other two MoUs were pertaining to projects for setting up language labs in 500 schools in Bangladesh and upgrade different roads in Rangpur city.
- All these MoUs were signed during the course of India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale's visit to Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Business

Reliance Infra bags Rs 1,081 crore EPC contract for Kudankulam nuclear project

Reliance Infrastructure has received a Rs 1,081 crore purchase order from Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) for engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contract for Common Services System, Structure & Components (SSC) package and allied civil works of Unit -3 and 4 of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project.

- The contract entails design, engineering, supply, erection, testing and commissioning of SSC package and allied civil works on EPC basis. The project is to be commissioned in 56 months.
- The contract value is inclusive of taxes and duties and also contains imported component of \$23.2 million. EPC division of the infrastructure major has won the contract amidst competition from leading EPC players like BHEL, L&T, Tata Projects and BGR.

Appointments & Resigns

Manu Bhaker will be the brand ambassador of Haryana's Measles and Rubella (MR) vaccination campaign

16-year-old Haryana shooter, Manu Bhaker, who won India's first gold in shooting at Commonwealth Games 2018, has been made brand ambassador for Measles and Rubella (MR) vaccination campaign starting from April 25 in the State.

- The Haryana Government would launch Measles and Rubella vaccination campaign on April 25 in the State.
- Under this campaign, vaccination of about 85 lakh children from nine months to 15 years of age would be carried out in Haryana.

M Sathiyavathy appointed as member of UPSC

Labour Secretary M Sathiyavathy took charge as member of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

- Sathiyavathy has rich and varied experience and has worked in various key positions under the Government during the course of a long career spanning over 35 years.

Ashok Gehlot appointed member of Congress central election panel

Congress general secretary Ashok Gehlot has been appointed a member of the party's central election committee.

- Gehlot, a former chief minister of Rajasthan, was recently appointed the AICC general secretary in charge of organisation and training of party cadres.

Ban Ki-moon elected as Chairman of Boao Forum

Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon was elected as Chairman of Boao Forum for Asia replacing Japan's Yasuo Fukuda.

- Former governor of People's Bank of China Zhou Xiaochuan was appointed vice-chairman.
- Ban Ki-moon is South Korean diplomat and was eighth Secretary-General of United Nations from January 2007 to December 2016.

Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban wins new term

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban won a third consecutive term as Prime Minister.

- Viktor Orban's party Fidesz won nearly half of the votes, with 93% of votes counted. Fidesz is expected to win a two-thirds majority in parliament.

Environment

Earth's bedrock: New source of global nitrogen discovered

According to recently published study, over quarter of nitrogen on Earth comes from weathering of planet's bedrock.

- The study has found that up to 26% of nitrogen in natural ecosystems is sourced from weathering of rocks, with remaining fraction from atmosphere. But input of this nitrogen source in global land system is unknown.
- This study shows that nitrogen weathering is globally significant source of nutrition to soils and ecosystems worldwide.
- The discovery will greatly improve climate change projections, which rely on understanding carbon cycle.
- It will also feed carbon cycle on land, allowing ecosystems to pull more emissions out of the atmosphere.
- Mapping nutrient profiles in rocks for their carbon uptake potential can help drive conservation efforts.
- The work also helps solve case of the missing nitrogen. For decades, scientists had recognized that more nitrogen accumulates in soils and plants than can be explained by input from atmosphere alone, but they couldn't pinpoint what was missing.

Science & Technology

Indian origin scientist develops world's first microfactory for e-waste

An Indian-origin scientist in Australia has launched the world's first microfactory that can transform the components from electronic waste items such as smartphones and laptops into valuable materials for re-use.

- According to Veena Sahajwalla, a professor at the University of New South Wales, the e-waste microfactory has the potential to reduce the rapidly growing problem of vast amounts of electronic waste causing environmental harm and going into landfill.

- It can also turn many types of consumer waste such as glass, plastic and timber into commercial materials and products
- For instance, computer circuit boards can be transformed into valuable metal alloys such as copper and tin while glass and plastic from e-devices can be converted into micromaterials used in industrial grade ceramics and plastic filaments for 3D printing.

Important Days

April 10: World Homoeopathy Day

The World Homoeopathy Day (WHD) is observed every year on April 10 to pay tribute to Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann, founder and father of Homeopathy system of medicine.

- Observance of day seeks to spread more knowledge about this form of medicine in mainstream public health.
- This year it is 263rd birth anniversary of founder of Homoeopathy.
- On this occasion, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated scientific convention on WHD 2018 in New Delhi organised by Ministry of AYUSH.
- The theme of two-day convention was “Innovate: Evolve, Progress: Exploring Science since 40 years.