

India's first village of books to come up in Maharashtra



A hamlet in Satara district of Maharashtra, popular for its strawberries is all set to embrace the tag of India's first 'village of books', a concept inspired by Britain's Hay-on-Wye, a Welsh town known for its book stores and literature festivals.

- B hilar village located near picturesque hill station Panchgani will see this state government initiative being inaugurated by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on May 4.
- Led by Education minister Vinod Tawde, this project was undertaken by the Marathi Bhasha department wherein 25 artistically decorated locations around the village will turn into reader hot spots with display of books ranging from literature, poetry, religion, women and children, history, environment, folk literature, biographies and autobiographies to festival specials.
- Also, the state has provided several facilities such as chairs, tables, decorated umbrellas and glass cupboards to local villagers to help them enhance the reading experience of literary connoisseurs visiting there.
- The state government had announced its plans to launch such a book village and literary festivals concept in Maharashtra two years back on February 27, 2015 - Marathi Language Day.

Kerala organises India's first transgender athletic meet



Kerala on Friday successfully organised a sports meet for transgenders, the first of its sort in the country.

- At least 130 athletes belonging to the third sex participated in the event that was well appreciated by a good crowd of onlookers at the central stadium at the heart of the state capital.
- Some of the events like 100m sprint witnessed a photo finish.
- "It was a runaway hit. This time there was no age bracket. But next time we will classify events as junior, senior and other levels. It will be an annual event now," said Sreekutty president of the Sexual and Gender Minority, an organisation working for the uplift of third sex.
- As a maiden meet, there were only six disciplines 100, 200 and 400m sprints and 4x100m relay, shot put and long jump.
- Next time organisers are planning to introduce more events.
- "It is a good beginning. Kerala sport council will give all support to the next meet year," said sports council vice-president Mercy Kuttan, a former Indian long jumper.

NAVAL COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE 02-05 MAY 2017



A four day Naval Commanders' Conference is scheduled at New Delhi from 02 - 05 May 17. The Chief of the Naval Staff, with the Commanders-in-Chief, will review major operational, training and administrative activities undertaken in the last six months and deliberate the way ahead on important activities and initiatives in the near future.

- The Hon'ble Defence Minister would address and interact with the Naval Commanders on the opening day of the Conference.
- The Conference is also the platform for institutionalised interaction between the naval top-brass and senior Govt officials as also with the Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Air Staff.
- Admiral Sunil Lanba, PVSM, AVSM, ADC, Chief of the Naval Staff would chair the Conference and deliberate/ focus on Indian Navy's plans for sustained operational effectiveness, combat readiness and improved maintenance philosophy to carry out its roles and missions.
- The Commanders would also brainstorm synergising the Navy's role in a joint/ unified structure in the future.
- In the backdrop of terrorist threats and the prevailing security scenario, the Conference would review the security measures for naval assets, bases and air stations, and the overall operational readiness of units with particular emphasises on indigenisation towards achieving greater self-reliance and support the "Make in India" initiative.
- The IN's approach to the increasing Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) to strengthen maritime security would also be discussed.

Two day conference of States Power Ministers to be held in New Delhi



A two-day conference of Ministers for Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy & Mines of States & Union Territories will be held on 3rd & 4th May in New Delhi. The Conference will be inaugurated by Shri Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of State (IC) for Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy and Mines.

- The aim of this two-day conference is to review the implementation of various ongoing Schemes/ Programmes & deliberate on a host of issues pertaining to Power, Coal, Renewable Energy and Mines sectors.
- Ministers and Secretaries of the States and Union territories and senior officials of the four sectors and Public Sector Undertakings under them will meet up to discuss issues like implementation of 24x7 Power for All, Strategies and action plan for 100% household electrification and Smart metering power reforms, Energy conservation, Energy efficient Agriculture Pumps, cyber security & promotion of digital payments in power sector.
- In the area of Renewable Energy, the Ministers will discuss guidelines for

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- Renewable projects.
- In the Coal sector, deliberations will focus upon issues like flexibility in utilisation of domestic coal for reducing cost of power generation and use of domestic coal instead of imported coal .
- In the Mining sector, deliberations will concentrate upon important issues such as Auction Preparedness of blocks for 2017-18 already under preparation by the States , Status of project implementation under Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY), Curbing illegal mining through Mining Surveillance System (MSS) with Specific Reference to Illegal sand Mining and Minor mineral rules.

Karnataka tops list of most-corrupt states: Report



Commerce and Industry Minister Smt. Nirmla Sitharaman, inaugurated the orientation programme for establishment of Spice Farmers Producer Companies (SFPCs) and a buyer-seller meet organized by Spices Board in Itanagar today to highlight the promotion of spices and herbs being grown in the hill State of Arunachal Pradesh and integrate the farmers of the

State with markets in India and abroad.

- Shri Kiren Rijju, Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri Wangki Lowang, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Trade & Commerce and Shri Tamiyo Taga, Minister of Power, Industries, Textiles & Handicraft, Government of Arunachal Pradesh also participated in the programme.
- “As part of Government of India Look East to Act East policy, North East region is given priority and actions are being initiated in the region for development.
- There is scope for export of spices like large cardamom, ginger, turmeric etc., which area produced naturally organic in Arunachal Pradesh.
- In order to aggregate the farmers” produce, Spice Farmers Producer companies shall be formed” said Smt. Sitharaman. She further added that Spices Board, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC), Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDONER), North Eastern Council (NEC) and Government of Arunachal Pradesh are to work together for materializing the establishment of SFPCs.
- The first SFPC in the country will be established in the State of Arunachal Pradesh.

India is now the world’s fifth-largest military spender



On the list of the world’s largest spenders on defence in 2016, India can be found occupying the fifth spot.

- The overall global military expenditure has increased for a second consecutive year with around \$1,168 billion being spent on defence.

- At \$55.9 billion, India's military expenditure increased by around 8.5 percent in 2016. The figures have been released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on April 24, 2017.
- With a total expenditure of \$611 billion, the USA is the largest military spender.
- The growth rate observed in the US between 2015 and 2016 was 1.7 percent.
- In 2016, the US spent 20 percent less than the peak observed in 2010.
- China is the world's second largest military spender with an expenditure of \$215 billion.
- The third largest spender was Saudi Arabia in 2015 but dropped to the fourth position in 2016.
- Despite continued involvement in regional wars, its spending reduced by 30 percent in 2016 to \$63.7 billion.
- The third largest spender in 2016 is Russia with an expenditure of \$69.2 billion.
- Russia's military spending has increased by 5.9 percent.

Pankaj Advani wins silver at Asian Snooker Championship



India's top cueist Pankaj Advani lost to China's Lv Haotian in the summit clash of Asian Snooker Championship here today, as he failed in his bid to win the continental double of billiards and snooker titles in the same year.

- Advani lost 3-6 in the final to his Chinese opponent and it meant that he could not become the first player to win both Asian titles in Billiards and Snooker in same calendar year.
- The defeat in the final also meant that Advani could not complete a career Grand Slam in cue sport.
- Having won all the major events -- Nationals, Asian and World Championships in both Billiards and Snooker and in both the long and short formats, this is the one title (15-red Asian Snooker) that has eluded Advani.
- A victory will make Advani only player in history to win all Majors in two sports at all levels and across all formats.
- The Chinese player took the first frame before Advani drew parity.
- This was the only time the two finalists were on equal terms.
- From there, Haotian was on song as he scored heavily to always keep the sixteen-time world champion Indian at bay.

Indian lifter Sushila Panwar banned after failing dope test



Indian +75 kg category woman weightlifter Sushila Panwar has been sentenced to provisional suspension after her failure in the dope test conducted by the Indian Weightlifting Federation.

- Her „A“ sample was tested positive for a banned substance terbutaline which

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caused her the suspension.

- This news surfaced only a few days after the suspension of Arjuna awardee Indian footballer Subrata Paul due to failure in the tests conducted prior to the Cambodian tour.
- The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) conducted dope tests on all the national campers on March 25 in Patiala.
- The 2016 South Asian Games gold medallist, Panwar had been in the news last year after she won the title in February 2016 defeating Ishani Annushka of Sri Lanka and Tara Devi Pun of Nepal.

