

Current Affairs : May 2017

National Current Affairs for May 2017

1. Noted environmentalist and social activist Prafulla Samantra was declared as one of the six winners of the Goldman Environmental Prize for 2017 on April 24, 2017 for his 12-year long legal battle that affirmed the indigenous Dongria Kondhs' land right and protected the Niyamgiri Hills from mining activities in Odisha. Prafulla, a lawyer, is the sixth Indian to win the Goldman Environmental Prize which is popularly known as 'Green Nobel'.
2. Rajiv Rai Bhatnagar, a 1983 batch IPS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre was on April 26, 2017 appointed new Director-General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). His appointment came two days after the force lost its 25 soldiers in a deadly Maoist attack in Sukma district of Chattisgarh. The CRPF was being led by additional DG Sudeep Lakhtakia with additional charge after the retirement of its previous incumbent K. Durga Prasad on February 28, this year. Senior IPS officer R.K. Pachnanda was also appointed as the DG of Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force.
3. Achal Khare was on April 18, 2017 appointed the Managing Director of National High Speed Rail Corporation for a period of five years as the Appointment Committee of Cabinet approved his name to the post. Prior to his new assignment, Khare was Adviser (Infra) in Railway Board. The corporation was formed for development and implementation of high speed rail projects in India.
4. A commemorative fragrance stamp, dedicated to the aromatic coffee was released on April 23, 2017 as the minister of state for communications Manoj Sinha and Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled the design of stamp on coffee at a function in Bengaluru.
5. Marathi film Kasaav directed by Sumitra Bhavde and Sunil Sukthankar won the National Film Award in the best feature film category on April 7, 2017. Kasaav is the great movie woven around the issues of depression and environment conservation. Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar for Hindi Movie 'Rustom' and Surabhi Lakshmi for Malayali movie 'Minnaminungu' won the 'Best Actor' & 'Best Actress' category National Film award respectively. Priyadarshan, an eminent filmmaker, was the chairman of the 11-member award jury of feature film category.
6. India suffered three ranking position loss in the 2017 World Press Freedom Index, released by a Paris-based media right group Reporters without Borders on April 26, 2017 as it was ranked on 136th position with 42.94 points in the Index. The section on India was titled "Threat from (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi's nationalism". Norway was ranked on top position with the score of 7.60 while Sweden finished second in the Index as the most press free country. North Korea was ranked on last spot.
7. The Indian military's capability to take down hostile aircraft and missiles has received a significant boost, with India and Israel signing deal worth \$2 billion for advanced surface-to-air missile system. As part of the deal, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) will provide the Indian Army with advanced medium range surface-to-air missile (MRSAM). The IAI said it was the single largest contract in

Israel's defence industry history. According to the deal, IAI will also supply surface-to-air missiles to be fitted on indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant being build in Kochi.

8. Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull was on a four days official visit to India in the third week of April 2017. He was accorded a warm ceremonial reception at the Rashtrapati bhavan and was given a Guard of Honour. His visit to India revives the already existing deep bilateral relations between the two countries. In their talks the Australian PM and Indian PM Narendra Modi expressed their resolve to take the bilateral relations to a new high. Both countries inked on April 10, 2017 6 Agreements including pact to expand counter-terrorism cooperation. They called for strong action against those financing and providing sanctuary to terror groups.

9. India was at fifth place on the list of the world's highest spenders on defence in 2016 as global military expenditure rose for a second consecutive year to \$1,686 billion, according to a new report India's military expenditure grew by 8.5% last year to \$55.9 billion, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) annual report on defence spending. The US remained at the top of the list, with its military spending growing by 1.7% between 2015 and 2016 to \$611 billion. Military expenditure by China, the second largest spender increased by 5.4% to \$215 billion, a "much lower rate of growth than in previous year" the report said.

10. A bill to unleash radical reforms in the transport sector by ensuring 100% e-governance, checking bogus driving license and vehicle thefts, slapping heavy penalty on traffic violators and protecting a good samaritan was approved by the Lok Sabha on April 10, 2017. All efforts would be made to eliminate corruption in the sector, road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari said while replying to a discussion on the motor Vehicle (Amendment) Bill, 2016, claiming that "no bogus driving would be made and there should be no theft of the vehicles once there is e-governance."

International Current Affairs for May 2017

1. China took a giant leap in its space research programmes when it launched its first unmanned cargo in spacecraft named Tianzhou-1 on board its Long March -7,1/2 rocket from the Wenchang Satellite Launched Centre in South China's Hainan province on April 20, 2017. The Tianzhou-1 spacecraft is designed to dock with the Tiangong-2 space laboratory. The cargo spacecraft is capable of carrying 6 tonnes of goods, 2 tonnes of fuel with an unnamed flying limit of the three months. It will provide an important technological basis for the construction of China's space station.

2. Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte emerged the winner of the Time magazine's reader poll of the 100 most influential people in the world. Duterte had consistently led the Time 100 Reader Poll' an online survey, in which the magazine had asked its readers to vote for who should be included in 'the 2017 Time 100 Reader Poll' list of the world's most influential people. Duterte received 5 per cent 'yes' votes to top the list.

3. Nobel Laureated and women's right activist Malala Yousafzai was granted the honorary citizenship of Canada at a ceremony in Ottawa on April 12, 2017. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau handed Malala a certificate documenting her citizenship, making her the youngest person to get the honour. 19 years old Malala is only the sixth person to get honorary Canadian citizenship after

Nelson Mandela, Dalai Lama Karima Aga Khan IV, Raoul Wallenberg and Aung San Suu Kyi, Malala was also declared the "Ambassador of Peace" of the UN in April 2017.

4. The United State of America emerged as the best digitally developed nation as it topped the Huawei Global Connectivity Index (GCI) 2017, released in April 2017 with a score of 77 points. Singapore and Sweden secured second and third position respectively in the list comprising 50 nations across the globe. This is the fourth annual GCI study that shows how countries are progressing with digital transformation. India was ranked on 43rd position in the GCI 2017.

5. China on April 26, 2017 launched its first indigenously built aircraft carrier in the north-eastern port city of Dalian amid rising maritime dispute in the South China sea. The carrier, called Type 001-A before it acquires a formal name is China's second aircraft carrier but first domestically built. The Liaoning, a refurbished Soviet Union made vessel commissioned in 2012 is China's first aircraft carrier. The carrier Type 001-A is a conventional oil-fuelled steam turbine power plant with a displacement of 50,000 tonnes. It is expected to be formally commissioned by Chinese Navy by 2020.

6. Younis Khan became the first Pakistani batsman to score 10,000 Test runs on April 23, 2017. He achieved this milestone in his 58-run innings at Sabina Park, Kingston during Pakistan's first innings in the opening Test of the Pakistan-West Indies bilateral Test series. Younis took 208 innings to reach the 10,000 mark in his Test career with an average of about 53. He is the 13th batsman of the world to touch the 10,000 Test run mark.

7. It is not called the 'Swachh UK Abhiyan' yet Theresa May government on April 10, 2017 announced new plans to tackle heaps of rubbish in public places that include doubling fines and car owners being held liable even if someone else throws litter from the vehicle. Fines will go up from \$75 to \$150 as part of efforts to cut down on nearly \$800 million of tax-payer's money spent every year to clean up public places, environment secretary Andrea Leadsom said, unveiling the government's first Litter Strategy for England.

8. Only a day after the military parade, an ironic situation happened. To boost its army's morale further, North Korea carried out another missile test on April 16, 2017. As ill-luck would have it, the North Korean missile "blew up immediately on April 16, 2017. The missile flight lasted four or five seconds. After five seconds it fizzled out", source said. All this happened when US Vice President Mike Pence was in South Korea for talks on the North's increasingly defiant arms programme, Mr. Pence, however reiterated that US commitment in South Korea was 'unwavering'.

9. Egypt imposed a three-month state of emergency on April 10, 2017 and ordered the military to protect vital infrastructure after the Islamic State (IS) terror group targeted two minority Coptic Christian Churches in powerful bombings, killing at least 45 people and wounding more than 100 others. As Egyptians bade tearful farewell to those who died in the terror attacks on Palm Sunday the Egyptian Government declared that the state of emergency across the country will be effective from April 10, 2017. Egypt's Cabinet approved the measure which allows authorities to make arrests without warrants and search people's homes and explained the reason for the imposition of emergency.

10. Ecuador's Socialist Lenin Moreno scored victory in the Ecuador presidential election in the first week of April, 2017. Moreno's victory now is set to extend a decade of leftist rule in Ecuador. Ecuador's National Electoral Council said that Moreno, the heir to President Rafael Correa, won the vote against his rival Guillermo Lasso by a convincing margin. The election was closely watched as a barometer of the political climate in Latin America, where more than a decade of leftist dominance has been waning.

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