

October 27th news:

International:

- Trump admin makes it more difficult for H-1B visa extension

In a new directive, US President Donald Trump's administration has made it more difficult to renew non-immigrant visas such as H-1B and L1, popular among Indian IT professionals

Rescinding its more than 13-year-old policy, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services, (USCIS) said, in its latest memorandum issued on October 23, that the burden of proof in establishing eligibility is, at all times, on the petitioner.

Under the previous policy, if a person was once found to be eligible for a work visa initially, they would usually be considered for visa extension.

Now, during every extension, they need to prove to the federal authorities that they are still eligible for the visa they apply for.

National:

- Rajasthan House passes quota Bill for Gujjars and four other castes

The Rajasthan Assembly on 26th October passed a Bill which grants 5 per cent reservation to Gujjars and four other castes in the state.

The Rajasthan Backward Classes (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions in the State and of Appointment and Posts in Services under the State) Bill, 2017, seeks to increase the Other Backward Classes (OBC) quota from 21 per cent to 26 per cent by creating a section for More Backward Classes for Banjara, Gadiya Lohar, Gujjar, Raika and Gadariya castes.

However, the Bill, tabled by the Vasundhara Raje government, also increases the current 49 per cent reservation to 54 per cent, exceeding the 50 per cent limit set by the Supreme Court.

Bilateral:

- India, Sri Lanka ink housing project deal in Hambantota

Sri Lanka signed an agreement with India to build 1,200 houses in a public ceremony held in the southern port city, Hambantota on 26th October. As many as 46,000 homes have been built in the Tamil-majority north and east, while 4,000 houses are currently being built in the hill country in the Central and Uva provinces, where several thousand Sri Lankans of recent Indian origin live and work.

Economy:

- Niti Aayog recommends strategic divestment of 34 sick PSUs

Government think-tank Niti Aayog has recommended strategic disinvestment of 34 sick public sector units so far, its CEO Amitabh Kant said on 26th October. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) had asked the think-tank to look into the viability of sick state-run companies.

The government has budgeted to raise Rs72,500 crore through stake sale in PSUs in the current fiscal. This includes Rs46,500 crore from minority stake sale, Rs15,000 crore from strategic disinvestment and Rs11,000 crore from listing of PSU insurance companies.

Books

- India 2017 year book

Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje launched an e-book titled 'India 2017 Yearbook', compiled by the present Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Rajiv Mehrishi. The e-book includes a plethora of information on important dignitaries, state policy, public schemes and important data about demographics, trade, economy and many other topics. Mc Graw Hill Education Publishers is the publisher of the e-book.