



CURRENT AFFAIRS (APRIL - 2017) :

National

- ⇒ The Supreme Court has introduced the 'Middle Income Group Scheme' in order to provide legal services to litigants in the Supreme Court, whose gross income does not exceed ₹ 60,000 per month or ₹ 7.5 lakh per annum. As per the scheme, cases can be filed before it only through the Advocates on Record. A sum of ₹ 500 shall be payable to the Supreme Court Middle Income Group (MIG) Legal Aid Society as service charges.
- ⇒ The Supreme Court has named a four-member Committee of Administrators to run the affairs of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). In keeping with the norms set by the court-appointed Justice Lodha Panel, SC named ex-CAG Vinod Rai to head the panel with the historian Ramchandra Guha, Infrastructure and Development Finance Company CEO Vikram Limaye and former India women's captain Diana Edulji as other panel members.

International

- ⇒ The US President Donald Trump imposed a controversial 90-day ban on the persons from 7 Muslim countries from entering the USA. They are – Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen in order to protect the USA from the entry of foreign terrorists to keep the nation safe. But the Federal Appeals Court of the USA ruled out the order. The Pentagon and the State Department urged the White House to reconsider Iraq's inclusion in the list given its key role in fighting the Islamic State group. In a fresh order, Mr. Trump re-imposed the ban on 6 countries except Iraq.
- Iran, in retaliation, banned US wrestlers from the World Cup held in the Iranian city of Kermanshah.
- ⇒ The Israeli Parliament (Knesset) recently adopted a controversial law legalising thousands of West Bank Settlement homes built unlawfully. The US President Donald Trump is seen as more sympathetic to Israel's settlement policies than his predecessor Barack Obama and the Israeli government has approved plans to build thousands of new houses on the occupied territory.
- ⇒ The Pakistan Senate unanimously passed the Hindu Marriage Bill, 2017 to regulate the marriage of Hindus living in Pakistan. The Bill is widely accepted by Hindus living in Pakistan because it relates to registration of marriage, separation and remarriage.
- ⇒ In the USA, a legislation has been introduced for reforms in the H-1B visa programme with a view to emphasise 'Buy American and hire American'. H-1B visa is an employment based non-immigrant visa category for temporary workers. Some of the proposed changes are –
- Doubling minimum salaries of H-1B visa holders from the current \$60,000 to \$1,30,000. The move was made in a bid to stop American firms from hiring less expensive foreign labours, including

from India. This is a threat to India's Information Technology (IT) sector, which contributes 9.3% to the country's GDP and employ 3.7 million people.

- Give preference to students educated in the USA.
- Crackdown on outsourcing companies that import workers for temporary training and then send them back home to do the same job.
- Prohibit spouses of H-1B visa holders from working in the USA.
- Earmarking 20% of H-1B visas for small and start-up employers.

- ⇒ Saudi Arabia, which was a tax-free nation has introduced value-added tax. This is likely to eat up the savings of about 3 million Indians working there, which would certainly reduce NRI remittances to India.

Economy

- ⇒ Under the money circulation and credit control policy of the RBI, the existing rates (as on 25.12.2016) are :
- * Repo Rate (*Repo Rate is the rate at which commercial banks borrow money from the central bank, i.e., RBI*) : 6.25%.
 - * Reverse Repo Rate (*Reverse Repo Rate is the rate at which the commercial banks deposit their surplus money to the central bank*) : 6%
 - * Statutory Liquidity Ratio (*SLR is the percentage of deposits that commercial banks have to maintain with themselves*) : 20.5%
 - * CRR (*Cash Reserve Ratio is the proportion of deposits which the banks have to keep with the central bank*) : 4%
 - * Bank Rate (*Bank rate is the rate at which central bank, i.e. RBI, rediscounts the bills of exchange of commercial banks*) : 6.5%
 - * MSF (*Marginal Standing Facility is the loan banks are permitted to avail themselves from the RBI on overnight basis, using its SLR securities*) : 6.5%.
 - * Base Rate (*Base Rate reflects the actual cost of banks that has to be covered through lending. Banks cannot lend money below the Base Rate, which varies from bank to bank*) : 9.10% - 9.60%.
 - * Term Deposit (Fixed Deposit) Rate (more than 1 year): 6.5% - 7%.
 - * MCLR: 7.75% - 8.20%.
- (MCLR, the Marginal Cost of Fund-based Lending Rate, is the new benchmark lending rate at which banks will now lend to new borrowers. Till 31 March 2016, banks used the Base rate as the benchmark lending rate. MCLR is built on four components – Marginal cost of funds, Negative carry on account of CRR, Operating costs and Tenor premium).
- ⇒ The union government has increased the cash credit limit for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to 30% of turnover from the existing 20% to encourage such ventures conduct business digitally.



- ⇒ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) permitted multilateral and regional financial institutions to invest in rupee denominated bonds popularly known as 'masala bonds' issued by Indian entities in rupee denominated bonds abroad. The Multilateral and Regional Financial Institutions where India is a member country, e.g., Asian Development Bank, BRICS led New Development Bank, etc. can only invest in the masala bonds.
- ⇒ India has become the second largest domestic LPG consumer in the world after China. LPG consumption in India has reached 19 million tonnes registering an annual growth of 10%. Barely nine months after launching the 'Ujjwala' scheme by the PM in May 2016, the scheme has covered 1.6 crore poor households.
- ⇒ India Post has received payments bank licence from the Reserve Bank of India to start roll-out of banking operations commercially. India Post Payments Bank is the third entity to receive payments bank permit after Bharati Airtel and Paytm.
- ⇒ India's horticulture production, at around 287.32 million tonnes, will continue to outstrip foodgrain production which was 271.98 million tonnes in 2016-17. Foodgrain production includes fruits, vegetables, spices and flowers.
- ⇒ According to the annual Economic Freedom Index published by the US political think-tank the Heritage Foundation, India ranked 143rd out of 178 countries. India was put in the category 'mostly unfree' economics. Hong Kong, Singapore and New Zealand topped the index. India's position last year was 123rd.
- ⇒ India has been ranked 79th among 176 countries in the Corruption Perception Index 2016, released by the Transparency International. Belarus, Brazil and China shared the same ranks as India. The list was topped by New Zealand and Denmark. Somalia was ranked the most corrupt country.
- ⇒ State Bank of India launched its wealth management service 'SBI Exclusif' in the national capital – the first of its kind to be introduced by a public sector bank.
- ⇒ The payment networks such as MasterCard and Visa have joined hands with NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India) to launch BharatQR, a common Quick Response (QR) code that would enable seamless digital payments without card swiping machines.
- ⇒ The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has rebranded its corporate website from 'sbi.co.in' to 'bank sbi'.
- ⇒ Tata Motors has launched a sub-brand TAMO with an aim to introduce new technology-equipped vehicles faster to the market.
Of late, Maruti Suzuki entered the high-end car segment with the launch of first of its kind premium retail network 'Nexa'.
- ⇒ Canara Bank has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) to operationalise the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) with an authorised capital of ₹ 2000 crore. HEFA has been formed as a special purpose vehicle for funding projects for infrastructure and development of world class Labs in IITs/IIMs/NITs, etc.
- ⇒ Fertilizer major IFFCO has tied up with Bank of Baroda to launch co-branded debit cards for farmers as part of strategy to promote cashless transactions in rural areas. Bank of Baroda will issue co-branded debit cards to the specified farmers with overdraft facility of ₹ 2500 per card through which they can purchase the IFFCO and its subsidiary agri-inputs on credit for one month. IFFCO would take the guarantee of the total outstanding amount of any of the farmer's default due to various reasons.
- ⇒ All the five of its associates were merged with State Bank of India from April 1, 2017. They are – State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur (SBBJ), State Bank of Mysore (SBM), State Bank of Travancore (SBT), State Bank of Patiala (SBP) and State Bank of Hyderabad (SBH). In earlier rounds of consolidation, State Bank of Saurashtra (in 2008) and State Bank of Indore (in 2010) were merged with the SBI. With this merger, SBI has become the 45th biggest bank in the world. SBI now has 22,500 branches, 58,000 ATMs and over 50 crore customers.
- ⇒ Bharatiya Mahila Bank has also been merged with the SBI on April 1, 2017.
- ⇒ The government has sold 2% stake in ITC to Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and earned ₹ 6,690 crore as part of its divestment plan for 2016-17. The state, held under the so-called Specified Undertaking of the Unit Trust of India (SUUTI), was sold at ₹ 275.85 per share through block deals. Following the SUUTI stake sale to LIC, the total divestment of the government in this financial year (2016-17) have touched ₹ 37,200 crore. The Centre has reduced the target of divestment in 2016-17 from ₹ 56,500 crore to ₹ 45,500 crore.
- ⇒ The RBI prohibited Indian entities from making direct investments in any entity located in 'non co-operative countries' as identified by the inter-governmental body Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
- ⇒ Gujarat has become the first State in the country to establish cashless distribution of foodgrain and installing Aadhar Enabled Payment System.
- ⇒ Aimed at building synergy between business and foreign policy, the Ministry of External Affairs co-hosted the second 'Gateway of India Geo-economics Dialogue' with the Gateway House in Mumbai. Gateway House is a not-for-profit, independent, membership-based think tank based on intellectual scholarship. It engages India's leading corporations and individuals in debate and scholarship on India's foreign policy and its role in global affairs.



Sports

- ⇒ The auction of players for the 10th Indian Premier League, 2017 took place in Bangaluru. England's all-rounder Ben Stockes emerged as the most expensive overseas player. Rising Pune Supergiants snapped him for ₹ 14.5 crore.
- ⇒ Two Afghan players Rashid Khan and Mohammad Nabi were auctioned for the IPL 2017. Sunrisers Hyderabad bought both of them.
- ⇒ Ravichandran Ashwin has become the fastest cricketer to take 250 wickets in Test matches. He reached this height in his 45th Test match against Bangladesh in Hyderabad. He broke the record of Dennis Lillee (48 matches).
- ⇒ Joe Rout has been named as England's Test captain replacing Alastair Cook.
- ⇒ Sahid Afridi, former captain of Pakistan cricket team announced his retirement from international cricket.
- ⇒ Defending champion India defeated Pakistan to retain the T-20 World Cup for Blind at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bangaluru.
- ⇒ 'Kheleo' is the official mascot of the FIFA Under-17 World Cup scheduled to be held in India from October 6 to 28, 2017. Kheleo is a clouded leopard which is a vulnerable wild cat whose habitat extends from the Himalayan foothills to mainland Southeast Asia.
- ⇒ Manchester United defeated Southampton to clinch the English Football League title.
- ⇒ Kalinga Lancers clinched its first Hockey India League title beating Dabang Mumbai in the summit clash in Chandigarh. It was the fifth edition of the Hockey India League.
- ⇒ Sourav Verma defeated Lakshya Sen to clinch the Men's Singles title of the Senior National Badminton Championship at the Patliputra Sports Complex in Patna. In the Women's Singles final Rituparna Das won the trophy defeating Reshma Karthik.
- ⇒ Sarath Kamal defeated Soumyajit Ghosh to grab the Senior National Table Tennis Men's Singles title at Manesar, Haryana. Madhurika Patkar won the Women's Singles title by defeating Poulomi Ghatak.
- ⇒ Kush Bhagat, a second grade student was awarded the title of Candidate Master (CM) by the World Chess Federation body FIDE. He won the World School Under-7 Blitz Championship in Sochi (Russia) and won three gold medals at the first ever Western Youth Chess Championship 2016 in UAE.

Awards

- ⇒ The 89th Academy Awards, popularly referred to as the Oscar Awards, were presented in Los Angeles (The USA). Some major awardees –
 - Best Picture – Moonlight
 - Best Actress in a Leading Role – Emma Stone for La La Land.
 - Best Actor in a Leading Role – Casey Affleck for Manchester By The Sea.
 - Best Director – Damien Chazelle for La La Land.

- ⇒ A great embarrassment at The 89th Academy Awards ceremony occurred when the announcer mistakenly named La La Land as the Best Movie. However, later the Oscar Awards Committee issued a statement of apology to the La La Land members.
- ⇒ Lata Mangeshkar has been felicitated with the 'Legendary Award' by the Brand Laureate.
- ⇒ Eminent Hindi litterateur Surendra Verma has been selected for the Vyas Samman for 2016 for his novel 'Kaatna Shami Ka Vriksha : Padma Pankhuri Ki Dhar Se'.
- ⇒ Anish Kapoor, a well known Indian-origin British sculptor won the prestigious Genesis Prize by Israel.
- ⇒ This year's 59th Annual Grammy Awards were given in Los Angeles, the USA. A Grammy Award (originally called Gramophone Award) is an honour awarded by the Recording Academy to recognize outstanding achievements in mainly English language. Two Indian tabla players – Sandeep Das and Abhiman Kaushal also got this award this year. Sandeep Das bagged a solo trophy in the World Music Category for his collaboration with acclaimed cellist, Yo-Yo Ma's Silk-Road Ensemble 'Sing Me Home'. Abhiman Kaushal was part of 'White Sun II', which was adjudged the Best New Age Album.
- ⇒ ESPN Cricinfo Awards, 2016 –
 - Best Test Batting Award – Ben Stokes (England)
 - Best Test Bowling Award – Stuart Broad (England)
 - Best ODI Batting Award – Quinton de Kock (South Africa)
 - Best ODI Bowling Award – Sunil Narine (West Indies)
 - Best T-20 Batting Award – Carlos Brathwaite (West Indies)
 - Best T-20 Bowling Award – Mustafizur Rahman (Bangladesh)
 - Captain of the Year – Virat Kohli (India)
- ⇒ Business Standard Annual Awards have been announced. The awards have been recognized as one of the finest in Indian business. The winners are –
 - Company of the Year – INDIGO Airlines
 - CEO of the Year – Sidhartha Lal, Eicher Motors
 - Star MNC – Maruti Suzuki
 - Star PSU – NTPC
 - Startup of the Year – Freshdesk
 - Innovative Organisation – ISRO

Persons

- ⇒ Frank Walter Steinmeier is the new President of Germany.
- ⇒ Shurhozelie Liezietsu is the new Chief Minister of Nagaland.
- ⇒ Sanjeev Sanyal has been appointed Principal Economic Adviser in the Finance Ministry. He will work under the Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian.



- ⇒ Ajay Tyagi has been appointed Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). He succeeded U.K. Sinha.
 - ⇒ Lee Jae Yong, the heir apparent of the South Korean company Samsung was formally arrested on multiple charges including bribery and embezzlement. The case is tied to the scandal which led to the impeachment of the country's President Park Geun-hye.
 - ⇒ E. Palaniswami is the new Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.
 - ⇒ Justice Abhay Manohar Sapre has been appointed Chairman of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal. Sharing the water of the Cavery river has been the source of serious conflict between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
 - ⇒ Raj Chengappa has been re-elected President of the Editors' Guild of India.
 - ⇒ Vijay P Bhatkar, the technocrat who is considered the father of the Indian super computer, has been appointed new Vice-Chancellor of Nalanda University, Rajgir, Bihar.
 - ⇒ Ashok Kumar Verma has been appointed Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
 - ⇒ Tehmina Janjua has been appointed Pakistan's first woman Foreign Secretary.
 - ⇒ Queen Elizabeth II, the world's longest reigning sovereign became the first British monarch to reach her Sapphire Jubilee, with 65 years on the throne.
- Died**
- ⇒ Altamas Kabir, former Chief Justice of India passed away.
 - ⇒ Masaya Nakamura, the 'Father of Pac-Man' and founder of Namco died recently. Pac-Man, a video game, is estimated to have been played more than 10 billion times. Guinness World Records has named it the world's most successful coin-operated arcade game.
 - ⇒ E Ahmed, former Union Minister and Indian Muslim League leader passed away. He collapsed in the Parliament at the time President Pranab Mukherjee was addressing a joint sitting of the two houses.
 - ⇒ Jogendra Singh, former CBI director passed away.
 - ⇒ Al Jarreau, seven Grammy Award winning musician died recently in Los Angeles, the USA..
 - ⇒ Ved Prakash Sharma, the famous Hindi novelist passed away.
 - ⇒ Peter Mansfield who won the Nobel Prize for physiology (Medicine) for developing Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), passed away.
- Miscellaneous**
- ⇒ A three-day National Women's Parliament was organised by the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly with the theme of Empowering Women – Strengthening Democracy, in the State Capital region Amaravati.
 - ⇒ The Supreme Court asked the Centre to prepare a comprehensive policy for implementation of a plan for eradication of leprosy. Leprosy affects over 1.25 lakh people annually in the country.
 - ⇒ The Fanatic Sports Museum (FSM), the country's first multi-sports museum has been open in New Town, Kolkata. The museum is inspired by the MCC Museum at Lord's and the IOC Museum in Lausanne.
 - ⇒ Assam government is setting-up a Consulate General office of Royal Government of Bhutan in Guwahati.
 - ⇒ Enthused by the success of two pilot projects on utilising the head post offices as Passport Seva Kendra, the government has decided to open 56 Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) across the country. The Ministry of External Affairs and the Department of Posts started two pilot projects, first at Mysuru (Karnataka) and then at Dahod (Gujarat).
 - ⇒ The Union Cabinet approved 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (PMGDISHA) to make 6 crore rural households digitally literate by March 2019.
 - ⇒ Global Gene Corp and Global Alliance for Genomics and Health (GA4GH) launched ggIndia, the first ever beacon for Indian genomics data. The ggIndia became the 69th beacon to join the GA4GH Beacon Network. A beacon is an online web service that allows researches to determine whether an institution has particular genomic data in its data-set.
 - ⇒ India successfully test fired its interceptor missile from Abdul Kalam Island (Wheeler Island) in Odisha. It was a significant milestone in the direction of developing a two layered Ballistic Missile Defence System.
 - ⇒ The Indian Air Force (IAF) inducted its first indigenously developed Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEWCS) named 'Netra' at the Asia's largest air-show Aero India 2017 at the Yelanka air-force base in Bangalore.
 - ⇒ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) created history with the successful launch of a record 104 satellites by its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C37) in a single mission. Out of the 104 satellites, 101 belonged to foreign countries while 3 belonged to India.
 - ⇒ The USA decommissioned their warship USS Enterprise, the world's first nuclear powered aircraft carrier after half a century of grand work. It played a villainous role against India in 1971 when the then US President Richard Nixon ordered it to sail as the head of the US 7th Fleet to the Bay of Bengal in an effort to support Pakistan during the Bangladesh liberation war.
 - ⇒ The Ganga cleaning action has started showing results. It is evident from the fact that as many as 110 Gangetic dolphins were spotted in a 90 km stretch from Kaushambi to Handia in Uttar Pradesh. Gangetic dolphin, one of the four fresh water dolphins, was declared India's National Aquatic Animal in 2009.
 - ⇒ The Rajasthan ILD Skill University, India's first Skill University in the government sector has been set up near Sisodia Rani Garden at Jamdoli in Jaipur. ILD stands for Institute of Leadership Development.



EXCELLENT TUTORIAL

Jadavpur : 9433267091, 033-24187224; Dumdum : 9748326310, 033-25483118; Nagpur : 9975017525

- ⇒ Indian Navy's survey vessel INS-Sarvekshak has become India's first ship to be installed with a solar power system on board.
- ⇒ With an aim to eradicate Rubella and Measles from India, the Union Health Ministry launched the Measles-Rubella Vaccination campaign, targeting 41 crore children across the country. Rubella, also known as German measles or three-day-measles is an infection-caused skin disease and attacks generally children or pregnant women.
- ⇒ The Telangana government has launched India's first social innovation centre 'Kakatiya Hub' For Social Innovation in Nizamabad.
- ⇒ Loktak Lake, the largest freshwater lake in the country, has now become home to first-of-its-kind floating elementary school. The Loktak Lake is called the 'life-line of Manipur' as it is highly productive and many lives depend on the lake for endurance.
- ⇒ Folk singer Satinder Sartaaj, musician A R Rahman and Sonu Nigam have been roped in by the United Nations Office on Drug under its project against human trafficking called 'Blue Heart Campaign'.
- ⇒ Bharuch, the township of Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited (GNFC) has been declared the first cashless township of the country.
- ⇒ The three-day International Spice Conference was held in Thiruvnanthapuram.
- ⇒ The Union Health Ministry launched Saathiya resource kit, under its Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK). The kit is specially designed to help peer educators, especially villagers, discuss sensitive issues and answer technical queries in their community in an informal manner.
- ⇒ NITI Aayog, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) together launched a mega initiative called 'India Innovation Index' in order to make India an innovation-driven economy.
- ⇒ Ireland has become the world's first country to stop investing in fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.
- ⇒ The South Asian Speakers' Summit was held recently in Indore, MP.
- ⇒ The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has planned to build the first city on Mars by 2117.
- ⇒ The Centre has formed a six-member committee to suggest ways to improve India's Haj Policy and look into the issue of subsidy for the pilgrimage in the light of the Supreme Court's 2012 order which called for its gradual reduction, leading to total abolition by 2022.
- ⇒ The fourth edition of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit will be held in Kathmandu. The seven members of BIMSTEC are – India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.
- ⇒ The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has declared 2017 as the Year of Apple.

Books & Authors :

- ⇒ Do We Care? India's Health System – Sujatha Rao
- ⇒ Behind Bars : Prison Tales of India's Most Famous – Sunetra Choudhury.
- ⇒ Perilous Interventions : The Security Council and the Politics of Chaos – Hardeep Singh
- ⇒ The Silliest Autobiography in the World – P G Bhaskar
