

National Current Affairs

Union Home Minister lays foundation for several development projects in Diu

Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated and laid foundation of various development projects in Diu. Some of the important projects to be undertaken under the scheme are:

- Construction of a continuous coastal promenade connecting Ghogla-Jalandhar-Chadrika Mata beach- upto Chakratirth beach
- Development of an all-inclusive Mobile App for the convenience of tourists for online room reservation, ticket booking, parking etc.
- Establishment of an Integrated Command and Control Centre for strengthening security and improving traffic management in Diu
- To develop Green Transport
- Setting up of Skill Incubation Centre for the fisher-folk
- Construction of an International Convention Centre and Multipurpose Facilities Centre
- Development of Naida Caves and public plaza near Diu Museum
- Sea plane service between Daman and Diu to improve connectivity.

Uttarakhand CM launches campaign to connect with youngsters

In a unique initiative to establish direct contact with the youth, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat launched a campaign called "Devbhoomi dialogue" at his official residence calling upon them to look for self-employment opportunities in their chosen fields.

- Valuable suggestions made by the youth at this programme will be included in the policies to be framed by the state government in future.
- The idea to initiate a programme like this was inspired by the success of a similar feedback oriented programme called 'Apki Rai, Apka Budget' conducted prior to introducing the state's annual budget in the Assembly last month.
- Rawat also honoured young entrepreneurs who have done good work in the field of education, health and agriculture in the state and let them recount their experiences so that they could be an inspiration for others.

Bengal's Digambarpur is India's best Gram Panchayat

West Bengal has once again topped in the country with Digambarpur Gram Panchayat (GP) bagging the Centre's award for the best GP in the country.

- Besides this, some more Gram Panchayats in districts including Purulia, Birbhum and Burdwan have also been awarded special prizes for certain achievements
- A survey was conducted to find out the best Gram Panchayat in the country and in a letter to the state government the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has stated that Digambarpur GP at Patharpratima block in South 24-Parganas has come up as the best out of 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats in the country.

PM Modi award for Manipur's Karang – India's first cashless island of the country

Prime Minister Narendra Modi honoured bureaucrats for making Manipur's Karang the first cashless island of the country, and implementing the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and other priority initiatives of the Centre.

- Modi awarded civil servants for smooth implementation of four priority programmes — Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban and Rural), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana, and for promoting digital payments.
- Also, Awards were given away for innovation in public service. Karang island, a remote and backward region, was cut-off from the (Bishnupur) district due to insurgency for a long time.
- Incentives were provided for training towards digital payments and five POS machines were installed on the island.

Yogi, most popular CM on Facebook

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has emerged as the most popular Chief Minister in India whose Facebook page had accounted the 'most interacting' in the year 2017.

- Yogi had pipped more fancied Chief Minister of Rajasthan Vasundhara Raje and Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani to 2nd and 3rd positions respectively.
- The data looks at the popularity of these accounts from the period of January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017, and is based on interactions on the platform, which include total reactions, shares and comments.

International Current Affairs

Syria returns Legion d'honneur to France

Syria has returned the prestigious Legion d'honneur that was presented to President Bashar al-Assad, by France, saying he would not wear the award of a "slave country" to the US.

- It comes just days after French President Emmanuel Macron begun the formal process of stripping the honour from his Syrian counterpart.
- France joined the US and UK in launching airstrikes at chemical weapons facilities in government-held Syria last week following the alleged use by Damascus of poison gas on citizens in a rebel-held enclave outside the capital.

North Korea 'halts missile and nuclear tests

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un says he has suspended all missile tests and will shut down a nuclear test site.

- The decision to suspend missile launches was made during a meeting of the ruling party's central committee.
- In a statement quoted by the agency, Mr Kim said it was no longer necessary to conduct missile tests because "nuclear weaponisation" had been achieved.
- The decision to halt missile tests is also aimed at pursuing economic growth.
- Mr Kim reportedly pledged to "concentrate all efforts" on developing a socialist economy.

Modi's visit to Germany

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Germany after wrapping up his visit to the UK where he attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and held a series of bilateral meetings.

- Prime Minister Modi met German Chancellor Angela Merkel during a brief stopover in Berlin.
- It will be the first meeting between the two leaders since Merkel began her fourth term as German chancellor last month.
- The Indian premier's meeting with Merkel comes after German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier's trip to India last month, which focused on boosting economic and strategic ties between the two countries.
- Germany is India's largest trade partner in the European Union bloc.
- The meeting between Modi and Merkel is expected to focus on ways to boost economic cooperation between the two countries.

Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors from G20 agree to aim for economic growth by promoting trade

Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors from G20, the Group of 20 economies, have agreed to aim for economic growth by promoting trade.

- In their two day meeting at Washington, the financial leaders agreed to work together to promote trade and global economic growth.
- The delegates expressed the concern that protectionist policies and a further escalation of US-China trade friction could slow down the global economy.

Banking & Finance

PNB impounds passports of 150 wilful defaulters

Punjab National Bank (PNB), the country's second-largest public sector lender, has impounded passports of 150 wilful loan defaulters apart from lodging 37 FIRs against those who are not repaying loans as part of its recovery drive.

- The bank has already declared 1,084 wilful defaulters and published photos of 260 such defaulters in newspapers.
- The state-run bank also plans to leverage data for loan recovery and risk management through a tie-up with an external agency.
- PNB is seeking to access contact details of defaulters, who have good credit record with other lenders and chase the errant borrowers.
- This partnership is a part of the larger strategy to deploy technology to strengthen internal systems. This partnership will not only help the bank with loan recovery but will also help identify and automate profitable lending strategies and minimize credit and fraud risk.
- It claimed that two special one-time settlement (OTS) schemes have already helped accelerate recovery of bad debt, with the average rising from 70,000-80,000 NPA accounts a year to 2.25 lakh accounts during the last 10 months. These schemes apply to small NPA accounts, helping defaulters come out of debt.

RBI makes Aadhaar key to KYC compliance

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) amended its 'know your customer' (KYC) guidelines, making Aadhaar key to conducting customer due diligence by banks and finance companies.

- The RBI has also done away with sections relating to the use of other "officially valid documents" by lenders for address and identity proof.

- In a circular, the RBI said the norms have been revised because the government had amended laws on prevention of money laundering through a gazette notification on June 2017.
- The Aadhaar requirement though is relaxed for residents of Jammu & Kashmir, Assam and Meghalaya.

Business

TCS inches closer to become first Indian company with \$100 bn market cap

Shares of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) jumped 6.5 per cent after the company reported a 4.4 per cent rise in March quarter net profit and guided towards a better show in fiscal 2019.

- This has taken its market capitalisation (m-cap) to over Rs 6.50 lakh crore or around \$98 billion.
- With this, the IT major emerges as the first Indian company with a market capitalisation of close to \$100 billion.
- The stock, after making a positive opening, further soared 6.55 per cent to hit its 52-week high of Rs 3,399.90 on BSE.
- On NSE, shares of the company surged 6.54 per cent to its one-year high of Rs 3,399.90.

Vodafone launches VoLTE in Chennai

Vodafone said that it has rolled out its Voice over LTE (VoLTE) services across Chennai, having already launched the service in Maharashtra and Goa, Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, Karnataka, UP West and UP East.

- The telco said that the service will be extended across the country in a phased manner over the next few months.
- VoLTE is a step further towards enhancing customer experience and enabling customers in Chennai explore newer possibilities with their smart devices.

Awards & Recognition

Awards of Print Biennale India 2018 distributed

The awards of Print Biennale India 2018 organised by Lalit Kala Akademi here were given at a function.

- The winners of the biennale were Arup Kumar Kuity (Andhra Pradesh), Satya Narayana Gavara (Andhra Pradesh), Preya Bhagat (Uttar Pradesh), Purvi Parmar (Gujrat) and Sonal Varshneya (Uttar Pradesh).
- Apart from the five winners eight other printmakers were chosen for appreciation mention by the jury of the competition.
- A total of 1,126 entries of 415 artists across the globe - including 364 of Indian artists - were received.

IOC President presents a memento to Bindra, Vijender

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach presented a memento to Indian Olympic medallist shooter Abhinav Bindra and boxer Vijender Singh.

- During his second visit to India a dinner was hosted in honour of IOC president Bach.
- On this occasion IOC President presented a memento to Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra and bronze medallist Vijender Singh. During the dinner former Indian Olympians and players were also present.
- Bach also met Sports Minister and IOA's newly formed Executive Board Members.
- He also attended Hockey 5s mixed team exhibition match at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium.

Sports

Dropping shooting from 2022 CWG huge setback for India

The Birmingham Organising Committee has decided to exclude shooting from the 2022 Games, citing logistical issues.

- India won a bagful of shooting medals at the Games. The shooting squad, at the recently concluded Gold Coast Games, bagged as many as 16 medals, seven of them gold.
- Shooting, though an optional sport at the CWG, has been played in every edition since Kingston 1966, except once in Edinburgh in 1970.
- A few days back, National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) president Raninder Singh had called for India's boycott of the 2022 CWG if shooting was not reinstated.

Former Inter and Brazil star Julio Cesar retires from football

Former Inter and Brazil goalkeeper Julio Cesar, 38, has retired from football.

- Cesar started for Brazilian side Flamengo in a 2-0 win over América Mineiro in his final action as a professional, having signed a short-term deal with the club he left for Europe over a decade ago.
- The Brazilian is best known for his time with Inter in Serie A, where he made over 200 appearances over the course of seven years with the club, and as the goalkeeper for the Brazilian national team.
- While with Inter Cesar won five Serie A titles and was a three-time Coppa Italia champion.
- He also claimed the UEFA Champions League title under Jose Mourinho in 2010, when the club went on to win the Club World Cup as well.

Obituary

Avicii, top electronic dance music artist, found dead at 28

Swedish DJ Avicii, one of the world's biggest dance music stars, has died in Oman at the age of 28.

- Avicii's club anthems include Wake Me Up, Levels, and recently, Lonely Together with Rita Ora.
- He started his career when he won a production competition held by Pete Tong in 2008
- He went on to notch up 11 billion streams on Spotify and was the first EDM DJ to stage a worldwide arena tour.
- He was nominated for two Grammy Awards and had nine UK top 10 singles, including two number ones.