

Cabinet approves establishment of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), South Asia Regional Center (ISARC) at campus of National Seed Research and Training Center (NSRTC) in Varanasi



The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the establishment of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), South Asia Regional Center (ISARC) at campus of National Seed Research and Training Center (NSRTC) in Varanasi.

- Under the proposal, a Centre of Excellence in Rice Value Addition (CERVA) will be set up in Varanasi.
- This will include a modern and sophisticated laboratory with capacity to determine quality and status of heavy metals in grain and straw.
- The Centre will also undertake capacity building exercises for stakeholders across the rice value chain.
- This Center will be the first international Center in the eastern India and it will play a major role in harnessing and sustaining rice production in the region.
- It is expected to be a boon for food production and skill development in the eastern India and similar ecologies in other South Asian and African countries.

Cabinet approves Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) between India and Germany on cooperation in the field of Health



The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its ex-post facto approval for signing a Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) between India and Germany on cooperation in the field of Health.

- The JDI was signed on 1st June, 2017.
- The JDI covers the following areas of cooperation.
- postgraduate education;
- training of medical personnel;
- pharmaceuticals & pharmacoconomics; and
- health economics.
- A Working Group will be set up to further elaborate the details of cooperation and to oversee the implementation of this JDI.

Cabinet approves Development of Four Laning of Solapur-Bijapur Section of New NH-52 in Maharashtra and Karnataka

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The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for 4 Laning of Solapur-Bijapur Section of New NH-52 (formerly NH-13) in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

- The development of 4 Laning of about 110 km. is estimated to cost approximately Rs.1889 crore including the cost of land acquisition and pre-construction activity.
- At present, the existing road is two-lane and passes through congested towns of Solapur, Takli and Nandani in Maharashtra and Zalki, Horti and Bijapur in Karnataka.
- It connects Southern India with Northern India and its development will serve as an alternative route to North South Corridor of the National Highways Development Programme.
- The development to four-lane of this road with bypasses at Solapur, Bijapur and construction of six flyovers would greatly reduce travel time and Vehicle Operating Costs as well as help in expediting the improvement of infrastructure in Maharashtra and Karnataka states.
- This road is part of the high-density traffic corridor Bangalore-Chitradurga-Bijapur-Solapur-Aurangabad-Dhule-Indore-Gwalior.

Cabinet approves SASEC Road Connectivity Investment Program - Tranche 2



The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for upgradation and widening of 65 kms of Imphal-Moreh Section of NH-39 in Manipur at a cost of Rs. 1630.29 crores.

- Manipur being a landlocked state with almost 90% of the area under difficult terrain presently has only road transport as a means of mass transport system within the state.
- Hence development of the road infrastructure is of paramount importance to improve connectivity and progress of the State and to ensure that the administrative set up reaches the isolated and remote habitats.
- The project will improve connectivity between Imphal with the eastern part of the state.
- Based on the existing and projected traffic requirements the NH-39 will be widened to 4 lane between Lilong village and Wanging village, while the stretch between Wanting village to Khang Khang will be upgraded to 2 lane with paved shoulder.

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MOU signed between Department of Defence Production and MIDHANI



Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI), a miniratna, Schedule 'B' Defence Public Sector Undertaking under the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the financial year 2017-18 with the Ministry.

- The annual MoU was signed by Secretary (Defence Production) Shri Ashok Kumar Gupta on behalf of the Ministry and Chairman and Managing Director, MIDHANI Dr. D K Likhi.
- The MoU outlines targets and various performance parameters for the company.
- The revenue from operations as per the MoU has been targeted at ₹ 780 crore which is significant improvement over the previous years.

India to host Theatre Olympics 'The Biggest Theatre Celebration of the World'



Dr Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State (Independent charge) for Culture and Tourism has announced here today that 8th edition of the greatest carnival of Theatre in the World will take place in India for the first time ever from February 17 – April 08, 2018 simultaneously in various cities across the country.

- Addressing a Press Conference here today in the presence of Shri Ratan Thiyam, Chairperson, NSD Society & Prof. Waman Kendre, Director, National School of Drama, the Minister said that there will be 500 plays & 700 ambience performances from across the world and Allied activities like exhibitions, seminars, symposia, interactive discussions and workshops with well-known academicians, authors, actors, designers and directors will be held.
- He said that the Leading luminaries of world theatre will take part.
- In a development that puts India firmly among the top nations in the world theatre map, the country is all set to host the next edition of the prestigious Theatre Olympics.
- Established in 1993, the Theatre Olympics is the foremost international theatre festival, presenting the finest productions of well-known theatre practitioners from around the world.
- The Theatre Olympics, being held in India for the first time, is being organised by National School of Drama, under the aegis of Ministry of Culture.
- The country's tryst with the biggest celebration of theatre in the world will

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take place from February 17 till April 08, 2018 and will be held in 15 cities across India.

Railway initiated Rail cloud project



Indian Railway has started a strategic IT initiative, christened IR-OneICT, for enterprise wide digital single platform with an aim to improve customer satisfaction, improve revenue and effective, efficient and safe operations.

- To achieve the goal of single digital platform for IR a few foundational projects need to be implemented first, establishment of RainCloud is one such project.
- Cloud Computing is the emerging technology for faster and on demand commensurate deployment of Server resources which result in reduced cost. Accordingly, RailCloud Phase-I has been sanctioned at the cost of Rs. 53.55 Cr under PH-17, DF(3) in FY 17-18. Potential benefits to Railways after implementation of RailCloud are:
- Faster and on-demand deployment of application- RailCloud will pave the way for swifter deployment of application (within 24 hrs as compared to conventional time running into weeks and months). At the same time the cloud hardware and environment will be available for rigorous testing of the new applications.
- Optimum use of Servers and storage- The technology enables maximising the usage of the available server and storage resulting in accommodation of bigger data and more applications within same server space.
- Utilization of existing infrastructure as part of Cloud- The existing resources available with railway will be subsumed in RailCloud thereby ensuring that expenditure is minimized in acquiring new resources.

Subhash Chandra Garg, IAS (RJ:83) assumes office as the New Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.

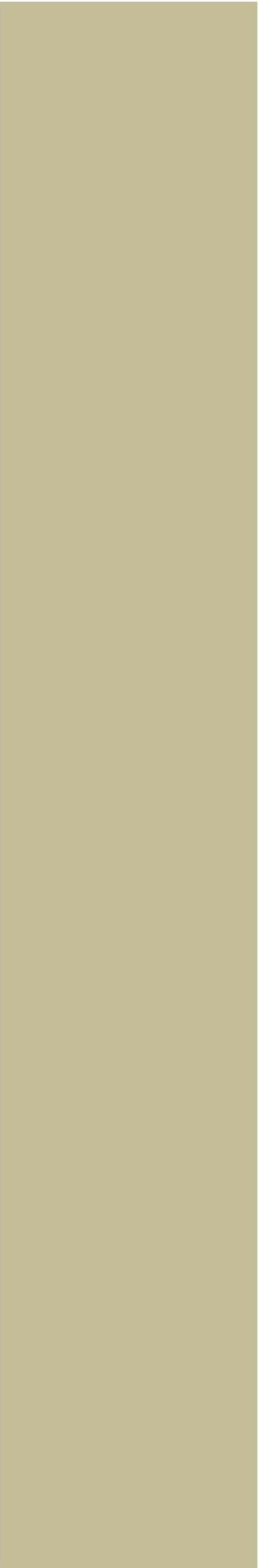


Shri Subhash Chandra Garg, IAS (RJ:1983) today assumed office as the new Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance. Shri Garg was Executive Director, World Bank, Washington D.C. in his immediate preceding posting.

- Shri Garg has widespread administrative experience in more than 30 years of service during which he held various important assignments including the Administrative postings in his home State of Rajasthan.

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Appointments

- Shri Garg has also worked in the Central Government in various capacities. He was posted as Director, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance from May, 2000 to September, 2003.
 - Later he took over as Joint Secretary, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance and continued to hold that position till May, 2005.
 - He has also worked in the Cabinet Secretariat where he held the position of Joint Secretary/Additional Secretary from February, 2012 to December, 2013.
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