

07 August 2018

Current Affairs 7th August 2018

National News

1. World's 1st Thermal Battery Plant Inaugurated In Andhra Pradesh

- i. The **world's first-ever thermal battery plant was unveiled in Andhra Pradesh** by the state's Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.
- ii. Manufactured by the **Bharat Energy Storage Technology Private Limited (BEST)**, the first-of-its-kind batteries will aim to boost renewable sources of energy production and reduce the dependence on non-renewable fossil fuel-based energy generation.

Static/Current Takeaways Important for Indian competitive Exam 2018-

- **Andhra Pradesh CM-** Chandrababu Naidu, **Governor-** ESL Narasimhan.

2. Government Sets Up GoM To Decide On RCEP Talks

- i. The Union Government constituted a four-member **Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu.**
- ii. The GoM has been constituted to advise Prime Minister Narendra Modi on whether to continue with or withdraw from the **16-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations.** The GoM also includes Finance and Power Minister Piyush Goyal, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri.

3. Parliament Passes Bill To Grant Constitutional Status To NCBC

- i. **The 123rd Constitutional Amendment Bill** giving constitutional status to the **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)** has got Parliamentary assent. It will give the institution all powers to safeguard the rights of the socially and educationally backward classes and fulfils a long pending commitment of the central govt to the OBCs.

ii. 123rd Constitutional Amendment Bill Explained:

1. It seeks to establish the NCBC under the constitution with authority to examine complaints and welfare measures regarding OBCs,
2. NCBC will have a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and 3 other members of which at least one will be a woman,
3. The provision for mandatory woman member will be made during framing of rules,
4. NCBC will work as an autonomous institution with powers of a civil court.

4. National Handloom Day: 7 August

- i. **The National Handloom Day** is being observed every year **on 7 August** to honour the handloom weavers in the country and also carter an impetus to India's handloom industry.
- ii. This year it was the 4th edition of the National Handloom Day after it was instituted in 2015.

5. Bidder Information Management System and Bhoomi Rashi-PFMS Linkage Portals Launched

- i. **The Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Nitin Gadkari** launched **Bidder Information Management System (BIMS) and Bhoomi Rashi and PFMS linkage** - two IT initiatives of the Road Transport & Highways Ministry.
- ii. **BIMS** is aimed at streamlining the process of pre-qualification of bidders for EPC Mode of contracts for National Highway works with enhanced transparency and objectivity.
- iii. **Bhoomi Rashi**, the portal developed by MoRTH and NIC, comprises the entire revenue data of the country, right down to 6.4 lakh villages. **PFMS** is a web-based online software application developed and implemented by the Office of **Controller General of Accounts (CGA)**.

6. International Conference on 'Sustainable Growth through Material Recycling' Inaugurated In New Delhi

- i. **NITI Aayog's** International Conference on **"Sustainable Growth through Material Recycling: Policy Prescriptions"** was inaugurated by the **Union Minister of Road Transport, Highways & Ganga Rejuvenation, Nitin Gadkari** at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi.

ii. The day-long conference brought together a host of experts for identifying policy prescriptions for the development and growth of material recycling in India towards creating more jobs.

Static/Current Takeaways Important for competitive Exam 2018-

- **NITI-** National Institution for Transforming India.
- **NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman-** Rajiv Kumar, **CEO-** Amitabh Kant.

7. NITI Aayog Identified 117 Districts As Aspirational Districts For RUSA Scheme

i. **NITI Aayog** has identified **117 districts as 'Aspirational Districts'**. These districts have been selected on the basis of composite index which includes published data of deprivation enumerated under Socio-Economic Caste Census, Health & Nutrition, Education and Basic Infrastructure.

ii. During the second phase of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of **Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)**, central assistance is provided for opening of new **Model Degree Colleges (MDCs)** in 'Aspirational Districts' identified by NITI Aayog and in unserved & underserved districts in North Eastern and the Himalayan States.

Static/Current Takeaways Important for competitive Exam 2018-

- **Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)** is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), launched in 2013 aims at providing strategic funding to eligible state higher educational institutions.

8. Italian Bike-Maker Benelli Signs MoU For Plant in Telangana

i. **Italian motorcycle-maker Benelli** signed an MoU with **Telangana government and Adishwar Auto Ride International (AARI)** for setting a manufacturing facility.

ii. The group company would initially start assembling **CKD (completely knocked down) kits** of the bike for Benelli to assemble, manufacture bikes and import exclusive range of the bikes from Italy and SouthEast Asian regions.

Static/Current Takeaways Important for competitive Exam 2018-

- Established in 1911, Benelli is one of the oldest Italian motorcycle-manufacturer and has presence in over 60 countries such as America, Africa, Europe and Asia Pacific regions.

International News

9. Saudi Arabia Freezes Trade Ties With Canada

- Saudi Arabia** has announced that it is **freezing all new trade and investment with Canada** over its interference in its internal affairs.
- The Saudi foreign ministry expelled the Canadian ambassador and recalled its own envoy in Canada.

Static/Current Takeaways Important for competitive Exam 2018-

- **Saudi Arabia Capital:** Riyadh, **Currency:** Saudi riyal.
- **Canada Capital:** Ottawa, **Currency:** Canadian dollar.

10. Indo-Thailand Joint Exercise 'Maitree 2018' Begins in Thailand

- Exercise 'Maitree'** is a joint military exercise between **the Indian Army and Royal Thai Army** which is running on **in Thailand**. It is a platoon level exercise which comprises of infantry component.
- The exercise will emphasize to hone the tactical and technical skills in joint counter insurgency and counter-terrorist operations in the rural and urban scenario under UN mandate.

Static/Current Takeaways Important for Indian competitive Exam 2018-

- **Thailand Capital:** Bangkok, **Currency:** Thai baht.

11. Pacific Endeavor-2018 Under MCIP Starts in Kathmandu

- Pacific Endeavor-2018**, a communication exercise under the **Multinational Communications Interoperability Program (MCIP)** started in **Kathmandu, Nepal**. The basic objective of 12 day exercise is to develop common communications operating procedures to enable military forces in the Asia Pacific region to collectively work in the wake of disaster.
- Around 270 personnel from 20 Asia-Pacific Countries are participating in the exercise, which is **jointly organised by the Nepali Army and United States Pacific Command**.

Static/Current Takeaways Important for Indian competitive Exam 2018-

- **Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli** is the current Prime Minister of Nepal.
- **Bidhya Devi Bhandari** is the current President of Nepal and commander in chief of Nepalese Army.
- The **Nepalese Rupee** is the currency of Nepal.

12. Google Releases 'Android 9 Pie'

i. **Google's latest Android operating system** update, **Android 9 Pie**, was officially released to customers following a beta testing period that started earlier this year.

ii. Android Pie introduces a new gesture-based system interface that's similar to the interface of the iPhone X, with iPhone-like swipes for navigating through the operating system.

Static/Current Takeaways Important for Indian competitive Exam 2018-

- **Google CEO-** Sundar Pichai, **Parent organization-** Alphabet Inc., **Headquarters-** the USA.

Appointments

13. Nikhil Nanda Appointed As Chairman And MD of Escorts

i. **Farm and construction equipment maker Escorts** appointed **Nikhil Nanda as the chairman and managing director (MD) of the company.**

ii. He succeeded his father Rajan Nanda who passed away earlier this week after a brief illness.

14. Ajay Data, 1st Indian To Become Member in ICANN

i. The nominating committee of **Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)** has selected **Ajay Data, Founder & CEO of Data XGen Plus** and a global leader in email linguistic services, as a **new council member of Country Code Supporting Organisation (ccNSO).**

ii. Ajay Data is the **first Indian to have been selected as a member of ccNSO** and will be representing India at a global level. He will be the custodian of Asia, Australia and Pacific Islands as a member of ccNSO.

Sports News

15. India Women Win Blitz Gold in Asian Nations Cup Chess Tourney

i. The Indian women chess team at the **Asian Nations Cup 2018** clinched the gold in the Blitz event held in Iran. **It's India's first gold-medal finish at the event since 2014.** They also won silver and bronze in the Rapid and Classical categories, respectively.

ii. While **India (1st)** finished with 21.5 points, Vietnam (2nd) settled for silver with 18.5 and China (3rd) bagged bronze with 17.5.