

President of India inaugurates 'Ashiana Annexe' in Dehradun



The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated the „Ashiana Annexe“ in Dehradun, Uttarakhand today (July 10, 2017) which comprises of twelve low cost dwelling units constructed to accommodate officers and staff of Rashtrapati Bhavan during Presidential visits to the Retreat at „Ashiana“.

- These dwelling units have been constructed using the Habitech-NivaraTantra - Onsite Sanitation Integrated Community Housing Technology Innovations developed at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT).
- The Technology innovations comprise unique blocks known as "compacted intermeshing" blocks which are made from local soil. The production of these blocks is on site and is an entirely green process.
- These blocks have novel cavities for horizontal and vertical reinforcement using steel bars which results in eliminating use of the conventional beams, columns and concrete lintel.
- The cavities also enable natural air curtain against temperature, noise pollution and water penetration.
- Other salient features of these dwelling units are that they are disaster resilient, sustainable and cost effective.
- Scientific treatment of sanitation waste enables mitigation of disease risk and ensures health and wellbeing of residents and the community.

India now has overall 36 World Heritage Inscriptions



It is under the dynamic and visionary leadership of the Prime Minister of India that India has been successful in securing the nomination of the “Historic City of Ahmadabad” on UNESCO’s World Heritage list on 8th July, 2017 during the 41st Session of World Heritage Committee.

- This makes the walled city of Ahmedabad the first city in India and the third in Asia to be inscribed to the World Heritage List.
- In the past 3 years alone, India has managed to put five built heritage sites on the world heritage list of UNESCO.
- India now has overall 36 World Heritage Inscriptions with 28 Cultural, 07 Natural and 01 Mixed site.
- While India stands second largest in number after China in terms of number of world heritage properties in ASPAC (Asia and Pacific) region, it is overall seventh in the world.

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- Founded in 15th century, the walled city of Ahmadabad, on the eastern bank of the Sabarmati river, presents a rich architectural heritage. Within this complex are 28 ASI Centrally Protected Monuments.
- The urban structures of the historic city of Ahmedabad are distinctive due to their puras (neighbourhoods), pols (residential streets), and khadki (inner entrances to pols) largely made of timber.

Exercise Malabar Commences in Bay of Bengal/ North Indian Ocean



Naval co-operation between India, US and Japan epitomises the strong and resilient relationship between the three democracies.

- The MALABAR series of exercises, initiated in 1992 between the Indian and US Navies, have steadily grown in scope, complexity and participation into a multifaceted exercise with the participation of Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF).
- The 21st edition of the exercise, MALABAR-17 will be conducted in the Bay of Bengal from 10 to 17 July 2017. The primary aim of this exercise is to increase interoperability amongst the three navies as well as develop common understanding and procedures for maritime security operations.
- The scope of MALABAR-17 includes wide-ranging professional interactions during the Harbour Phase at Chennai from 10 to 13 July 2017 and a diverse range of operational activities at sea during the Sea Phase from 14 to 17 July 17.
- The thrust of exercises at sea this year would be on Aircraft Carrier operations, Air Defence, Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), Surface Warfare, Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS), Search and Rescue, Joint Manoeuvres and Tactical procedures.
- In addition, officials from the three countries will be flown onboard the ships at sea on 15 July 2017.

Ministry of Health signs MoU with Government of West Bengal to set up Centre of Excellence in Transfusion Medicine



Ministry of Health and Family Welfare signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Government of West Bengal to formalize its support to set up a state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence in Transfusion Medicine at Kolkata, here today.

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- Government of India has approved this important initiative with an outlay of approximately Rs.200 Crores towards equipment, manpower and running costs.
- The land for this initiative will be provided free of cost by the State government.
- The move intends to strengthen the blood transfusion services in the State and the surrounding region.
- Shri R K Vats, Additional Secretary (Health) and Shri Anil Verma, Principal Secretary Health, Government of West Bengal signed the MoU on behalf of their respective Ministries.
- Metro Blood Bank Project is conceived to be a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to set up state-of-the-art Centres of Excellence in transfusion medicine in the four metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata.
- These centres are high volume blood collection centres where there is state-of-the-art technology in transfusion medicine for component separation, processing of blood and quality systems.

Ministry of Minority Affairs completely gone online/digital



The Minister of State for Minority Affairs (Independent Charge) & Parliamentary Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi today said here that the Central Government is moving ahead for “transformation through transparency and efficiency”.

- While inaugurating a workshop of Inspecting Authorities of Maulana Azad Education Foundation, Shri Naqvi said that under the NDA Government, transparency is the parameter of progress of poor and needy.
- Shri Naqvi said that he himself is monitoring all the schemes of Ministry of Minority Affairs so that benefits of these schemes reach to the needy with complete transparency.
- Shri Naqvi said that Ministry of Minority Affairs has completely gone online/digital. This digital system has not left any space for middlemen.
- It has ensured that fruits of development are reaching directly to every needy of the society.
- Various scholarships are being given directly into banks accounts of students. Be it welfare and developmental schemes or Haj affairs, our Ministry has ensured complete transparency.

The Ministry Of Shipping Draws Up Cruise Tourism Reforms



The Ministry of Shipping, in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism, has announced reforms to the regulatory processes governing the cruise tourism industry in the country.

- The objective is to revolutionize this industry which has a high employment generation potential, by simplifying the rules and procedures pertaining to various aspects of cruise port operations like security, immigration, and customs.
- According to Special Secretary, Shipping, Shri Alok Srivastava, the promotion of cruise tourism requires not just improvement in infrastructure but also uniformity, transparency and predictability in the procedures followed by multiple government organizations .
- In other words, Ease of Doing Business is critical for the success of cruise tourism.”

Iraq announces victory over Islamic State in Mosul



Haider al-Abadi, Prime Minister of Iraq, on 8 July 2017 declared the full liberation of Mosul and reclaim the city after three years of ISIL control.

- The success was achieved after nine months of bitter fighting to displace the extremist group from the city where it proclaimed its caliphate.
- Abadi travelled to Mosul to formally reclaim the devastated city.
- Mosul is a major city in northern Iraq.
- The city stands on the west bank of the Tigris, opposite the ancient Assyrian city of Nineveh on the east bank.
- It had been under the control of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant since June 2014.
- Since October 2016, the city has been a site of a military operation to dislodge and defeat militant forces.
- The Battle of Mosul, a military offensive to retake the city begun in October 2016, is the largest deployment of Iraqi forces since the 2003 invasion by

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U.S. and coalition forces.

Union Government proposes scheme to open residential schools for SC girls



Union Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot on 7 July 2017 said that the Union Government has proposed to introduce a scheme to open residential schools for scheduled caste girls in educationally backward districts.

- The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot informed about the proposed school while speaking at a regional conference of social welfare ministers from Punjab, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and officials from Chandigarh.
- He said the schools will have classes from VI to XII and 70 per cent of the seats will be reserved for SC girls and the remaining for those from BPL families in other categories.
- The Minister said the Union Government is committed to ensuring the welfare of scheduled caste and tribes, OBCs and BPL families through the proper implementation of all centrally-sponsored social security and welfare schemes.
- He urged the ministers and officials to prepare a report on the financial assistance being given under different schemes and by the national financial corporations within a month.
- Besides, he also informed that the Rashtriya Vayoshree Yojana for senior citizens is also being implemented. Benefits of these schemes would be given on the first-come-first-serve basis, a Haryana government release said quoting him. The minister urged officers to send their suggestions and plans on these schemes at the earliest.

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