

19 February 2018 Current Affairs

Saudi Arabia allows women to open business without male consent

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced a major policy change by allowing women to open their own business without the need of showing consent from a husband or male relative. The announcement was made by the country's Ministry of Commerce and investment, which stated on its website that women can now launch their own business and benefit from governmental e-services without having to prove consent from a guardian.

42 Indian languages heading towards extinction

42 languages or dialects in India are considered to be endangered and are believed to be heading towards extinction as only a few thousand people speak them. According to a report of the Census Directorate, there are 22 scheduled languages and 100 non-scheduled languages in the country, which are spoken by a large number of people - one lakh or more. There are 42 languages spoken by fewer than 10,000 people. A list prepared by UNESCO also has mentioned them as critically endangered languages. The Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore is working for protection and preservation of these languages under the central scheme Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages of India.

Crime Drama "Three Billboards" won five BAFTA Film Awards

Crime drama "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" captured five British BAFTA Film Awards. The movie, chronicling a grieving mother's campaign for justice, won for original screenplay and outstanding British film, while Frances McDormand bagged best actress and Sam Rockwell best supporting actor prizes. "The Shape of Water" - the most heavily nominated film of the night with 12 nods - came away with only three awards, including best director for Guillermo Del Toro. "Darkest Hour" claimed two prizes, including for Gary Oldman as best actor.

Roger Federer Wins Rotterdam Open For 97th Career Title

Roger Federer (Switzerland) celebrated his return to the top of the world rankings by winning the Rotterdam Open, in the Netherlands. It was his 97th career title. The 36-year-old, the oldest No.1 in history, defeated Grigor Dimitrov (Bulgaria) in the final. Federer is three years older than American Andre Agassi was when previously holding the record for oldest No.1 back in 2003. This was his third title in Rotterdam following successes in 2005 and 2012. France doubles pair P. H. Herbert and N. Mahut won the Men's Doubles Title.

UN names India as Global Host for the World Environment Day 2018

Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan announced that India will host the World Environment Day 2018. The theme for the World Environment Day-2018, held every year on June 5, is "Beat Plastic Pollution". Harsh Vardhan also launched the first electric charging facility at the Lodhi Road UN office - the first ever in a UN office in India.

India, Indonesia begin joint drill

A special task force of Indian Army & Indonesian Army have begun the 6th Garuda Shakti exercise in the West Java province of the archipelago country. Drill aims to build experience sharing in counter-terrorism operations, close quarter combat & other areas of special operations. The exercise b/w Indian & Indonesian Special Forces highlights the increasing trust & cooperation b/w the 2 armies.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley arrived in Riyadh on a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia. He will co-chair the 12th India-Saudi Arabia Joint Commission Meeting to be held in the Saudi capital Riyadh. Mr Jaitley will also open the Saudi-Indian Business Council. Finance Minister will also visit India Pavillion at the Saudi National Heritage and Cultural Festival Janadriyah. Mr Jaitley will meet with the Saudi Minister of Trade & Investment Majid Al-Qassabi to discuss the bilateral issues between the two countries.

Amazon Dethrones Microsoft as Third Most Valuable Company

According to a report in The New York Post, with a market cap of \$702.5 billion, Amazon has become the third most valuable company in the world, racing past Microsoft, which has a market cap of \$699.2 billion. Apple and Alphabet stand ahead of Amazon as the most valuable companies in the world.

PM Modi opens 'biggest party office in world'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the BJP's new headquarters on Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, spread over 1.70 lakh square feet. According to the BJP Chief, the building is bigger than the office of any political party in the world. The new headquarters is fitted with the latest communication technologies and has a spacious social media office.

Sanjiv Bajaj named as EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2017

Business consultancy firm EY named Bajaj Finserv's Sanjiv Bajaj as the entrepreneur for 2017. Sanjiv Bajaj will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year award (WEOY) in Monte Carlo. The company also conferred E. Sreedharan, who spearheaded metro projects in Delhi, Kolkata, Kochi, and Lucknow, with the lifetime achievement award. The awardees were selected by a nine-member jury led by Sun Pharmaceuticals' managing director Dilip Shanghvi.

Arvind Jamkhedkar to be next Chairman of ICHR

Archaeologist and historian Arvind P. Jamkhedkar will be the next Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR). He will replace Prof. K. Sudershan Rao. The post fell vacant after Prof. Rao's retirement. Prof. Jamkhedkar is at present Chancellor of Deccan College, Pune, known in academic circles for its archaeology department.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar first Indian pacer to take five-fors in all formats

Fast bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar has become the first Indian bowler to take a five-wicket haul in all three formats in international cricket. Bhuvneshwar achieved the feat by taking his first T20I five-wicket haul against South Africa.

Australia's Most-Capped female player Alex Blackwell retires

Australia's most-capped female player and vice-captain Alex Blackwell has announced her retirement from international and state cricket. She became just the fourth female Australian to pass 5,000 runs when she batted in the Test, Twenty20 and One-Day arenas, compiling 5,250 runs. Blackwell, who led Australia to victory at the ICC Twenty20 World Cup in the West Indies in 2010, was also a member of Australia's World T20 winning sides in 2012 and 2014 and has two World Cup trophies from 2005 and 2013.