

**NATIONAL**

**Centre may enact law against fugitives**

The Union government may consider enacting the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill to confiscate assets of those who flee the country and refuse to return after committing frauds in excess of Rs 100 crore.

- A draft of the Bill, which is in consonance with similar legislation in several countries, was circulated in May, 2017 seeking comments from all stakeholders.
- The Bill was cleared by the Union Law Ministry with certain recommendations on reconciliation of provisions with the existing laws.

The draft Bill defines a fugitive economic offender as any individual against whom an arrest warrant has been issued and who has either left the country or refuses to come back to face prosecution.

- the Enforcement Directorate will be empowered under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to initiate the proceedings.
- It has a provision enabling repayment of dues to creditors by disposing of confiscated assets, in case the accused offender continues to evade prosecution.
- It will be applicable to various financial and allied offences as defined under the Indian Penal Code, the Prevention of Corruption Act, the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, Customs Act and so on.

**Background**

The move came after Vijay Mallya, who owed more than Rs 9,000 crore to the public sector banks, flew out of the country and refused to come back.

**States can relax highway liquor ban**

The Supreme Court gave the State governments the discretion to decide, on facts, whether areas covered by local self-governing bodies or areas proximate to municipal pockets should be exempted from the court's nationwide prohibition on sale of liquor within 500 metres along the highways.

**Background**

- The purpose of the ban, imposed in a December, 2016 judgment, was to prevent drunken driving along these busy thoroughfares.

- In July , 2017, the court exempted municipal areas from the prohibition. It said the ban mainly targeted busy national and State highways inter-connecting cities, towns and villages along.
- However, the July,2017 order triggered more questions than answers. States, especially came back to the court, asking whether panchayats would also come under the definition of “municipal areas” mentioned in the order.

## **IR**

### **N. Korea open to talks with the U.S.**

According to the senior officials from Pyongyang, North Korea was open to talks with the U.S.

#### **U.S.'s sanctions**

Earlier, a statement released by North Korean state media accused the U.S. of provoking confrontation on the Korean peninsula with Friday's sanctions announcement.

The Winter Olympics have given a boost to engagement between the two Koreas after more than a year of sharply rising tension over the North's missile tests and its sixth and largest nuclear test in defiance of UN sanctions.

But the closing days of the games were overshadowed by the U.S. announcement that it was imposing its largest package of sanctions aimed at getting North Korea to give up its nuclear and missile programmes.

U.S. President Donald Trump, in announcing the new sanctions warned of a “phase two” that could be “very, very unfortunate for the world” if the sanctions did not work.

North Korea denounced the sanctions and said a blockade by the U.S. would be considered an act of war.

### **CPC clears the decks for third term for Xi**

China's Xinhua news agency reported that Communist Party of China (CPC) proposed that the President and the Vice-President will not be constitutionally restricted to two consecutive terms in office. This, in effect, means that Mr. Xi, who is serving his second consecutive five-year term, can continue beyond 2023.

- Analysts point out that the removal of a two-term restriction on the Vice-President is also significant. There is speculation that Wang Qishan, the country's anti-corruption czar and Mr. Xi's trusted ally, who officially retired in November,2017 could be reappointed as Vice-President.

- Alternatively, he could head a new National Supervisory Commission that will be empowered to throw its dragnet beyond the 86 million members of the CPC, including private business houses.
- Some observers, however, highlight that the CPC's move is not confined to Mr. Xi's term, but is a deeper long-term initiative.

The removal of the two-term limit means President Xi, who is serving his second consecutive five-year term, will now be leading China for one more decade, or perhaps remain in the post for his entire lifetime.

## **STATE - AP**

### **Initiative for GPS-based data on aqua farms**

The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) on launched a first-of-kind initiative to develop a GPS-based database of export-oriented aquaculture farms in the country.

#### **Why?**

To ensure antibiotic and other banned substances-free shrimp and other exportable varieties of fish from Visakhapatnam and other places.

#### **Unique number**

According to the the MPEDA, nodal agency of the Union Commerce and Industry Ministry, all the farms engaged in production of shrimp, shellfish and other exportable varieties of fish would be enrolled by providing the farmers cards carrying a Unique Identification Number (Farm ID) and Quick Response (QR) code containing basic information about their farms.

An estimated 1,00,000 farms covering about 1,95,994 hectares are under shrimp culture. Of this, the MPEDA has collected the GPS data for 65,595 farms covering 1,48,321 hectares while enrolment has been completed for 54,165 farms.

The produce from the enrolled units could be traced back from farm to end-consumer in case of detection of unwanted or banned substances in the produce.

### **India's first AI University to come up at Amaravati**

India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) University would be set up at futuristic capital coming up at Amaravati with the support of Finland. The university would train youngsters on the latest AI technologies.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu as part of real time governance initiative, was very keen on establishing the AI University at Amaravati for which they were planning to allot 40 to 50 acres.

The university would be operational by March, 2019, he disclosed.

As AI was playing a dominant role in the age of disruptive technologies, A.P was keen on grabbing the opportunity by producing a large number of professionals in robotics and other latest technologies.

The university proposed at Amaravati will also have R&D lab and incubation centre for startups. The State Government has already announced sanction of a fund of ₹100 crore to encourage innovative projects.

### **Second day of summit - 285 MoUs signed**

On the second day at the ongoing CII Partnership Summit and Sunrise Andhra Pradesh Investment Meet, as many as 285 MoUs were signed attracting an investment of ₹1,74,568 crore. They are expected to provide employment to about 2,86,371 people.

With this the total number of MoUs signed for the two days reached 364 fetching an investment of ₹2,18,814 cr and providing employment opportunity to 3,84,662 people.

It may be noted on the first day of the partnership 79 MoUs were signed attracting an investment of ₹44,246 crore.

### **Details**

10 MoUs were signed in aerospace and defence sector, 25 MoUs in textiles sector, 34 MoUs in energy sector, 169 MoUs in food processing, 25 MoUs in Health sector and 22 MoUs in IT, Electronics and Industries sector.

### **Micro irrigation gets a boost in Anantapur**

On the second day of CII Partnership Summit , 11 micro irrigation companies with ₹150 crore investment signed MoU with the State government to establish manufacturing units in plastic park hub coming in Anantapur district.

With this farmers will get drip irrigation system at an affordable price.

All the 11 minor irrigation companies are functioning from North India. They have decided to establish their units in Andhra Pradesh responding to the call given by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

### **Feeder ambulances in remote tribal areas**

**News –**

Dept. of Health, Medical and Family Welfare will soon be rolling out a fleet of 122 feeder ambulances or two-wheeler ambulances in several remote tribal villagers across Andhra Pradesh.

**Aim –**

The unique initiative is aimed at reaching out to the areas inaccessible for the normal ambulance.

The major objective is to mitigate the time taken to reach the patient in remote areas, which are inaccessible by normal ambulance, thereby, delaying the process of providing aid in times of emergencies. Now feeder ambulances will overcome this hassle and provide timely aid to many.

The ambulances will be equipped with all facilities to aid the person concerned immediately “like oxygen cylinder, IV fluids, suction catheter, nebuliser mask, glucometer, pulse oxymeter and medicines.

They will be attached to ambulances and operated by the ITDAs.

**Stone laid for IIFT, IIP**

The foundation stone for Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) and Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP) in Kakinada of East Godavari district were laid by unveiling a plaque at the second day of CII summit.

For IIFT and IIP campuses, the State Government has allotted 25 acres each.

Work on construction of campuses would be taken up on a fast-track mode.

**STATE-TELANGANA**

**State-level panel to purchase farm produce**

Chief Minister said that the State-level farmers coordination committee will be mandated to purchase agricultural produce from farmers if they are not guaranteed minimum support price by traders at market yards.

- The State government will give a bank guarantee of Rs 6,000 crore to Rs 7,000 crore for the corpus for the State level panel to let it purchase the produce and, also permit it to sell the stocks anywhere in the country.

The government will sanction Rs 12 lakh each for construction of permanent ‘RytuVedikas’ over an acre of land in each village. The committees will be responsible for all agricultural activities from cropping to marketing for every 5,000 acres.

### **e-Saayam to the aid of farmers**

The officials of the Agricultural Department in coordination with the scientists at the KrishiVignan Kendra at Jammikunta and support of Karimnagar District Collector have created a group — eSaayam — that shares credible and actionable information on pest control and other farm related subjects. They spent around Rs 2.78 lakh on developing the solution.

- The e-Saayam group includes all the agricultural extension officers (AEO), agricultural officers, horticulture officials, scientists of KVK and two agricultural scientists from Hyderabad.
- All the AEOs in the district would visit their clusters comprising 5,000 acres daily and collect photographs of the crops along with soil, water and weather data and send it to the e-Saayam group.
- The scientists, after analyzing the crop situation, prepare a farm specific advice via the same media to the AEOs, who in turn, disseminate it among the farmers to check the spread of pest. They would also take out print outs and display at the gramapanchayat offices for the benefit of the community.