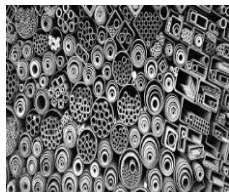


Ministry of Steel Organises Second Steel Consumers' Council Meeting in Bhubaneswar



The Second Meeting of the National Steel Consumers' Council, on the theme of "Current Status of Steel Industry and the Way Forward" will be held under the Chairmanship of the Union Steel Minister Shri Chaudhary Birender Singh in Bhubaneswar on 16th June, 2017 .

- The function of the Steel Consumer Council is to advise Government on matters relating to supply, availability, quality and the market trends of iron and steel.
- India is currently the third largest steel producer in the world; while the domestic steel consumption remains at only 60 Kgs per capita which is quite less in comparison to the world average of 208 kgs.
- There has been continued thrust from the Ministry of Steel to boost domestic steel consumption by exploring versatile steel uses. Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the policy for providing preference to Domestically Manufactured Iron & Steel Products in Government procurement.
- The meeting comes at a good time to address all steel related issues.

Task Force on Innovation



Innovation is widely recognized as a central driver of economic growth and development. The Global Innovation Index (GII) aims to capture the multi-dimensional facets of innovation. India improved its innovation rank to reach 66th position from 81st (in 2015).

- This improvement in India's rank came after 5 years of continuous drop in its ranking. Recognizing India's potential to reach great heights in innovation and creativity, a Task Force on Innovation was set up on the directions of Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman, the Commerce & Industry Minister, Government of India.
- The Task Force on Innovation had the mandate of assessing India's position as an innovative country, suggest measures to enhance the innovation ecosystem in India and thus improve India's ranking in the GI. The Team, comprising of government officials and experts from private organisations & academia, has come up with its report which gives specific measures the measures to improve India's rank.
- The report comprises recommendations and suggestions to improve India's rank on all 82 indicators mentioned in GI 2016 report. It also points out the national and international models, programs or schemes which may be adopted and/ or replicated and scaled up to further improve India's position in a particular indicator.
- In addition to this, the report analyses the methodology used in GI-2016 and calls for a need to re-examine and suitably modify the methodology in order to reflect true position of countries.

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States shortlisted by NITI for transformative change in Health and Education



NITI Aayog has initiated a unique and novel initiative to catalyse transformational change in key Social Sectors. Under SATH (Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital), NITI Aayog and its knowledge partners will provide strategic, technical and implementation support to three states for each sector.

- A Committee comprising of Member, NITI Aayog , Sh Bibek Debroy, CEO, Amitabh Kant, Advisers of NITI Aayog and representatives of Health and Education Ministry spent two days assessing and vetting presentations by 14 States for each of the two social sectors.
- The States showcased the initiatives undertaken by them thus far, their willingness to accelerate improvement and justified why they should be selected for the institutional support being offered by NITI Aayog under the program.
- Transformative change in social sector is challenging as the pace is slow, as compared to the infrastructure sector. The issues are multi-layered and complex, involving both governance and building capacity of human capital.
- NITI Aayog has taken up this challenge and has decided to deep dive into handholding the States through a time bound and outcome oriented process. After final selection of the States, a Program Management Unit to push for efficiency and efficacy in governance structures and service delivery will be available at the State level for a period of 30 months.
- It is expected that these 36 months of focussed attention and support from the premier think tank will lead to a marked transformation and will also provide a model for other States to replicate and adapt.

SBI Launched Prime Credit Card



State Bank of India, the country's largest bank, plans to take its credit card venture SBI Card, public over the medium term, a top official said.

- SBI Card, the second-largest credit card issuer in the country, is also looking to become the industry leader over the next one year.
- "We definitely have plans to take SBI Card public. Much of it would depend on the completion of transaction that would raise our stake to 74 per cent in SBI Card.
- The intent to go in for initial public offering is there," Dinesh Khara, Managing Director (Associates and Subsidiaries), SBI, told.
- Plans are also afoot to merge the two entities comprising the SBI Card joint venture with GE.
- This would happen after GE's exit. SBI hopes that the transaction involving GE's exit and it raising stake to 74 per cent will get over in the next quarter (July-September).

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BANKING

Indian warships arrive for bilateral maritime exercise



Three Indian warships sailed into Fremantle to participate in a week-long naval exercise off the Western Australian coast.

- Exercise Australia India (AUSINDEX) is a regular bilateral maritime exercise aimed at developing a deeper understanding and cooperation between the two navies.
- Commander Australian Fleet, Rear Admiral Stuart Mayer, said AUSINDEX 17 was a concrete example of India and Australia working more closely together to increase maritime security.
- "Australian and India share a commitment to a stable and prosperous Indian Ocean region," Rear Admiral Mayer said.
- "AUSINDEX is a terrific opportunity to increase our interoperability and enhance the professional interaction of two great navies.
- "Amidst a very busy operational program for the Indian Navy, I am pleased to welcome their ships to Fremantle and look forward to a challenging and rewarding sea program.

Centre To Open Passport Service Centres in Head Post Offices



The Centre has decided to open passport service centres in all the 800 district head post offices across the country in two years' time to increase people's access to the facility, especially in remote areas.

- Making the announcement here today, minister of state for External Affairs V K Singh said, "150 post office passport seva kendras are being opened this year and within two years all the 800 head post offices in all the districts would be in place."
- "We have decided to ensure that no citizen is made to travel long distances for a passport. People in far-flung areas of the country find it difficult to obtain passports and redress passport-related grievances," Mr Singh said.
- The step has been initiated through a joint effort by the ministry of external affairs and the department of posts to deliver passport-related services to the people.
- Passport seva kendras have already been launched in several district head post offices in various parts of the country.

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Yogi Adityanath opens new airport terminal at Gorakhpur



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday inaugurated a new terminal at the Gorakhpur airport.

- The Chief Minister, whose Lok Sabha constituency is Gorakhpur, said the terminal would provide better and more facilities to passengers.
- Adityanath recalled how the Gorakhpur airport was first opened for commercial flights in the late 1980s but later closed down. He said due to his efforts, Sahara Airlines started flights from Gorakhpur in 2000.
- Now Air India and Spice Jet have also started operating from Gorakhpur airport and more private airlines are likely to follow.
- Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha, who attended the event, credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi with "revolutionizing the aviation sector in the country".

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