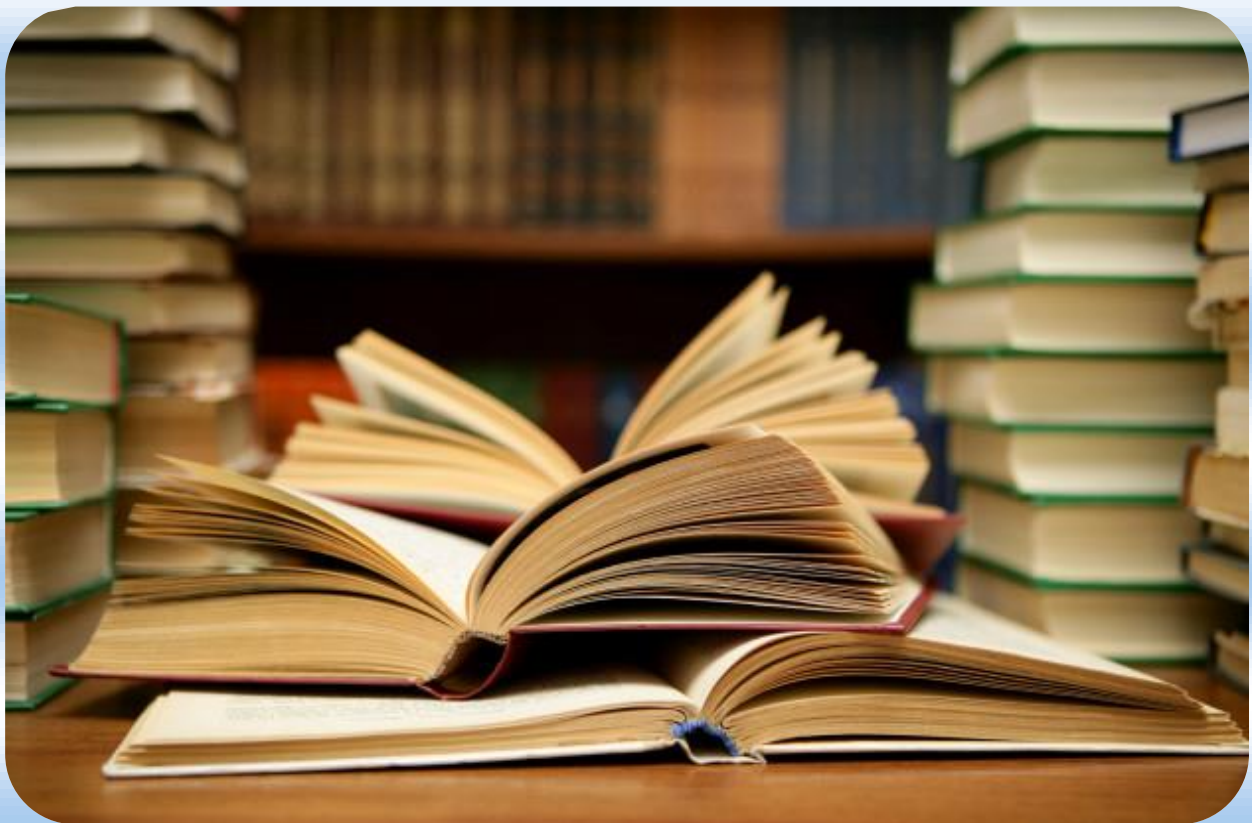


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GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



OCTOBER-2018

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

India ranks 5th in world terms of largest pictorial warning on cigarette packs

NEW DELHI: India ranks fifth, jointly with Hong Kong and Thailand, in terms of the largest pictorial warning on cigarette packs with 85 per cent of both sides of the packets covered, a Canadian Cancer Society report released on Monday said. The Cigarette Package Health Warnings: International Status Report 2018 highlighted that 118 countries worldwide have made pictorial warnings mandatory, representing a global public health achievement, and 58 per cent of the world's population is covered by

Supreme Court judge Madan Bhimarao Lokur appointed Executive Chairman of NALSA

Senior judge of the Supreme Court, Madan Bhimarao Lokur, is now the Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority of India (NALSA). President Ramnath Kovind nominated Justice Lokur to the post.

He was one of the four senior judges of the Supreme Court, who on January 12 this year, held a first-of-its-kind press conference and said that the situation in the top court was "not in order" and many "less desirable things" have taken place.

Justice Lokur will take the charge as NALSA's Executive Chairman on October 3.

Udyam Abhilasha: SIDBI launches national level entrepreneurship awareness campaign

New Delhi, Oct 3 () The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has launched a national level entrepreneurship awareness campaign 'Udyam Abhilasha' to promote entrepreneurship in the 115 aspirational districts identified by NITI Aayog.

The campaign was launched on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi On Tuesday.

"The campaign would be running parallelly from October 3 to October 8, 2018 across India. The campaign would create and strengthen cadre of more than 800 trainers to provide entrepreneurship training to aspiring youth across these districts thus encouraging them to enter the admired segment of entrepreneurs," an official statement said on Wednesday.

Union Cabinet approves Productivity linked bonus for Railway Employees

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved productivity-linked bonus (PLB), which is equivalent of 78 days' wages, for 11.91 lakh eligible non-gazetted railway employees for the year 2018-19. The decision will cost the transporter around Rs 2,044.31 crore.

The transporter has been paying PLB equivalent of 78 days' wages to these employees — which do not include Railway Protection Force and Railway Protection Special Force —for the past seven years, before the festival of Dussehra, to increase the productivity of employees. The maximum amount payable per eligible railway employee will be Rs 17,951 for the current year.

Last year, about 12.30 lakh non-gazetted railway employees were paid PLB having a financial implication of around Rs 2,245.45 crore on the railways.

Cabinet approves establishment of permanent campuses of two new IISERs at Tirupati and Berhampur

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved establishment and operationalisation of two new permanent campuses of the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) in Tirupati and Behrampur.

"The construction of the two campuses shall be completed by December, 2021. The total cost likely to be incurred is Rs 3074.12 crore," an official statement said.

"The creation of two posts of Registrar, one in each IISER, has also been approved. Both the IISERs will be constructed in area of 1,17,000 sqm which will have complete infrastructural facilities for 1,855 students each," it added.

IWAI launches Ro-Ro service from Neamati to Manjuli Island in Assam

New Delhi, Oct 10 () The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is set to launch a Roll on-Roll off (Ro-Ro) service tomorrow in Assam from Neamati to Manjuli island, the Ministry of Shipping said Wednesday. This service will reduce the road route distance of 423 km that trucks take from Neamati to Majuli Island via Tezpur Road Bridge to only 12.7 km with the use of river route.

Majuli is one of the biggest riverine islands in the world located on river Brahmaputra and faces serious challenges of connectivity. It has 144 villages with a population of over 1,50,000.

NITI Aayog, Microsoft sign agreement to bring in AI tools for agriculture and healthcare

Microsoft India said Friday it has signed an agreement with Niti Aayog to deploy artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to address challenges in agriculture and healthcare, and promote adoption of local language computing, among others.

Microsoft India will support NITI Aayog by combining the cloud, AI, research and its vertical expertise for new initiatives and solutions across several core areas, the company said in a statement.

Microsoft will also accelerate the use of AI for the development and adoption of local language computing, in addition to building capacity for AI among the workforce through education, the statement said.

Under the agreement, Microsoft will provide Niti Aayog advanced AI-based solutions to address challenges in agriculture and healthcare including farm advisory services, healthcare screening models at Primary Health Centres, and building capacity for AI through education among others.

Delhi Government launches Chief Minister's Urban Leaders Fellowship Programme

The Delhi government Saturday announced a fellowship programme that seeks to attract young leaders across the country to work with it on addressing some of the most pressing urban challenges.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia tweeted about the Chief Minister's Urban Leaders Fellowship Programme and even shared an advertisement about it.

"Thrilled to announce the launch of Delhi CM's Urban Leaders Fellowship Programme. If you r young professional, under 35 yrs age, have a dream to contribute for India, we invite you to work with us in #DelhiGovernanceRevolution," he wrote on the micro-blogging site.

Foreign tourists can now visit Andaman and Nicobar Islands without any restrictions

Foreign tourists can now visit Andaman and Nicobar Islands without any restrictions as the Home Ministry has modified its earlier order which made it mandatory for them to register with the Foreigners Registration Officer within 24 hours of their arrival, a source in the ministry said.

The step was taken on the suggestion made by the Tourism Ministry to boost the foreign tourist arrivals in the Union Territory through an order dated September 17.

RBI issues guidelines for facilitating money transfer among e-wallets

Mumbai: Users of mobile wallets may soon be able to transfer funds from one wallet to another, with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) releasing rules for the same. The rules on interoperability of prepaid payment instruments (PPIs) do not force PPIs such as wallets to permit such transfers; instead, these guidelines are for "participating PPI issuers, who choose to adopt interoperability".

Interoperability allows compatibility between payment systems and once implemented, a user will be able to transfer funds between wallets and also from their wallets to bank accounts.

Former UP and Uttarakhand CM Narayan Datt Tiwari passes away

Former Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand chief minister Narayan Dutt Tiwari died of a cardiac arrest in Delhi on Thursday. He was 93.

Tiwari, who died hours after his son offered him a cake to celebrate his birthday, had been admitted to the private hospital in the national capital in September 2017 after suffering a stroke. His condition had been critical and he was admitted into the intensive care unit of the hospital.

Over the next 13 months, the condition of the veteran Congress leader who was being treated by specialists at south Delhi's Max Super Speciality Hospital fluctuated.

He is the only politician to have served as chief minister of two states.

Tiwari was Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh from 1976-77, 1984-85, and then from 1988-89. and later became the chief minister of Uttarakhand when Congress came to power in the hill state carved out of Uttar Pradesh. This time, Tiwari was able to complete his five-year-term from 2002. He continues to hold the distinction of having been the only Uttarakhand CM who has done so.

NCR RASTA and Yatri RASTA: North Central Railways launches two mobile apps

LUCKNOW: The North Central Railways (NCR) today launched two mobile apps, 'NCR RASTA' and 'Yatri RASTA', for its employees and passengers, respectively, for locating assets and stations.

"NCR RASTA (Railway assets Summerised Tracking Application) and Yatri RASTA (Railway Approach to Station Tracking Application) were launched today by NCR General Manager Rajiv Chaudhry," North Central Railway PRO Amit Malviya told PTI.

The 'NCR RASTA' app is for the use of railway officers and staff and has exact mapping of all railway assets.

"It will enable railway staff to reach desired asset using Google Navigation in case of any emergency," he said.

Likewise, the 'Yatri RASTA' app will allow general public to locate the railway stations easily. It is already available for smartphones running on Android and can be downloaded free of

#Metoo: NCW launches dedicated e-mail address to report instances of sexual harassment at workplace

The National Commission for Women has come out with a dedicated e-mail address to report instances of sexual harassment at workplace after several such complaints were made to the body by women who have narrated their ordeal under the 'Metoo' movement on social media.

The NCW, in a statement, said it has received formal written complaints from various women about instances of sexual harassment at their workplace.

“The National Commission for Women follows a zero tolerance of sexual harassment of women at all workplaces and the Commission is committed to ensure safety and dignity of women including at all workplaces,” it said.

In light of the complaints received in the past few days, the National Commission for Women has decided to create a dedicated email ID to receive such complaints.

75th anniversary of establishment of Azad Hind government observed

NEW DELHI: Trinamool Congress member Sugata Bose today asked the government to observe the 75th anniversary of the Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fauj) across the country.

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha, he also urged the External Affairs Ministry to ask the missions abroad, especially in the Asian countries where Subhash Chandra Bose had visited to set up the force, to hold events to commemorate the event.

Bose, a grandnephew of Netaji, also urged Speaker Sumitra Mahajan to make a mention of it during the ongoing session.

India's longest river bridge will be built on Brahmaputra river in Assam

A year after the longest river bridge in India, Dhola-Sadiya, was opened in the north-eastern state of Assam, the Modi government has announced plans for a longer bridge, again over the river Brahmaputra. The announcement came by the government ahead of the opening of the world's longest sea bridge, between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong. According to an IE report, the new bridge over the river Brahmaputra is likely to be completed by the year 2026-27. It will run between Dhubri in Assam and Phulbari in Meghalaya, which is close to the Bangladesh border. At 19.3 km, the new bridge will be twice as long as the Dhola-Sadiya bridge, which at present, is the longest in the country.

QS Asia Rankings 2019: Eight Universities from India among top 100

QS Asian University Rankings 2019 has been released and the top university in the region is National University of Singapore, NUS. Stepping up one spot from its second rank in 2018, NUS has beaten Nanyang Technological University, NTU. NTU has slipped to number three this year and University of Hong Kong has taken the second place. As for the top Indian Universities in Asia, IIT Bombay comes in at number 33.

HRD Ministry launches SPARC Scheme to Promote Research in Science

The Centre on Thursday announced the formal launch of two schemes to promote higher education research in India: IMPRESS, dealing with social science research projects and

coordinated by the ICSSR, and SPARC, involving foreign collaboration mainly in science research, coordinated by IIT Kharagpur.

Speaking on the occasion, Union minister of Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar said that IMPRESS — Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences — would entail ₹414 crore funding of 1500 projects on policy themes in the social sciences at the cost of ₹20-25 lakh per project.

India Building World's Highest Railway Line

Indian railways plans to connect New Delhi with Ladakh region through the world's highest railway line that will run along the India-China border. The national transporter plans to build a strategically-important Bilaspur-Manali- Leh line along the Indo-China border. The location survey of the first phase is complete. Besides giving quick all-weather access to the armed forces, the railway line will also boost tourism in the scenic Ladakh region that is currently connected by road and air. The Ladakh-Himachal region receives heavy snowfall and road and air connectivity are sometime affected due to bad weather.

Fact Sheet: Odisha Coastal Disaster Alert System

BHUBANESWAR: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday launched the much-awaited Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS) and mass messaging system to provide timely information on natural calamities to the public.

Naveen also announced to shift villages, located on hilltops that are vulnerable to landslides, to safer areas.

The EWDS and mass messaging system, developed as part of the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project, will disseminate early information on calamities to people through Alert Siren System. The alert system has been installed at 122 locations within 1.5 km of the coast and will cover entire coastal habitations, tourist places and fish landing centres.

Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board to issue masala bonds worth Rs 5,000 crore for development works

The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board would issue 'masala bonds' worth Rs 5,000 crore to mobilise funds for various development works, state Finance Minister T M Thomas Isaac said Thursday.

Rupee denominated overseas bonds are popularly known as masala bonds.

The KIIFB Chief Executive Officer has been entrusted the task of issuing the 'masala bonds' next month, he said.

The bonds would be listed in the London and Singapore stock exchanges, he said adding bonds worth Rs 5,000 crore would be issued in the first phase.

Odisha Government launches Nirman Kusuma programme

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Saturday launched the "Nirman Kusuma Yojana" to provide financial assistance to children of construction workers for pursuing technical education.

The Chief Minister said the government will bear cent per cent financial cost for the children to study in government ITIs and engineering diploma institutions.

Under the scheme, the government provides Rs 23,600 financial assistance to each student for pursuing an ITI course.

It gives Rs 26,300 financial assistance for pursuing polytechnic and diploma courses in government institutions.

Odisha Government launches food security scheme

The Naveen Patnaik government launched its own food security scheme on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti on Tuesday, benefiting 25 lakh people who were left out of the National Food Security Act.

"On Gandhi Jayanti, launched Odisha's own food security scheme to benefit 25 lakh vulnerable populace that were excluded from coverage; sufficient and nutritious food is a basic need and prerequisite for a healthy Odisha, as a part of our resolve to eradicate hunger in Odisha," said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in a tweet after launching the scheme.

The beneficiaries will get 5 kg of rice per person pe

Niwari announced as 52nd district of Madhya Pradesh

Niwari will become the 52nd district of Madhya Pradesh, with effect from October 1.

A proposal to this effect was cleared by the state Cabinet on Saturday. IAS officer Akshay Kumar Singh (2010-batch) will hold the interim charge of the first District Collector of the new district till further orders, a state government order to this effect on Saturday said.

Akshay Kumar Singh is Director, Cultural and Religious Endowments Department.

BSE becomes first stock exchange to launch commodity derivative contracts

Leading bourse BSE Monday became the first stock exchange in the country to launch the commodity derivative contracts in gold and silver. Till date, commodity contracts are available only on MCX and NCDEX, the two specialised commodity derivatives exchanges in the country.

"We have launched gold and silver derivative contracts and have applied for launching of crude oil and copper contracts with Sebi. We will subsequently launch more agri commodities," BSE managing director and chief executive officer Ashishkumar Chauhan told reporters.

India ranked 28th on government's adoption of e-payments in 2018: EIU

India's overall ranking on the government's adoption of e-payments has moved up to 28th in 2018, from 36th in 2011, but it needs to do more on digital infrastructure access and socio-economic factors, a survey said Wednesday.

The country is taking "rapid strides" in advancing government e-payments capabilities and is one of the top-performing countries in terms of citizen-to-government (C2G), business-to-government (B2G) and government-to-business (G2B) transactions, the survey

NASSCOM unveils Centre of Excellence for IoT in Haryana

Gurugram: In collaboration with the Haryana government, Indian IT industry's apex body Nasscom on Friday launched here its Centre of Excellence for Internet of Things (CoE - IoT).

This Centre of Excellence for IoT at Gurugram, inaugurated by Haryana commerce and industries minister Vipul Goyal, will provide one of the largest innovation platforms for enabling IOT revolution through connected devices using emerging technologies, Nasscom said.

"The aim of Nasscom's Centre of Excellence is to act as a perfect collaboration for innovation and high-end technologies," Debjani Ghosh, President, Nasscom, said in a statement

SEBI allows foreign entities to participate in commodity derivatives market

Mumbai: Capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has allowed foreign entities to participate in the commodity derivatives segment of stock exchanges for hedging their exposures.

In a letter addressed to managing directors, chief executive officers of all recognized stock exchanges and clearing corporations with commodity derivatives segment, Sebi said foreign entities should be enabled to hedge their price risk in the Indian commodity derivatives market because their actual exposure to the various commodities in Indian market makes them valuable stakeholders in the value chain of such commodities and also exposes them to price uncertainty of the Indian commodity markets.

WEF launches Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution in India

New Delhi, Oct 11 (PTI) The World Economic Forum on Thursday announced its new Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution in India, which would aim to bring together the government and business leaders to pilot emerging technology policies. The centre, which was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a function here, would be based in Maharashtra and it has selected drones, artificial intelligence and blockchain as the first three project areas, the World Economic Forum (WEF) said. Geneva-based WEF, which describes itself as an international organisation for public-private cooperation, said the new centre will work in collaboration with the government on a national level to co-design new policy frameworks and protocols for emerging

Invest India wins UN Award for excellence in promoting investments in sustainable development

Invest India, the country's investment promotion body, has won the UN Award for excellence in promoting investments in sustainable development. The award was presented by Armenian President Armen Sarkissian to Deepak Bagla, the CEO of Invest India, on Monday at the World Investment Forum, Geneva.

The event is being attended by more than 6,000 participants, including more than 10 heads of state, and ministers from 50 countries. Agencies from Bahrain, Lesotho and South Africa have also won top honours during the function.

The awards, organised by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), honour

India To Become Third Largest Aviation Market : IATA

India will become the world's third largest aviation market around 2024 surpassing the United Kingdom, global airlines' body IATA said on Wednesday as it projected total air passenger numbers to touch 8.2 billion in 2037.

Releasing the latest update to IATA's 20-year Air Passenger Forecast, the grouping also cautioned that growth prospects for air transport and the economic benefits driven by aviation could be curtailed if protectionist measures are implemented by governments.

The present trends in air transport suggest passenger numbers could double to 8.2 billion in 2037, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said.

Indian-American Gita Gopinath appointed as Chief Economist of IMF

In a major development, Gita Gopinath has been appointed as Chief Economist of International Monetary Fund (IMF). Gopinath was born and grew up in India. She is a U.S citizen and an Overseas Citizen of India. The development comes after IMF in a statement confirmed that Gita Gopinath will succeed Maurice Obstfeld as IMF Chief Economist. Also, according to news agency ANI, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde appoints Harvard's Gita Gopinath as IMF Chief Economist, replacing Maury Obstfeld who will retire from IMF in December.

Justice Ranjan Gogoi sworn in as 46th Chief Justice of India

Justice Ranjan Gogoi became the 46th Chief Justice of India, the first from the northeast to take over the post, on Wednesday as he replaced justice Dipak Misra.

President Ram Nath Kovind administered the oath of office to the 63-year-old Justice Gogoi during a brief ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan's Darbar Hall. Justice Gogoi will have a tenure of a little over 13 months and is set to retire on November 17, 2019.

Justice Gogoi has said he wants to focus on dealing with the rising backlog of cases clogging up the courts and providing access to justice to the poor.

"Two things are troubling me--pendency of case, which brings in a lot of disrepute to courts, and providing justice to poverty-stricken population," justice Gogoi said last week in his keynote address in New Delhi at an interactive session on the "Role of Bar and Bench in Social Engineering," organised by the Youth Bar Association of India.

R N Ravi appointed Deputy National Security Advisor

R N Ravi, the government interlocutor for talks with Naga insurgents, was Thursday appointed Deputy National Security Advisor, according to an order issued by the Personnel Ministry. Ravi is the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved redesignating Ravi as the Deputy National Security Advisor (Internal Affairs) and as interlocutor of the government in Nagaland instead of chairman, JIC, the order said.

PM unveils 64-foot-tall statue of peasant leader Chhotu Ram in Rohtak, Haryana

SAMPLA: Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a 64-foot-tall statue of peasant leader Sir Chhotu Ram at his native village Sampla in Haryana's Rohtak district on Tuesday.

After unveiling the statue, Modi paid floral tribute to the peasant leader and visited a museum built in his memory. There, Modi watched a four-minute documentary on the life of Sir Chhotu Ram.

Sir Chhotu Ram, who was born on November 24, 1881, was regarded as a messiah of peasants and was instrumental i

Tushar Mehta appointed as new Solicitor General of India

NEW DELHI: Additional Solicitor General Tushar Mehta was on Wednesday appointed the new Solicitor General of India, months ahead of the general elections in 2019.

He will hold office till June 30, 2020. Mehta, who was Gujarat advocate general when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the chief minister of the state, will replace Ranjit Kumar, who had stepped down sometime back. The post was lying vacant since then.

Mehta has handled several contentious cases, including justice BH

PM Narendra Modi awarded 2018 Seoul Peace Prize

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been awarded the 2018 Seoul Peace Prize for his contributions to international cooperation and the growth of the Indian and global economies, especially “Modinomics” aimed at reducing social disparity.

Modi is the 14th recipient of the prize established in 1990 to commemorate the success of the Olympic Games in Seoul and to crystallise the Korean people’s yearning for peace on the Korean Peninsula and across the world.

The Seoul Peace Prize Committee chose Modi in recognition of his “dedication to improving international cooperation, raising global economic growth, accelerating human development of the people of India by fostering economic growth in the world’s fastest growing economy and furthering the development of democracy through anti-corruption and social integration efforts”, the external affairs ministry said in a statement.

Union Cabinet approves ordinance to make instant triple talaq a penal offence

The Union cabinet has cleared an ordinance to make the practice of instant triple talaq a penal offence, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said Wednesday, citing compelling necessity for the move as the practice annulled by the Supreme Court continues unabated. Addressing a press conference, he accused the Congress party of not cooperating in the passage of the 'Muslim Women Protection of Rights on Marriage Bill, pending in the Rajya Sabha, because of vote bank politics.

Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh re-elected as Regional Director of WHO’s South-East Asian Region

World Health Organisation (WHO) Wednesday said Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh has been nominated for a second five-year term as regional director of its South-East Asian Region. Singh’s candidature was unopposed, as the 11 member countries of WHO South-East Asia Region met at the ongoing Regional Committee session to elect the next Regional Director, the global health body said in a statement.

LK Advani renominated as Chairman of Ethics Committee of Lok Sabha

Senior BJP leader L K Advani has been renominated as the chairman of the Ethics Committee of the Lok Sabha by Speaker Sumitra Mahajan. The Committee examines complaints related to any unethical conduct by members of the Lower House. The committee can also initiate suo motu investigation into matters related to unethical conduct of a member and make recommendations.

President appoints Justice Ranjan Gogoi as next Chief Justice of India

The President has appointed Justice Ranjan Gogoi as the 46th Chief Justice of India. Justice Gogoi will assume office from October 3. He is the first Chief Justice of India from Assam. The warrant of appointment comes in less than 10 days after incumbent Chief Justice Dipak Misra recommended Justice Ranjan Gogoi his successor. The Press Information Bureau released a statement about the appointment.

Kamlesh Nilkanth Vyas appointed Chairman of Atomic Energy Commission

Kamlesh Nilkanth Vyas, director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), was appointed as the secretary to the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and chairperson, Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), on Tuesday. According to an order issued by the Appointments Committee of the cabinet, ministry of personnel, Vyas (61) will hold the positions until he attains the age of 64 (May 3, 2021) or until further orders. He takes over the reins from Sekhar Basu, who has served as the secretary since October 2015.

Anil Kumar Chaudhary appointed as new Chairman of Steel Authority of India Ltd

Anil Kumar Chaudhary has been appointed as the new chairman of the Steel Authority of India (SAIL), a government order said Friday. Chaudhary, at present, has been serving as the Director (Finance) in the country's largest steel making company. The post of SAIL chairman fell vacant on June 30 with the retirement of P K Singh. The order issued by Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) said Chaudhary will be in the post till his superannuation in December, 2020.

Senior IPS officer Rajni Kant Misra appointed Director General of BSF

NEW DELHI: Senior IPS officers Rajni Kant Misra and S S Deswal were Thursday appointed director general of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) respectively, according to an official order. Misra, a 1984-batch IPS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre, is at present serving as the SSB chief. He has been tasked to head the BSF for a period up to his superannuation on August 31, 2019 in place of K K Sharma, who retires this month end, the order issued

Kerala Tourism wins two Pacific Asia Travel Association gold awards

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Kerala Tourism's vigorous efforts to get back on track in the wake of recent devastating floods got a shot in the arm as it walked away with two prestigious gold awards of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) for its innovative marketing campaigns. The awards were presented at a glittering function in Langkawi, Malaysia on Friday during PATA Travel Mart 2018, a release said here.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Weightlifter Jeremy Lalrinnunga wins India's maiden gold medal at Youth Olympic Games

India had already eclipsed its best-ever tally at a Youth Olympic Games on Day 2 of the extravaganza and by the end of it, had further return to rejoice. Having won three silver medals, India won their first gold medal at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires, Argentina with Jeremy Lalrinnunga lifting 150kg on his last attempt for a combined 274kg. This is India's first-ever gold medal at the Youth Olympics. In the two editions prior to this, India's best performance was two medals in the 2014 Youth Olympics at Nanjing, China.

Youth Olympics: Thangjam Tababi Devi clinches India's first judo medal at Olympics

Thangjam Tababi Devi became India's first judo medallist at the Olympic level, claiming a silver at the ongoing Youth Games after losing to Venezuela's Maria Giminez in the finals of the women's 44kg category here.

Tababi Devi, an Asian cadet champion hailing from Manipur, lost 0-11, also conceding a penalty point in the process, in the summit showdown that lasted a little over two minutes on Sunday night.

India have never won an Olympic medal in judo either at the senior or th ..

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International Day of Non-Violence: October 2

The International Day of Non-Violence is marked on 2 October, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence.

According to General Assembly resolution A/RES/61/271 of 15 June 2007, which established the commemoration, the International Day is an occasion to "disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness". The resolution reaffirms "the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence" and the desire "to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence".

Introducing the resolution in the General Assembly on behalf of 140 co-sponsors, India's Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Anand Sharma, said that the wide and diverse sponsorship of the resolution was a reflection of the universal respect for Mahatma Gandhi and of the enduring relevance of his philosophy. Quoting the late leader's own words, he said: "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man".

Idiocracy among 1,400 new words in Oxford dictionary

Idiocracy – a government formed of people considered ignorant or idiotic – is among 1,400 new words, senses, and phrases added in the latest update of the Oxford English Dictionary. The dictionary records over 100 words derived ultimately from the Greek suffix -cracy, meaning 'power' or 'rule.' The new addition idiocracy, refers to a society consisting of or governed by people characterised as idiots, or a government formed of people considered stupid, ignorant, or idiotic.

Words like democracy and aristocracy originated in ancient Greek, but by the 18th century, -ocracy was being added to English words, as in statocracy and mobocracy.

In the 19th century, the trickle of such formations became a flood, with many of the new words being terms of ridicule, a tradition to which idiocracy belongs; the earlier terms foolocracy (1832) and idiotocracy (used by Ambrose Bierce in 1909) express a similar

Malaysia to abolish the death penalty for all crimes

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysia's new government said it will abolish the death penalty for all crimes and halt all pending executions, a rare move against capital punishment in Asia that human rights groups hailed Thursday as a major advance.

More than 1,200 people are on death row in Malaysia, which mandates hanging as punishment for a wide range of crimes including murder, drug trafficking, treason, kidnapping and acts of terror.

Stanford University named World's Most Innovative University: Reuters

For the fourth year running, Stanford University tops Reuters' ranking of the World's Most Innovative Universities, a list that identifies and ranks the educational institutions doing the most to advance science, invent new technologies and power new markets and industries.

Recent Stanford research highlights include several developments in the field of artificial intelligence, including the next generation of camera systems to guide self-driving cars and simulators that can predict potential drug interactions before new pharmaceuticals are ever tested on humans. While a few UK and Asian schools have ascended, American universities continue to dominate the top of Reuters' ranking.

India elected to UN Human Rights Council

India was elected with the highest number of votes by the General Assembly to the influential Human Rights Council on Friday with a pledge to combat intolerance.

India received 188 votes, the highest polled by any of the 18 countries elected in the voting.

This is the fifth time India is elected to the Geneva-based Council, the main body of the UN charged with promoting and monitoring human rights.

India's presence on the Council will be important because the previous UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Raad Al Hussein asked the body to facilitate an international commission of inquiry into allegations of human rights violation in Kashmir.

Bhutan general elections: Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa party got majority

New Delhi: As Bhutan went to the polls on Thursday, a large number of voters turned up with a majority opting for the new political party, Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT), which secured 55.1% of the total votes.

The South Asian country has sought change for the third time in ten years of democracy.

Bhutan is the third country in the region to go for general elections this year – after Pakistan and the Maldives. Bangladesh is also slated to go for general elections, but dates are yet to be announced.

Till now, both Pakistan and the Maldives have witnessed a change of government and new faces at the top, with now Bhutan also following suit.

Over 71% of all registered voters had cast their vote after polling closed on Thursday evening. This was higher than the voting percentage of 66% in last month's primary round and the 2013 general elections.

AG600: China's first amphibious aircraft completes first water takeoff

BEIJING: China's home-grown amphibious aircraft AG600, claimed by Beijing as the world's largest, carried out its first take-off and landing on waters today.

Developed and built by the state-owned aircraft giant Aviation Industry Corporation of China, the seaplane took off from the Zhanghe Reservoir in Jingmen, Hubei's province, at 8.51 am, and stayed airborne for about 15 minutes, the state media reported.

Xinhua news agency said the aircraft was piloted by four crew members.

Code-named "Kunlong", the AG600 made its maiden flight at the coastal city at Zhuhai in December 2017.

China opens world's longest sea bridge linking Hong Kong, Macau and Zhuhai **26**

ZHUHAI: China's President Xi Jinping launched the world's longest sea bridge connecting Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China on Tuesday (Oct 23), at a time when Beijing is tightening its grip on its semi-autonomous territories.

Xi announced the bridge officially open at a ceremony also attended by Hong Kong's and Macau's city leaders at a new port terminal in the southern mainland city of Zhuhai.

"I declare the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau bridge officially open," Xi said as digital fireworks exploded on a screen behind him in an indoor ceremony, before leaving the stage immediately. He did not address the audience.

Read more at <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/world-s-longest-sea-bridge-hongkong-zhuhai-macau-10853884>

Mahinda Rajapaksha sworn in as Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

Former strongman Mahinda Rajapaksa Monday assumed charge as Sri Lanka's new Prime Minister after the surprise sacking of his predecessor Ranil Wickremesinghe by President Maithripala Sirisena which plunged the island nation into an unprecedented political crisis. Rajapaksa assumed the duties in the prime minister's secretariat which was not used by the ousted prime minister Wickremesinghe, officials from his Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) said.

Sirisena on Friday night sacked Wickreme ..

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Researchers developed a web-based tool to monitor fake news on Facebook, Twitter

Scientists have developed a web-based tool to help monitor the prevalence of fake news on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

Developed by researchers at the University of Michigan in the US, the tool uses a Platform Health Metric called the Iffy Quotient, which draws data from two external entities: NewsWhip and Media Bias/Fact Checker.

NewsWhip, a social media engagement tracking firm, collects URLs on hundreds of thousands of sites every day and then gathers information on which of those sites have engagements on Facebook and Twitter.

Minal Patel Davis honoured with Presidential Medal for Combating Human Trafficking

HOUSTON: An Indian-American woman has been honoured with a Presidential award by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for her extraordinary contribution towards combatting human trafficking in Houston.

Minal Patel Davis, Special Advisor on Human Trafficking to Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, received the 'Presidential Medal for Combating Human Trafficking' in the White House last week at a ceremony also attended by President Donald Trump.

Global Agriculture Leadership Awards – 2018 and First World Agriculture Prize

Agriculture has been the foremost engagement of human beings since their existence and will continue to be imperative given the fact that food is necessary for survival. The shift in lifestyle of humans from their nomadic way of life to the settled way of life has become possible due to development and adoption of early agriculture practices. In this journey of transformation from famine to food sufficiency and from hunger and mal-nutrition to healthy diets, certain individuals and institutions played critical roles. Still there is a long way to go in making the planet free from hunger and malnutrition. Considering the ever-increasing population, changing climatic pattern, shrinking resource base and increasing disposable incomes resulting in higher demand for safe and quality food, agriculture is continuously evolving to support the humankind. Developing and underdeveloped nations in order to boost food production need cooperation, collaboration and learning of global experiences. Youth are moving away from farming and educated class sees farming as last option. They need role models and inspirations. India has come a long way from the pre-Green Revolution days of 'ship to mouth' to a situation now, where warehouses are over-flowing with food grains. Over the years, India has taken leadership position in the world agriculture and is now is in a

position to benefit the developing world with its experiences and diversity of learning through Green Revolution in food production, White Revolution in milk, Blue Revolution in fisheries and Golden Revolution in horticulture production.

Germany rolls out world's first hydrogen-powered train

Germany has rolled out the world's first hydrogen-powered train, signalling the start of a push to challenge the might of polluting diesel trains with costlier but more eco-friendly technology. Two bright blue Coradia iLint trains, built by French TGV-maker Alstom, on Monday began running a 62 mile (100km) route between the towns and cities of Cuxhaven, Bremerhaven, Bremervoerde and Buxtehude in northern Germany – a stretch normally plied by diesel trains.

WWF Tx2 programme: Nepal becomes first country to double its tiger population

Nepal is set to become the first country to double its tiger population as part of the World Wildlife Foundation's (WWF) "Tx2" programme which aims to double the number of tigers all over the world. Nepal's tiger population has risen to 235 from the baseline population of 121 counted in 2009, the WWF said in a statement released on Sunday to commemorate National Conservation Day.

Narendra Modi, Emmanuel Macron jointly awarded UN's Champions of Earth Award

French President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have been recognised in the Policy Leadership category of the United Nation's Champions of the Earth award, the world body's highest environmental honour, for their pioneering work in championing the International Solar Alliance and promoting new areas of levels of cooperation on environmental action. This also includes Macron's work on the Global Pact for the Environment and Prime Minister Modi's pledge to eliminate all single-use plastic in India by 2022.

Dr Arif Alvi elected as 13th President of Pakistan

Arif Alvi, a close ally of Prime Minister Imran Khan and one of the founding members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, was elected as President of Pakistan on Tuesday, as the cricketer-turned-politician consolidated his grip on power. The 69-year-old former dentist defeated Pakistan Peoples Party candidate Aitzaz Ahsan and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz nominee Maulana Fazlur Rehman to become the 13th President.

18th Asian Games concludes in Indonesia

A spectacular pyrotechnic show, including a simulated volcanic eruption, lit up the Jakarta skyline on Saturday night as Indonesia rolled out the red carpet for the continent's elite

athletes in the opening ceremony for the 18th Asian Games. The country's president Joko Widodo made an unorthodox and dramatic entrance to the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium, riding a motorbike onto the stage before officially opening Indonesia's second hosting of the Asiad.

Japanese swimmer Ikee Rikako named as Most Valuable Player (MVP) of Asian Games

Japanese swimmer Ikee Rikako has been named as the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the recently-concluded 18th edition of the Asian Games. The 18-year-old, who bagged six gold and two silver medals in the tournament, became the first female athlete to win the MVP title. Reflecting on her achievement, Rikako said that this is for the first time that she has received any international honour, adding that she would now look to continue with her winning momentum in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

2018 US Open: Novak Djokovic wins men's singles title

The 31-year-old Serb won 6-3 7-6 (7-4) 6-3 to earn his third triumph in New York and equal American great Pete Sampras' haul of major trophies. Djokovic, who won Wimbledon in July, will climb to third in the world after back-to-back Grand Slam victories. Only great rivals Roger Federer (20) and Rafael Nadal (17) have won more. Argentine third seed Del Potro, 29, was playing his first Grand Slam final since winning the 2009 US Open, having almost quit the game in 2015 because of multiple wrist injuries.

USAID-India End TB Alliance to eliminate TB announced

NEW YORK, SEP 27 The US and India have formed an alliance comprising leading experts in public and private sectors to combat the menace of tuberculosis, an American official said. US Agency for International Development (USAID) administrator Mark Green announced the formation of 'USAID-India End TB Alliance' at an event in New York in presence of Union Health Minister J P Nadda.



