

National Current Affairs

Intra-state e-way bill rolled out in 5 states

The E-Way Bill system for Intra-State movement of goods was rolled out in five more states- Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

- The E-Way Bill system for all inter-State movement of goods valued over Rs 50,000 was rolled-out from 1st April 2018.
- At that time, Karnataka was only state which had rolled out e-way bill system for intra-state movement of goods.
- The roll-out of e-Way Bill system in these States will facilitate trade and industry so far as the transport of goods is concerned.
- This will also help in paving way for nation-wide single e-Way Bill system.
- The e-way bill provision of the goods and services tax (GST) was first introduced on February 2018.

Odisha's second longest river bridge opened

The much-awaited bridge built over the Ib river in Sambalpur district was thrown open to the public by CM Naveen Patnaik.

- The 2.5-km-long bridge, which is the State's second longest bridge, has been built in three years at a cost of Rs. 117.50 crore.
- The bridge has helped establish direct road connectivity between Sambalpur and Brajarajnagar and the distance has now been reduced by 50 km.
- The Biju Expressway-IB Thermal-Coal Region link would improve transport and accelerate economic growth in the entire region.

FAO to name 14 new agricultural heritage sites

The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) unveiled 14 new heritage sites in eight countries in Asia, the Middle East and Central America at an award ceremony.

- The new agricultural heritage sites are located in China, Egypt, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Portugal, Spain and Sri Lanka and will all receive certificates.
- The designation of these sites recognises the ways that farmers, herders, fishermen and foresters have sculpted the landscape for centuries "to create agricultural systems of exceptional aesthetic beauty preserving biodiversity and creating resilient ecosystems and a valuable cultural heritage.

- The newly designated sites bring to 50 the number of globally recognised agricultural heritage systems in 20 countries.

Biannual Army Commanders' Conference to commence in New Delhi

The biannual Indian army commanders' conference began in New Delhi on 16th April 2018.

- The Biannual Army Commanders' Conference is held for 6 days. Discussions will be made on management of the extant security dynamics, mitigation of future security threats and enhancement of combat edge over potential adversaries.
- The conference is chaired by General Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Army Staff. Senior commanders will also discuss issues related to Army formations and Army as a whole.
- Other issues that will be discussed are: infrastructure development in the Northern borders, review of strategic railway lines, optimisation of limited budget to make up critical deficiency in ammunition, issues related to Border Road Organization projects, ECHS (Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme), matters related to operations, administration and welfare of troops.

Bihar has highest rate of crime against SC/STs

Bihar reports the highest rate of crimes against Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribe population, while West Bengal reports the lowest, according to latest data released by National Crime Records Bureau.

- For crimes against SCs specifically, Madhya Pradesh is highest at 43.4 per cent, and West Bengal is lowest at 6 per cent.
- For crimes against the ST population specifically, Rajasthan is the highest at 12.9 per cent, with West Bengal being the lowest at 1.6 per cent.
- Since 2014, crimes against SCs have increased one percent overall, although there was a steep rise of 5.5 percent in 2016.
- As per 2016 statistics, Uttar Pradesh accounts for over a quarter (25.6 percent) of these crimes in 2016, followed by Bihar and Rajasthan.
- States with low prevalence of violence include West Bengal (0.3%), Jharkhand (1.3%) and Kerala (2%).
- Coimbatore and Chennai have emerged with the lowest prevalence of violence against SCs amongst all metropolitan cities, with 0.2% and 0.6% respectively.

Smriti Irani launches GNFC's Neem project in UP

State-run Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizers & Chemicals Limited (GNFC) started its socio-economic Neem Project, inaugurated by Union Minister Smriti Irani Kathaura – Jagdishpur in Amethi District.

- GNFC intends to collect 8,000 to 10,000 MT Neem seeds from the State. It is estimated to provide additional income of Rs 12-15 crore for over one lakh rural woman from 2,500 villages in the State.
- Neem project will be implemented in around 15 districts of Uttar Pradesh.
- Using Neem as a key ingredient, GNFC has started producing Neem oil-based products such as Neem soap, handwash, shampoo, hair oil, facewash, Neem mosquito repellent, Neem pesticide & Neem organic manure.

International Current Affairs

India to work with China on OPEC's Asian Premium issue

India is coordinating with China and other Asian countries to raise voice against Asian premium charged by Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

- Indian Oil Corporation Chairman Sanjiv Singh will coordinate with head of China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) to chalk out strategy that will result in getting better price from OPEC countries.
- Asian Premium is extra charge being collected by OPEC countries from Asian countries when selling oil in comparison to western countries.
- The discriminatory Asian Premium is mainly used by OPEC countries to subsidised western buyers at cost of Asian buyers.
- The OPEC is an intergovernmental organization (or cartel) of 14 oil-exporting developing nations that coordinates and unifies the petroleum policies of its member countries.

Bisket Jatra festival 2018

In Nepal, the famous Bisket Jatra is being celebrated in Bhaktapur and other parts of Kathmandu valley.

- The 9- day annual festival marks beginning of Nepali new year. The Jatra begins four days before the start of new year. It is believed that the festival started during Malla dynasty. There are many legends associated with the Jatra.
- The main attraction of Bisket Jatra is chariot procession of Lord Bhairavanath.

- The three story chariot is taken out in the streets of Bhakatapur and there is a tug of war between people from upper and lower city to pull the chariot on their side.
- Thousands of visitors from various parts of Nepal and a large number of foreign tourists gather at Bhaktapur to see this thrilling event.

Banking & Finance

Yes Bank launches GST backed over draft facility for MSMEs

Yes Bank has announced the launch of 'Yes GST', an OD (over draft) facility for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

- Through this an MSME can avail OD up to Rs 1 crore, based on their annual turnover, backed by GST returns. Any additional assessment of balance sheet or bank statements will not be required.
- This OD facility can be availed by an MSME against mortgage of residential or commercial property. The sanctioned amount can be utilised by the MSME either fully or in tranches.
- The bank is targeting a disbursement of Rs 1,000 crore through Yes GST for financial year 2018-19. The bank's total exposure to MSMEs as on March 31, 2018 has crossed Rs 32,500 crore.

Bandhan Bank enters league of top-50 most valuable company

Bandhan Bank, the private sector lender, has entered the list of the top-50 most valuable companies in terms of market capitalization (m-cap) following a sharp surge in its stock price post listing.

- The bank climbed 5 positions in the m-cap pecking order since its debut on the bourses on March 27, 2018.
- Bandhan Bank, the country's eighth-most valuable lender, is now stood behind YES Bank, which have market-cap of Rs 717 billion.
- Despite stress across the banking and NBFC industries, the asset quality of Bandhan was healthy at 1.67% gross NPA and 0.8% net NPA as of 31 Dec' 17.

CII projects FY19 GDP growth at 7.3-7.7 percent

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) expects India's gross domestic product (GDP) to grow at 7.3-7.7 percent during the 2018-19 financial year.

- This is based on strengthening demand in the rural economy, including agriculture and non-farm activities, as well as better global growth climate.
- Sector-wise, the CII projected 2.5-3.5 percent growth for the agriculture sector, 7.2-7.5 percent for the industrial sector and 8.4-8.7 percent for the services sector, with "construction" and "trade and repairs" to lead.
- Rising oil prices has been identified as a macro challenge. However, improving industrial performance is expected to compensate for the same.

Appointments & Resigns

Arun Jaitley takes oath for fresh six-year term in Rajya Sabha

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley took oath for his new six years term in the Rajya Sabha.

- He was elected to the Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh. He was re-elected for new term in March 2018.
- Following his re-election, he was also appointed the Leader of the House on April 2, 20.

Awards & Recognition

Dharmendra to receive Raj Kapoor Lifetime Achievement award

Veteran actor Dharmendra will be conferred Raj Kapoor Lifetime Achievement by Maharashtra State Government.

- Along with Dharmendra, Director Rajkumar Hirani will get the Raj Kapoor Special Contributions Award, veteran Marathi actor Vijay Chavhan will get Chitrapati V Shantaram Jivangaurav Puraskar (Lifetime Achievement Award) and actress-director Mrinal Kulkarni will get Chitrapati V Shantaram Vishesh Yogdaan Puraskar (Special Contributions Award).
- 82-year old Dharmendra has earned himself the sobriquet of "He-Man". "Sholay", "Chupke Chupke", "Yaadon Ki Baaraat", "Satyakam" and "Seeta Aur Geeta" are some of the popular movies in which he played the lead role.
- These awards were instituted by Maharashtra State Government. Both the lifetime achievement awards carry a citation and cash reward of Rs 500000 while the special contribution awards carry a citation and Rs 300000 cash prize each.

- The awards will be given away at the 55th Maharashtra State Marathi Film Festival.

Aditi Rao Hydari to receive Dadasaheb Phalke Award for Bhoomi

Aditi Rao Hydari added another trophy to her achievements as she will receive Dada Saheb Phalke excellence award 2018 for the Best Leading Lady (Critics Award) for her memorable performance in 'Bhoomi'.

- Sure-footed, Aditi has been garnering huge amount of praises for her effective portrayal in 'Bhoomi' by the critics and the audiences.
- The award ceremony is scheduled on April 21, 2018, at St. Andrews Auditorium in Mumbai.

Bhuj Mercantile Coop Bank bags Banco Award

Kutch-based Bhuj Mercantile Cooperative Bank has bagged the prestigious Banco Award for best performing cooperative bank. The bank was adjudged best among the 1500 cooperative banks from across the country.

- Bhuj Mercantile Cooperative Bank also ranked in the lead in Gujarat for hi-tech technology upgradation, while it stood third in the category at National level.
- Banco Award given annually to the top performing cooperative banks recognise and encourage best practices in the cooperative banking sector.
- The selection criteria for the qualification for the Banco Award includes bank's audited accounts for past three years, deposit growth, non-performing assets (NPA), net profit, customer service standards, ratings provided by RBI, staff training, CBS and use of latest technology, e-com and ATM facilities.

Rana Kapoor felicitated with outstanding Indian Brand Builder award

Mr. Rana Kapoor, MD & CEO, YES BANK, India's 4th largest private sector Bank was recognized by Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI) as an Outstanding Contributor to the Media and Communication Industry and Indian Brand Builder at the 13th edition of Goafest 2018.

- AAAI felicitated Mr. Kapoor with the award for pioneering banking & financing solutions to the Media and Communications Industry.
- Under his visionary leadership, YES BANK's Media and Entertainment banking knowledge vertical, through its in-depth understanding of the industry and partnerships has helped to further corporatize the Indian Film, Media, Entertainment and Communications industry.

Science & Technology

Indian-led Scientists' Team develops electronic device that mimics human brain

A team of scientists at Northwestern University, USA, led by an Indian, has developed an electronic device that can mimic the human brain.

- This device named "memtransistor" combines the functions of a memristor and a "transistor".
- The memtransistor has tremendous potential in Artificial Intelligence (AI), which requires unprecedented analytical and computational capabilities.
- The device, which has futuristic applications even in healthcare, has been designed by Dr Vinod Kumar Sangwan, a post-doctoral researcher at Northwestern University and a team of scientists.

China to launch new weather satellite Fengyun-II 09

China will launch a new meteorological satellite this year to further boost its weather forecasting capabilities.

- The Fengyun-II 09 satellite, the last in the Fengyun-II series, will be able to collect meteorological, maritime, and hydrological data to help weather forecast in China and neighbouring regions.
- The satellite will be launched from Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest China's Sichuan Province.
- Fengyun satellites are a series of remote-sensing meteorological satellites developed by China.

Sports

2018 Commonwealth Games

The 2018 Commonwealth Games, officially known as the XXI Commonwealth Games and commonly known as Gold Coast 2018, were an international multi-sport event for members of the Commonwealth that were held on the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia, between 4 and 15 April 2018.

- It was the fifth time Australia had hosted the Commonwealth Games and the first time a major multi-sport event achieved gender equality by having an equal number of events for males and female athletes.
- The host nation Australia topped the medal table for the fourth time in the past five Commonwealth Games, winning the most golds (80) and most medals overall (198).
- England and India finished second and third respectively.
- Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, British Virgin Islands and Dominica each won their first Commonwealth Games medals.

Daniel Ricciardo wins Chinese GP after series of overtakes

Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo took a sensational victory in the Chinese Grand Prix as a chaotic final 20 laps threw the championship wide open.

- Ricciardo drove beautifully to pass five cars after Red Bull chose to pit for fresh tyres in a safety-car period.
- Team-mate Max Verstappen stopped at the same time - but threw away his chances with two errors caused by over-optimistic driving.
- Lewis Hamilton finished a frustrated fifth, but was promoted back ahead of Verstappen, who was penalised for causing a collision with Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel.