

CURRENT AFFAIRS OF FEBRUARY 2017

Awards

The renowned Hindi writer who has been chosen for the Vyas Samman 2016 by the KK Birla Foundation for his novel "Kaatna shami ka vriksha padma-pankhuri ki dhar se" – **Surinder Verma**

Defence

Indian Navy's second sail boat slated to be a platform for the first Indian all-women global circumnavigation which was inducted into the Indian Navy in Goa – **INSV Tarini**

The multinational military exercise being held in Thailand from 14 to 24 February 17 with participation from about 30 countries is named – **Cobra Gold 2017**

The Indian Navy's survey vessel which has become the first Indian warship to go green by installing a 5 kw solar power system on board – **INS Sarvekshak**

The new exo-atmospheric interceptor missile test-fired by DRDO for engaging the targets in the exo-atmosphere region at an altitude above 50 kilometers of earth's atmosphere – **Prithvi Defence Vehicle**

The fifth multinational naval exercise with participation from 37 countries being conducted by Pakistan at Karachi is named – **Aman-17**

Places

The place at which India's first integrated heliport was inaugurated by the Union Civil Aviation Minister Shri Gajapathi Raju – **Rohini, Delhi**

The place at which the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unveiled a 112-foot statue of Adiyogi - Lord Shiva, constructed by Isha Foundation – **Coimbatore**

The place in Madhya Pradesh where establishment of Food Legumes Research Platform (FLRP) by ICARDA has been approved by the Union Cabinet – **Amlaha, Sehore**

The sub-division of West Bengal's Darjeeling district which has been declared to be its 21st district – **Kalimpong**

The State which has become the first in the country to make its public distribution system (PDS) completely cashless – **Gujarat**

Venues of Conferences, Seminars, Fairs etc.

The venue of the Third National Dam Safety Conference organized by Central Water Commission in association with Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam and IIT Roorkee – **Roorkee**

The venue of India's Western Regional Agriculture Fair – 2017 inaugurated by Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Radha Mohan Singh – **Bikaner**

The venue of 11th biennial edition of International Aerospace and Defence Exhibition, the Aero India 2017 declared open by the Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar – **Yelahanka, Bengaluru**

The venue of Indian Seed Congress 2017 held from 12 to 14 February 2017 with the theme "Seed For Joy" – **Kolkata**

The venue of National Women's Parliament being held with the theme Empowering Women – Strengthening Democracy – **Amaravathi, A.P.**

The venue of 11th biennial edition of International Aerospace and Defence Exhibition – Aero India 2017 to be held from 14th to 18th February 2017. – **Bengaluru**

The venue of 17th International Counter Terrorism Seminar organised by National Security Guard on 08 and 09 February 2017 – **Manesar, Haryana**

Sports

The Pakistani cricketer and former Captain of its national cricket team who announced retirement from international cricket – **Shahid Afridi**

The Indian car racing driver who has become the first Indian to win Grand Prix by winning the New Zealand Grand Prix 2017 – **Jehan Daruvala**

The US gymnast who has been awarded the Laureus World Sports Award for the Sportswoman of the Year 2017 – **Simone Biles**

The Jamaican athlete who has been awarded the Laureus World Sports Award for Sportsman of the Year 2017 – **Usain Bolt**

The Indian batsman who has become the first batsman in the world to score 4 double centuries in 4 consecutive series breaking the record of Sir Don Bradman and Rahul Dravid – **Virat Kohli**

The team India defeated to win the T20 Blind World Cup in the finals at Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru – **Pakistan**

The number of tests in which R Ashwin has reached 250 test wickets beating the record of Australian bowler Dennis Lillee who achieved it in 248 tests – **245**

The biggest school sport outreach programme launched by the Central Govt to encourage school children to play football is named – **Mission XI Million**

The official mascot (a clouded leopard) of the FIFA U-17 World Cup 2017 unveiled by the Sports Minister Vijay Goel is named – **Kheleo**

The winners of Men's and Women's titles at the 81st Senior Badminton National Championships respectively – **Saurabh Verma and Rituparna Das**

The place at which foundation stone for the first ever training center for para athletes was laid by the Sports Minister Shri Vijay Goel – **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**

Persons

The former Chief Justice of India who passed away on 19 February 2017 – **Altamas Kabir**

The internationally acclaimed Bangladeshi painter who has become the first foreign artist to live in Rashtrapati Bhavan as an Artist In-Residence as a guest of the Indian President – **Shahabuddin Ahmed**

The Indian sand artist who has created a Guinness World Record by building the world's tallest sand castle which is 48 feet and 8 inch at the Puri beach – **Sudarsan Pattnaik**

The additional secretary at the finance ministry's economic affairs department who has been chosen to succeed Shri U.K. Sinha as the Chairman of SEBI from 01 March 2017 – **Ajay Tyagi**

The British scientist, recipient of the 2003 Nobel Prize (Physiology and Medicine) with Paul C. Lauterbur for discoveries concerning magnetic resonance imaging, who passed away on 08 February 2017 – **Peter Mansfield**

The former Minister of State of External Affairs and MP for Mallapuram, Kerala who passed away following a cardiac arrest in the Parliament – **E. Ahamed**

Themes

The theme of National Science Day observed on 28 February 2017 – **Science and Technology for specially abled persons**

The theme of National Productivity Week (12 to 18 February 2017) being observed by National Productivity Council, an autonomous body under Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, – **From Waste to Profits-through Reduce, Recycle and Reuse**

The theme of Annual Maritime Power Conference-2017 being conducted by the National Maritime Foundation at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) Auditorium, New Delhi, on 09-10 February 2017 – **The Blue Economy: Concept, Constituents and Development**

The theme State of 31st Surajkund International Crafts Mela - 2017 being held from 01 to 15 Feb 2017 at Surajkund, near Faridabad (Haryana) – **Jharkhand**

Railways

The stations between which the first Antyodaya Express (long-distance, fully unreserved, superfast train service) was flagged by the Union Railway Minister Shri Suresh Prabhu – **Howrah and Ernakulam**

Space

The ultra-cool dwarf star, 40 light years away from earth, around which NASA has discovered 7 planets about the size of earth – **Trappist-1**

Miscellaneous

The State which has become the second in the country to prohibit all stadiums, restaurants, airports and cinema halls from charging any price more than the printed Maximum Retail Price (MRP) for packaged food items such as drinking water bottles, wafer and biscuit packets (Maharashtra was the first State) – **Rajasthan**

The University which along with Bhartiya Shikshan Mandal has organised a 3-day international conference on 'Bharat Bodh' - the idea of Bharat in New Delhi – **Indira Gandhi National Open University**

The French car manufacturing company to which Hindustan Motors has sold its Ambassador brand for Rs. 80 crores – **Peugeot SA**

The international airlines which has launched the world's longest scheduled commercial service with its inaugural flight from Doha to Auckland (a distance of 14,535 kilometers, or 9,032 miles which is the furthest distance between any two cities linked by direct flights.) – **Qatar Airways**

The partner nation at the 31st Surajkund International Crafts Mela - 2017 being held from 01 to 15 Feb 2017 at Surajkund, near Faridabad (Haryana) – **Egypt**

The tagline of National Capital Region Transport Corporation released by the Minister of Urban Development Shri M.Venkaiah Naidu – '**Gati Se Pragati' (Progress with Speed)**

Books in News

The Golden House - Salman Rushdie

Veerappan, Chasing the Brigand - K. Vijay Kumar

Abbreviations in News

PRAGATI - Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation

QR Code - Quick Response

VoLTE - Voice over Long-Term Evolution

PMGDISHA - Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan

Important Days of February

World Wetlands Day: 02 February 2017

Designated by: Ramsar Convention Secretariat

Theme: **Wetlands for Disaster Risk Reduction**

First Observed in: 1997

World Cancer Day: 04 February 2017

Designated by: Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)

Theme: **We Can, I Can (for 2016-18)**

First Observed in: 2000

<p>International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation: 06 February 2017 Designated by: U.N.O. Theme: Building a solid and interactive bridge between Africa and the world to accelerate ending FGM by 2030 First Observed in: 2013</p>
<p>Safer Internet Day: 07 February 2017 Designated by: European Union Theme: Be the change: Unite for a better internet First Observed in: 2004</p>
<p>World Radio Day: 13 February 2017 Designated by: UNESCO Theme: Radio is You First Observed in: 2013</p>
<p>World Day of Social Justice: 20 February 2017 Designated by: UNO Theme: Preventing conflict and sustaining peace through decent work First Observed in: 2008</p>

[Payment of Wages \(Amendment\) Bill 2016](#)

The Parliament recently passed the Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill 2016

Under the Payment of Wages Act, 1936 all wages must be paid either in coin or currency notes, or both. However, the employer may pay his employee's

- wages either by cheque or
- by crediting it into his bank account, after obtaining his written authorisation.

The amendment removes the requirement of obtaining written authorisation from the employee and allows the employer to pay through cheque or by crediting into his bank account.

In addition with the amendment the relevant central or state government may specify certain industrial or other establishments where the employer should pay his employees only by:

(i) cheque; or (ii) crediting the wages in his bank account.

[Academy Awards \(Oscars\) 2017](#)

Best Picture: **Moonlight**

Best Director: **Damien Chazelle** for La La Land

Best Actor: **Casey Affleck** for Manchester by the Sea

Best Actress: **Emma Stone** for La La Land

Best Animated Feature Film: **Zootopia**

Best Foreign Language Film: **The Salesman** (Iran)

La La Land was nominated in 14 categories and won 6 awards - Best Director, Best Actress, Best Original Score, Best Original Song, Best Production Design, Best Cinematography.

SAATHIYA Resource Kit and SAATHIYA SALAH Mobile App

SAATHIYA Resource Kit and SAATHIYA SALAH Mobile App for Adolescents were launched by the Health Secretary on 20 February 2017 as part of the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) program.

One of the key interventions under the programme is introduction of the Peer Educators (Saathiyas) who act as a catalyst for generating demand for the adolescent health services and imparting age appropriate knowledge on key adolescent health issues to their peer groups. In order to equip the Saathiyas in doing so, the Health Ministry has launched the Saathiya Resource Kit (including 'Saathiya Salah' Mobile App).

RKSK identifies six strategic priorities for adolescents i.e. nutrition, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), non-communicable diseases (NCDs), substance misuse, injuries and violence (including gender-based violence) and mental health.

This Resource Kit comprises i) Activity Book, ii) Bhranti-Kranti Game iii) Question-Answer Book and iv) Peer Educator Diary.

In addition to the kit is the mobile app 'Saathiya Salah' (downloadable from Google play-store) which acts as a ready information source for the adolescents in case they are unable to interact with the Peer Educators. The mobile app is also linked to another important piece of cost-effective information platform of a toll-free Saathiya Helpline (1800-233-1250) which will act as an e-counselor.

Launch of TAMRA Portal and Mobile App

Transparency, Auction Monitoring and Resource Augmentation (TAMRA) Portal and Mobile Application has been launched by the Ministry of Mines. It was simultaneously launched across 12 mineral rich States.

TAMRA is a step to speed up mining activity in India and facilitate all the stakeholders to track the status of the statutory clearances associated with mining blocks for getting mines to reach till operationalisation for the same. It will be an interactive platform for all the stakeholders to compress the timelines for statutory and other clearances as it would help minimize the gestation period for commencing production.

In case of delay in obtaining any clearances, TAMRA will send triggers to the concerned authority so that the remedial steps can be taken immediately by those responsible. The Ministry of Mines will also receive triggers generated by TAMRA, which will facilitate in expediting clearances in case the timelines set against each of the statutory clearances are not met.

Launch of 104 satellites by ISRO

In its thirty ninth flight (PSLV-C37), ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle successfully launched the 714 kg Cartosat-2 Series Satellite along with 103 co-passenger satellites on February 15, 2017 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR, Sriharikota. This is the thirty eighth consecutively successful mission of PSLV. The total weight of all the 104 satellites carried on-board PSLV-C37 was 1378 kg.

The total number of Indian satellites launched by PSLV now stands at 46.

The imagery from the Cartosat-2 series satellite will be useful for cartographic applications, urban and rural applications, coastal land use and regulation, utility management like road network monitoring, water distribution, creation of land use maps, change detection to bring out geographical and manmade features and various other Land Information System (LIS) and Geographical Information System (GIS) applications. The data sets could be used for urban planning of 500 cities under the Amrut Planning Scheme. The government initiative of 100 smart city programme in which these data sets could be used for master plan preparation and detailed geospatial data preparation for rural roads and infrastructure development.

Of the 103 co-passenger satellites carried by PSLV-C37, two – ISRO Nano Satellite-1 (INS-1) weighing 8.4 kg and INS-2 weighing 9.7 kg – are technology demonstration satellites from India. The remaining 101 co-passenger satellites carried were international customer satellites from USA (96), The Netherlands (1), Switzerland (1), Israel (1), Kazakhstan (1) and UAE (1).

With today's successful launch, the total number of customer satellites from abroad launched by India's workhorse launch vehicle PSLV has reached 180.

South Asia Training and Technical Assistance Center (SARTTAC)

IMF's South Asia Training and Technical Assistance Center (SARTTAC) was inaugurated in Delhi by the Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, Shri Shaktikanta Das.

SARTTAC is a collaborative venture between the IMF, the member countries, and development partners. Its member countries are Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The centre has been established less than a year after IMF Managing Director Ms Christine Lagarde and the Finance Minister of India, Shri Arun Jaitley, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a capacity development center for South Asia. SARTTAC, the newest addition to the IMF's global network of fourteen regional centers which are financed jointly by the IMF, external development partners, and member countries.

The center's strategic goal is to help its member countries strengthen their institutional and human capacity to design and implement macroeconomic and financial policies that promote growth and reduce poverty.

India Innovation Index

A joint initiative of NITI Aayog, DIPP and CII.

States will be ranked on innovations from 2017

The India Innovation Index Framework will be structure based on the best practices followed in Global Innovation Index (GII) indicators and additionally by adding India-centric parameters those truly reflect the Indian innovation ecosystem.

Data collated on this portal will not only be used to ameliorate current data gaps w.r.t the GII, but be the prime source for the India Innovation Index, which will be jointly developed by NITI Aayog, DIPP and CII, in consultation with World Economic Forum, the World Intellectual Property Organization, Cornell University, OECD, UNIDO, ILO, UNESCO, ITU and others with the objective to rank Indian states as per their innovation prowess and provide impetus to them to build their respective innovation ecosystems and spur the innovation spirit among institutions and people.

India currently ranks 66th out of 128 countries on the Global innovation Index (GII) 2016.

Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan

The Union Cabinet has recently approved 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (PMGDISHA) to make 6 crore rural households digitally literate. The outlay for this project is Rs.2,351.38 crore to usher in digital literacy in rural India by March, 2019. This is in line with the announcement made by Finance Minister in the Union Budget 2016-17.

PMGDISHA is expected to be one of the largest digital literacy programmes in the world. Under the scheme, 25 lakh candidates will be trained in the FY 2016-17; 275 lakh in the FY 2017-18; and 300 lakh in the FY 2018-19.

Digitally literate persons would be able to operate computers/digital access devices (like tablets, smart phones, etc.), send and receive emails, browse internet, access Government Services, search for information, undertaking cashless transactions, etc. and hence use IT to actively participate in the process of nation building.

As per the 71st NSSO Survey on Education 2014, only 6% of rural households have a computer. This highlights that more than 15 crore rural households (@ 94% of 16.85 crore households) do not have computers and a significant number of these households are likely to be digitally illiterate.

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