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NATIONAL NEWS

- The **Central government** is planning to set up one National Skill Training Institute (NSTI) in every State to meet the rising demand for skilled manpower in the country.
 - Union Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship **Dharmendra Pradhan** laid the foundation stone of country's **first such skill training institute** at **Barang near Bhubaneswar**.
- The government has formed a committee comprising officials of the environment ministry, experts from **NEERI, IITs** and various other forums to look into the issue of industrial pollution around the iconic **Taj Mahal**.
 - The committee will be headed by **C K Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.
- The city of **Udaipur** has once again in **2018** been ranked among the **World's Best Cities by Travel + Leisure**. Udaipur, the heritage-city built by the **Maharanas of Mewar** in the **16th century**, is on the third place among the **15** of the world's best cities.
 - The top **2 cities** are both in **Mexico: San Miguel de Allende and Oaxaca**.
- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme, **PMEGP** is estimated to have generated over **11,13,000 employments** during the last three years **i.e. 2015-16 to 2017-18**.
 - This information was given by Minister of state for **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Shri Giriraj Singh** in a written reply in the **Rajya Sabha**.
- The **10th edition of the Delhi Dialogue** begins in **New Delhi**. **External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj** delivered the keynote address of the two-day event. The theme of this event is **'Strengthening India-ASEAN Maritime Co-operation'**.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

- The **3rd BRICS Media** Forum under the theme of “**BRICS Media Cooperation – Fostering an Inclusive, Just World Order**” will be held on **July 18-19** in **Cape Town, South Africa**.
- The **UK** has topped an **annual global ranking of nations’ soft power**, with **France placed second on the list of 30 countries** which does not feature **India**.
 - The **2018 ‘Soft Power 30’** index, published last week by UK-based strategic communications consultancy firm **Portland and the University of Southern California Center on Public Diplomacy**, ranked **Germany** as **third** followed by the **US**.
- The Militaries of **India and Pakistan** will be part of a mega anti-terror drill in **Russia** in **August** which is being organised by the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (**SCO**). The drill, “**Peace Mission**”, will take place nearly three months.
 - The exercise will be joined by all SCO member countries including **Russia, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan**.

APPOINTMENTS

- Actress **Richa Chadha** has become the **face and voice of the Save the Elephants campaign by animal rights** organisation **People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)**.
- Wrestling Federation of India (**WFI**) president **Brij Bhushan Saran Singh** is set to be named the **Chef de Mission** of the **Asian Games-bound Indian contingent**.