

Daily Current Affairs 19 January 2018

Finance and Banking

Paytm Payments Banks launches physical RuPay Debit Cards

- Paytm Payments Bank on Friday announced the launch of physical Debit Cards">RuPay Debit Cards for its banking customers to seamlessly make payments across online platforms and offline stores.
- Additionally, now Debit Card holders can also withdraw money from any ATM in the country. The bank's physical debit cards can be ordered online via the Paytm app.
- The company has also launched UPI on its iOS app (launched on Android a month ago), enabling users to create their own Paytm UPI IDs, which will be issued by Paytm Payments Bank.
- They can now link any of their savings bank account with this unique Paytm UPI ID and start sending and accepting money directly into their bank account with no waiting time to add beneficiary. They will also not have to share their bank account details and IFSC code with anyone to receive money.
- This will enable Paytm users to transact digitally with more choices, great ease and convenience. They can also use their Paytm UPI IDs to pay at any of the 6 million Paytm partner retail outlets across India. Paytm UPI IDs are being accepted across all banks and UPI apps.

AU Small Finance Bank inks MoU with LIC to offer PMJJBY scheme

- Banking finance company AU Small Finance Bank has signed an MoU with LIC to offer Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), a company official said.
- Under the MoU, LIC will give a life cover of ₹2 lakh in case of death to the customer at a nominal premium of ₹330 per annum.
- The aim is to provide best services to the customers under one roof, MD and CEO of the company, Sanjay Agarwal said in a statement.
- Briefing about another recent development, Agarwal said the company has re-entered the housing finance segment.
- The company will also offer loans under government's affordable housing and subsidy schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, he added.
- He said the customers can avail loans up to ₹1 crore.
- The product will be targeted for both salaried and self-employed (professional and non-professional) customers in urban, semi-urban and rural areas which is the bank's core market segment.

Mauritius largest source of foreign direct investment in India, says RBI

- Mauritius was the largest source of foreign investment in India, followed by the US and the UK, according to a census by the Reserve Bank.
- Singapore and Japan were the next two sources of foreign direct investment (FDI), said the Census on Foreign Liabilities and Assets of Indian Direct Investment Companies 2016-17, released by RBI today.
- Of the 18,667 companies that participated in the census, 17,020 had FDI/overseas direct investment in their balance sheets in March 2017, it said.
- "96 per cent of the responding companies were unlisted in March 2017 and most of them had received only inward FDI; unlisted companies had higher share of FDI equity capital vis-à-vis listed companies," it said.
- Further, over 80 per cent of the 15,169 companies that reported inward FDI were subsidiaries of foreign companies (single foreign investor holding over 50 per cent of the total equity).

WEF 2018 first to be chaired entirely by women, Chetna Sinha from India to create history

- Indian entrepreneur Chetna Sinha will be creating history by becoming a part of 'all-women' co-chairs for the first time in 48 years. Chetna Sinha will join world women leaders and entrepreneurs, including IMF Director Christine Lagarde and former Norwegian PM Erna Solberg.
- Chetna Sinha is a banker, activist and the president of micro-finance company Mann Deshi Mahila Sahkari Bank.
- Called a 'silent crusader' by Forbes magazine, Chetna Sinha has worked to make Maharashtra's Mhaswad a destination for women entrepreneurship. Mann Deshi Mahila Sahkari Bank became the first bank in the country for and by rural women to get a cooperative license from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Chetna Sinha's Mann Deshi Mahila Sahkari Bank aims to provide one million women entrepreneurs with access to knowledge and capital, enabling them to have personal and professional agency in their lives.

Axis Bank partners NGO Srijan to mentor IIM graduates

- Axis Bank is partnering with NGO Srijan through an initiative called Buddha Fellowship Programme to help nurture talent for the development sector. The bank is mentoring 15 graduates from the Indian Institutes of Management at Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Shillong, who have been taken on board by Srijan as campus hires.
- Axis Bank, along with Srijan, recently hosted a day-long event where the graduates had sessions with some of the bank's business heads as well as other senior honchos.
- According to Srijan head Ved Arya, Buddha Fellows (2017-19) are a cohort of IIM graduates working in rural areas with farmer producer companies, civil society organisations and government departments to scale up new or existing projects in livelihood, health and education sectors.

Maharashtra gives nod to Rs 4,000-cr climate resilient agri project

- The Maharashtra government has approved a Rs 4,000-crore project aimed at promoting climate-resilient agriculture, to be partially funded by the World Bank.
- A government resolution (GR) issued yesterday said the project, named Nanaji Deshmukh Krishi Sanjivani Yojna, will be implemented in 5,142 villages across 15 districts.
- It will roll out in 2018-19 and continue till 2023-24.
- The total cost of the project is Rs 4,000 crore, 70 per cent of which will be borne by the World Bank while the state will contribute 30 per cent over six years, said the GR.

Kerala to set up Blockchain academy

- The state-run Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management-Kerala (IIITM-K) is all set to launch its proposed Kerala Blockchain Academy, which will be the first of its kind in the country.
- The academy is a joint initiative of IIITM-K and the Blockchain Education Network (BEN), a global network of blockchain communities. It will come up at the Technopark campus.
- The main aim of setting up of the academy is to explore the possibilities of leveraging blockchain technology for public good, capacity building initiatives and promoting disruptive innovations and entrepreneurship with blockchain technology.
- The move is expected to boost Kerala's efforts in becoming a national leader in the education, adoption and entrepreneurship promotional activities in the new age technological domains.

India becomes member of Australia Group

- India on 19 January 2018 joined the Australia Group export control regime, an informal forum that seeks to ensure that exports do not contribute to the development of chemical or biological weapons.
- India has become the 43rd member of the group. The inclusion is expected to raise India's stature in the field of non-proliferation and help in acquiring critical technologies.
- It is an informal forum of countries which, through the harmonisation of export controls, seeks to ensure that exports do not contribute to the development of chemical or biological weapons.
- Coordination of national export control measures assists Australia Group participants to fulfil their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention to the fullest extent possible.

India and States

Hardeep Singh Puri announces commencement of India's first-ever 'Livability Index'

- Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri today announced the commencement of the country's first-ever 'Livability Index' to rank 116 cities.
- An official said that the result of the exercise will be announced in June.
- "The Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has decided to assess the livability standard of 116 Indian cities, which include the identified Smart Cities and few more cities with a population of over 1 million," the housing and urban minister told a press conference here.
- Among the cities to be assessed for the 'Livability Index', include Delhi's three municipal corporations, Bangalore (Karnataka), Kochi (Kerala), Ghaziabad, Meerut, Varanasi, Allahabad and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) and Faridabad in Haryana.
- The cities will be assessed on 15 core parameters like governance, social infrastructure, education, employment, health and safety and security.
- The 'Livability Index' will also take into account physical infrastructure like housing, open spaces, land use, energy and water availability, solid waste management and pollution, among others.

'PadMan' has become the first Indian film to be showcased at the Oxford Union

- Actor-producer Twinkle Khanna has been invited to speak at the Oxford Union - one of the reputed debating societies in the world. She is expected to showcase her maiden production venture Pad Man, starring her husband Akshay Kumar, at the Union on January 18. Twinkle Khanna will talk about why is it important to discuss menstrual hygiene and how the story of PadMan (Arunachalam Muruganantham in real life) has played a big part in creating awareness among rural South Indian population.
- She will also discuss the need to break the taboo around menstruation and the stigma attached to it globally.
- This will also be the first Indian film to be showcased and discussed at the Oxford Union. The society founded in 1823 has since invited world leaders and influencers to discuss topics of importance. Some of the speakers include Sashi Tharoor, the Dalai Lama, Michael Jackson, Malala Yousafzai, Salman Rushdie and Morgan Freeman.
- PadMan is about an illiterate man becoming an entrepreneur who creates awareness about the importance of using sanitary napkins. The film, directed by R Balki, also features Sonam Kapoor and Radhika Apte in leading roles and is set to be released on January 25.

Uber enters into partnership with Eastern Railway

- App-cab company Uber today entered into a partnership with Eastern Railway to help travellers avail a ride at Howrah station, which is one of the busiest railway terminals in the country.
- Uber will set up booking zones at the station where even those who do not have the app will be able to book a ride, a spokesperson for the company said.
- The Uber app will also enable riders to get specific pick up instructions to reach the car driver.
- Currently, an Uber is used close to 8,000 times every week at Howrah station and this new service will enable many more commuters who use the railway station every day, he said.

Telangana inks MoU with Clean Authority of Tokyo

- The Telangana government has entered an MoU with Clean Authority of Tokyo in the field of Municipal Solid Waste Incineration Facilities on Friday.
- On the Third-day of his tour to Japan to woo foreign investors, Telangana business delegation led by IT and Industries Minister KT Rama met with industrial heads and front leaders of Multi-National Companies in Tokyo.
- Telangana Industries and Commerce Principal Secretary Jayesh Ranjan and Clean Authority of Tokyo Vice President Yoshimi SATO signed the MoU respectively in the presence of Minister KT Rama Rao and Sujan R Chinoy, Ambassador of India in Japan.
- Under the MoU, they will exchange information on knowledge in municipal solid waste incineration facilities and make an effort to realise human resource exchanges in view of technical cooperation in the future.

9 more cities selected for 'Smart City' mission, 3 from Uttar Pradesh

- Housing Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Friday released the list of nine new cities to be funded under the Centre's flagship 'Smart City' mission.
- The government has allocated Rs 12,824 crore to be invested in 409 projects to make these cities 'Smart Cities. Of the nine cities, 3 are from Uttar Pradesh, 1 from Bihar, 1 from Tamil Nadu, 1 from Daman & Diu, 1 from Arunachal Pradesh and 1 from Lakshadweep.

Here's are the nine cities announced on Friday:

1. Silvassa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli
2. Erode, Tamil Nadu
3. Diu, Daman & Diu
4. Biharsharif, Bihar
5. Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh
6. Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh
7. Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh
8. Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh
9. Kavaratti, Lakshadweep

The Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has till now announced the names of 90 cities that the government aims to help under the scheme. Under the scheme, each city will get Rs 500 crore as central assistance for implementing various projects.

Union Government launches 100 accessible websites for Divyangs

- The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot on 19th January 2017 launched 100 accessible websites for Divyangs.

- The divyang-friendly websites, especially for the visually impaired, use features such as screen readers and screen magnifiers, which can relay website content to the user in audio format. According to Social Justice Minister, 900 such websites will be launched in a phased manner.
- Speaking further on the occasion, the Minister said that divyangs are full of capabilities but need to be given opportunities to prove themselves. He asserted that a lot needs to be done to empower divyangs in the country.
- The Minister further urged the states to increase the pace of the work that is being done in favour of divyangs and said that the centre is extending all assistance to empower divyangs and bring them into the mainstream.

PMSMA crosses 1 Cr mark in antenatal check-ups

- The Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) has crossed one crore mark in antenatal check-ups.
- The programme was launched in 2016 to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision and ensure comprehensive and quality antenatal checkups to pregnant women across the country. The PMSMA has provided quality antenatal checkups to pregnant women on the 9th of every month.
- Speaking on the development, Union Health Minister J P Nadda said that safe pregnancy has now become a social movement in the country. He stated that the programme has been successful in reaching out to the difficult and remote areas.
- He said more than 25 lakh check-ups were conducted in high priority districts identified by the Health Ministry for focussed attention. The Minister further revealed that the state of Maharashtra has reported the largest number of check-ups among the non-empowered action group states and Rajasthan has reported the largest number of check-ups among the empowered action group states.

Tamil Nadu government to introduce Aerospace & Defence policy

- The Tamil Nadu government is planning to come up with an exclusive Aerospace and Defence policy.
- The policy's main objective would be to achieve a 30 per cent share of the defence sector in India and creating high-end employment opportunities for around 100,000 people in the state.
- The development of Chennai Aerospace Park at Sriperumbudur is line with the initiative. The park is being set up in 250 acres in the first phase, which will be expanded to 500 acres in the next phase. It would house at least 50 aerospace or Defence companies forming a strong base for supporting large OEMs (original equipment manufacturers).
- The state is also planning to set up a multi-floor manufacturing complex in Chennai Aerospace and Defence Park.

Appointments

Anandiben Patel appointed Madhya Pradesh governor

- Former Gujarat chief minister Anandiben Patel has been appointed as the next governor of BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh.
- Patel succeeded Narendra Modi when the latter resigned from the Gujarat assembly to become the Prime Minister in 2014. Her tenure as the chief minister of Gujarat, however, didn't last beyond two years and Vijay Rupani took over from her in August 2016 and retained charge after BJP's victory in last year's assembly elections .
- The current governor of Madhya Pradesh, Om Prakash Kohli, also holds charge of Gujarat since 2016. After Patel's appointment, Kohli will continue with that responsibility.

In a first, Sikh-American Gurbir S Grewal appointed New Jersey's AG

- Gurbir S Grewal, a prominent Indian-American lawyer has become the first Sikh attorney general of the US state of New Jersey after the state Senate approved his nomination unanimously.
- Grewal, became the nation's first Sikh state attorney general after the Senate approved his nomination with a vote of 29-0. He was later sworn into office at a private ceremony, NJ.com reported.
- Grewal, a registered Democrat, was made Bergen County's top law enforcement official by Governor Chris Christie in 2016. Before that, he worked as chief of the economic crimes unit at the US Attorney's Office under former federal prosecutor Paul Fishman, the report said.

Sports

FIFA rankings: India surges 3 places to occupy 102nd spot

- The Indian men's football team have climbed three spots to be placed 102nd in the latest Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) rankings.
- India, which are ranked 14th among Asian countries, have earned 13 points over the past month for a total of 333 points.
- Coached by Englishman Stephen Constantine, the Sunil Chhetri-led side are currently standing just above 103rd-placed Qatar.
- It should be noted that the Indian men's football team had remained unbeaten in 2017, having clinched seven of their nine matches while settling with the draw in two matches.
- They had also confirmed their berth in the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 after snatching a 4-1 victory against Macau in the qualifiers in October last year.

Brazil legend Ronaldinho bids adieu to football

- Brazilian football superstar Ronaldinho, who was part of the triumphant Brazil 2002 World Cup squad, has bid adieu to his illustrious career at the age of 37.
- Confirming the news, Ronaldinho's brother and agent Roberto Assis said that the Brazilian World Cup winner's career as a professional footballer is over.
- However, he hopes to schedule some farewell matches for Ronaldinho after the World Cup in Russia, which ends July 15
- Ronaldinho, who earned the last of his 98 Brazil caps against Chile in April 2013, won one World Cup title (2002), one Champions League victory (2006) and two Spanish league titles with Barcelona, and two FIFA world player of the year awards (2004 and 2005) in his decorated career.

ICC rankings: Kohli becomes 2nd Indian batsman to reach 900-point mark

- Indian skipper Virat Kohli has become the second player of the country, after Sunil Gavaskar, to reach the 900-point mark in the latest International Cricket Council (ICC) Player Rankings for Test Batsmen, which were released following the conclusion of the Centurion Test.
- Gavaskar, one of the ICC Cricket Hall of Famers, had achieved the milestone in his 50th Test when he scored 13 and 221 at The Oval in 1979 to jump from 887 points to 916 points, which remained his career-best.
- Kohli, who recorded his 21st century at Centurion, got to the rare feat in his 65th Test after vaulting from 880 points to 900 points.
- Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid are the other two India batsmen who came close to the 900-point mark, but were unable to break the barrier. Tendulkar peaked to 898 points in 2002, while Dravid achieved 892 points in 2005.

Days

NDRF celebrates 13th Raising Day

- The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) celebrated its 13th Raising Day on 19th January 2018.
- The force was raised on 19th January 2006, as a specialised force capable of responding to any type of disaster in the country and abroad. It is strategically deployed across the nation as per the vulnerability profile.
- Overall, the force has saved more than four thousand lives since its inception during relief and rescue operations.
- The day's celebrations included the presentation of Distinguished Service Medals to the NDRF personnel by Intelligence Bureau Director Rajiv Jain.