

CURRENT AFFAIRS



DECEMBER 2016

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Current Affairs December 2016

This is a guide to provide you a precise summary and big collection of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) covering national and international current affairs for the month of **December 2016**. This guide helps you in preparation for Indian competitive examinations like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade, Officer Grade etc.

Audience

Aspirants who are preparing for different competitive exams like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade, Officer Grade etc.

Even though you are not preparing for any exams but are willing to have news encapsulated in a roll which you can walk through within 30 minutes, then we have put all the major points for the whole month in a precise and interesting way.

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Table of Contents

Current Affairs December 2016.....	1
Audience.....	1
Copyright and Disclaimer	1
Table of Contents.....	2
APPOINTMENTS.....	4
AWARDS	11
BOOKS & AUTHORS.....	19
COMMITTEES.....	22
DEATHS.....	24
DEFENCE.....	28
ECONOMIC	32
ENVIRONMENT	39
FINANCE.....	42
IMPORTANT DAYS.....	53
INTERNATIONAL.....	58
MISCELLANEOUS.....	73
NATIONAL.....	76
PERSONS IN NEWS.....	110
PLACES IN NEWS.....	113

REGIONAL	116
REPORTS	129
RESIGNATIONS & RETIREMENTS	137
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	140
SPORTS	147

APPOINTMENTS

1. Mr. Amar Abrol appointed as the Managing Director of AirAsia

AirAsia has appointed Amar Abrol as its Managing Director in addition to his role as Chief Executive Officer (CEO). He was appointed as the CEO of the Airline in April 2016.



AirAsia India is an Indian low cost carrier. It is a joint venture between the Tata Group and Malaysia's AirAsia Berhad. The airline was recently in the news for alleged fraudulent transactions worth Rs. 22 crores that took place in their office.

2. Mr. B S Bhullar appointed as the Chief of Directorate General of Civil Aviation

The appointments committee of the Cabinet has appointed Senior Bureaucrat B S Bhullar as the Chief of Aviation Regulator, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). He will replace M Sathiyavathy who was named as the new Union Labour Secretary.



Mr. Bhullar is presently working as the Additional Secretary in the Civil Aviation Ministry. He was also holding additional charge of the DGCA. The DGCA is the Indian Governmental Regulatory Body for Civil Aviation under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

3. Mr. Rakesh Asthana appointed as the Interim Director of CBI

The Union Government has appointed senior IPS officer Rakesh Asthana as the Interim Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) following the retirement of Mr. Anil Sinha.



Mr. Rakesh Asthana is a Gujarat-cadre officer of 1984 batch. Mr. Asthana served as the commissioner of police of Vadodara and Surat region. The CBI Director is selected by a group comprising of the Prime Minister, Chief Justice of India and the Leader of the Opposition or the leader of the largest party in opposition in the Lok Sabha.

4. Sunil Taldar appointed as the CEO and Director for Airtel DTH

Bharti Airtel has appointed Mr. Sunil Taldar as the CEO & Director for their DTH division. Sunil will be a member of the Airtel Management Board and report to Gopal Vittal, MD & CEO (India & South Asia), Bharti Airtel. He takes over from Shashi Arora who after a successful stint of approximately five years as the CEO of the DTH division has moved as the MD & CEO of the Airtel Payments Bank.



Prior to this, Sunil Taldar was the Country Head – Indonesia for Mondelez (erstwhile Cadbury). He has a rich experience of over 28 years in the FMCG industry.

5. Justice J.S. Khehar to be the next Chief Justice of India

Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar has been recommended as the 44th Chief Justice of India. He will succeed CJI Thakur who will be demitting office on January 3, 2017. Justice Khehar led the five-judge constitution bench in the Supreme Court which had struck down the controversial NJAC Act for the appointment of judges.



He has also headed a bench which had set aside the imposition of the President's Rule in Arunachal Pradesh in January 2016. He was also a part of the bench which sent Sahara Chief Subrata Roy to jail.

6. Navdeep Singh Suri takes up appointment as the Ambassador to UAE

Senior diplomat Navdeep Singh Suri has taken up his appointment as the Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates.



Mr. Suri is a 1983 batch Indian Foreign Service official. Before, this Mr. Suri was serving as the Indian High Commissioner in Canberra. He had earlier served in India's diplomatic missions in Cairo, Damascus, Washington, Dar es Salaam, London and as India's Consul General in Johannesburg. He has also headed the West Africa and Public Diplomacy divisions at the Ministry of External Affairs.

7. Justice Mian Saqib Nisar appointed as the new Chief Justice of Pakistan

Justice Mian Saqib Nisar has been appointed as the new Chief Justice of Pakistan. He is currently a senior judge of the Supreme Court (SC). He will take charge on December 31st and replace Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali, who is set to retire on December 30th.

He has also served as the Acting Chief Justice of Pakistan when the incumbent CJP Anwar Zaheer Jamali was on a seven-day official visit to Turkey.



8. Veena Mankar appointed as the Non-Executive Chairperson of the IDFC Bank

The Board of Directors of the IDFC Bank has approved the appointment of Ms. Veena Mankar as the Non-Executive Chairperson with effect from December 09th, 2016, up to July 26th, 2018.

Ms. Mankar is a banking and financial services professional with expertise in trade and structured finance, financing for MSMEs and microfinance. Ms. Mankar is also a Director on the Board of the Liberty Videocon General Insurance Co. Ltd. She started her career in 1975 with ICICI.



9. Ex-SEBI Chief C B Bhave appointed as the Non-Executive Chairman by Vistaar

Vistaar Financial Services has appointed former SEBI Chief C B Bhave as their Non-Executive Chairman and Independent Director.

Mr. Bhave was the Chairman of SEBI during the 2008-11 period. Earlier, he was the Chairman and Managing Director of the National Securities Depositories Limited (NSDL). Vistaar Financial Services is a MSME-focused financing firm. It has a loan portfolio size of Rs. 1,000 crores and currently has 198 branches primarily in the rural and semi-urban areas.



10. Rajendra Kumar appointed as the new CBDT Member

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has appointed the Senior IRS Officer Rajendra Kumar as the new Member of the CBDT. He is a 1980-batch Indian Revenue Service officer.

The CBDT is headed by a Chairman and has six members. One member is yet to be appointed. The CBDT is currently led by Chairman Sushil Chandra.

CBDT is the policy making body for the Income Tax Department. It is headquartered in New Delhi.



11. Facebook India appoints a new Industry Director

Google India's Industry head of e-commerce business Pulkit Trivedi has been appointed as the new Industry Director for e-commerce, retail, travel and financial services verticals of Facebook India. Pulkit Trivedi has vast experience in business development and has personalized marketing skills for Indian and multinational technology companies such as Google, Intel, Microsoft, IBM and HCL.

Pulkit Trivedi has received an award as one of the Hottest Young Business Leaders under 40' by Business Today in year 2015.



12. VG Kannan appointed as the new CEO of the **Indian Banks'** Association

Mr. VG Kannan has been appointed as the Chief Executive of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA). He succeeds MV Tanksale who retired from his office on August 9th, 2016.

Mr. Kannan had retired as the Managing Director & Group Executive (Associates & Subsidiaries) of the State Bank of India on July 31st, 2016.

IBA is a self-regulatory organisation of banks and has 237 members with an aim to promote and develop sound and progressive banking principles, practices and conventions in India.



13. Rajiv Jain named as the next Director of IB, AK Dhasmana to head RAW

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Rajiv Jain as the Director of Intelligence Bureau and AK Dhasmana as the Secretary, Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) for a period of two years.



Mr. Jain is an IPS officer of the 1980 batch of Jharkhand cadre. He is currently working as the Special Director in the Intelligence Bureau. Mr. Dhasmana, a 1981 batch IPS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre is posted as the Special Secretary in the R&AW.

14. Lt Gen Bipin Rawat to be the next Indian Army Chief; B.S Dhanoa to be the IAF Chief

The Vice Chief of Army Staff, Lt General Bipin Rawat will be the new Chief of Army Staff, while Air Marshal BS Dhanoa will be the next Chief of Air Staff.



Lt. Gen Rawat will replace General Dalbir Singh. Lt. Gen Rawat has tremendous hands-on experience of serving in the combat areas and at various functional levels in the Indian Army over the last three decades.

Air Marshal Dhanoa, who will replace Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha, was commissioned into the fighter stream of the Air Force in June 1978.

15. Deepak Agarwal appointed as the CEO of the Noida Authority

The Uttar Pradesh Government has appointed the year 2000 batch IAS officer of UP cadre, Deepak Agarwal, as the CEO of the Noida Authority. He will replace Mr. P K Agarwal. Earlier Deepak Agarwal was the CEO of the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA).



Deepak Agarwal was also posted as the District Magistrate of Gautam Buddha Nagar district.

Mr. P K Agarwal will continue functioning as the additional CEO of the Noida Authority.

16. Girija Vaidyanathan appointed as the new Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu

IAS officer Girija Vaidyanathan has been appointed as the new Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu replacing P. Rama Mohana Rao, whose residence and the properties of his close associates were raided by the Income Tax authorities. Mr. Rao ascended to the top most position in the state official hierarchy.



Ms. Girija Vaidyanathan will hold additional charge as the Vigilance Commissioner and Commissioner for Administrative Reforms. She has served the state administration in various capacities for long.

17. Lt. Gen. Vinod Vashisht takes over as the DG of the NCC

Lt. Gen. Vinod Vashisht took over the reins of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) as its Director General. He succeeded Lt Gen A. Chakravarty, who retired on the 31st August 2016.



He has held various staff and command appointments and has been awarded with COAS & GOC-in-C Central Command Commendation, VSM & Bar for distinguished service in command and staff assignments. He was the Commandant, Officers Training Academy, Gaya prior to the current assignment.

18. Viral Acharya appointed as the Deputy Governor of RBI

The Government has appointed Viral Acharya as the new Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India for a 3-year term. He will join RBI on January 20. He will look after the Monetary Policy and Research cluster.



Prior to his appointment, he has been serving as CV Starr professor of economics at the New York University Stern School of Business since 2008. Recently, he was awarded the 'Rising Star in Finance Award'.

19. Former IAS officer Anil Baijal to be the next Lt. Governor of Delhi

Former home secretary Anil Baijal has been appointed as the next Lieutenant Governor (L-G) of Delhi. Baijal is a 1969 batch IAS officer. He had retired from service in 2006 as Secretary, Urban Development Ministry. He is a former vice chairman of Delhi Development Authority.



He has served as secretary general of the Federation of Indian Airlines and as chief executive officer of Prasar Bharati. Delhi's former Lt. Governor Najeeb Jung had resigned on December 22 2016, 18 months before the end of his tenure.

20. SP Vaid appointed as the new J&K Police Chief

The Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet has cleared the appointment of 1986 batch IPS officer Dr. Shesh Pal Vaid, Special DG, Coordination and Law and Order, as new Director General of Police.



He will succeed DGP K Rajendra, whose extended term of service ended on 24th December, 2016. Mr. Vaid will hold office till October, 2019. He is the second officer from Jammu to have risen to the post of Director General of Police after MM Khajuria who held the position in 1985.

AWARDS

1. UAE-based Indian teenager won the Children's Peace Prize

Indian teenager in the United Arab Emirates, Kehkashan Basu, has won this year's prestigious International Children's Peace Prize for her fight to save the planet.

Basu is an environmental activist fighting against climate justice. She founded her organisation Green Hope at the age of 12 which now has more than 1,000 volunteers in 10 countries around the world. It carries out environment-focused campaigns. The prize is awarded annually "to a child who fights courageously for children's rights".



2. La La Land won the Best Film at the New York Film Critics Circle

Musical romantic drama La La Land has been chosen as the best film of 2016 by the New York Film Critics Circle. It is also considered to be one of the Oscar frontrunners.

Other awards included:

- **Best Actor:** Casey Affleck for Manchester by the Sea.
- **Best Actress:** Isabelle Huppert for her work in both Elle and Things to Come.
- **Best Director:** Barry Jenkins for Moonlight.



3. Actress Katy Perry honoured with the humanitarian award at the UNICEF event

Katy Perry received the Audrey Hepburn Humanitarian Award for her work as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in support of the world's most vulnerable children.

Katy Perry has served in this role since year 2013 with a special focus on engaging young people in UNICEF's work, traveling to some of the poorest and most remote regions in Madagascar and Vietnam to bring awareness to UNICEF's child protection, education and other health programs.



4. Kaadu Pookkunna Neram to compete for BAFTA

Critically acclaimed Malayalam movie 'Kaadu Pookkunna Neram', written and directed by Dr. Biju has found a place in the list of films which are competing for the British Academy Film and Television Award nominations in different categories.

This movie is also competing in seven other categories including that of the best director, actor and actress and cinematographer. The nominations would be declared on the 10th January, 2017. The movie revolves around the conflict between authority and activists who fight for the rights of marginalized.



5. Star Screen Awards 2016

The 23rd edition of the annual film awards show, Star Screen Awards, was held at Mumbai co-hosted by Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan.

Shoojit Sircar's "Pink" bagged as many as four awards, including for the Best Film. Amitabh Bachchan won the Best Actor award for the film. Alia Bhatt received the Best Actress Award for Uda Punjab. Rekha was bestowed with the Lifetime achievement award. The Critics' Choice award for the Best Actor went to Sushant Singh Rajput for "M.S. Dhoni – The Untold Story" and the Critics' Choice award for the Best Actress went to Swara Bhaskar for "Nil Battey Sannata".



6. President presented the Shilp Guru Awards, National Awards

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee presented the Shilp Guru awards as well as the National Awards to master craftsperson's at a function at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre in New Delhi.



These Shilp Guru Award consists of a gold coin, Rs. 2,00,000/- in cash, a Tamrapatra, an Angavastram and a certificate. The National Award consists of Rs. 1,00,000/- in cash, a Tamrapatra, an Angavastram and a certificate.

The Shilp Guru Awards, National Awards and National Merit Certificates are awarded to a craftsperson only once in a lifetime, to encourage master craftsperson's.

7. Helen Marten wins the 2016 Turner Prize

Sculptor and painter Helen Marten has won the 2016 Turner Prize. She received £25,000 as award. Marten uses sculpture, screen printing and writing to create her work. Marten had won the first-ever Hepworth Prize for sculpture last month.



The Turner prize is awarded to a British artist, under the age of 50, who is considered to have put on the best exhibition of the past year. It is named after the renowned English Painter J. M. W. Turner.

8. BEML bags CII National Quality Award

The 'CII National Quality 2016 Award' was won by BEML Ltd, the Public-Sector Company under the Ministry of Defence.



BEML was awarded for practicing various EFQM Models (European Foundation for Quality Management) and achieving results. The award has been jointly instituted by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and the Export Import Bank (EXIM). The Chairman & Managing Director, BEML, Deepak Kumar Hota, received the award at a function held at Bengaluru.

9. Petrotech 2016 awards presented

The Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Shri Arun Jaitley presented the Petrotech 2016 awards in New Delhi. The key winners of the awards were:



- **Lifetime Achievement Award in Upstream:** Dr Avinash Chandra, Former DG, DGH
- **Lifetime Achievement Award in Downstream:** Shri P.S. Teckchandani, Swan Energy Ltd
- **Lifetime Achievement Award in Midstream:** Dr. C R Prasad, Former CMD, GAIL India Ltd
- **Lifetime Achievement Award in R&D:** Dr. Paul Ratnasamy, Chief Scientific Officer, Alphajet Inc
- **Lifetime Achievement Award International:** Mr. Igor Ivanovich Sechin, CEO, Rosneft
- **Rising Star Award for Start-ups in Hydrocarbon sector:** Planys Tech Pvt Ltd
- **Best project Management team:** HPCL and BPCL
- **Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (Corporate):** Cairn India Ltd
- **Special Technology Award:** Greening of oil and gas business: ONGC Ltd

10. Indian documentary on Down Syndrome wins an international award

Indian filmmaker Onir's documentary – Raising the Bar has won the Award of Recognition at the Australian film festival, which was held along with the Hollywood Independent Documentary Awards.



The documentary is based on six Indian and Australian youth who have Down syndrome. Onir is best known for his directorial films like I AM, My Brother Nikhil and Bas Ek Pal. He has also won the National Award for his film – I Am.

11. John Kerry conferred with the highest French Civilian Distinction Legion of Honour

The US Secretary of State John Kerry was conferred with the highest French civilian distinction, Officer of the Legion of Honour for his contribution in the peace efforts.

The French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault presented Kerry with the insignia of the Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor at a ceremony in Paris. The Legion of Honor was created by Napoleon Bonaparte and is France's highest military and civilian decoration. Foreign nationals, who have served France in one way or the other are eligible for the honour.



12. Ratan Tata awarded the 'Global Agriculture Leadership Award 2016' by ICFA

Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) awarded the 'Global Agriculture Leadership Award 2016' to Tata Sons Interim Chairman Ratan Tata for his overall contributions spanning over five decades through industry-led development of the Indian economy and agriculture, which positively impacted the lives of millions of people in India and globally.

He was awarded the 'Lifetime Achievement Award 2016' for his role to help Tata Group be recognized as the globally admired group.



13. BEML conferred with CEPM Fellowship Award

Shri Deepak Kumar Hota, Chairman & Managing Director, BEML LIMITED, a Public Sector undertaking under the Ministry of Defence has been conferred with the CEPM Fellowship Award 2016 at the 24th Global Symposium organized by the Centre for Excellence in Project Management.

This Award was bestowed on Shri Hota in recognition of his commitment in transforming and driving organizational capabilities through human centric approach.



14. Maharashtra Chief Minister Selected for SIES- Kanchi Seer Award

Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis has been selected for the SIES Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswati National Eminence Award for Public Leadership. Similarly, ISRO Chairman Mr. A S Kiran Kumar was selected for Science & Technology Category. UK-based scholar John Ralston Marr was selected for his work in the International category and Hari Katha exponent Kamala Murthy was selected in the Social Thinkers, Philosophers and Pravachana Karthas category.



Each award carries a cash prize of Rs 2.5 lakhs, a citation, a shawl and an ornamental lamp. The awards were instituted by the South Indian Education Society (SIES) in 1998 in the memory of the late Seer of Kanchi, Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswati.

15. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights gets SKOCH Awards for POCSO e-Box

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) of Ministry of Women and Child Development has been conferred the SKOCH Silver and SKOCH Order-of Merit award.

These two awards were received by the NCPCR for applying technology to develop an electronic drop box, POCSO e-Box for registering complaints on Child Sexual Abuse.



POCSO e-box is a unique endeavor by NCPCR for receiving online complaint of Child Sexual Abuse directly from the victim.

16. Sahitya Akademi awards announced

Sahitya Akademi announced its annual Sahitya Akademi awards for year 2016 in 24 languages. The noted English novelist Jerry Pinto has got the award for his novel Em and the Big Hoom and Hindi Author Nasira Sharma has been named for the award for her novel Paarijat.



Other awarded novelists are Boluwaru Mohammad Kunhi for Swatantryada Ota in Kannada, Edwin JFD Souza for Kale Bhangar in Konkani and Gita Upadhyay for Janmabhumi Mero Swadesh in Nepali.

17. HRD ministry conferred with the Web Ratna Digital India Award – 2016

The Ministry of Human Resource Development website has been given the Platinum Award in the Web Ratna Category in the recently concluded Digital India awards, 2016.



Digital India awards, earlier known as the Web Ratna Awards, were instituted under the Ambit of National Portal of India. The award acknowledges exemplary initiatives of various government entities in the realm of e-governance. These awards are conferred by the Ministry of Electronics and IT to promote more innovative e-governance initiatives by the government entities.

18. Kaisa Matomaki and Maksym Radziwill honoured with the SASTRA Ramanujan award

The 2016 SASTRA-Ramanujan award for mathematics was presented to Maksym Radziwill of McGill University, Canada and Kaisa Matomaki of University of Turku, Finland for their mathematical work on properties of numbers. They were presented with \$10,000 prize money.



Kaisa Matomaki from Finland's University of Turku is the first woman to receive this prize since it was instituted in 2005. The SASTRA Ramanujan Prize is awarded every year to a young mathematician judged to have done outstanding work in Ramanujan's fields of interest.

19. Bengali poet Shankha Ghosh to receive the 2016 Jnanpith Award

The Jnanpith Selection Board chose eminent modern Bengali poet Shri Shankha Ghosh as the recipient of the 52nd Jnanpith Award for 2016. Ghosh has written several poems including 'Adim lata-gulmomay', 'Murkha baro, samajik nay', 'Kabir abhipray', 'Mukh dheke jay bigyapane' and 'Babarar prarthana'.

The Jnanpith Award is an Indian literary award presented annually to an author for their "outstanding contribution towards literature". The award consists of a citation plaque, a cash prize of ₹1 lakh and a bronze replica of Saraswati.



20. Rajasthani writer Satya Narayan chosen for Bihari Puraskar

Eminent Rajasthani litterateur Satya Narayan has been chosen for the 26th Bihari Puraskar, 2016 for his Hindi book titled, "Yeh Ek Dunia". The book was published in 2010.

Bihari Puraskar is a literary award instituted by K. K. Birla Foundation and awarded to an outstanding work published in Hindi or Rajasthani by a Rajasthani writer. It carries a citation, a plaque and prize money of Rs. 1 lakh. Dr. Bhagwati Lal Vyas had won the award in 2015 for his Rajasthani Poetry, *Kathe Sun Aawe Hai Sabad*.



BOOKS & AUTHORS

1. Sachin Tendulkar's autobiography "Playing it my way" named Book of the Year

Sachin Tendulkar's autobiography "Playing it my way" has won the prestigious Crossword Book of the Year Award in the Autobiography category. The book was written by Boria Majumdar.



The book also had entered the Limca Book of World Records for being the bestselling adult hardback across both fiction and non-fiction categories. It also holds the record for logging up Rs. 13.51 crore in retail value terms. This autobiography was launched a year after his retirement in Nov 2013.

2. "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child" topped Amazon's best-selling books of 2016

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child topped Amazon's list of best-selling books of 2016. The book is written by Harry Potter series author J.K. Rowling, Jack Thorne and John Tiffany. "When Breath Becomes Air" by Paul Kalanithi was the second book in the list.



"The Nest" by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney was the top debut novel of the year. The Playscript by JK Rowling, Jack Thorne and John Tiffany, was also named this year's 'Most Wished For' and 'Most Gifted' book.

3. An inspirational book written by first IAS Officer to scale Mount Everest

Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha released an inspirational book titled 'An Inspiring Journey of Transforming Dream into Reality' written by Ravindra Kumar, an IAS officer of 2011 batch. Ravindra Kumar is the first such IAS officer, who scaled the Mount Everest.



The book describes the ups and downs of Ravindra Kumar's life and his journey from the deep sea, where he spent almost a decade as a seafarer before scaling the Mount Everest. Ravindra Kumar has also been an awardee of the Sikkim Khel Ratna Award and Vishesh Khel Samman.

4. 'Courts of India – Past to Present' by Supreme Court of India: Book

The book titled 'Courts of India – Past to Present' was released by the Supreme Court of India. It is a comprehensive history of the Courts and the Judicial System in India. The book begins with country's ancient legal systems and practices to the modern legal system.



The book has no single author, instead the Editorial Board comprises members of both the Bench and the Bar. This board includes three sitting Supreme Court Judges – Justices SA Bobde, Rohinton Fali Nariman and UU Lalit – and one judge from the Delhi High Court, Justice Ravindra S Bhat.

5. Hrithik launched a book 'Tactabet' for the visually impaired children

A children's book series 'Tactabet', Braille-Tactile-Text version of ABC books, published by White Prints for visually impaired people in both Hindi and English languages, was recently launched by actor Hrithik Roshan. The books are created to enable fun and learning for visually impaired and kids with low vision as the book series is on the alphabets.



These books have been designed and penned by Neha Talesara, an alumnus of National Institute of Design. The technical know-how, Poly Braille and computerized effects are developed by Chanakya Mudrak Private Limited.

6. Indian Dairy Cooperative Amul launched 'India 3.0' book

Indian dairy cooperative Amul launched the updated edition of its book called 'Amul's India 3.0'. The book throws light at how the 'Amul girl' has over the years covered the nation's concerns and her acceptance towards the changing world around her.



The book was launched by social commentator Santosh Desai, Amul's Managing Director R.S. Sodhi, and journalists Indrajit Hazra, Rahul Da Cunha and Jai Arjun Singh. They unveiled many ideas and observations about the iconic 'Amul Girl'.

7. Rishi Kapoor's autobiography to be unveiled on the 15th January 2017

Famous actor Rishi Kapoor's autobiography titled "Khullam Khulla" will be released on the 15th January 2017. The book's title has been derived from one of his famous songs "Khullam Khulla Pyar Kareng Hum Dono".



The book describes about the ups and downs of actor Rishi Kapoor's life, his stardom and his honesty towards the real as well as the virtual world. The actor is known for his performances in movies such as "Bobby", "Karz", "Sagar" and more recently for "Kapoor & Sons".

COMMITTEES

1. Digital Payments Committee headed by Shri. Ratan P Watal submitted its Final Report

The Committee on Digital Payments, under the Chairmanship of Shri Ratan P. Watal, Principal Advisor, NITI Aayog, submitted its Final Report. The Committee has recommended medium term strategy for accelerating growth of Digital Payments in India.

The Report has recommended inclusion of financially and socially excluded groups and assimilation of emerging technologies in the market. It has also recommended for security of Digital Transactions and to provide level playing to all stakeholders and new players who will enter this new transaction space.



2. Centre to set up single tribunal to decide inter-state water disputes

The Centre has decided to set up a single, permanent Tribunal to adjudicate all inter-state river water disputes. It will be headed by a retired Supreme Court judge.

Besides this Tribunal, the government has also proposed to float some benches by amending the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956 to consider the disputes as and when required. Unlike the Tribunal, the benches will cease to exist once the disputes are resolved. The amendment also proposes to set up Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC), comprising experts and policy-makers to handle disputes prior to the Tribunal.



3. Parliament panel recommended more schemes for differently abled

A parliamentary panel has recommended revamping existing schemes for differently abled and formulation of new ones to cover more homeless and destitute Divyangs.

The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment has recommended that the Department of Empowerment of Persons in the Ministry of Social Justice formulate a national policy for PWDs on the lines of the National Policy for Older Persons. The Committee also urged to revamp the three schemes operated by the National Trust



namely Vikas, Samarth and Gharounda and make them effective and result-oriented.

4. Committee reconstituted to assist Krishna River Management Board

A committee was reformed to assist the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB), headed by A.K. Bajaj, former chairman of the Central Water Commission (CWC). Other members include Gopala Krishnan, R.P. Pandey, Pradeep Kumar Shukla and N.N. Rai.



Since Telangana government was not convinced with Mohile committee's biased recommendations, Union ministry reconstituted the committee to prepare a manual on projects, common to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. However, committee has advised to divide Krishna water in 70:30 ration between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, but Telangana government has strongly opposed.

DEATHS

1. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa passed away

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa passed away at the age of 68 years after suffering a cardiac arrest.

She was one of India's most powerful and popular politicians. She began her career as an actress and acted in more than 100 films in Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Kannada. She paired with MGR in about 28 films to become the most successful onscreen couple of all time with the masses. Jayalalithaa joined the AIADMK in 1982.



2. Astronaut John Glenn passed away

The first American astronaut to orbit Earth passed away at the age of 95 years. He was best known for circling the earth in 1962. Glenn circled the world three times on board the Mercury capsule "Friendship 7" before splashing down in the Atlantic Ocean on Feb. 20, 1962.

He also became the oldest person, worldwide, to fly into space when he returned to orbit aboard the space shuttle Discovery at the age of 77 years. Glenn served as an advisor to NASA until 1964.



3. Journalist, Actor Cho S Ramaswamy passed away

Veteran journalist, political analyst and theatre personality, Cho Ramaswamy, passed away at the age of 82 years.

He was the editor of Thuglak, a Tamil magazine known for its withering satire and fearless criticism of political figures. He served as an MP from 1999 to 2005.

He was also the winner of the B.D. Goenka award for excellence in journalism. He also acted in 180 movies, scripted 14 and directed four films.



4. Veteran jockey player Walter Swinburn passed away

Derby-winning rider and perfect horse trainer Walter Swinburn passed away at the age of 55 years. He was just 19 when he rode the Michael Stoute-trained Shergar to a record 10-length terrific win in the 1981 Epsom Derby and created history. He had also won Aga Khan Cup. He won 10 consecutive Ryder Cups from 1955-1973.

He was famously known as Choirboy. Some other famous horse riders paid tribute to him on his obituary.



5. Actor Bernard Fox passed away

Actor Bernard Fox, best known for his roles on the ABC Series Bewitched and James Cameron's Oscar-winning picture "Titanic", passed away at the age of 89 years.

He enacted the most famous role of Dr. Bombay, the witch doctor on "Bewitched". He also acted in popular movies like "The Mummy" and "Titanic".

He also made appearances in British films and on television. He had 30 film credits from 1956-2004.



6. Famous Economist Saumitra Chaudhuri died

Former member of the Planning Commission and veteran economist Saumitra Chaudhuri passed away due to lung cancer. He had the experience of working with important Government Committees and was on board of many high-level panels of the Government.

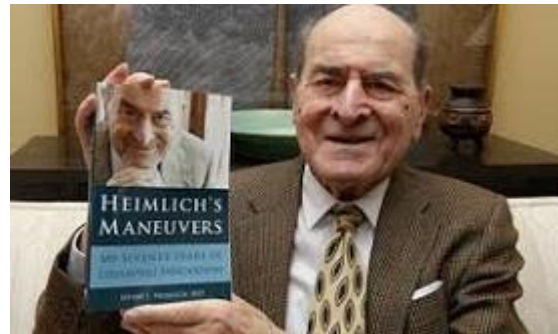
Mr. Chaudhuri was an eminent Economic Advisor and Research coordinator with the ICRA Limited and was associated with the Steel Authority of India Ltd and the State Bank of India. He had over 25 monographs and papers spanning issues of industry, regional development and fiscal policy.



7. Heimlich Maneuvers inventor Henry Heimlich passed away

Dr. Henry Heimlich who created the life-saving Heimlich Maneuver for choking victims, passed away at the age of 96 years after suffering a massive heart attack.

The Heimlich Maneuver saves a choking victim with a bear hug and abdominal thrusts to eject a throat obstruction. Heimlich also released his autobiography, "Heimlich's Maneuvers," and recounted how his technique was promoted to global fame starting in August 1974.



8. Veteran Malayalam Actor Jagannatha Varma died

Veteran Malayalam actor K. N. Jagannatha Varma passed away at the age of 77 years. Varma was in the Kerala Police force and had retired as the Superintendent of Police.

His well-known films include New Delhi, Lelam, Pathram, Nakshatrangale Sakshi, Sughamo Devi, Ee Thanuthe Veluppan Kalathu and No. 20 Madras Mail. He went on to do memorable roles in over 500 films. He was also a Kathakali artist.



9. Dinanath Bhargava who sketched the National Emblem passed away in Indore

Mr. Dinanath Bhargava, a co-artist in the team that sketched the National Emblem 'Lion Capital of Ashoka' and decorated the pages of the Constitution's manuscript, died at the age of 89 years in Indore.

Bhargava was chosen by noted painter Nandalal Bose, then the Principal of Kala Bhavan Shanti Niketan, in the group for designing the pages of the Indian Constitution's manuscript. The national emblem of India was adapted by the Government of India on the 26th January 1950.



10. Former Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake passed away

Former Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake passed away at the age of 83 years. He had served as a Prime Minister during Mahinda Rajapaksa's term as President from 2005 to 2010.



Wickremanayake had earlier held the post from August 2000 to December 2001. He was a member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party for more than 60 years. Wickremanayake entered politics in 1960. In 1970, he was appointed Deputy Minister, Justice, and went on to be the General Secretary of the SLFP in 1977.

11. Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Sunderlal Patwa passed away

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Sunderlal Patwa passed away at the age of 92 years. died after suffering a cardiac arrest.



Mr. Patwa was a two-time Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. He was also elected to the Lok Sabha from Chhindwara in 1997. He also served as a minister in the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Government. He took part in RSS movements. He went on to head the state unit of the BJP in 1996.

12. Pioneering Astronomer Vera Rubin passed away

Transformer of Modern Physics and Astronomy, Vera Rubin, passed away at the age of 88 years. She helped find powerful evidence of the dark matter.



Rubin is the second female astronomer to be elected to the National Academy of Sciences. She also received the National Medal of Science from President Bill Clinton in 1993 "for her pioneering research programs in observational cosmology". Rubin examined more than 200 galaxies in her career.

DEFENCE

1. India, US signed a \$750-million deal for 145 Artillery guns

India signed a government-to-government deal with the U.S. for 145 M-777 Ultra-Light Howitzers worth \$750 million under the Foreign Military Sales Program. This is the first major artillery deal signed by India after the Bofors scandal of the late 1980s.



The first lot of 25 guns will come to India in a fly away condition. The rest will be assembled in India in partnership with Mahindra. The manufacturer of the gun, BAE Systems, will invest about \$200 million in India as offsets.

2. INS Sumitra reached Darwin, Australia

The Indian Navy's Offshore Patrol Vessel Sumitra has reached Darwin, Australia. The ship is on her return passage to India after participating in the Royal New Zealand Navy International Naval Review 2016.



The three-day visit aims at strengthening bilateral ties and enhancing maritime security cooperation between the two countries. Sumitra, is the fourth of the Saryu class patrol ships, based on an indigenous design. Since commissioning in 2014, the most notable Operation has been Operation Rahat, which entailed the evacuation of personnel of various nationalities from war-torn Yemen in 2015.

3. Russia, India hold joint naval drills from December 14th to 21st

The Russian-Indian Indra NAVY-2016 naval exercise was held from 14th to 21st of this month. The first Russian-Indian naval exercises were held in May 2003.



The Indra NAVY-2016 consisted of two stages – coastal and naval. The coastal part was held from December 14th – 18th in the city of Visakhapatnam, while the naval part took place in the Bay of Bengal from December 19th – 21st. At least three vessels from each side will participate in the drills.

4. India designated as a Major Defence Partner of the US

The United States designated India as its "Major Defense Partner". This was announced in the India-US joint statement on the United States Secretary of Defence Ashton Carter's visit to New Delhi.

It is a status unique to India and has been made a part of the India Amendment in the National Defense Authorization Act, 2017 (NDAA), approved by the US Congress. The status will help facilitate defense trade and technology sharing between the countries.



5. India to train Vietnam's Sukhoi Su-30MK2 fighter pilots

India has signed an agreement with Vietnam to train the pilots of Vietnam's fleet of Russian-made Sukhoi Su-30MK2 'Flanker F' multirole combat aircraft. The agreement was signed in New Delhi by the Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar and his Vietnamese counterpart, General Ngo Xuan Lich.

The training of the fighter pilots from the Vietnam People's Army Air Force (VPAAF) by Indian Air Force (IAF) instructors is set to start in early 2017.



6. Exercise Konkan 16 was held in two phases from 05th to 16th December

The KONKAN 16, the 2016 Edition of the Annual Bilateral Maritime Exercise between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy, was held at Mumbai and Goa. Exercise KONKAN, named after the Western Coastal Region of India, was institutionalized in 2004.

The first phase from 05 – 09 December 2016, was a Command Planning exercise involving the two navies. The second phase was a LIVE EXERCISE (LIVEX), held from 12th – 16th December 2016 at Goa.



7. The Seventh Indo – Maldives joint military exercise commenced

The Seventh edition of the Exercise EKUVERIN was held from the 15th to 28th December 2016 at Kadhdhoo, Laamu Atoll, Maldives. The Exercise was a 14-day platoon level joint military exercise between the Indian Army & the Maldives National Defence Force conducted on a yearly basis.



The aim of the exercise is to conduct military training with emphasis on amphibious & counter insurgency/ counter terrorism operations with a view to enhance interoperability between the two armies. The previous edition of the exercise was held in India at Trivandrum, Kerala.

8. Indo – Russian Bilateral Naval Exercise held at Bay of Bengal

INDRA NAVY, an annual bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Navy was conducted in the Bay of Bengal from 14th to 21st December 2016. The primary aim of exercise INDRA NAVY-16 was to increase inter-operability amongst the two navies and develop procedures for maritime security operations.



The scope of the exercise includes wide-ranging professional interactions in harbor phase and a diverse canvas of operational activities across a spectrum of maritime operations at sea.

9. GRSE Launched Indian Navy's Eighth Landing Craft Utility

Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) launched Indian Navy's eighth landing craft utility (LCU), an amphibious ship. The ship was named 'LCU-L58'.



This LCU-L58 can displace 830 tonnes and can be deployed for multirole activities like beaching operations for landing troops ashore, humanitarian aid and disaster relief operations and evacuation of personnel from distant islands. It is armed with two CRN 91 naval guns, two heavy machine guns, four medium machine guns and portable air defence system.

10. India successfully test-fired nuclear-capable cruise missile called Nirbhay

India successfully test-fired its home-grown long range subsonic cruise missile Nirbhay from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur on sea off the Odisha coast. The surface-to-surface missile is developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation.



Nirbhay can carry conventional and nuclear warheads. It has a range of more than 1000 kms, weighs about 1500 kgs and has a length of 6 meters. It is difficult to be detected by the enemy's radars. Nirbhaya was first test fired on March 12, 2013 from the ITR.

11. DRDO successfully flight tests the Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon

The Defence and Research Development Organization, DRDO has successfully flight tested the Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon, SAAW, from an Indian Air Force aircraft. The flight test was conducted at the integrated test range in Chandipur, Odisha.



SAAW is an indigenously designed and developed 120 kilograms' class Smart Weapon, developed by DRDO. It is capable of engaging ground targets with high precision up to a range of 100 kilometres. The light weight high precision guided bomb is one of the world class weapons systems.

12. Indian Army partnered with IIT Gandhinagar for critical technology requirements

Indian Army has inked an MoU with the IIT Gandhinagar to set up a research and development (R&D) cell at the IIT campus. The two parties will collaborate in areas including critical technology requirements of Indian Army and sharing of professional and technical knowledge.



The research cell will help identify problems and possible solutions for the Indian Army. Indian Army will also conduct short term courses and lectures at the institute.

ECONOMIC

1. India's GDP grows at 7.3% in the Q2 of 2016-17

As per the data published by the Central Statistical Office (CSO), India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at 7.3% in the second quarter (July-September) of 2016-17 but stayed lower than 7.6% in the corresponding period of the last year.

Growth rate, as measured by Gross Value Added (GVA), declined to a three-quarter low of 7.1% during the months of July-September. Gross fixed capital formation was only 29 percent of the GDP in Q2 of this financial year as compared with the 32.9 percent in the Q2 of 2015-16.



2. Morgan Stanley lowers India's growth forecast to 7.3% for FY'17

Morgan Stanley lowered its growth forecast of India for FY'17 to 7.3% from 7.7% earlier because of the demonetization. It also rolled out our F2019 growth forecast at 7.9%.

The demonetization is expected to affect domestic demand in view of disruption in cash transactions until the end of December. It is also expected that consumers will hold back spending on big-ticket items in the near term and property spending in the medium term.



3. Government approved 6 new SEZs

The Board of Approval (BoA), headed by Commerce Secretary Rita Teotia, has approved six proposals from four developers to set up new special economic zones (SEZs). These SEZs will be set up across three states in areas such as IT and biotechnology.

- **Vaxenic India:** Biotechnology and bio pharmaceuticals SEZ in Telangana.
- **EON Kharadi Infrastructure:** IT/ITeS special economic zones in Pune.
- **KRC Infrastructure:** IT/ITeS special economic zones in Pune.
- **GAR Corporation:** Will set up two IT/ITeS zones in Telangana.



4. India received over 300 billion US dollar Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) milestone

India has received over 300 billion US dollar Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) milestone between April 2000 and September 2016. About 33% of the FDI came through the Mauritius route. India received 101.76 billion US dollars from Mauritius between April 2000 and September 2016, as per the data compiled by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion. The cumulative FDI inflows during the period amounted to 310.26 billion dollars.



The other big investors have been from Singapore, the US, UK and the Netherlands.

5. Amazon launched a global start up program “Launchpad” in India

Amazon.in launched Amazon Launchpad in India. The global program will be an exclusive corner and will help startups in the country to launch, market and distribute their products to Amazon customers across India and around the world via a dedicated store.

Amazon India has tied up with Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP)’s Start Up India and Nasscom for its initiative. The global program is present in seven different countries and has helped over 1,200 startups launch products.



6. Joint Communique issued at the end of two-day BRICS Revenue meet

The two-day BRICS meeting of Revenue heads and Tax experts held from 5-6 December 2016 was concluded at Mumbai, India. A Joint Communique was issued at the end of the meeting.

This meeting resolved to support other developing nations in increasing their tax administrations' capacity to implement the OECD/G20 standard on Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI). All heads vowed to share tax information automatically and adopt global standards on tax transparency to check cross border tax evasion.



7. Enforcement Directorate summons AirAsia India officials for FEMA Violations

The Enforcement Directorate has issued summons to officials of Air Asia India for alleged violations of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) regulations for alleged fraudulent transactions of Rs22 crore involving non-existent parties in India and Singapore.

The fraudulent transactions were detected by a forensic audit of AirAisa conducted by Deloitte India. AirAsia India is a joint venture between Malaysian carrier AirAsia Bhd and Tata Sons. The main instigator of the investigation has been Cyrus Mistry.



8. Mobile banking service SIMsePAY launched in Arunachal Pradesh

The Arunachal Pradesh State Co-operative Apex Bank launched a Mobile Banking Service named SIMsePaY in collaboration with the Yes Bank Ltd aimed at helping bank customers' in their cash crunch problem.

The SIMsePAY service allows any account holder to do money transfers, pay utility bills and other mobile banking services without the need for smartphones or internet. The offering is based on a frugal "sim-sleeve" technology, in association with Taisys Technologies.



9. IOC, BPCL, HPCL join hands to set up India's biggest oil refinery

Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation signed a pact to build India's biggest oil refinery (60-million tonnes a year) on the west coast in Maharashtra. It will cost \$30 billion or Rs. 2 lakh crores.



IOC is leader of the consortium with 50% stake while BPCL and HPCL will have 25 per cent each. The refinery will produce petrol, diesel, LPG, ATF and feedstock for petrochemical plants in plastic, chemical and textile industries in Maharashtra. The biggest refinery in India till date is at Jamnagar in Gujarat built by Reliance Industries.

10. ADB curtailed India's growth forecast from 7.4% to 7%.

ADB reviewed and curtailed its GDP forecast for India from 7.4% to 7% for 2016-17. As per the Asian Development Bank, due to cash shortage post demonetization in India, GDP of the country may be affected. However, structural reforms will enhance productivity and domestic demand will keep the growth momentum in pace.



As per the reports, less cash availability has affected weak investments and has caused a slow-down in the agricultural sector. However, the GDP forecast for 2017-18 is estimated at 7.8%.

11. Retail inflation by CPI fell to a two-year low at 3.63 %

The Central Government's decision of November 8 to remove high-value bank notes caused a massive cash crunch and depressed consumer demand in the market. This move impacted on the consumer price index and retail inflation fell to a two year low at 3.63%. Food articles inflation fell from October's 3.32 % to 2.11 % in the month of November.



The overall CPI inflation had come in at 5.41 percent in November last year and it was 4.20 percent in October 2016. The rural retail inflation stood at 4.13 percent and urban retail inflation stood at 3.05% in November.

12. November WPI inflation at 3.15%

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation for November 2016 came in at a five-month low of 3.15 %, lower than 3.39 % in the October month. The September WPI inflation has been revised from 3.57 % to 3.8 %.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) is the price of a representative basket of wholesale goods. Some countries use WPI changes as a central measure of inflation. But now India has adopted a new CPI to measure inflation.



13. Micromax and Uber announced partnership

Micromax and Uber announced a partnership that will help Micromax customers book an Uber ride on their phones without having to download the application. Micromax devices offer an integrated experience with Uber over the next three years.

As a part of this partnership, the Uber app will come in-built in close to 100 million Micromax smartphones.

Micromax is a mobile phone brand while Uber is taxi-hailing service provider.



14. India becomes the **world's** 6th largest economy

As per a report published in the Forbes magazine, India has surpassed Britain to become world's sixth-largest economy in GDP terms. The top five in the list are **United States, China, Japan, Germany** and **France**.

Britain's 2016 GDP was \$2.29 trillion compared to India's \$2.30 trillion. Furthermore, this gap is expected to widen as India grows at 6 to 8% per annum as compared to UK's growth of 1 to 2% until 2020, and likely beyond. Britain's economy and currency are struggling post-Brexit.



15. Amul to invest Rs. 200 crores in Bengal

Amul is all set to invest in Bengal with a 'Centralized Milk Processing Plant' at Sankrail Food Park in Howrah. The project is worth about 200 crore rupees. The proposed plant will manufacture UHT milk, yoghurt and ghee besides normal milk.

The Kandua Food Park, at Howrah's Sankrail, has been developed by WBIDC. As per the Food Agriculture Integrated Development Action (FAIDA) report of McKinsey, Bengal is one of the three leading states in India in the food and agro-processing sector.



16. Bio Ethanol plants to be set up in each district of Punjab

Bio Ethanol plants will be set up in each district of Punjab to solve pollution problem originating from burning of paddy straw. The foundation stone of first Bio-Ethanol plant in the state was laid at village Tarkhan Wala in Bathinda district.

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation will set up 12 such plants in the country and this is the first one. In this plant 400 tonnes of paddy straw (Prali) will be used daily to produce 100 kilolitres of Ethanol. The total production during the year will be 3.20 crore litres of ethanol which will cater for 26% of the total ethanol requirement of Punjab.



17. Foreign investors pull out \$3.4 billion in December

Foreign investors have pulled out 3.4 billion dollars from the domestic capital market in December 2016, following the rate hike by the US Federal Reserve.

The Nett withdrawal by foreign portfolio investors from equities stood at 3,744 crore rupees between December 1 and 23, while withdrawals from the debt market stood at 19,027 crore rupees. The latest FPI outflows follow a withdrawal of over 49,700 crore rupees, on a net basis, from the capital market, including both equity and debt, in the October and November. Before that, FPIs had poured in 46,000 crore rupees into the capital markets in preceding three months of July to September.



18. India's External Debt at end-September 2016 stock stood at US\$ 484.3 billion

At end-September 2016, India's external debt stock stood at US\$ 484.3 billion, recording a decline of US\$ 0.8 billion (0.2 per cent) over the level at end-March 2016. The fall in external debt during the period was due to commercial borrowings and short term external debt. However, on a sequential basis, total external debt at end-September 2016 increased by US\$ 4,768 million from the end-June 2016 level.



At September-end 2016, long-term external debt accounted for 83.2 percent of India's total external debt.

19. India to Supply Additional 80 MW TO Nepal from 1st January 2017

Beginning 1st January, 2017, additional power transfer of 80MW to Nepal is expected to commence. With this, the total supply of electricity to Nepal from India will be about 400 MW.



Besides reviewing cooperation and expanding ties between the two countries in the power/energy sector, Minister of Energy of Nepal requested for an additional supply of 80 MW from India to alleviate power shortage in Nepal due to seasonal reduction in supply from domestic hydro projects in winter months.

ENVIRONMENT

1. Pacific Fisher, a rare species of weasel, makes a comeback

A weasel-like mammal (fisher) was recently spotted in the thick forest of Mount Rainier National Park, Washington. It had been missing for around 70 years. Ten Pacific fishers were set free at the park. Fishers were listed as state endangered species in 1998.

The fisher is a small carnivorous mammal native to North America. It is a member of the weasel family. Fishers have been trapped since the 18th century for their fur.



2. Rajiv Gandhi Airport achieves carbon neutral status

Airports Council International's 'Airport Carbon Accreditation' program certified Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport with Level 3+, Carbon Neutrality status. Hyderabad's international airport is the first in the Asia-Pacific region under 5-15 million passengers per annum category to attain this status.

The Airport Carbon Accreditation program is an industry standard for assessment of airports' efforts to manage and reduce carbon emissions.



3. Atlantic Killifish resistant to toxic waste 8,000 times discovered

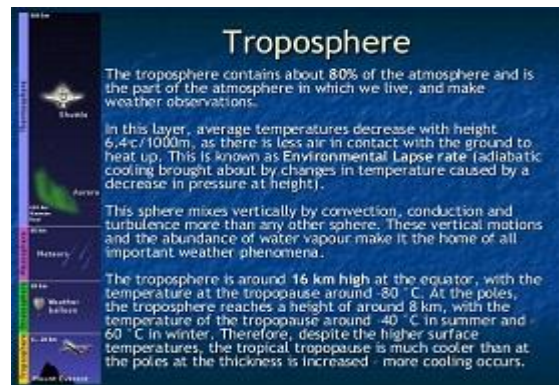
Atlantic Killifish adaptable to environmental change has evolved to be 8,000 times more adaptable to toxic waste as compared to normal fish. Scientists have found that Killifish lives in the highly polluted East Coast Estuaries of the USA. As per the ecologists, fish acts as an indicator species in polluted environments.

The Killifish's advantage is the diversity of its genes, allowing them to survive the radically change of mutations and live in polluted sites have been contaminated by a mixture of industrial plants.



4. Scientists found presence of ammonia in upper Troposphere

German researchers have found a presence of ammonia in the Troposphere, the lowest atmospheric layer of Earth. These findings were based on analyzed satellite data collected from various parts of the troposphere between June 2002 to April 2012. Agricultural emissions from livestock farming and fertilization released ammonia into the atmosphere, which finally ends up into the monsoon as the NH₃ creates a cooling effect.



The ammonia concentration was up to 33 pptv above Southeast China and North India. It has been assumed by Scientists that ammonia may help to mitigate the effects of global warming.

5. Rio enters the UNESCO World Heritage Status

Rio de Janeiro has officially entered the UN's list of world heritage sites in recognition of its soaring granite cliffs, urban rainforest and beaches.



The city is nicknamed the Marvelous City. The city of Rio de Janeiro lies in the narrow strip of alluvial plain between Guanabara Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

The development of the city of Rio de Janeiro has been shaped by a creative fusion between nature and culture.

6. NGT imposed interim nationwide ban on Manja for flying kites

The National Green Tribunal imposed an interim nationwide ban on use of glass-coated "Manja" for flying kites as the sharp string poses a danger to humans, animals and birds. The bench was headed by NGT Chairperson Swatanter Kumar.



The order came in response to a petition by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals - India, which called for a nationwide ban on all kinds of sharp kite strings.

7. Majuli set to become the country's first ever carbon neutral district

The State Government of Assam has launched 'Sustainable Action for Climate Resilient Development in Majuli' (SACReD, Majuli) to make the river island of Majuli as the country's first ever Carbon Neutral district by 2020.



This project has been initiated by Assam's Department of Environment and Forest to combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. SACReD, Majuli project is part of the French Development Agency assisted Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation (APFBC).

8. Huge "Dead Zone" discovered in the Bay of Bengal

Scientists have discovered a huge 'Dead Zone' of an estimated 60,000 square kilometers in the Bay of Bengal. A dead zone is an area that contains little or no oxygen and supports microbial processes that remove vast amount of nitrogen from the ocean. The study was published in Nature Geosciences.



These Dead Zones are popular off the western coasts of North and South America, off the coast of Namibia and off the west coast of India in the Arabian Sea.

9. Scientists discover 163 new species in the Greater Mekong region

A report by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) revealed that scientists have discovered 163 new species (3 mammal's species, 9 amphibians, 11 fish, 14 reptiles and 143 plants) in the Greater Mekong region of the Southeast Asia. These species were discovered in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar and Thailand.



These discoveries included a rainbow-headed snake, a three-centimeter long frog, a gecko etc. The Greater Mekong is home to some of the world's most endangered species.

FINANCE

1. Competition Commission of India approves merger of Bharatiya Mahila Bank with SBI

The Competition Commission of India has approved the merger of the Bharatiya Mahila Bank with the State Bank of India (SBI). The board of the SBI had cleared the merger of the Bharatiya Mahila Bank Ltd (BMBL) and that of five associate lenders with itself in August 2016.



The business of BMBL, including its assets and liabilities, will be acquired by SBI through amalgamation. Post-merger of these six entities, including the BMBL, SBI will have a network of more than 24,000 branches, 2,70,000 employees and total assets of Rs. 30 lakh crores.

2. RBI raises Market Stabilisation Scheme limit to Rs. 6 lakh crores to manage liquidity

RBI has raised the ceiling for market stabilization scheme or MSS 20 times to Rs. 6 lakh crores from Rs. 30,000 crores to mop up extra liquidity from the system in view of demonetization.

MSS is a tool to drain out excess liquidity from the system through issue of Treasury Bills and government dated stocks. MSS bonds has fixed tenures and are interest bearing. RBI auctioned the 28-day Cash Management Bills (CMB) of Government of India worth Rs. 20,000 crores.



3. The 5th Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement of 2016-17: Key Highlights

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released the fifth Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement 2016-17. The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) led by RBI governor Urjit Patel, kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.25% and reverse repo at 5.75%. The RBI left cash reserve ratio (CRR) unchanged at 4% but said it will withdraw the temporary 100% hike in the CRR.



Key Highlights:

- The RBI cut growth forecast to 7.1%, from 7.6% for this fiscal.
- The RBI kept the inflation target at 5% for March 2017, with upside risk.
- Foreign exchange reserve rose to all-time high of \$364 billion on 2 December.

4. RBI relaxed norms for online card transactions of up to Rs. 2000

The RBI has relaxed norms for additional factor of authentication (AFA) for payments up to Rs. 2,000 for online CNP (card not present) transactions to speed up small value online transactions.



Only authorized card networks will provide such payment authentication solutions with participation of card issuing and acquiring banks. Registered customers will not be required to re-enter the card details for every transaction at merchant locations that offer this solution and thereby save time and effort.

5. RBI to issue new Rs. 100 Bank notes

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is all set to issue new Rs. 100 bank notes in the Mahatma Gandhi Series – 2005 without inset letter in both the numbering panels. The new note will bear the signature of Dr. Urjit R. Patel, Governor, Reserve Bank of India.

The old Rs 100 notes will continue as legal tender. The new note will have the year of printing '2016' printed on the reverse of the banknote.



6. RXIL gets the RBI nod for 1st trade receivables exchange platform

The Reserve Bank has authorized the Receivables Exchange of India (RXIL) to launch the country's first trade receivables exchange platform for MSMEs, buyers and financiers. The RBI gave its nod on December 1st.

RXIL is promoted by SIDBI and NSE. It also has SBI, ICICI Bank, Yes Bank, SBI Caps, and ICICI Securities as other investors. The objective of the TReDS is to facilitate financing of invoices / bills of MSMEs drawn on corporate buyers by way of discounting by financiers.



7. Mahila E-haat tied up with India Post, SBI

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has tied up with India Post and State Bank of India to offer more payment options to buyers and simplify shipping of products bought from "Mahila-E-Haat". It is an online marketing platform for women entrepreneurs.



SBI users can avail multiple options for making payments such as draft, cheque, e-banking and e-wallet through "SBI Buddy" application. SBI customers abroad can make use of "SBI Global". India Post will help locate the nearest post office for shipping purposes.

8. MSME Excellence award by ASSOCHAM

The Corporation Bank has bagged the Best MSME Bank Award 2016 instituted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM). Karnataka Bank Ltd has bagged the 'Best MSME Bank Award (private sector) 2016'. Vijaya Bank has been adjudged 'Best Bank for SME Lending award' by Assocham.



The Best MSME Bank Award seeks to identify and honour banks and provide role models of best practices in MSME lending.

9. NABARD to extend Rs. 120 crore to banks for deploying PoS devices in villages

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) will extend about Rs. 120 crore to banks for deployment of two point-of-sale (PoS) terminals each in one lakh villages with a population of up to 10,000 to facilitate more cashless transactions in rural India.



NABARD will also support the procurement of EMV chip and PIN-Based RuPay Kisan Cards by both regional rural banks and the rural cooperative banks at an approximate expenditure of Rs. 108 crores covering around 4.32 crore KCC holders.

10. About 25.68 crore accounts opened across the country till 23rd November under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)

Under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), 25.68 crore accounts have been opened across the country till 23rd November.

As on the 2nd of December, 3883 claims under life insurance cover of Rs.30000/- have been received, out of which 3870 claims have been disposed off.

As on 2nd December, 1675 claims under RuPay card linked accidental insurance cover of Rs. 1.00 lakh have been received, out of which 1649 claims have been disposed off.



11. Equalization levy of 6% on online advertisers

The Government has introduced equalization levy of 6% on online advertisers. The Finance Act, 2016 had inserted a separate Chapter VIII titled 'Equalization Levy' to tap tax on income accruing to foreign e-commerce companies from India. A person making payment exceeding in aggregate 1 lakh rupees in a year, to a non-resident, who does not have a permanent establishment in India, as consideration for online advertisement, will withhold tax at 6% of gross amount paid, as Equalization levy with effect from 1st June, 2016. Further the levy will only apply to Business to Business transactions.



The revenue accrued for the Government exchequer through the equalization levy amounts to 146.5 Crore rupees from 1st June 2016 to 3rd December 2016.

12. 'Each one, teach one' program launched by PayTM to increase digital inclusion

Paytm has launched a program, "Each one, teach one", to increase the digital inclusion in the country. PayTM has urged consumers as well as merchants to teach others on how to use PayTM to pay and accept money.



PayTM has also announced an incentive including a Rs. 1 crore grand prize along with additional prizes for users transacting between 1st December 2016 and 31st March 2017. The company has also announced Rs. 2100 in scholarship for 10,000 users.

13. India, ASEAN set target of \$100 billion trade to be achieved by 2020

India and ASEAN have set a target of trading at 100 billion dollars to be achieved by year 2020. Currently the trade between ASEAN and India is 57 billion dollars.



ASEAN and India will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2017, which will be attended by the head of states of all the ASEAN countries. In view of the anniversary, India and ASEAN are planning to enhance people to people contact. Showcasing movies of ASEAN countries and India will also be a part of the celebrations.

14. US Federal Reserve raised interest rates for the second time in a decade

The US Federal Reserve has raised its benchmark interest rate by 0.25%. This is the second increase in a decade and first in 2016. The Central Bank voted unanimously to raise the key rate to a range of 0.5% to 0.75%, citing a stronger economic growth and rising employment.



The Chairman of the Federal Reserve System Board, Janet Yellen said that the increase in the federal funds rate is appropriate considering the progress the country has seen toward the goals of maximum employment and two% inflation.

15. India's foreign exchange reserves down to USD 362.987 bn

India's foreign exchange reserves declined by 887.2 million dollars to 362.987 billion dollars in the week ended that ended on the 9th of December. In the previous week too, the reserves had declined by 1.431 billion dollars to 363.874 billion dollars.



Gold reserves remained steady at 19.982 billion dollars. India's special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund decreased by 5.4 million dollars to 1.438 billion dollars, while the country's reserve position also dipped by 8.8 million dollars to 2.307 billion dollars.

16. State Bank MobiCash Mobile Wallet launched

The State Bank of India launched their State Bank MobiCash Mobile Wallet. "State Bank MobiCash" is a joint endeavor of "State Bank of India" & "Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) to provide a mobile wallet for the masses.



It also works with any normal feature based phone. The special feature of MobiCash is that users can deposit cash with BSNL retail outlets and can also withdraw cash from his/her account. This feature is unique with MobiCash and is not available with any of the Mobile wallets available in India at present.

17. RBI lowers charges on debit card payments to promote digital transactions

To incentivize greater adoption of digital payment methods, the Reserve Bank of India has asked banks and prepaid payment instrument issuing entities not to levy any charges for transactions up to 1000 rupees that are settled using Immediate Payment Service, USSD based *99# and Unified Payment Interface systems.



The RBI has also advised banks to cap the Merchant Discount Rates for debit card transactions up to 1000 rupees at 0.25 percent of the transaction value. For transactions between 1000 and 2000 rupees, the merchant charges shall be capped at 0.5 percent of the transaction value.

18. YES Bank and Ola cabs unite to provide cash

The Yes Bank Limited in union with app-cab service provider Ola will deliver cash at doorstep. Ola customers while booking a ride can opt for 'cash at their doorsteps' facility that will be enabled using Point-of-Sale machines, powered by YES Bank, where one can swipe their debit cards to withdraw an amount of up to ₹2,000 per card.



This service has been made available across 10 cities Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Jaipur.

19. EPFO lowered interest rate on EPF to 8.65 percent for FY17

The Employees Provident Fund Organisation lowered the interest rate on provident fund deposits to 8.65% for the current fiscal, from 8.8% in 2015-16.



The interest income from PF investments for 2016-17 has been estimated mainly based on the interest income received or receivable in this financial year, including surplus from previous year of 410 crore rupees. Roughly 17 crore subscribers' accounts will be updated with this interest rate upon acceptance by the Government.

20. RBI to issue new Rs. 500 note with inset letter in the new series

The Reserve Bank of India will shortly issue new 500-rupee bank notes in the Mahatma Gandhi New series with the inset letter E having star mark in the number panel.

This bank note will bear the signature of RBI Governor Dr. Urjit R. Patel, year of printing 2016 and Swachh Bahrat Logo. The packets containing these notes will have 100 pieces as usual but not in serial order. The star banknotes in the denomination of 10, 20, 50 and 100 are already in circulation.



21. Singapore tops the list as the top FDI source for India

As per the data from the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Singapore has topped the list as the top source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India during the first half of the current financial year, while Mauritius was second and Netherlands was the third in the list.

During April-September 2015, India has attracted \$6.69 billion (Rs 43,096 crores) FDI from Singapore while from Mauritius, it received \$3.66 billion (Rs 23,490 crores).



22. BSNL to launch a mobile app with SBI in Assam for digital transactions

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, BSNL, will soon launch a mobile app with SBI to facilitate cashless transactions in Assam. The app will help people, even in remote areas in digital banking.

BSNL has deputed senior officials at seven zones to provide necessary help to banks after demonetization. It is providing networking and high speed mobile services in interior areas as per the requirement of bank. BSNL is also helping in opening of ATMs in tea garden areas by providing media connectivity.



23. RBI imposes fine on 5 foreign banks for violating FEMA rules

The Reserve Bank of India imposed penalty on five foreign banks for violation of its instructions on reporting requirements of the FEMA.

Deutsche Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, Bank of America, Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi and The Royal Bank of Scotland are those five banks. Deutsche Bank was slapped Rs. 20,000 as fine while the other four banks were slapped with Rs. 10,000 each as fine. The penalties were imposed in exercise of the powers vested in the Reserve Bank under the provisions of Section 11(3) of FEMA 1999.



24. Bank of Baroda becomes the 1st company to support the FIFA Under-17 World Cup India 2017

The Bank of Baroda has become the first Indian company to sign up as a National Supporter for the FIFA U-17 World Cup India 2017. It is the first FIFA event to be hosted in the subcontinent.

Bank of Baroda has thus claimed the first of six National Supporter slots for the FIFA U-17 World Cup India 2017. The tournament will be held from 6 to 28 October 2017. The event will see participation from 24 countries and



matches will be played at six different venues.

25. China signs a 525 million yuan loan agreement with the BRICS bank

The New Development Bank set up by the BRICS which is called as the BRICS bank has approved a 525-million-yuan loan for a solar power project to China. Shanghai Lingang Distributed Solar Power Project is a solar photovoltaic power plant with a total capacity of 100 MW to be built in Lingang Industrial Area of Shanghai.

The NDB, headquartered in Shanghai, has earlier given nod to loans amounting to \$900 million to green projects in each member state.



26. ICICI Bank launched EazyPay app for Merchants

ICICI Bank has launched a EazyPay mobile application for merchants that allows consolidation of all modes of payments.

Eazypay is a one-stop solution for all merchants to collect payments from their customers. It is a mobile based application which allows merchants to quickly raise an invoice and their customers can pay them immediately through any convenient payment mode – Unified Payment Interface (UPI), Credit Card, Debit Card, Internet Banking or Pockets wallet. With this, ICICI Bank became first bank in the country to roll out all-in-one payments platform.



27. AU Financiers get the final nod from RBI to start a small finance bank

AU Financiers (India) Ltd received the final licence from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to start a small finance bank. It is a Jaipur-based NBFC.

AU Financiers has operations in 10 states with 300 branches and finances commercial and personal vehicle loans, as well as caters to micro, small and medium enterprises. 10 entities had received in-principle approval from the RBI to start small finance bank.



28. Bank of Maharashtra adopts Malangaon Village in Sangli for Digital Transactions

Bank of Maharashtra has adopted the village of Malangaon, in Sangli district, Maharashtra to make it a completely cashless village. The village is located 3.5kms away from Shirdoh branch of the bank.

All the villagers were enrolled through Aadhaar linked bank accounts to enable them to make payments digitally instead of cash. Further the bank also conducted various educational initiatives in the village to create awareness among people about the various channels of digital payments.



29. South Indian Bank has introduced a full-fledged NRI-focused mobile banking app

South Indian Bank has introduced a full-fledged NRI-focused mobile banking application called SIB Mirror+.

SIB Mirror+ equips the customers to perform almost all banking transactions from their smart phones. The app comes with self-registration facility for ease of activation and utilises NEFT facility for interbank fund transfers. The innovative feature 'Social Money' allows customers to transfer money from and to their friends through social media channels like Facebook and WhatsApp.



30. RBI extends loan repayment window to 90 days

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked lenders to provide borrowers 90 days for repayment of housing, car, farm and other loans worth up to 1 crore rupees, saying that the dispensation will apply to dues payable between 1st November and 31st December. It has been decided to provide another 30 days over and above the existing 60 days. The dispensation will apply to dues payable between 1st November and 31st December.



So, borrowers together get 90 days from getting the account classified under non-performing asset (NPA) category.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2016

The United Nations' (UN) International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed annually on December 3rd to focus on issues that affect people with disabilities worldwide.

The theme for this year's International Day is "Achieving 17 Goals for the Future We Want". This theme notes the recent adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the role of these goals in building a more inclusive and equitable world for persons with disabilities.



2. National Pollution Control Day 2016 observed

The National Pollution Control Day is celebrated annually on the 2nd of December in India to honor and memorialize the thousands of human beings who had lost their existence because of the Bhopal gas calamity in 1984.

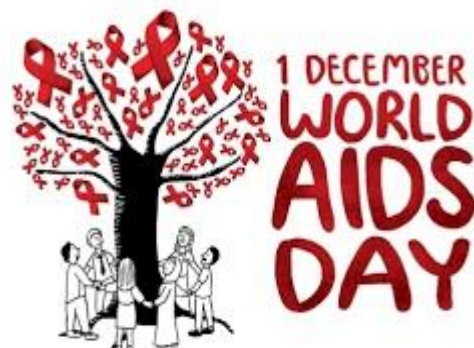
More than 5,00,000 people were left severely affected due to leakage of poisonous gas "Methyl Isocyanate (MIC)" from Union Carbide plant in Bhopal. The day is observed to manage and control the Industrial Disaster as well as prevention of the pollution of water, air and soil.



3. World AIDS Day 2016 observed

The United Nations' (UN) World AIDS Day is observed annually on December 1st to honor AIDS victims. It also focuses on issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. The theme for the year 2016 is "Hands up for #HIVprevention". The campaign explores different aspects of HIV prevention.

This day is dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection. The day is observed often with education on AIDS prevention and control.



4. World Soil Day 2016 observed

The World Soil Day is celebrated on the 5th of December to celebrate the importance of soil as a critical component of the natural system and as a vital contributor to human wellbeing.

The theme for year 2016 is 'Soils and pulses, a symbiosis for life'. The theme for the 2016 WSD focuses on the positive contributions of pulses to soil properties, such as fixing the atmosphere nitrogen and improving its biodiversity, fertility and structure.

The day coincides with the birthday of Bhumibol Adulyadej, the King of Thailand who strived to raise global awareness on soils.



5. International Volunteer Day observed

The International Volunteer Day is observed on the 5th of December annually. This day recognizes the work of volunteers and the importance of volunteering.

The theme for the year 2016 is "Global Applause — Give Volunteers a Hand". This year's theme recognizes the volunteers worldwide and their efforts in making peace and sustainable development a reality. The Day was designated in 1985 by the United Nations as an international observance day to celebrate the power and potential of volunteerism.



6. Human Rights Day 2016 observed

The Human Rights Day is observed every year on the 10th of December for people to know and push for their rights, no matter where they are in the world. The theme for year 2016 is "Stand up for someone's rights today!"

It commemorates the day on which, in 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The first Human Rights Day was celebrated in year 1950.



The National Human Rights Commission, India organized a series of events in run up to the celebration of Human Rights Day, which culminated into a function in New Delhi.

7. International Anti-Corruption Day 2016 observed across the world

The United Nations' (UN) International Anti-Corruption Day is observed on December 9th each year. The day aims to raise public awareness of corruption and what people can do to fight it. The theme for 2016 is "United against corruption for development, peace and security".



As per the UN, every year \$1 trillion is paid in bribes while an estimated \$2.6 trillion are stolen annually through corruption – a sum equivalent to more than 5% of the global GDP.

8. Dr. Ambedkar's birthday to be celebrated as Water Day

The Union Government plans to observe Dr. B R Ambedkar's birth anniversary (14th April) as "Water Day". The day will be observed to mark Ambedkar's contribution in water resource management of the country.



The day will be observed with an aim to create awareness among people about managing water resources. Dr. Ambedkar advocated the concept of River Valley Authority or corporation for integrated development of rivers.

9. International Mountain Day 2016 observed

The "International Mountain Day" is observed annually on 11th December to create awareness about the importance of mountains to life, to highlight the opportunities and constraints in mountain development and to build alliances that will bring positive change to mountain peoples and environments around the world.

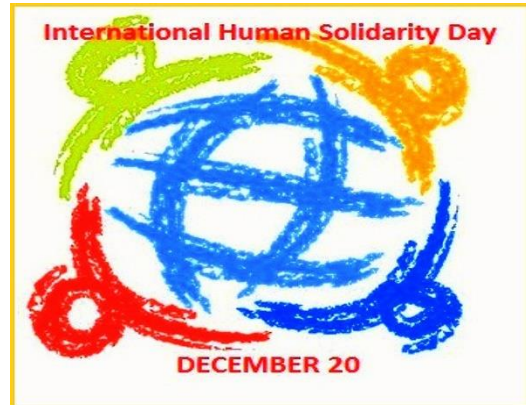


The day aims to draw attention to the important roles that mountainous regions play in water and food supply. The year 2016 Theme is – "Mountain Cultures: Celebrating diversity and strengthening identity".

10. The International Human Solidarity Day observed

The International Human Solidarity Day is observed every year on December 20th to celebrate unity in diversity. The theme for the year 2016 is "Shared Progress & Prosperity based on global solidarity".

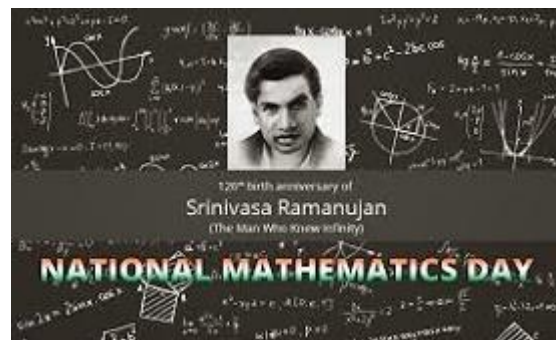
The International Human Solidarity Day aims to celebrate our unity in diversity, remind governments to respect their commitments to international agreements, raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity and encourage new initiatives for poverty eradication.



11. National Mathematics Day observed worldwide

The National Mathematics Day is observed annually on the 22nd December on the birth anniversary of the great Indian Autodidact Mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. He was considered as the master of the number theory, infinite series, mathematical analysis and equations without any formal training in pure mathematics.

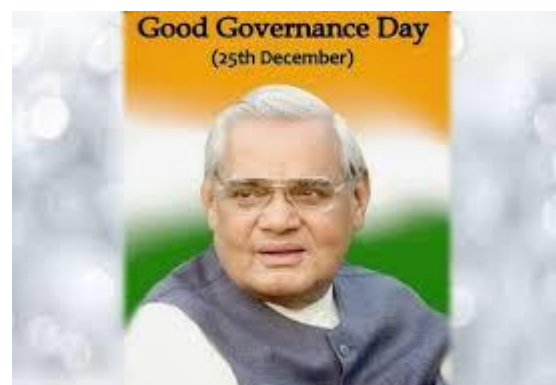
He had formulated more than 3900 mathematical results and equations. Ramanujan had discovered the smallest number represented as sum of two cubes 1729 which is known as Hardy-Ramanujan number.



12. Good Governance Day observed to mark Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Birthday

Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birthday was observed as Good Governance Day. Good Governance campaign will be launched for 100 days starting 25th December, where Ministers and Members of Parliament will travel across the country and will attend programmes to highlight key initiatives of the Government.

The Minister of State for Personnel Dr. Jitendra Singh launched six major initiatives. Ministry of Textiles also launched 'JUTE-SMART' an online portal to facilitate purchase of Jute bags from the Jute industry by the state procurement agencies.



13. The 45th Nagi Day celebrated in Rajasthan

The 45th Nagi Day was celebrated at Nagi, a small village located in Sri Karanpur near International Boundary in Rajasthan, in memory of gallant soldiers of the Indian Army who laid down their lives for the Nation during the famous Battle of Nagi on 27-28 December 1971.

This battle was fought ten days after announcement of the ceasefire of Indo-Pak war. A total of 21 Indian soldiers including three officers made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.



INTERNATIONAL

1. Thailand officially named crown prince Maha Vajiralongkorn as its new king

Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn was proclaimed king of Thailand. Vajiralongkorn, 64, is the 10th king in the Chakri Dynasty and became King Rama X. He was the only son and designated heir of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who died on October 13 at the age of 88. His official title will be - King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun.

Vajiralongkorn studied in Australia, graduating from the Royal Military College at Duntroon. He is a qualified pilot, flying helicopters, fighter jets and his own Boeing 737.



2. Opposition wins near majority in Kuwait Polls

Kuwait's opposition groups and their allies have won 24 of the 50 contested seats in the country's parliamentary elections. Around half of those who won were from groups linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists.

Safa Al Hashem is the only woman to have won a seat in the new assembly. This was the fourth election since 2012. Kuwait holds free elections but most power remains in the hands of the ruling al Sabah family.



3. Chapecoense air tragedy in Colombia

Chartered British aircraft — Flight 2933 carrying 77 people, including players of top Brazilian football team, Chapecoense, crashed near Medellin in Colombia. The reason of the crash is said to be an electrical fault. The team was traveling from Santa Cruz to Medellin to play the first leg of the two-game Copa Sudamericana final against Atletico Nacional.

Among the 77 passengers on board, 22 were Chapecoense players and 21 were journalists. Only six people survived the crash.



4. Donald Trump picked Seema Verma for **Centre's** for Medicare and Medicaid Services

The U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has picked Indiana health policy consultant Seema Verma as his pick for administrator of the Center's for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Ms. Verma is best known for her work on Medicaid issues. She is the architect of the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP), the nation's first consumer directed Medicaid program. Ms. Verma currently is the President, CEO and founder of SVC, Inc, a national health policy consulting company. Ms, Verma holds a master's degree in public health from Johns Hopkins University.



5. Heart of Asia' conference concluded in Amritsar

The 6th Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia was held in Amritsar, Punjab on 3rd and 4th December, 2016. Leaders from 40 countries gathered to attend the annual event. The 7th Ministerial Conference will be held in Azerbaijan in the year 2017.

The key highlights of the declaration were terrorism, particularly, state-sponsored terrorism was identified as a key challenge and members agreed upon a concerted effort to dismantle all kinds of terrorism.



6. Shavkat Mirziyoyev wins the Uzbekistan Presidential Election

Shavkat Mirziyoyev won the Presidential elections held in Uzbekistan on the 4th of December 2016 following the death of incumbent President Islam Karimov. Mirziyoyev got 88.6% of the votes.

Mr. Mirziyoyev worked as the Prime Minister under Mr. Karimov since 2003 and took over as the acting President after Karimov's death. The other nominees in the Presidential Election were: Sarvar Otamuradov, of Uzbekistan National Revival Democratic Party; Narimon Umarov, of the Justice Social Democratic Party and Khatamjon Ketmonov of the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan.



7. Venezuela suspended from South America's Trade Bloc Mercosur

Venezuela was suspended from the South America's Trade Bloc Mercosur over its failure to comply with the pact's democratic principles and trade bylaws.

The other members of the bloc are Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Its associate countries are Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Suriname. While the observer countries are New Zealand and Mexico. The purpose of the bloc is to promote free trade and the fluid movement of goods, people and currency.



8. Alexander Van der Bellen elected as the Austrian President

Independent candidate and pro-European Alexander Van der Bellen has won the Austria's re-run presidential election with around 53.5% votes.

He is due to take office as the country's 12th President on 26th January 2017. He was a professor of economics at the University of Vienna before he entered national politics. In May 2004, Van der Bellen received the Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold with Star for services to the Austrian republic.



9. Israel advances bill to legalise West Bank settlements

Israeli Parliament has given a preliminary approval to a revised bill that would legalize thousands of homes built in the occupied West Bank. Lawmakers advanced the bill in a 60-49 vote. The bill is a revised version of legislation initially devised to avoid demolishing the Amona outpost, which was built without permission on Palestinian land.

Around 4,000 settler homes, which were built without permission, will be legitimized if it goes ahead. However, the bill must receive more approvals before becoming law.



10. China launched a new cargo service connecting Tibet and Nepal

China launched a new cargo service connecting Guangdong, Tibet and Nepal with an aim to boost trade with the Himalayan nation. Dozens of trucks carried the first consignment of goods worth \$2.8 million from the Tibetan border port of Gyirong to Kathmandu.



Nepal had signed the transit trade deal with Beijing in March 2016 in a bid to reduce its dependence on India. Guangzhou port was also used recently to launch China-Pakistan

Freight service connecting Karachi's Port Qasim.

11. Canada reached carbon agreement with provinces

The Canadian Government and most of Canada's provinces had come to an agreement on a national carbon pricing plan. However, 10 provinces have not agreed to the plan.



The Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hopes to impose a national carbon tax that would rise to C\$50 (US\$38) a ton by 2022. An independent expert panel will review the plan when the carbon price would pause at British Columbia's existing \$30 Canadian

(\$US23) level in 2020.

12. World Bank cancelled \$100 million loan for Pakistan

The World Bank cancelled a \$100 million loan for Pakistan approved for a natural gas efficiency project to be carried out by Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC). The loan was cancelled for lack of interest on the part of SSGC.



The loan was aimed at enhancing the supply of natural gas by reducing physical and commercial losses of gas in the pipeline system. The bank had disbursed only \$0.25 million against the original commitment of \$200 million.

13. European Union approved \$26 billion Microsoft-LinkedIn deal

The European Union approved Microsoft's \$26 billion acquisition of LinkedIn Corp. after the software giant agreed to concessions that would keep Microsoft products open to LinkedIn rivals.

The deal has already been given the green light in the United States, Canada, Brazil and South Africa. Microsoft had announced its deal with LinkedIn on 13 June 2016. LinkedIn is the world's largest and most valuable professional network. LinkedIn will retain its distinct brand, culture and independence.



14. Nana Akufo-Addo won the presidential election in Ghana

Ghana's main opposition leader Nana Akufo-Addo won the country's Presidential election, defeating President John Mahama by 53.8 percent to 44.4 percent. It was his third bid for the top job.

Nana Akufo-Addo is the leader of New Patriotic Party (NPP). Akufo-Addo had promised to boost growth and deliver jobs during his campaigns.

Ghana is the world's second biggest producer of cocoa after Ivory Coast and Africa's second biggest gold producer after South Africa.



15. Two Banks of Abu Dhabi to Merge as the Biggest Bank in the Gulf Nation

National Bank of Abu Dhabi and First Gulf Bank will merge into the biggest bank of all Gulf Countries with an asset of \$ 178 billion. Under terms of the deal, the combined company will be known as NBAD.

The FGB shareholders will receive 1.254 NBAD shares for each FGB share they hold. Post-merger, FGB stockholders will own 52 percent of the new bank. The Chairman of this new firm is slated to be Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan.



16. Paolo Gentiloni named as Italy's new Prime Minister

Paolo Gentiloni has been named as Italy's new Prime Minister following reformist leader Matteo Renzi's resignation in the wake of a crushing referendum defeat. Renzi took the decision to resign on 4 December 2016 after voters rejected the constitutional reforms proposed by him.

Mr. Gentiloni, who served as the Foreign Minister under Renzi, was asked by the President Sergio Mattarella to form a new centre-left government that will guide Italy to elections due by February 2018.



17. World's longest tunnel in Switzerland begins commercial service

The world's longest and deepest rail tunnel began its commercial operations in Switzerland. The tunnel has been constructed at the cost of 12 billion dollars and completed after almost two decades of construction work.

The 57-kilometer (35-mile) twin-bore Gotthard base tunnel will provide a high-speed rail link under the Swiss Alps between Northern and Southern Europe. The tunnel has overtaken Japan's 53.9-kilometer Seikan rail tunnel as the longest in the world and pushed the 50.5kilometre Channel Tunnel linking the UK and France into third place.



18. Bill English sworn in as the New Zealand PM

New Zealand's socially conservative Finance Chief Bill English has been sworn in as the country's new prime minister following the resignation of his predecessor John Key. Mr. Key had resigned for family reasons after eight years as Prime Minister. State Services Minister Paula Bennett was named as the deputy leader.

Mr. English has held several ministerial posts across education, health and finance since he joined Parliament in 1990.



19. Venezuela President orders 100 unit banknotes out of circulation

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro signed an emergency decree ordering the country's largest banknote, the 100-bolivar bill, taken out of circulation to thwart mafias he accused of hoarding cash in Colombia.

Venezuela is amid an economic crisis and crippled with the world's highest inflation. The government wants to issue new banknotes and coins in values up to 200 times the highest denomination currently available.



20. Antonio Guterres sworn in as the UN Secretary General

Former Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres was sworn in as the ninth UN Secretary-General, succeeding Ban Ki-moon as the Chief of the world body.

The President of the UN General Assembly Peter Thomson administered the Oath of Office to Guterres at a special plenary meeting of the 193-member General Assembly at the United Nations. Guterres, 67, was unanimously appointed by the General Assembly as the successor to Ban. The former UN refugee chief takes over from Ban on January 1.



21. EU, Cuba signed the first agreement on PDCA

The European Commission adopted a proposal to the Council on the signing of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) with Cuba to enhance sustainable development, democracy and human rights. Both proposals will now be under consideration by the Council, before their final adoption and the signature of the PDCA.

The agreement includes three main fields on political dialogue, cooperation and sector policy dialogue as well as trade and trade cooperation. The PDCA will contribute to build EU-Cuba relations and "updating" the Cuban economy.



22. Lt Gen Naveed Mukhtar to take charge as the new ISI chief

Lt. Gen. Naveed Mukhtar to take duties as the new Director-General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), succeeding Lt. Gen. Rizwan Akhtar who has been further appointed as the President of the National Defence University (NDU) in Islamabad. Prior to this appointment, he had been the Commander of V Corps of Karachi from September 2014 to December 2016.



Lt. Gen. Mukhtar has a vast working knowledge in the field of intelligence and had also led the counterterrorism wing of the ISI in Islamabad.

23. Rex Tillerson selected as USA's new Secretary of State

Rex Tillerson, CEO of ExxonMobil has been appointed by Donald Trump, as the new Secretary of State. He has no experience in public office. The 64 year old Tillerson has 41 years of experience in exploring oil deals and gas deposit deals of Russia. In 2014, US imposed sanctions on Russia on involvement in oil deals of the Arctic project.



Other major designations include candidates that included former Republic presidential candidate Mitt Romney and former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani.

24. Malaysia installed its 15th king, Sultan Muhammad V

The 47-year-old Sultan Muhammad V took oath as Malaysia's 15th king in Kuala Lumpur. Previously, Sultan Muhammad V was the ruler of the conservative Islamic northern state of Kelantan. Since 1957 there is a rule of 'rotating monarchy' in Malaysia and country changes its king in every five years between the rulers of the nine Malaysian states.



Sultan Muhammad V replaces Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah from the northern state of Kedah. The king is also the symbolic head of Islam in the nation, as well as the nominal chief of the military.

25. India to contribute \$500,000 to UN Central Emergency Response Fund

India will contribute \$500,000 to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). India's cumulative contribution, including this contribution for the year 2016-17, since the fund was launched in 2006 stood at \$6 million.

29 countries promised contributions totaling \$273 million to the CERF. CERF provides early funding when humanitarian crises break out and supports essential relief operations that are poorly funded.



26. Qatar abolishes the controversial 'Kafala' labour system

Qatar announced the end of its controversial "Kafala" system, a system that forces foreign workers to seek their employer's permission to change jobs or leave the country.

Qatar will make a new contract-based law to ensure greater flexibility and protection. The "Kafala" rules were abolished from December 13th. Qatar is the host nation for the 2022 World Cup Football. The international community has condemned the labour laws, predominantly "Kafala".



27. World Bank declared a pause to protect Indus Waters Treaty

The World Bank Group announced a pause in the separate processes initiated by India and Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty to allow the two countries to consider alternative ways to resolve their disagreements.

The announcement temporarily halts the appointment of a Neutral Expert, as requested by India, and the Chairman of the Court of Arbitration, as requested by Pakistan, to resolve issues regarding two hydroelectric power plants under construction by India along the Indus rivers system.



28. Pakistan successfully test-fired improved version of Babur cruise missile

Pakistan successfully tested an improved version of the medium-range and subsonic Babur cruise missile. It can hit targets both at land and sea with pinpoint accuracy.

The 700 kms range based Babur cruise missile is equipped with the Terrain Contour Matching (TERCOM) and Digital Scene Matching and Area Co-relation (DSMAC) technologies. It can hit targets at 700 kms with all kinds of warheads. It is a low flying, terrain hugging missile, which carries certain stealth features.



29. The 5th India-Arab partnership conference held in Muscat, Oman

The fifth edition of the India-Arab Partnership Conference was held in Muscat, Oman from December 14 to 15, 2016 organized by the Oman Foreign Ministry, Arab League Secretariat in association with the Union Ministry of External Affairs of India.

The theme of the summit was 'Partnership towards innovation and cooperation in Information Technology'. About 500 Arab and Indian government officials, academicians, businessmen and investors participated in the conference.



30. Nigeria's Amina Mohammed named UN's Deputy Secretary-General

Incoming UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has announced the appointment of Nigeria's Environment Minister Amina Mohammed to be the UN's Deputy Secretary-General.

Senior Brazilian foreign ministry official, Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, will serve as Guterres' chief of staff while Kyung-Wha Kang of South Korea was appointed to the new position of the special advisor on policy. Guterres has made gender parity a priority of his tenure which begins from the 1st of January 2017.



31. Indian-American woman elected as the Mayor of the Californian City

For the first time, an Indian-American woman, Savita Vaidhyanathan, has been elected as the new Mayor of the key Californian city of Cupertino, globally known for its Apple headquarters. Savita is an MBA who worked as a high school Math teacher and an officer in a commercial bank as well as in non-profit management.



Savita is the first Indian-American Mayor of Cupertino, which as per Forbes is one of the most educated small towns in the country with local public schools ranking highly.

32. Asia Pacific countries resolved to adopt “Urban Plus” approach in the ‘New Delhi Declaration’

Asia Pacific countries have resolved to adopt “Urban Plus” approach taking urban planning and development beyond city limits to prevent unmanageable and unsustainable urban expansion in the ‘New Delhi Declaration’ adopted on the conclusion of three day deliberations of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD).



The theme of the conference was ‘Emerging Urban Forms-Policy Reforms and Governance Structures in the Context of New Urban Agenda’.

33. India-Nepal Folk Crafts Festival kicks off in Kathmandu

The India-Nepal Folk Crafts Festival, INCF was held in Kathmandu. The festival is an initiative of South Asia Foundation, SAF to promote cultural exchanges between the two neighbors. The festival aims to promote crafts based bilateral relations and enhance cultural exchanges between the artisans of India and Nepal.



The festival highlights more than 70 theme based pavilion with focus on folk crafts of India and Nepal, cultural events, live demonstration by crafts-persons, design workshops to be conducted by qualified designers, trade facilitation and exclusive buyer-seller meet among others.

34. African Nations developing lifestyle diseases: WHO

A World Health Organization survey of 33 countries has shown that most adults in Africa have at least one risk factor increasing their chance of developing deadly lifestyle diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

These include smoking, harmful use of alcohol, a poor diet and low levels of physical activity. Most people were not eating enough fruits and vegetables, and a rise of junk food and unhealthy diets mean that paradoxically, sub-Saharan Africa suffers from the double burden of under nutrition and obesity.



35. Ukraine nationalises its largest bank, PrivatBank

The Ukrainian government nationalized PrivatBank, the country's biggest lender. The bank has nearly \$6 billion in private deposits - 36.5 percent of Ukraine's total - and hence is considered too big to fail.

Risky lending practices had left a capital shortfall of around \$5.65 billion on PrivatBank's balance sheet as of December 1st. The government requires a minimum of \$4.5 billion from the budget to rescue it.



36. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani revealed landmark Bill of Right

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani unveiled a landmark bill of rights which ensures that the people of Iran get freedom of speech, freedom to protest, fair trials and privacy. With the aim to protect the revolution against dissenters and outside interference, the bill is implemented to all.

Although many of the rights are already enshrined in Iran's Constitution written after the 1979 Islamic revolution, it is the first clear list of principles that could be used to check the performance of State institutions.



37. Japan gave nod to the **country's highest annual defence budget** for 2017-18

Japan cabinet gave nod to 5.13 trillion yen (\$43.6 billion) for defence expenditure of year 2017-18 under the leadership of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. It is Japan's highest annual defence budget announced so far in the face of North Korea's nuclear and missile threats and a territorial row with China.

It marks the fifth straight annual increase, by 1.4% from the initial budget. Japanese Coast Guard will increase security around the islands by allocating a record 210 billion yen, which includes two new patrol ships and the hiring of 200 more personnel.



38. Hong Kong withdraws visa-free entry to Indians

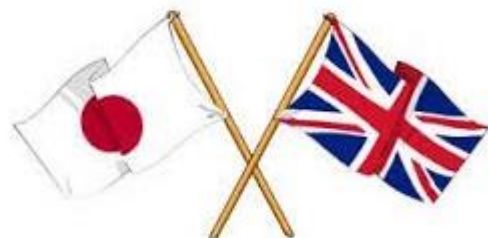
Since Indians have been overstaying in Hong Kong violating visa norms, Hong Kong decided to withdraw visa-free facility for Indians from January 23, 2017, by making amendments to its visa agreement with India.

Under the previous visa agreement, Indian visitors could visit the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for 14 days but now Indians must pre-register themselves. The said decision was taken to prevent illegal immigration and because the number of Indian asylum seekers was on the rise.



39. Japan and UK inked MoU on Nuclear power cooperation

Japanese and British Ministers in charge of energy policy signed a Memorandum of Understanding on nuclear power cooperation. They agreed that their governments will seek to conduct technological research on scrapping the damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant and decontamination near the facility.



They also agreed to discuss planned construction of a nuclear power station in the UK. Japan's Hitachi and Toshiba are involved in the project. Based on the memorandum, Japan plans to coordinate financing for the project by government-affiliated institutions.

40. **World's first solar road inaugurated in France's Normandy region**

World's first solar road unveiled in Normandy region of France covering 1-kilometre-long route with the help of 2,880 photovoltaic panels. Solar route is expected to be used by at least 2,000 motorists daily, to check power generating capacity.

Route 'Wattway' is built by engineering firm Colas and is estimated to produce to produce 280 megawatt hours (MWh) of energy annually with an estimated electrical output of 767 kilowatt hours (kWh) per day.



41. Italy's cabinet approved state-bailout for Monte dei Paschi bank

Italy's cabinet approved a state-bailout for the country's third-largest bank, Monte dei Paschi di Siena. Prime Minister has authorized 21 billion dollars fund to support Italy's embattled banking sector. The announcement came after Monte dei Paschi had failed to raise 5 billion euros from private investors.

The Government will need to stick to new European Union rules designed to stop tax payers bearing the brunt of supporting weak banks. The Italian parliament had already authorized the Government to create a fund to prop up the bank sector.



42. Saudi Arabia projected \$53bn deficit in 2017

Saudi Arabia cabinet projected a 2017 Budget deficit of about 53 billion US Dollars and that 2016 deficit will be 79 billion US Dollars, down 8.9 percent from 2016's budget forecast. Expenses for 2017 are projected to reach 237 billion US Dollars against revenues of 184 billion US Dollars.

The world's biggest oil exporter froze major building projects, cut Cabinet ministers' salaries and imposed a wage freeze on civil servants in the wake of last year's record deficit.



43. World's tallest artificial Christmas tree in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, a 73-meter Christmas tree, claimed to have broken previous records, was unveiled in Colombo on Christmas evening. The tree located on a sea facing beach has become an attraction for locals and tourists.

The tree is 18 meters taller than the current record holder in a Chinese city. The tree's steel-and-wire frame is covered with a plastic net decorated with more than 10 lakh natural pine cones, 6 lakh LED bulbs and topped by a 6-metre-tall shining star.



44. China to levy environment tax

China has passed a new law to levy environment protection tax on industry for the first time from 2018 to fight the country's pollution woes.

The tax rate will be 1.2 yuan (\$0.17) per unit of atmospheric pollution, 1.4 yuan per unit of water pollution, 5 yuan per tonne of coal waste and 1,000 yuan per tonne of "hazardous waste". Companies will also pay taxes ranging from 350 yuan (\$60) to 11,200 yuan (\$1870) per month for noise, as per their decibel level. However, carbon dioxide, is not included in the levying list.



45. China and Nepal to conduct first ever joint military drill

Nepal and China will hold their first ever joint military exercise in the northern region of Nepal in February 2017. The proposed drill named 'Pratihar-I' would focus on counter terrorism operations and disaster management.

The exercise will become the first between the two neighbors. Nepal also holds military drills with some other countries including India and the USA. This move may raise eyebrows in India over the intent of such an exercise.



MISCELLANEOUS

- Union IT Minister Ravishankar Prasad launched **Digidhan Abhiyan** to enable every citizen, small traders and merchants to adopt digital payments in their everyday financial transactions.
- The two-day India-UK Conference on Ease of Doing Business was jointly inaugurated on 9 December 2016 in **New Delhi**.
- Reserve Bank has directed all Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) to upload the Know Your Customer or KYC data pertaining to new individual accounts opened on or after January 1, with **Central KYC Records Registry**.
- The Assam government has mooted allocating at least 5 percent of development funds of every department for tea garden areas from **the next annual state budget**.
- The Rajasthan High Court has struck down Special Backward Classes reservation given to **Gujjars and five other communities of the state**.
- The UN General Assembly has demanded an immediate ceasefire in Syria and urgent aid deliveries in a resolution adopted by a strong majority as Syrian forces launched another assault on **Aleppo**.
- A Japanese capsule blasted off with much-needed supplies for the International Space Station, a week after **a Russian shipment was destroyed shortly after lift-off**.
- India was recently designated as a Major Defence Partner of the United States during the visit of US Secretary of Defence **Ashton Carter** to New Delhi.
- The first American astronaut to Orbit Earth, **John Glenn**, passed away recently.
- The Chief Minister of Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan recently launched Haritha Keralam Mission to **make the state clean, protect its water sources and soil**.
- Most powerful language as per the 2016 World Power Language Index is **English**.
- **Vijaya Bank** was considered as the Best Bank for SME Lending by Assocham.
- **Andhra Pradesh** launched the Purse mobile app to promote digital transactions.
- **NABARD** announced to provide financial support to eligible banks for deployment of 2 POS devices each in 1 Lakh villages with population of less than 10000.
- **Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple** has brought back its strict dress norms.
- **Park Geun-hye** faces an impeachment vote.
- **Uttarakhand** High Court has ordered a liquor and tobacco ban in three of its districts.
- **Allahabad High Court** declared the process of Triple Talaq as unconstitutional.

- Arunachal Pradesh State Co-operative Apex Bank 2016 launched Mobile Banking Service named SIMsePaY in collaboration with **Yes Bank Ltd.**
- **US President-elect Donald Trump** was named as Person of the Year 2016 by Time magazine.
- Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight PK-661 crashed with 47 people, including five crew members and 42 passengers, on board into a mountain near the town of **Havelian, in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan.**
- Armed Forces Flag Day is celebrated in India on **7 December.**
- **Vijayawada** recently became India's first parliamentary constituency to have health insurance for all.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to discontinue 500 and 1000 rupees' notes has boosted the revenue of many civic bodies in **Maharashtra.**
- Altogether 98 trainee police officers of the 42nd Basic Course from North Eastern Police Academy took oath during the Dikshant parade held in **Shillong.**
- India received over 300 billion US dollar Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) milestone between **April 2000 and September 2016.**
- Former Spanish footballer, **Alvaro Dominguez Soto**, recently announced retirement.
- India's earth observation satellite that was successfully launched on 7 December 2016 is **Resourcesat-2A.**
- The New French Prime Minister is **Bernard Cazeneuve.**
- **West Bengal** will be setting up a special panel to prevent child trafficking panel.
- The chairman of the anti-child trafficking panel is **Partha Chatterjee.**
- The Philippine Vice President, who resigned her Cabinet post is **Leni Robredo.**
- **J Ravichandran** appointed as the Interim Chief Executive Officer of National Stock Exchange of India.
- Renowned Urdu poet, **Bekal Utsahi**, passed away recently and belonged to Uttar Pradesh.
- A 10,500-year-old camping site has been discovered by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in **Ladakh.**
- The 6th Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) concluded on 4 December 2016 after adopting **the Amritsar Declaration.**
- Phulel Singh Sujlana, who passed away recently, was the former international umpire of **Hockey.**
- Yoga, India's one of the ancient practices to keep oneself healthy, has been inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List as the **Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.**

- **KPMG and Microsoft** India announced a strategic Internet of Things (IoT) Advisory partnership to accelerate the digital transformation of large and mid-market enterprises in the country.
- Tasmania-based Women's Legal Service in collaboration with TRS Law Offices (India) has launched a website (**www.Girlsgottaknow.In**) for women in the country to educate them about their legal rights.
- India's largest public sector trading body MMTC (Metals and Minerals Trading Gold Corporation) tie-up with the State Bank of India (SBI) to sell government-minted Indian Gold Coin (24 Karat) which will be available in denominations of **5gm, 10gm and 20 gm bar**.
- In a bid to enhance cooperation in education with Egypt, India will establish a centre of excellence in information technology at the country's oldest and most prestigious **Al-Azhar University**.
- Nobel Peace Laureate **Jose Ramos-Horta** strongly urged for peace in Jammu and Kashmir on 11 December 2016 in New Delhi on the side lines of a child slavery abolition programme of a non-governmental organisation (NGO).
- **Corporation Bank** has bagged the SKOCH silver award for attaining the position of number1 channel partner of LIC of India for the past three financial years, as per a press release by the bank here. The bank was also awarded order of merit under other three categories.

NATIONAL

1. Supreme Court ordered Status Quo on Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal land

A bench of Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose and Justice Amitava Roy of the Supreme Court ordered status quo on land acquired for the construction of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal's stretch in Punjab.

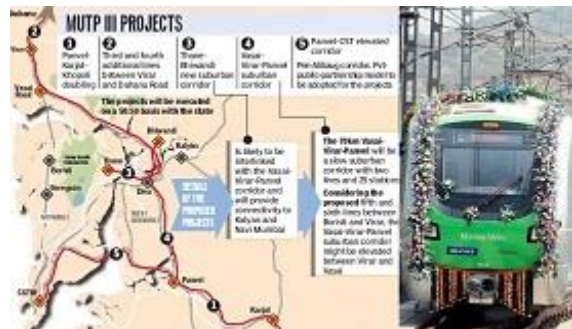
The court also appointed Union Home Secretary, Chief Secretary of Punjab and the Director General of Punjab Police as receivers in the dispute between Punjab and Haryana. The controversial 1981 water-sharing agreement came into being after Haryana was carved out of Punjab in 1966.



2. Union Cabinet approves Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP) — Phase III

The Union Cabinet has approved the Mumbai Urban Transport Project Phase-III. The estimated cost of project is Rs. 8,679 crores with the completion cost of Rs. 10,947 crores. The project is expected to be completed in the next 5 years during 13th Plan period.

The areas covered by this project are Thane, Palghar, Raigad and Mumbai districts of Maharashtra. The Mumbai suburban railway network on Central and Western Railways has 376 Kms based routes and there are five corridors.



3. Union HRD Minister launched 'Vittiya Saksharata Abhiyan'

Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Prakash Javadekar launched the 'Vittiya Saksharata Abhiyan' in New Delhi.

He appealed to the young students to come forward and join 'Vittiya Saksharata Abhiyan' to encourage, create awareness and motivate all people around them to use a digitally enabled cashless economic system for transfer of fund. He also launched a webpage where students can register themselves, give continuous feedback and suggestions on the initiative.



4. Garbage from Ghazipur landfill site to be used to make highways

Garbage from the Ghazipur landfill site in east Delhi will be used for road expansion projects by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). The garbage piled up at the site will be cleared by 2018.

The East Delhi Municipal Corporation signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, and the Union Urban Development Ministry in this regards.



5. The Union cabinet approves Rs. 2,000 Crores for displaced families from PoK

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Home Ministry's proposal of Rs. 2,000 crore development package for the displaced people of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) living in the country.

Each family will get around Rs. 5.5 lakhs as aid to enable them to earn an income and subsist their livelihood. The amount will be released to the State government for disbursement to eligible families through Direct Benefit Transfer.



6. ESIC increases the monthly wage limit to Rs. 21,000

In a bid to bring more workers from the unorganized sector under the health insurance scheme, the Employees State Insurance Corporation, ESIC has increased the monthly wage limit to 21,000 rupees.

Earlier the coverage under the ESIC scheme was enhanced to 15,000 rupees in 2010. The upward increase in revision would add about 35 lakh new members to the ESIC pool.

At present, 2 crores 14 lakhs persons are enrolled under this scheme.



7. Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Signs MoU with Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) signed a MoU with Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for cooperation in zoonoses, anti-microbial resistance, nutrition and pesticide residues. The MoU will strengthen the ties between the two organizations and energize environment of mutual cooperation and collaboration.



This collaboration is aimed at developing guiding inputs for National Action Plan on anti-microbial resistance regarding limiting resistance emanating from antibiotic use in feed animals and spreading into the environment.

8. Portal 'E-Box' launched by WCD Ministry to register online complaints of child sexual abuse

Union Minister Maneka Gandhi launched an online complaint box for reporting child sexual abuse, the POCSO e-Box in New Delhi. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO), e-Box, is an online complaint management system for easy and direct reporting of sexual offences against children and timely action against the offenders under the POCSO Act, 2012.



The facility is available on the NCPCR website. Anyone, a victim or an adult, can visit the website and file a complaint about a child facing sexual abuse. There are pictorial aides to make the procedure simple for young children.

9. Union Government launches Stanpan Suraksha mobile app to promote breastfeeding

The Union Tribal Affairs Ministry in association with Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) have developed and launched the 'Stanpan Suraksha' mobile application to promote breastfeeding and keep a check on inappropriate promotion of baby food items in the country.

The app also has a city-wise database of trained breastfeeding counsellor who can educate and aid mothers during antenatal and postnatal period.

**Stanpan
Suraksha**



10. Supreme Court approved action plan to deal with air pollution in Delhi NCR

The Supreme Court has approved the Graded Response Action Plan of the Union Government to tackle the different levels of pollution in Delhi-NCR region. The enforcement of action plan will be under orders of Environment Pollution (Control and Prevention) Authority (EPCA).

The court also directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to set up more monitoring stations in Delhi-NCR within six months and upgrade existing infrastructure.



11. India, Qatar signed four agreements including visa and cyberspace

India and Qatar inked four agreements on visas, cyberspace and investments, which are as follows:

- Holders of diplomatic, special and official passports of the two countries visa-free travel between the two countries.
- Protocol on technical cooperation in cyber space and combating cybercrime was signed
- Letter of intent for negotiations on an agreement on grant of e-visa to businessmen and tourists of the two countries.
- MoU that will provide a framework for project experts for Indian companies in Qatar, including through participation in infrastructure projects in Qatar undertaken for the 2022 FIFA World Cup



12. Petroleum Minister inaugurated the fifth IEF-IGU Ministerial Gas Forum

Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the fifth International Energy Forum (IEF) and the International Gas Union Ministerial Forum in New Delhi. The forum is being held as a parallel event to the 3-day Petrotech-2016.

Compared to international average, the share of gas in India's primary energy basket is only at about 6.5 percent and the government have set a target to raise the share from the current level to 15 percent.



13. Government announced incentives for cashless transactions

The Union Government announced package of incentives and measures for promotion of digital and cashless economy in the country.

Key Measures:

- 0.75% discount on diesel and petrol to consumers who pay through digital means.
- Rs. 10 lakh free accident insurance cover to passengers on booking of Railway ticket through online mode.
- Buying general, life insurance policies and renewal premiums from PSU insurers' websites will attract 10% and 8% discount, respectively.
- No service tax will be charged on all digital transaction up to Rs. 2000.
- Merchants would not be required to pay more than Rs. 100 as monthly rental for PoS terminals/Micro ATMs/mobile POS through Public sector banks.



14. Eleven MoUs Signed, Web Portals of 3 Start-Up Funds Launched during PETROTECH 2016

On the last day of the Petrotech-2016, 11 Memorandum of Understandings were signed. Summary of the agreements signed are as follows:

- Consortium Agreement between Indian Oil as Lead Member and HPCL & BPCL in relation to pre-project activities for establishment of West Coast Refinery and Petrochemicals Project in Maharashtra through creating a joint venture company amongst the Parties.
- MoU with IIT, Guwahati for supporting OIL's start up initiative
- MoU with IIT, Mumbai for supporting ONGC's Start-Up Initiative
- Setting up 5 2G ethanol plants in various parts of the country.
- Portal were also launched by ONGC, OIL and IOCL under "Start-Up India".



For detailed information on the MoUs signed, you can click on the following link: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=155009> (Ref Date: 07/12/2016)

15. India signed a Civil Nuclear Co-Operation Agreement with Vietnam

India signed a Civil Nuclear Co-Operation Agreement with Vietnam. The agreement was signed in New Delhi in the presence of Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan and visiting President of Vietnam's National Assembly Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan.

Ngan is the first woman to head the National Assembly of Vietnam.

Vietnam is the 14th country with which India signed the civil nuclear deal. India had signed a similar civil nuclear agreement with Japan in November 2016.



16. Cabinet approved an MoU between India and Vietnam on Cooperation In the field of Information Technology (IT)

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval to the MoU between India and Vietnam on Cooperation in the field of IT.

This MoU aims to develop a long-term and sustainable cooperation based on equality and mutual interest in the areas of IT in line with each country's laws and regulations. The MoU will remain in force for a period of five years and will be renewable by mutual written consent between India and Vietnam. It will be implemented by establishing a Joint Working Group on IT with representatives from both the countries.



17. Cabinet approves an MoU between India and Afghanistan on Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval to the MoU between India and Afghanistan on cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

This MoU will benefit both the countries in the following manner:

- Development of space sector in Afghanistan.
- Burnish India's credentials as a nation with advanced space technology, one that can also assist other countries;
- Afghanistan will move towards self-reliance in the space sector;
- Help deepen bilateral ties and mutual understanding and trust between India and Afghanistan;
- Provide India with a foothold in Afghanistan's strategic space and communication sector.



18. Cabinet approves an MoU between India and Thailand on Cooperation in controlling narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the MoU between India and Thailand in controlling narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, their precursors and chemicals and drug abuse.

The MoU is an effective framework to deal with all issues requiring mutual assistance and cooperation in the above areas. It will facilitate effective institutional interaction between India and Thailand. The MoU, once in force, would help in curbing transnational narcotics trafficking.



19. Cabinet approves an MoU between India and United Kingdom (UK) for Cooperation in the Field of Intellectual Property

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval to the MoU between India and United Kingdom (UK) for Cooperation in the Field of Intellectual Property (IP). The MoU was signed on 7.11.2016.

The MoU seeks to establish a wide-ranging and flexible mechanism for developing and furthering the cooperation in the development of automation, new documentation and information systems in IP. It provides an opportunity for collaboration in training programs, exchange of experts and technical exchanges and outreach activities.



20. Cabinet approves an MoU between India and United Kingdom (UK) to support Ease of Doing Business in India

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval to the MoU between India and United Kingdom (UK) to support Ease of Doing Business in India.

The MoU shall enable exchange of officials from both the Governments to facilitate sharing of best practices, offering technical assistance and enhanced implementation of reforms. The UK government has shown interest to offer expertise in the following areas:



- Support to small businesses and start ups
- Starting business and registration
- Paying taxes and tax administration
- Insolvency
- Construction permits
- Getting electricity
- Risk based framework for inspection and regulatory regimes
- Trading across the borders
- Competition economics
- Getting credit
- Drafting of laws and regulations
- Reducing stock and flow of regulation
- Impact assessment of regulations

21. Cabinet approves Reforms to Boost Employment Generation and Exports in the Made-ups Sector

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the reforms to boost employment generation and exports in the Made-ups Sector.

The cabinet approved budget of Rs. 6,006 crores for the apparel package with the objective of creating large scale direct and indirect employment of up to 11 lakh persons over the next three years in the made-ups sector. Key points:



- Providing production incentive through enhanced Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS)
- Extension of Pradhan Mantri Paridhan Rozgar Protsahan Yojana (PMPRPY) Scheme (for apparel)
- Extension of Rebate of State Levies (ROSL) (for apparel) Scheme

22. Cabinet approves Nutrient Based Subsidy rates for Phosphatic and Potassic fertilizers for the year 2016-17

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the proposal of half yearly review of Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) rates for Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers for the year 2016-17.



(Per Kg subsidy rates in Rs.)

Period	N (Nitrogen)	P (Phosphorus)	K (Potash)	S (Sulphur)
2nd half of FY 2016-17 (from October'16 to March'17)	15.854	13.241	15.470	2.044

23. Cabinet approves the proposal of the Election Commission for the procurement of Control and Ballot Units during 2017–18 and 2018–19

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal of Election Commission for purchase of 4,10,000 Ballot Units (BUs) and 3,14,000 Control Units (CUs) during 2017-18 and 4,35,306 Ballot Units and 71,716 control units during 2018-19 at a tentative unit cost of Rs. 7,700/- and Rs. 9,300/- respectively. The total estimated cost will be Rs.1,009.6 crore.



The purchases will be made through Bharat Electronic Ltd.(BEL), Bangalore and Electronics Corporation of India Ltd. (ECIL), Hyderabad.

24. PMFBY has provided coverage to 366.64 lakh farmers (26.50%)

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), as on date, has provided coverage to 366.64 lakh farmers (26.50%) and at this rate it is likely to exceed the target of 30% coverage for both Kharif and Rabi seasons in 2016-17.



In terms of total area covered, the achievement has been significant amounting to a total area of 388.62 lakh hectare and sum insured of Rs. 141339 crore. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana was recast as a new scheme by the Government as the earlier existing insurance schemes were not meeting the full requirements of the farmers for insurance coverage.

25. Cabinet approves Pune Metro Rail Project Phase – 1

The Union Cabinet has approved the development of Pune Metro Rail Project Phase – 1. The Pune Metro Rail Corridor will be covering a length of 31.254 km comprising with two corridors i.e. Corridor – 1 {Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) to Swargate} and Corridor – 2 (Vanaz to Ramwadi).



The total completion cost of the metro rail corridor will be Rs. 11,420 crores. The project is scheduled to be completed in five years from the date of start of work as per the Detailed Project Report (DPR).

26. Government Released Rs 1667.99 Crores and Rs 366.47 Crores for Installation of Solar and Wind Energy Projects

The total installed capacity in the country from solar power was 8727.64 MW and from wind power was 28279.40 MW as on 31.10.2016. This was stated by Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of State (IC) for Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy and Mines in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha today.



Shri Goyal further informed that Ministry has released amount of Rs. 1667.99 Crores and Rs. 366.47 crores for installation of solar and wind energy projects respectively till 31st October 2016 in different State/UTs. "The potential of wind and solar in the country has been estimated to be 302251 MW and 784990 MW respectively", he added.

27. Setting up two National Kamdhenu Breeding Centre's

Government is undertaking establishment of two National Kamdhenu Breeding Centre's in the Country. An amount of Rs.25.00 Crore has been released to Madhya Pradesh for establishment of National Kamdhenu Breeding Centre in Itarsi, Hoshangabad in Northern region of India and Rs 25 crore has been released to Andhra Pradesh for establishment of National Kamdhenu Breeding Centre in Chintaladevi, Nellore in Southern region of India.



Under the Rashtriya Gokul Mission, all the bull mother farms available with State governments and State Implementing Agencies/ State Livestock Development Boards are covered for modernization and strengthening of existing infrastructure.

28. Organic farming on the Banks of Ganga River

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfares to promote organic clusters on the banks of Ganga in 5 Ganga basin States namely Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. It is proposed to cover 136 gram panchayats/villages under the program.



The Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) program components will be converged with Namami Ganga program to implement the organic cluster in these Ganga basin States. A financial assistance of 14.95 lakhs for 3 years shall be provided per cluster towards organic farming practices and Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) of Certification.

29. Government launched “DigiShala” channel to educate Rural India on Cashless Transaction

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology launched a TV channel named ‘DigiShala’. It is a free-to-air channel. To educate, enable and inform citizens about cashless economy, the government has also initiated ‘Digi Dhan Abhiyan’.

‘DigiShala’ is aimed at enabling and empowering citizens who will be informed and educated about various digital payment options through step by step demos of digital payments using UPI, USSD, Aadhar-enabled payment systems, e-Wallets and cards.



30. Indonesia and India inked three MoUs

Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed three agreements in the fields of youth and sports, fishing and cooperation between the Bureau of Indian Standards and the National Standardization Agency of Indonesia.



The MoU on fishing was inked to tackle illegal fishing. The President of Indonesia and the Prime Minister of India agreed to hold annual Summit meetings, including on the margins of multilateral events and emphasized the importance of further consolidating the security and defence cooperation between the two countries.

31. Union Minister of Road Transport laid foundation for 17 road projects in Manipur

Union Minister of Road Transport Nitin Gadkari announced 17 road projects at a cost of Rs. 1152 crores for Manipur, which includes construction of Barak and Makru bridges on National Highway no 37 Imphal-Jiribam road, Ukhrul -Toloi-Tadubi projects covering 115 km, Sinzawl-Tuivai projects covering 162 km and Tamenglong-Khongsang road covering 40 kms.



Various projects will be looked after by Public Works Department of Manipur. Ministry assured that Imphal-Jiribam road will be repaired within three years.

32. India's first Cybersecurity Engagement Centre launched in New Delhi

Software giant Microsoft launched cybersecurity engagement centre (CSEC) in the Delhi region to tackle cyber threats in the country and develop a secure tech-space for users. It is an initiative for India's digital transformation. It will involve an investment of \$1 billion yearly in the field of security research, innovation and development.



Microsoft's other cybersecurity centers are located in Singapore, Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing, Berlin and Washington DC. Centre will be operated in union with the Redmond DCU team which involves over 100 legal and technical experts worldwide.

33. National Resource Centre for Tribal Livelihood launched at Odisha

Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs in collaboration with UNDP and National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation, launched "Vanjeevan" the National Resource Centre for Tribal Livelihood issues at Bhubaneswar, Odisha.



Vanjeevan is a program to identify the problems in livelihood issues in select districts of six states having low HDI of tribal people in two phases. The program will focus on the identification of local resources, facilitate utilization of funds and serve as a platform for livelihood mapping and skill gap analysis for tribal entrepreneurship development.

34. Kolkata-Mizoram trade route to be opened via Myanmar

Kolkata-Mizoram trade route via Myanmar will be opened and become a reality soon as Sittwe port will be built by India in Myanmar. Trade route involves arrival of shipments at Sittwe port from Kolkata and transfer to smaller freight carriers into Mizoram.



Construction of Sittwe port is the first phase of an integrated \$500-million project being funded by India. India is funding to build route because it will reduce the cost and distance of movement from Kolkata to Mizoram.

35. India Signs Grant Agreement with the IBRD for USD 5.19 million

An agreement for GEF Grant of USD 5.19 Million for "Additional Financing for Financing Energy Efficiency at MSMEs Project-Programmatic Framework for Energy Efficiency" was signed by Shri Raj Kumar, Joint Secretary (MI), Department of Economic Affairs and World Bank (India) on behalf of IBRD.



The Development Objective of the project was to increase demand for energy efficiency investments in MSME. The proposed additional financing (AF) would be used to help further scale up the initiatives taken up under the parent project.

36. Rajya Sabha passed the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill

Rajya Sabha passed the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2014, complying with the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which India became a signatory in 2007. Persons with disabilities shall have the right to equality such as equal opportunity in employment, legal capacity and equal protection and safety in situations of risk.

At least 5% seats in all government institutions of higher education and those getting aid from the government are required to reserve seats for persons with benchmark disabilities.



37. The 6th APMC on Housing and Urban Development held in New Delhi

Union Urban Development Minister M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated 6th edition of three day Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD) in New Delhi. 68 countries' senior officials witnessed conference and decided to adopt Delhi Declaration. Various strategies were planned for the New Urban Agenda adopted at Quito, Ecuador.



Main objective of the conference was to address issues regarding sustainable growth, urban population growth, climate change challenges and rising levels of air pollution.

38. Cabinet approves replacement of 'Major Port Trusts Act, 1963'

The Union Cabinet approved the proposal of Ministry of Shipping to replace the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963 by the Major Port Authorities Bill, 2016. This will empower the Major Ports to perform with greater efficiency on account of full autonomy in decision making and by modernizing the Institutional structure of Major Ports.



The Bill is aimed at reorienting the governance model in central Ports to landlord port model in line with the successful global practice. This will also help in bringing transparency in operations of Major Ports.

39. e-Tourist visa extended to citizens of 161 countries

The Government has extended the facility of e-Tourist Visa for citizens of 161 countries. The number of foreign tourist arrivals on e-Tourist Visa (e-TV) during January to November 2016 was 9,17,446, registering a growth of 168.5% over same period of previous year.



The e-visa scheme was launched on November 27, 2014. Under the scheme, an applicant receives an email authorizing him or her to travel to India after it has been approved. The tourist can travel with a print-out of this authorization.

40. NITI Aayog announces Lucky Grahak Yojana and Digi-Dhan Vyapar Yojana

NITI Aayog announced the launch of the schemes Lucky Grahak Yojana and the Digi-DhanVyapar Yojana to give cash awards to consumers and merchants who utilize digital payment instruments for personal consumption expenditures.



- Lucky Grahak Yojana [Consumers]:** Consumers making payment through digital mode will get chance to win minimum Rs. 1000 each every day or Rs. 1 lakh per week.
- Digi-DhanVyapar Yojana [Merchants]:** Merchants doing business using POS are eligible to win Rs. 50000 per week from 25th December 2016 to 14 April 2017.

41. The Union Cabinet approved an MoU between ISRO and USGS

The Union Cabinet has been apprised of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and United States Geological Survey (USGS) for Cooperation in the exchange and use of U.S. Land Remote Sensing Satellite Data. The MoU was signed on 9th July 2016 at Bengaluru.



This MoU will enable ISRO to receive USGS's Landsat-7 & 8 in India and USGS to receive ISRO's Resourcesat-2 (AWiFS and LISS III) data of US region.

42. India Signs Open Skies Agreement with Six Countries During ICAN 2016

International Civil Aviation Negotiations (ICAN) - 2016 were held recently in Nassau from 5th to 9th December, 2016. India negotiated with 17 countries and "Memorandum of Understanding" was signed with 12 countries.



India signed open Skies agreement as per NCAP 2016 that allows unlimited number of flights to six metro airports namely Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Chennai, was signed with six countries namely Jamaica, Guyana, Czech Republic, Finland, Spain and Sri Lanka.

43. India to Receive Euro 1 billion Soft Loan for 'Green Energy Corridors' from Germany

Germany will provide soft loan to the tune of Euro 1 billion for the funding of green energy corridors in both intra and inter State transmission projects, under the framework of cooperation between Govt. of India and Govt. of Germany.



Intra State transmission schemes under Green Energy Corridors (GEC) are to be funded as 20% equity of the State Govt., 40% grant from National Clean Energy Fund (NCEF) and 40% soft loan, whereas, the inter State transmission schemes are to be funded as 30% equity by PGCIL and 70% as soft loan.

44. Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana became operational from the 17th December

The Taxation Laws (Second Amendment) Act 2016 has come into force which has provisions of levy of a total tax, penalty and surcharge of 50 per cent on the amount deposited post demonetization. The money collected from taxes and penalty on undisclosed incomes will be deposited in the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojna, which in a part of the Act.

The scheme commenced from the 17th of December and would remain open for declarations up to 31st of March next year.



45. India and Tajikistan sign four agreements

India and Tajikistan signed four agreements following delegation-level talks headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Tajik President Emomali Rahmon in New Delhi.

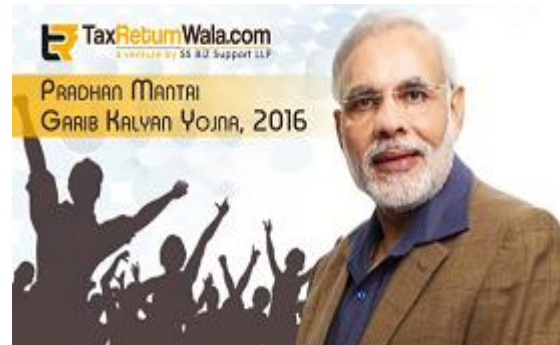
The agreements are as follows:

- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed on cooperation in the exchange of financial intelligence related to money laundering, related crimes and financing of terrorism.
- A protocol was signed amending avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion.
- A MoU regarding cooperation on broadcasting in exchange of audio-visual programs.
- Initiated a document on bilateral investment.



46. Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojna comes into effect

The Government has notified changes to income tax law for the new black money disclosure scheme i.e. 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana'. Money received under this scheme as penalty will be used for the social schemes meant for poor.



This scheme started from December 17 and declarations made under this scheme will be kept confidential. Any individual who has undisclosed income can disclose income under this scheme till March 31 2017. Any individual who declares unaccounted income, should pay a fine of 50% of the unaccounted money. 25% of the amount will remain locked in for 4 years. You can deposit the penalty on your undisclosed income in any bank or in the income tax department. Any information about black money can also be emailed on blackmoneyinfo@incometax.gov.in

47. Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill passed in Lok Sabha

The Lok Sabha passed "The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill - 2016". The Bill will replace the existing PwD Act, 1995, which was enacted 21 years back. The Rajya Sabha had already passed the Bill on 14.12.2016.

The salient features of the Bill are:

- Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.
- The types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21 and the Central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities.
- The office of chief commissioner and state commissioners for Persons with Disabilities which will act as regulatory bodies.



48. NTPC and NALCO inked MoU to establish a 2400 MW Coal based power project

NTPC Limited and National Aluminum Company Limited (NALCO) inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate the setting up of a Joint Venture (JV) Company to establish a 2400 MW coal based power project at Gajmara, Dhenkanal, Odisha.



The generated power will be taken by the NALCO as a JV partner for the Brownfield expansion of its 5 lakh tonne Aluminum smelter at Angul and the Greenfield project of a 6 lakh tonne smelter at Kamakhya Nagar, Odisha. The estimated investment in all these projects will be approximately Rs. 36,000 crores.

49. PM Modi laid foundation stone of first ever Indian Institute of Skills at Kanpur

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the first ever Indian Institute of Skills in the country at Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. The institute will be open by the Skill Development Ministry in partnership with the Institute of Technical Education, Singapore.

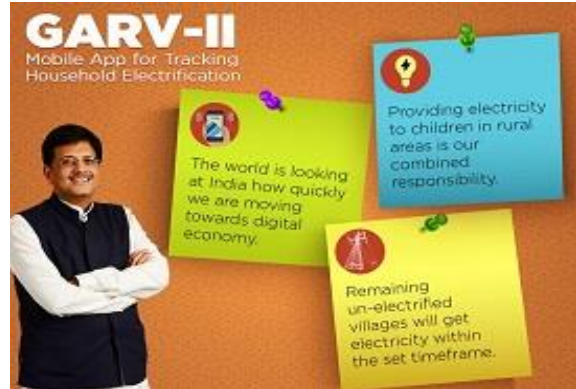


Prime Minister also inaugurated the Kaushal Pradarshini (Skill Exhibition, between 19th to 22nd December) for the youth. The Exhibition showcased state-of-the-art vocational training practices of various sectors.

50. Power Ministry launches GARV-II App to track Rural Household Electrification

Power Ministry launched the 'GARV-II' App to provide access to electricity to all households in the country. Under this module, village-wise and habitation-wise base line data on household electrification for all States, as provided by them, has been incorporated.

The data in respect of about 6 lakh villages has been mapped for tracking progress on household electrification and the status of village-wise works sanctioned under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) (for these projects has also been mapped in 'GARV-II' to monitor progress of works in each village.



51. 'Swasthya Raksha Program' launched by the AYUSH Ministry

Swasthya Rakshan Program has been initiated through Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine, Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy and Central Council for Research in Siddha in selected districts/ villages.

This Swasthya Rakshan Program will organize Swasthya Rakshan OPDs and Health awareness program, create awareness about cleanliness of domestic surroundings and provide medical aid in the adopted villages.



52. India and Kyrgyzstan ink 6 MoUs

India and Kyrgyzstan have inked six Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) in the fields of tourism, agriculture and food industry etc after delegation level talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Sharshenovich Atambayev in New Delhi.

The 6 MoUs are:

- MoU on cooperation in the field of Tourism
- MoU in the field of cooperation in youth exchange.
- MoU on cooperation in the field of Youth development
- MoU on exchange of information on training programs of diplomats.
- Agreement on cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Food Industry.
- MoU on cooperation in the field of Broadcasting and exchange of audiovisual programs.



53. Government revised North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy

The government has revised the North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NEIIP), 2007. Subsidies will be disbursed through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanism.

Benefits available under the policy are:

- Provides for subsidy @ 30% of the investment in plant and machinery
- Provides for interest subsidy @ 3% on the working capital loan
- Provides for reimbursement of 100% insurance premium for a maximum period of 10 years



54. Government announced a Rs. 207 crore project for protection of Majuli island

Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region Dr. Jitendra Singh announced to provide 207 crore rupees for protection and development of the world heritage island Majuli located along river Brahmaputra in Assam for the upliftment of the world famous scenic island.



This amount will be spent primarily for safeguarding the land loss due to erosion and to protect the 80-kilometer length of the bank line on the right bank of river Brahmaputra along Majuli island.

55. The Union Cabinet approved ordinance to amend Payment of Wages Act

The Union Cabinet approved an ordinance to amend the Payment of Wages Act for allowing business and industrial establishments to pay salaries through cheque or electronically in the bank accounts.

An infographic titled "Payment of Wages Act, 1936". It lists the following details:

- Object?**
 - To avoid with holding wages, delays in paying wages & making unreasonable deductions out of wages.
- Applicability:** This Act is applicable to persons whose wages does not exceed Rs. 6900 per month (2009) or such other higher sum which, on the basis of figures of the Consumer Expenditure Survey published by the National Sample Survey Organisation, the Central Government may, after every five years, by notification in the Official Gazette.
- Wage period** – shall not exceed 1 month
- Time of payment of wages**
 - <1000 persons - before the expiry of the 7th day of the following wage period
 - >1000 persons - before the expiry of the 10th day of the following wage period
 - Termination of employment - before 1st working day from the terminated day
 - Wages to be paid on a working day

The employers will also have the option to pay wages in existing provisions of payment in current coin or currency notes. The Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill seeks to amend Section 6 of the principal Act to enable employers to pay wages to employees through cheque or by crediting it into their bank accounts.

56. Cabinet approves creation of ‘Indian Enterprise Development Service (IEDS)’

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the Cadre review and formation of a new service in the name of Indian Enterprise Development Service (IEDS) in the Office of Development Commissioner (MSME), Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).



The creation of the new cadre and change in structure will strengthen the organization as well as help to achieve the vision of “Startup India”, “Stand-up India” and “Make in India”.

57. Information and Broadcasting Ministry launched Google Map toilet locator

Information and Broadcasting Minister Venkaiah Naidu launched google map toilet locator to help people find access to clean public restrooms. Google toilet locator is a pioneering attempt at providing access to a toilet facility every 500 meters in cities.

At present 504 cities and towns which also includes 4 Million-plus cities have achieved Open Defecation Free. Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Sikkim have declared all cities and towns Open Defecation Free.



58. Shri Shripad Naik inaugurated the NE Institute of Ayurveda and Homeopathy

The Minister of State for AYUSH Shri Shripad Yesso Naik inaugurated the North-Eastern Institute of Ayurveda and Homoeopathy, an autonomous Institute under Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, in Shillong, Meghalaya. With this, it became the second Ayurvedic College in the North-East Region with a Homeopathy college and the only Central Academic Institute of Ayush.



The primary aim of the Institute is to produce quality human resource in AYUSH; particularly in the Ayurveda and Homeopathy along with the Yoga systems.

59. Textiles Ministry to set up Bunkar Mitra-Handloom Helpline Centre

Textiles Ministry decided to establish a Bunkar Mitra Handloom Helpline Centre where professional queries of weavers will be answered by the experts in the field.

At present, 28 weavers' service centers are functioning across the country to provide technical assistance to handloom weavers in improving their skills. Presently, there is no single point of contact where weavers can seek solutions for their technical issues. The call centre will be operationalized within a month.



60. Enemy Property ordinance promulgated again

President Pranab Mukherjee has given his assent to the Enemy Property (Amendment and Validation) Fifth Ordinance – 2016.

It will guard against claims of succession or transfer of properties left by people who migrated to Pakistan and China after wars. The amendments are aimed at plugging the loopholes in the principal Act to ensure that the enemy properties worth thousands of crores of rupees vested in the Custodian do not revert to the enemy, enemy subject or enemy firm.



61. Google India, Consumer Affairs Ministry join hands for online consumer protection

Google India has collaborated with Ministry of Consumer Affairs announced a nationwide Digitally Safe Consumer campaign to raise awareness about online safety. It is a part of a larger effort to help better protect consumer interest online.

Google with the help of partner agencies will work towards advocating digital security and privacy needs through 'Digital Literacy, Safety & Security' workshops through a 'Train the Trainer' model for approximately 500 people including 250 consumer organisations across the country.



62. NITI Aayog launched the National Index for Performance on Health Outcomes

NITI Aayog launched the National Index for Performance on Health Outcomes to rank states towards transformative action in the Health sector.

It is meant to capture the annual incremental improvements by States, rather than focus on historical achievements. It includes indicators in the domains of health outcomes governance and information and a few key inputs and processes. A similar exercise has also been launched for the Education and Water sectors.



66. Ministry of Railways doubled compensation rate for accident victims

Ministry of Railways decided to double the amounts of compensation payable in respect of Death & Injuries to the passengers involved in Accidents, by amending "The Railway Accidents and Untoward Incidents (Compensation) Rules, 1990" and replacing with "The Railway Accidents and Untoward Incidents (Compensation) Rules, 2016".



As per the revised Compensation Rules, compensation in case of death has been doubled from Rs. 4 lakh to Rs. 8 lakh. The new rules will come into effect from 1st January 2017.

67. Foreign Tourist Arrivals have grown to around 9.3% in November

There was a growth of 9.3% in Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in the month of November 2016 over the same period in 2015 where USA accounted for the highest share of tourist arrivals followed by UK and Bangladesh in November 2016. Close to Rs. 14, 474/- crores Foreign Exchange has been earned through tourism in November 2016.



The Percentage share of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during November, 2016 among the top 15 source countries was highest from USA (15.53%) followed by UK (11.21%), Bangladesh (10.72%), Canada (4.66%), Russian Fed (4.53%), Australia (4.04%), Malaysia (3.65%), Germany (3.53%), China (3.14%), France (2.88%), Sri Lanka (2.49%), Japan (2.49%), Singapore (2.16%), Nepal (1.46%) and Thailand (1.37%).

68. CPWD signs an MOU to help Bhutan in green and sustainable construction

Central Public Works Department (CPWD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Engineering Services, Ministry of Works and Human Settlements, Royal Government of Bhutan in Thimpu.



Under the MoU for bilateral technical cooperation in infrastructure engineering, CPWD will assist in promoting sustainability in the built environment, capacity building through training of Bhutanese manpower, benchmarking in building and road sectors besides deputing engineering experts to Bhutan.

69. Noida-Greater Noida Metro gets Rs. 406 crores boost from NCR Planning Board

The National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) has begun to release funds for the Noida-Greater Noida Metro Project by disbursing the first loan instalment of Rs. 406 Crores.



NCRPB had earlier sanctioned a loan of Rs. 1,587 Crores to Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) for the 29.70 kms Noida-Greater Noida Metro Project that is estimated to cost Rs. 5,533 Crores. The targeted date of completion of this section is April, 2018.

70. Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the 24th National Children’s Science Congress

Union Minister for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated the 24th National Children’s Science Congress at Vidyapratishthan’s Institute of Information Technology, Baramati in Pune district of Maharashtra.



The five-day Science Congress will bring more than 700 child scientists under one umbrella that will give them an opportunity to showcase their talents. The top 25 projects will be shortlisted and respective students will be provided with training support.

71. Centre released funds of Rs. 1981 crore for Polavaram irrigation project

The Union government released Rs. 1981 crores issued by NABARD to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Shri N Chandrababu Naidu for Polavaram irrigation project. The Government has also released Rs. 830 crores to Maharashtra and Rs. 463 crores to Gujarat.



The total funds required for the completion of all the 99 identified projects have been estimated at Rs. 77595 crores (Rs. 48546 crores for project works and Rs. 29049 crores for CAD works) with an estimated Central Assistance of Rs. 31342 crores.

72. Cabinet approved the Road Connectivity Project for the Left-Wing Extremism Affected Areas

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved a Centrally Sponsored Scheme namely "Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Affected Areas" to improve the rural road connectivity in the worst LWE affected districts from security angle.



Under the project, construction/upgradation of 5,411.81 kilometres road and 126 Bridges/Cross Drainage works will be taken up at an estimated cost of Rs. 11,724.53 crores. These funds will be shared in the ratio of 60:40 between the Centre and States for all States except for eight North Eastern and three Himalayan States (Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh & Uttarakhand) for which it is 90:10.

73. Cabinet approved the International Solar Alliance (ISA): Signing of the Framework Agreement

The Union Cabinet gave its ex-post facto approval for ratification of ISA's Framework Agreement by India. ISA was launched jointly by India and France on 30th November, 2015 at Paris.



The ISA will strive to bring together more than 121 solar resource rich nations for coordinated research, low cost financing and rapid deployment. The foundation stone of the ISA Headquarters was laid at Gwal Pahari, Gurgaon in Haryana. Till now, 25 nations have signed the Framework Agreement.

74. Centre released Rs. 250 crores for the Lucknow Metro Rail project

The Centre released 250 crore rupees for the Lucknow Metro Rail project which is a joint venture of Central and Uttar Pradesh Governments. The Ministry had earlier this year released Rs. 300 crores taking the total assistance provided to the Lucknow Metro to Rs. 550 crores.



Total length of metro: 23 kilometres.

Estimated Cost: Rs. 6928 crores.

Centre's Contribution: Rs. 1,003 crores as its share of equity, Rs. 297 crores as Sub-ordinate Debt and Rs. 3,500 crores as loan assistance funded by the European Investment Bank

75. Centre approved Rs 266 crore investment for Delhi under AMRUT

The Centre has approved investments of 266 crore rupees for improving water supply and sewerage networks in Delhi taking the total investment to 489 crore rupees.



The amount will be provided as assistance to the Delhi government under the 2016-17 action plan in Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) guidelines. As per AMRUT guidelines, the Centre will provide a total of 804 crore rupees to Delhi for the five-year mission period.

76. Swachh Bharat-Health Ministry collaborate for sanitation in health centers

The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare jointly launched the 'Swachh Swasth Sarvatra' initiative. Another joint initiative, 'Swasth Bacche Swasth Bharat', between Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development was also launched.



The objective of the 'Swachh Swasth Sarvatra' initiative is to build on and leverage achievements of two complementary programmes – Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) and Kayakalp – of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, respectively.

77. India and Singapore Sign a Third Protocol for Amending the DTAA

India and Singapore have amended the DTAA for the avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income, by signing a Third Protocol. Third protocol provides for source-based taxation of capital gains arising from alienation of shares acquired from 1st April, 2017 in a company resident in India.



The Third Protocol also inserts provisions to facilitate relieving of economic double taxation in transfer pricing cases. This is a taxpayer friendly measure.

78. Shri Thawarchand Gehlot Launches 'Mobile App and Facebook Page' of 'National Trust'

Shri Thawarchand Gehlot, Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, launched the 'Mobile App and Facebook Page' of the National Trust at a function to mark the 'National Trust Foundation Day' on the theme "Celebrating Inclusion". On this occasion, many cultural performances were presented by Divyangjan children.



The objective of the function was to create awareness amongst various professionals and stakeholders and the creation of support network for these persons with disabilities by sensitizing unreached section of society.

79. President approved promulgation of Specified Bank Notes Ordinance, 2016

President Pranab Mukherjee approved for the promulgation of the Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Ordinance, 2016. The Union Cabinet had earlier approved the ordinance. It provides for making holding of old 1,000 and 500 rupee notes after 31st of March next year an offence that will attract a fine of 10 thousand rupees or five times the cash held, whichever is higher.



The ordinance also provides for amending the Reserve Bank of India Act to provide legislative support for extinguishing the demonetised banknotes that are not returned.

80. Railway Minister laid the foundation of Nadikudi-Srikalahasti project in Andhra Pradesh

Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu laid the foundation for Nadikudi-Srikalahasti railway project and initiated several other development works in Andhra Pradesh. Mr. Prabhu flagged off the Double-Decker train between Visakhapatnam-Tirupathi besides launching hi-speed wi-fi facility in Guntur RS and ETTC new hostel building in Vijayawada and route relay interlocking system for Raidurg-Kalyandurg new railway line.



The demand for railway zone at Visakhapatnam was raised by Andhra Pradesh which is being also considered by Railway minister.

PERSONS IN NEWS

1. Srinidhi Shetty crowned 2016 Miss Supranational title

India's Srinidhi Shetty was crowned Miss Supranational 2016 at a ceremony held in Krynica Zdroj, Poland. It was twice in three years that an Indian contestant has won the title, making India the first country to achieve it. Srinidhi received the prize amount of \$30,000. She also won the title of Miss Asia-Oceania.



Runner Ups:

- Venezuela's Valeria Vespoli (2nd)
- Suriname's Jaleesa Pigot (3rd)
- Sri Lanka's Ornella Gunesekere (4th)
- Hungary's Korinna Kocsis (5th)

2. Elon Musk voted as the most admired leader in technology

As per an annual State of Startups survey carried out by the venture firm First Round Capital revealed that Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk was the most admired tech leader.

Musk received 23% of the votes. Amazon's Jeff Bezos came in a distant second, with 10% of votes followed by Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg with 6%, and Apple co-founder Steve Jobs at 5%.

The venture firm First Round Capital has released the results of its annual State of Startups survey.



3. Flipkart's Binny Bansal, Sachin Bansal named Asians of the Year

The Straits Times of Singapore has chosen Flipkart Founders – Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal for the prestigious "2016 Asian of the Year" as part of a group called the "The Disruptors."

The duo was also put by Time Magazine on the list of 100 Most Influential People in the world. The Asian of the Year 2016 awards recognizes entrepreneurs "operating at the frontiers of technology's interface with business".



4. Viola Desmond became first Canadian woman on banknote

Civil rights activist Viola Desmond became the first Canadian woman to appear on the face of a banknote. She replaced Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A Macdonald, on the \$10 bill. He will be moved to a higher bill - when new banknotes go into circulation in 2018.

Desmond was selected from a list of five iconic Canadian women by Finance Minister Morneau, in accordance with the Bank of Canada Act. She fought racial segregation in the 1940s after refusing to give up a seat in a "whites only" section of a cinema.



5. Iqbal Sayed became first Indian to medal at Mr. Olympia

Mumbai's Iqbal Sayed has successfully won the silver medal at the Mr. Olympia amateur event held in Hong Kong. He beat nearly 20 participants from other countries in the Classic Bodybuilding category and finished second.

The 27-year-old Iqbal is a civil engineer with Reliance Infrastructure and Mumbai Metro. He is also the 2015 Mr. Mumbai runner up. He was also crowned as Junior Maharashtra Shree and Mr. Ghatkopar.



6. Gujarat-born activist on BBC's power women list

Gujarat-born activist, Jayaben Desai, has made it to the BBC's most influential women of the past 70 years' list. She was named among seven women chosen to mark the 70th anniversary of BBC Radio 4's 'Woman's Hour'.

Jayaben Desai had led a campaign against low pay for women workers at a UK factory in the 1970s. The list is topped by Margaret Thatcher – Britain's first female Prime Minister. The names were unveiled as part of a special 'Woman's Hour' show.



7. Stephanie Del Valle clinches Miss World 2016 crown

The 19 years old Stephanie del Valle of Puerto Rico was crowned Miss World 2016, 66th edition of beauty pageant held in US, surpassing runners-up from the Dominican Republic and Indonesia. Puerto Rico becomes the 17th country with multiple winners since Miss World started in 1951.



Del Valle is a student who speaks Spanish, English and French, and plans to join the entertainment industry. First runner-up was Yaritza Miguelina Reyes Ramirez of the Dominican Republic, followed by Miss World Indonesia Natasha Mannuela.

8. Press Information Bureau featured PM Modi on the GOI calendar for 2017

Press Information Bureau featured Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the Government of India 2017 calendar. The photos are taken from the Prime Minister's participation in campaigns such as 'Swachh Bharat', 'Sashakt Nari, Sashakt Bharat', and 'MSME. Government of India Calendar 2017 was launched by Information and Broadcasting Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu at Press in India.



In the Government of India Calendar 2017, each month features a quote from the Prime Minister from PM Narendra Modi.

9. Tata Motors ropes in Akshay Kumar as their brand ambassador

Tata Motors has appointed Bollywood film star Akshay Kumar as the brand ambassador for its Commercial Vehicle Business Unit. Akshay will be actively involved in a host of innovative marketing and customer experience initiatives to be rolled out by Tata Motors.



Tata Motors is the country's largest automotive player and among the top 10 truck and bus manufacturers globally. It has operations in the UK, South Korea, Thailand, South Africa and Indonesia.

PLACES IN NEWS

1. Serendipity Arts Festival held in Goa

The first edition of the Serendipity Arts Festival (SAF) was held from 16 December to 23 December 2016 in Goa. The festival is a multi-disciplinary event with a special focus on music, dance, theatre, crafts, visuals and culinary arts. 33 global artists will showcase their work at the festival.



The festival will be dispersed across a 1.8 km stretch along river Mandovi at a mix of indoor and outdoor locations.

2. India International Science Festival (IISF-2016) inaugurated in New Delhi

The India International Science Festival (IISF-2016) – the largest festival of science in India was inaugurated at CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (NPL) Campus in New Delhi with its focus on "Science for the Masses".



The IISF-2016 has been organized by the Union Ministry of Science and Technology and Earth Sciences in association with Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA). It will showcase recent developments and contributions of India in science and technology involving all our scientific departments.

3. The 21st International Film Festival of Kerala was held at Thiruvananthapuram

The 21st International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) began on 9th December at Thiruvananthapuram. About 184 films from 62 countries were screened. The Golden Crow Pheasant for Best Film was given to the movie "Clash" directed by Mohamed Diab of Egypt. The award carries a cash prize of Rs 10 lakhs to be shared equally by the director and the producer.



This film festival was started in 1996 and is hosted by the Kerala State Chalachitra Academy on behalf of Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of Kerala.

4. India-UK Ease of Doing Business Conference concluded

The India-UK Conference on Ease of Doing Business concluded in New Delhi. The conference provided a forum for experts from both countries to share best practice – and to make the connections that will lead to further collaboration in the future.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Ms. Theresa May had witnessed the exchange of a Memorandum of Understanding on the Ease of Doing Business.



5. The 28th SIMCON organized at the Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting organized the 28th State Information Ministers Conference on 9th and 10th December, 2016 at Vigyan Bhawan. The conference was organized on the theme – “Reform, Perform & Transform – A New Dimension of Communication”.

The two-day conference promoted partnership in the dissemination process between Centre and States. The aim was to discuss key issues in the films & broadcasting sector and new initiatives undertaken in the information domain.



6. The 9th World Confluence of Humanity, Power and Spirituality Inaugurated

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, inaugurated the ninth World Confluence of Humanity, Power and Spirituality, organized by ASSOCHAM, Srei Foundation and the Times Group in New Delhi.

The theme of the convention is “Sach Bharat: Spirituality at Work”. The Confluence saw the meeting of ideas and principles to build on the strong and wide sense of spirituality that infuses the lives of millions across the globe.



7. Union Minister Birendra Singh inaugurated Pelletizing lab in Ranchi

A Pelletizing laboratory facility which is first of its kind in India was inaugurated by Union Steel Minister, Choudhary Birendra Singh at Ranchi. The Minister also witnessed operation of ball mill, disc pelletiser, blaine apparatus and cold Compressive strength equipment.



Union Minister advised SAIL to utilize mineral resources of low grade iron ore for National interest. Any type of Iron ore can be made quality heat hardened pellet through this automated pilot pellet heat hardening unit.

8. Regional Institute of Education inaugurated at Nellore

Ministry of Human Resource Development will open a new Regional Institute of Education at Nellore (Andhra Pradesh). Its foundation-stone will be laid on December 27.

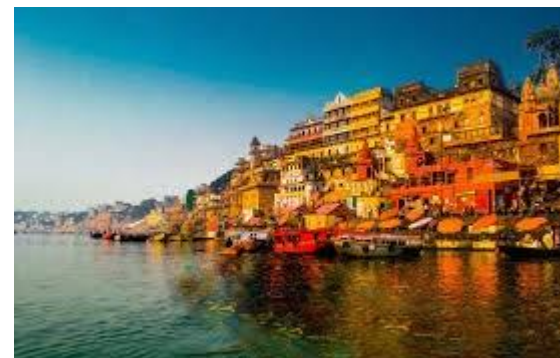


The opening of the new RIE at Nellore will be give an impetus to the strengthening of School Education and Teacher Education in the region.

The new institution at Nellore shall offer teacher education programmes and undertake research and development of Resource Materials on school and teacher education.

9. World Bhojpuri Conference held in Varanasi

The four-day World Bhojpuri Conference began in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh on December 29, 2016 at a private school in Badalapur. Participants from over 18 countries participated in the conference.



The aim of the conference is to strengthen the links of the people of Indian-origin, who once belonged to the Bhojpuri-speaking belt in India and had migrated to different parts of the world. 'Bhojpuri Ratna' award and 'World Bhojpuri Karmayogi' award will be conferred on over 25 people.

REGIONAL

1. Asia's first and longest cycle highway inaugurated in Uttar Pradesh

A 207-km-long cycle highway that runs between Etawah and Agra was inaugurated in Uttar Pradesh by state Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav. The cycle highway is the Asia's first and longest cycle highway.

It has been constructed by the UP Public Works Department and is about 7-feet-wide. The track begins from the lion safari in Etawah. On its way, it has tourist destinations like Naugava ka Quila, Raja Bhoj ki Haveli, and Bateshwarnath Temple.



2. M M Kutty appointed as the Chief Secretary of Delhi

Senior IAS officer M M Kutty has been appointed as Chief Secretary of Delhi. He will replace K K Sharma, who was transferred as OSD in the Union HRD Ministry.

The 1985 batch IAS officer was working as Additional Secretary in the Union Ministry of Environment and Forest. Mr. Kutty was principal secretary to then chief minister Sheila Dikshit.



Mr. Kutty has also been finance secretary in the present AAP government.

3. Chief Minister of Odisha inaugurated Tata Steel's ferro-chrome plant in Gopalpur

Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik today inaugurated the 55,000 tonne per annum (TPA) ferro-chrome plant set up by Tata Steel in the company's Gopalpur Industrial Park in Ganjam district of Odisha.

The plant has been set up at a cost of Rs542 crore and is the first green field ferro-chrome plant of Tata Steel in India. It has 100% water harvesting facility that caters to most of the water needs of the plant. It has an indigenously built semi-closed hybrid furnace, which is first of its kind in India.



4. India's first Digital Village: Akodara in Gujarat

Akodara village in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat became India's first digital village in India. The village was adopted by ICICI Bank under its Digital Village Project in 2015 and made cashless by adopting digital technology.

The villagers' most important transactions — selling Agri-produce at the local mandi or selling milk at the co-operative society — have been digitized and made cashless. All transactions in the village are carried out through digital modes like SMS, net-banking or debit cards.



5. Hailakandi in Assam becomes the 1st district to pay wages through Cashless Transactions

Hailakandi in Assam has become the first district to pay wages to tea garden workers through individual bank accounts before the December 15 deadline set by the State Government for Cashless Transactions to the plantation workers.

At least 504 workers of Burnie Braes tea estate received their wages through bank accounts and the payment was made through five Banking Correspondents (CSPs) of Assam Gramin Vikash Bank.



6. O Panneerselvam sworn-in as new Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

O Panneerselvam was sworn-in as the new Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu after the AIADMK Supremo and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa passed away. Earlier, he had served Tamil Nadu as its Chief Minister, during 2001-02 and 2014-15, after Jayalalithaa was unseated by the courts. Panneerselvam is the 19th chief minister of Tamil Nadu.

He also served as the Finance Minister of Tamil Nadu in the Jayalalithaa cabinet from 2011 to 2014. He represents the Bodinayakanur Assembly constituency in the current assembly.



7. International Gita Mahotsav begins in Kurukshetra, Haryana

The International Gita Mahotsav-2016 began at Kurukshetra in Haryana. The Mahotsav is being organized to mark Gita Jayanti.

The Governor and Chief Minister of the state inspected the model of Krishna Circuit, which would be developed at a cost of 97.35 crore rupees under 'Swadesh Darshan Yojana'. They also went around the exhibition organized by Saraswati Heritage Development Board and viewed the model of Saraswati project.



8. Liquor banned in three districts of Uttarakhand

The Uttarakhand High Court has directed the state government to impose a complete ban on the sale and consumption of liquor in Rudraprayag, Chamoli, and Uttarkashi districts of the state from the next fiscal year. The Chardham temples are located in these three districts - Kedarnath and Badrinath are located in Rudraprayag and Chamoli respectively while Gangotri and Yamunotri are located in Uttarkashi.



A Government Order dated February 24, 2002 prohibits sale and consumption of liquor in Haridwar because of the religious significance of the place.

9. Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan launched Haritha Keralam Mission

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan launched Haritha Keralam Mission to create new developments by the optimum utilization of the natural resources.

The main purpose of Harithas Keralam Mission is the cleaning of vacant lands which will be used for vegetable cultivation. This mission is a comprehensive waste management plan to collect, separate and recycle waste in villages and municipalities. Eminent Carnatic vocalist and playback singer K J Yesudas is the Brand Ambassador of the mission.



10. Kerala launches mobile apps to fight corruption

Kerala government launched two mobile applications, 'Arising Kerala' and 'Whistle Now'. The applications were launched on the International Anti-Corruption Day.

Arising Kerala: Users have the facility to upload the audio, video related to corruption, automatically that media file will be sent to authorities, and immediate action will be taken.

Whistle Now: Users can blow whistles and expose any information or activity that is deemed illegal, unethical and govt will take actions on it.



11. Rajasthan High Court scraps SBCs 5% quota

The Rajasthan high court scrapped special backward class reservation in the state after the state Assembly passed two separate bills for providing 5% quota to the SBC, and 14% to Economically Backward Classes of unreserved categories in September 2015.

Two separate petitions were filed challenging constitutional validity of the SBC Reservation Act, 2015. According to the Act 5% reservation in jobs and educational institutes were given to five communities namely, Gujjars (Gurjars), Banjara (Baldia, Labana), Gadia-Lohar (Gadolia), Raika (Rebari, Debasi), Galaria (Gadri, Gayari).



12. Punjab Government launched the country's 1st Amphibious Bus Project

The Punjab Government launched country's first Amphibious Bus Project at the Harike wetland near Amritsar. The project has cost the State Government over Rs 11 crores.

The bus run by the Punjab Tourism department has a seating capacity of 34 people and is equipped with life-jackets for everyone. The current route of the bus includes a 13-km ride from Amritsar to the Harike wetlands, which the bus is expected to traverse over 45 minutes. It will then traverse 4 kms on water.



13. Kerala Chief Minister Vijayan inaugurated the 3rd edition of KOCHI-MUZIRIS BIENNALE

The Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the third edition of the KOCHI-MUZIRIS BIENNALE, one of the largest celebrations of contemporary art in South Asia at a program in Kochi.

Titled 'Forming in the pupil of an eye', Kochi Biennale, will feature the performances of ninety-seven artists from thirty-one countries including thirty-six from India.



It is a 3-month long festival. The main exhibition is spread across 12 different venues.

14. The Narmada Seva Yatra launched by the Madhya Pradesh Government

The Narmada Seva Yatra from November 11 to 8 March 2017 was launched by the Madhya Pradesh Government to prevent Narmada river from pollution and conserve water. It will be a 5-month long yatra, covering 2,930 kilometers spanning close to 16 districts. Plantation of trees along the banks of the Narmada river and sewage water treatment before it flows into river, will be implemented by campaigners.



It will involve public participation from various districts and follow up action on measures to be undertaken by Narmada Sewa Samiti. A website on the proposed 'Narmada Sewa Yatra' has also been launched with an appeal to attract commoners to join the yatra.

15. Gujarat inaugurated Border Viewing Centre to promote tourism

On the annual 'Rann-Utsav' at Dhordo in the Rann of Kutch, Gujrat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced to open a Border Viewing Centre at Nadabet near Suigam village of Banaskantha to promote state tourism, by providing all the facilities which are available to tourists at Wagah Border. Minister inaugurated ten `Bhungas, traditional Kutchi huts, which will be rented to tourists.



Various other Lion Safari Parks at five locations in Gir Wildlife Sanctuary will also be opened soon.

16. Mahila Police Volunteer Initiative launched in Haryana

The Mahila Police Volunteer initiative was launched in Haryana, the first state to adopt this scheme. Mahila Police Volunteer is a joint initiative with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

Haryana inducted the first batch of 1000 Mahila Police Volunteers. In order to provide a link between police and community and facilitate women in distress, one Mahila Police Volunteer (MPV) is envisaged per Gram Panchayat across the country.



17. Rajasthan launches Amma canteen-type meal scheme

Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje has launched Annapurna Rasoi Yojana at the Jaipur Municipal Corporation by flagging off vans which will sell meals, including breakfast, lunch and dinner. As per the scheme, the poor and the needy will get breakfast for Rs. 5 and lunch or dinner for Rs. 8.

In the first phase, the scheme is being implemented simultaneously at 80 places in 12 districts - Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Ajmer, Bikaner, Udaipur, Bharatpur, Baran, Banswara, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh and Jhalawar.



18. Odisha Government sets target for construction of 2000 kms of concrete road

The Odisha Government has decided to construct more than 2,000 kilometers of cement concrete roads under the Gopabandhu Gramin Yojana in rural areas by March 2017.

The State Government has allocated 1,000 crore rupees for the Gopabandhu Gramin Yojana in the current year's Budget.

The sanctioned funds will be utilized in 30 districts of the State for road construction and drinking water facilities in rural areas.



19. Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation to receive Digital India Silver Award

The Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation has been selected for Digital India Award in the category of "Most Innovative Citizen Engagement" and installing and implementing free Wi-Fi Scheme in its various offices.

The award is instituted by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology for leveraging use of Information and Communication Technology to solicit active engagement of public in the process of governance. mygov.in won the Platinum award and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna got the gold award.



20. First Cybercrime police station opens in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

The first Cybercrime Police Station was opened at state police headquarter in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh. The main objective of this police station is to deal with increasing crime based on misuse of information technology by the High tech criminals.

The cyber offences like hacking of government web sites and its data, prevention and detection of cyber terrorism & financing all types of cyber fraud cases would be investigated by this police station.



21. Himachal Pradesh becomes the 6th State in India to attain 100% Aadhaar saturation

Himachal Pradesh has become the 6th State/UT in the country to have achieved 100 percent Aadhar saturation based on the population of year 2015. Earlier, Delhi, Telangana, Haryana, Punjab and Chandigarh have achieved this milestone.

Aadhaar numbers have been generated for 72, 52,880 residents of the state. About 240 Permanent Enrolment Centers are operational for updation and enrolment activity while 22 Aadhaar Mobile Vans are also covering any left-out citizen or elderly person in the remote areas.



22. PM Modi to inaugurate Vibrant Gujarat Summit in January 2017

To promote sustainable long-term growth and inclusive development, Gujarat will organize the 8th edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit from the 10th to 13th of January 2017 in Gandhinagar. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit.



CEOs of Fortune 500 companies from India and abroad will witness the 2-day event. It will bring together heads of states and governments, ministers, senior policy makers and heads of international institutions to promote cooperation.

23. Manipur CM inaugurated 2 new districts carved out of Naga-dominated districts

Manipur CM Okram Ibobi Singh announced creation of two new districts Pherzawl and Noney. Pherzawl has been carved out of Churachandpur district and Noney has been carved out of Tamenglong district of Manipur, so as to bring infrastructure improvement in the interior hill areas



Now, the total toll of the district stands at 11. Recently, Manipur government resolved to create Kangpokpi, Jiribam, Noney, Tengnoupal, Pherzol, Kamjong and Kaching districts by carving up seven of the existing nine districts.

24. Telangana got Rs. 450 crore Central aid for backward districts

The Centre has released a special assistance of 450 crore rupees to Telangana this fiscal for development of backward areas in terms of provisions under Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act. The Centre has so far provided 900 crore rupees to the State for this purpose.



The backward districts which are being supported are Adilabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Medak, Mahbubnagar, Rangareddy, Nalgoda and Khammam. The developmental activities will improve the physical and social infrastructure bringing these districts at par with the more developed districts of the state.

25. Chhattisgarh CM dedicates the **country's first cashless bazaar to** people in Raipur

The Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh launched India's first cashless bazaar in Raipur with nearly over 900 shops. These shops provide the facilities of cashless payments using POS, UPI and other digital systems to its customers.

The following table has the names of the First Cashless Villages from different states:



State	Village
Telangana	Ibrahimpur
Maharashtra	Dhasai
Madhya Pradesh	Badjhiri
Haryana	Jhatipur
Jammu n Kashmir	Lanura

26. The Gujarat Government announced Aerospace and Defence Policy – 2016

The Gujarat State Government announced Aerospace and Defence Policy – 2016 with an aim to attract investment into fields of aerospace and defence design, development and manufacturing.



The State Government offered the following benefits and incentives for investors:

- 100% reimbursement on stamp duty and registration charges paid for purchase, lease or mortgage of land meant for setting up the facility in the areas of Aerospace and Defence(A&D)
- Cash subsidy of 25% on capital investment made by MSME units to set up their facility in the A&D sector
- Government lands will be allotted at 50% of prevailing market rates decided by Government
- Reimbursement up to 100% of the net Value Added Tax or Central Sales Tax
- 100% exemption on electricity duty for the first five years
- 50% subsidy on the construction cost of R&D centre

27. Mizoram's Aizawl became first free Wi-Fi city in North-East

Aizawl became the first free Wi-Fi city in the North-East region. Free Wi-Fi is a pilot project of the Aizawl Municipal Corporation. The free Wi-Fi facilities would enable the much-needed internet accessibility to one and all.



The Aizawl Municipal Corporation urged net users to use free Wi-Fi facilities for more productive purposes rather than misusing the same. Providing free Wi-Fi facility to the residents of Aizawl city was an election manifesto of the Mizo National Front.

28. Odisha Government launched Biju Sishu Surakshya Yojana

The Odisha state Government launched the Biju Sishu Surakshya Yojana for safety of HIV positive orphan children.

Highlights of the Yojana:

- Financial support for studies up to higher secondary.
- Rs. 20,000 reward after passing higher secondary.
- Scholarship to 3 meritorious students every year in each district.
- Rs 1,000 per year deposit in the Sukanya Samridhi Account of the girl child till she attains the age of 18 years.
- One time token assistance of Rs 50,000 for girls and Rs 40,000 for boys on completion of 18 and 21 years respectively to facilitate marriage ceremony.



29. Odisha Cabinet approved six proposals

The Odisha Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik approved six proposals. The Cabinet has decided to name all Lift Irrigation projects after eminent female freedom fighter Parbati Giri, nicknamed as Mother Teresa of Western Odisha.

The Cabinet also approved 13 lift irrigation projects that would come up in eight blocks in Mayurbhanj district and one project in Keonjhar district of the state at a cost of 7,600 crore rupees. Besides, the Cabinet has approved mega sanitation project for Rourkela city and extension of VAT relaxation on Dal till March 31 next year.



30. Maharashtra Government to create new ministry for welfare of VJNT, OBCs and SBCs

The Maharashtra State Government Cabinet has decided to create a new ministry for welfare of Vimukta Jati and Nomadic Tribes (VJNT), OBCs and Special Backward Classes.

The cabinet also approved hike in the grant provided for Ramai and Shabri Awaas Gharkul Yojana. It was also decided that State Agriculture Corporation land will be available for allocation to those affected by notified projects as compensation. Cabinet also decided to grant extension to individuals, companies and institutions who have been given government land on lease or ownership for carrying out constructions.



31. Bihar Government to provide 50 percent reservation in state judicial services

Bihar Government will provide 50 percent reservation in the state judicial services as the decision to this effect was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by chief minister Nitish Kumar. As per the cabinet decision, 35 percent reservation will be given to women in all categories.

About 21 percent reservation will be given to Extreme Backward Classes (EBC), while 16 percent will be given to schedule Caste (SC). There will be 12 percent reservation for other backward castes (OBC) and remaining one percent reservation will be for schedule tribes (ST).



32. Nagar Uday Abhiyan launched in Madhya Pradesh

The Madhya Pradesh government launched "Nagar Uday Abhiyan" in all 378 urban bodies in the state with an aim to assess services provided to citizens.

The Nagar Uday Abhiyan inform lower income class people residing in slums in urban areas about public welfare schemes and provide benefit of Antodaya, also inform them about works carried out for urban development and ensure contribution of citizens and other agencies in urban development schemes.



REPORTS

1. Mahatma Gandhi's Charkha among 100 'Most Influential Photos of All Time'

As per a compilation by Time Magazine of "Images that changed the world", the 1946 picture of Mahatma Gandhi with his Charkha (spinning wheel) is among the 100 most influential images of all time. The black and white photo was taken by Margaret Bourke-White.



The collection includes 100 history-altering images, dating back from the 1820s to 2015. Among the pictures is the tragic photo of the lifeless body of three-year-old Syrian Alan Kurdi lying face down on the shore near the coastal town of Bodrum.

2. Four India-born CEOs on Fortune's Businessperson of the Year list

Four leading India-born CEOs have featured in Fortune's Businessperson of the Year list. These four Indians in the list are:

- Microsoft's Satya Nadella ranked 5th
- CEO of Milwaukee-based maker of water heaters A O Smith, Ajita Rajendra on the 34th spot
- HDFC Bank's Managing Director Aditya Puri on the 36th position
- Mastercard's Ajay Banga on 40th



3. Narendra Modi won the reader's poll for the TIME Person of the Year 2016

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has won the online reader's poll for TIME Person of the Year. Modi won with 18% of the vote, placed well ahead of his closest contenders, including Barack Obama, Donald Trump and Julian Assange, who all received 7% of the "yes" vote.



The winner's name is decided by the editors of the magazine. US president elect, Donald Trump, was declared as the TIME 'Person of the Year' 2016.

7. UNESCO report on Universal Educational Goals

As per the Global Education Monitoring Report, 2016 by UNESCO, India will be half a century late in achieving its universal education goals. The Report also states that India will achieve universal primary education by 2050, universal lower secondary education (Grades VI - VIII in case of India) by 2060 and universal upper secondary education (Grades IX-XII in case of India) by 2085.



UNESCO has informed that these projections have been made based on past trends. It has not involved the Ministry of Human Resource Development in this exercise.

8. India has improved by 21 spots as per latest Gender Gap Report of World Economic Forum

As per the Global Gender Gap Report 2016 by World Economic Forum, India ranks at 87th in respect of Global Gender Gap Index (GGI) among 144 countries of the World. According to the Human Development Report 2015 brought out by UNDP, India ranked 130 on the Gender Inequality Index among 155 countries. India had ranked at 108th in 2015.

The Global Gender Gap Report 2016



Other parameters:

- Education Attainment: 113th
- Economic participation: 136th
- Health and Survival: 142nd
- Political Empowerment: 9th

9. Forbes' second annual rich list of under 40 includes two Indians

Forbes' second annual list of wealthiest entrepreneurs under the age of 40 was topped by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. Two Indian-origin men Vivek Ramaswamy (biotech entrepreneur) and Apoorva Mehta were placed at 24th and 31st spot respectively. Ramaswamy is a biotech businessman with net-worth of 600 million dollars and Apoorva Mehta is considered as one of Silicon Valley's youngest successful immigrant with net-worth of 300 million dollars.



List also consisted some new personalities such as boxer Floyd Mayweather, pop star Beyonce, actress Jessica Alba and NBA stars Kobe Bryant and LeBron James.

10. The **2016 IHS Jane's Defence Budgets report released**

The 2016 IHS Jane's Defence Budgets report placed India at the fourth place in defence expenditure around the world. List was topped by United States (\$622 billion), China (\$191.75) and the UK (53.81bn), followed by India (50.67bn). India surpassed countries like Saudi Arabia, France, Germany and Russia in defence spending.



The report analyses defence expenditure of about 105 countries and tracks 99 percent of global defence spending, based on five-year planning, historical data, budget allocation and trend evaluation.

11. UN report states earth's poorest countries are falling further behind

UN report revealed that many of the poorest countries' situation has been worsened in the last 45 years, since the United Nations created its list of Least Developed Countries. Only 4 countries have made themselves out of such situation such as Botswana, Cape Verde, Maldives and Samoa. Report projects that only three countries show symptoms of positive outbreak out of such poor situation i.e. Angola, Equatorial Guinea and Vanuatu.



The current list of least developed countries comprises of 34 African Nations, nine in Asia, four in the Pacific region as well as Haiti.

12. PM Modi ranked 9th among most powerful people: Forbes

Forbes has ranked Prime Minister Narendra Modi among the top 10 most powerful people in the world. he has been ranked 9th on the Forbes list of 74 of the World's Most Powerful People.



The list is topped by Russian President Vladimir Putin for a fourth straight year followed by US President-elect Donald Trump in the second place. The others in the top ten list are:

- German Chancellor - Angela Merkel
- Chinese President - Xi Jinping
- Pope Francis
- Chair of the Federal Reserve - Janet Yellen
- Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates
- Google Co-founder - Larry Page
- Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg

13. India ranked first in Asia in innovation chart

As per a research published by Capgemini, India has been ranked as the number 1 innovation destination in Asia and number 2 in the world for innovation centers.



Bengaluru is ranked as the 5th hub at the global level. Nine innovation centers were opened in the country between March and October this year. The total number of innovation center's now stand at 25. The first in the list, USA has 146 centers.

14. Priyanka Chopra ranked at 55 in the IMDb's most popular celebrities' list

Priyanka Chopra has been ranked at number 55 in the IMDb's most popular celebrities' list. She has been ranked ahead of Hollywood's big names like Jennifer Aniston, Emma Watson, Leonardo Di Caprio, Johnny Depp, Scarlett Johansson and others. She is also the only Indian on the list.



Sofia Boutella of the "Kingsman: The Secret Service" fame, was ranked number 1 in the list. Jennifer Aniston stands at number 56, Emma Watson at 63, Leonardo DiCaprio at 77, while Johnny Depp is at number 81.

15. Sushma named among 15 Global Thinkers

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj has been chosen to be part of a list of 15 top global thinkers by the prestigious magazine on foreign affairs 'Foreign Policy' for the year 2016. She's been cited for fashioning a novel brand of social media diplomacy.



She has been included in the 'Decision-makers' category alongside former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

16. India ranked at the 4th position in the Global Wind Power Installed Capacity Index

As per a research note from the Global Wind Energy Council, India has achieved 4th rank in the Global Wind Power Installed Capacity index. The cumulative installed wind power generation capacity of India was 28,279 MW in 2016. The first three countries in the list are China, USA and Germany.



India continued to be the fifth largest annual market globally. India was also among the top ten countries in terms of renewable energy investment, which rose to USD 10.2 billion.

17. Amazon surveys named Delhi as India's most well-read city of year 2016

As per the 'Annual Reading Trends Report for 2016' survey conducted by Amazon.in, Delhi has emerged as the most well-read city in India for the fourth consecutive year with Bengaluru and Mumbai at the 2nd and 3rd spot, respectively.

Karnal, Vadodara and Patna were first-time entrants in the Top 20 list. 'The Rise and Fall of Nations' by Ruchir Sharma was announced as the winner in business category. Chetan Bhagat's book 'One Indian Girl' emerged as the highest selling book.



18. Forbes India Celebrity 100 List 2016 topped by Salman Khan

Forbes India Celebrity Top 100 list of 2016 revealed that actor Salman Khan's total earnings of 270.33 crores constituted 9.84 percent of the total wealth of all the top 100 celebrities for the year and so he was ranked 1st among all the celebrities, followed by actor Shahrukh Khan with 221.75 crores and cricketer Virat Kohli with 134.44 crores.

The Forbes top 5 celebrity list is as follows:

- Salman Khan
- Shahrukh Khan
- Virat Kohli
- Akshay Kumar
- MS Dhoni



19. Global Wage Report 2016-17 released by the International Labour Organisation

The International Labour Organisation released the Global Wage Report 2016-17 showing the worst levels of gender wage gap among the countries worldwide. India in this report shows men earning more than women in similar jobs with 30% gap. Major findings were that women form 60% of the lowest paid wage labour, but only 15% of highest wage-earners.

Singapore shows least (3%) gender gap whereas Berlin shows highest wage gap. The ILO threw light on high income inequality. The report also found that the share of women among wage earners was among the lowest in South Asia.



RESIGNATIONS & RETIREMENTS

1. Nico Rosberg announced F1 retirement after maiden world title

The 2016 World Champion Nico Rosberg made a shocking announcement to retire from Formula 1 with immediate effect. The 31-year-old German had won the title in Nov 2016, beating Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton to his first Drivers' Championship.

Nico Rosberg made his F1 debut at the Bahrain Grand Prix in 2006. He joined Mercedes from 2010 until 2016. He has 23 Formula one wins. He has 7 consecutive Grand Prix wins. He is the son of former F1 world champion, Keke Rosberg.



2. New Zealand PM John Key announces resignation

New Zealand's Prime Minister John Key announced his resignation on the 5th of December 2016 citing family reasons.

Mr. Key has been New Zealand's Prime Minister since 2008. He became the 38th Prime Minister of New Zealand. He also won the subsequent general elections held in 2011 and 2014. He is a former foreign exchange dealer who worked at firms including Merrill Lynch before being elected as the member for Helensville in 2002.



3. French PM Manuel Valls resigns

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls resigned after announcing his bid to become France's next President.

Bernard Cazeneuve has been named as the new Prime Minister by the French President, François Hollande, until a presidential election next May. Cazeneuve was interior minister. Bruno Le Roux has been named as the successor of Cazeneuve as the Interior Minister of France. France will hold legislative elections in June after the two-round presidential election in April and May.



4. Coca-Cola CEO Muhtar Kent to step down

Coca-Cola CEO Muhtar Kent will step down as the Chief Executive Officer after eight years of his stint atop the world's biggest beverage company. President and COO James Quincey will succeed him, effective May 1. Kent will remain Chairman of the company.



Kent became Coke CEO in April of 2009. Quincey joined Coke in 1996 and has been President and COO since August 2015. Coke has 20 brands with at least \$1 billion each in retail sales.

5. Cyrus Mistry sacked as Tata Industries director

Tata Industries removed former Tata Sons Chairman Cyrus P. Mistry, as director in the company. the decision was taken in a vote at its Extraordinary General Meeting. Thus he also ceased to be the Chairman of the company.



Tata Industries is a subsidiary of Tata Sons. Several Tata companies, including Tata Motors, Tata Power and Tata Steel, hold equity in the company. Tata Industries promotes the group's entry into new businesses and invests in operating companies to push growth.

6. Tata Consultancy Services voted out Cyrus Mistry

TCS shareholder's majority voting resulted into removal of Cyrus Mistry from the board, as Director of Tata Consultancy Services. It has been analyzed that 82% of public shareholders did not vote whereas of those who voted, 78% voted to not to remove Mistry as director of company while 22% voted in favor of the decision taken by Tata group. Overall, about 87% of company shares were voted and 93.11% chose to favour the resolution.



Tata Sons, which is the holding company of the USD 103 billion salt-to-software conglomerate, holds over 73 per cent of TCS shares.

7. Najeeb Jung resigned as the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi

Delhi Lt. Governor Najeeb Jung resigned as the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi who was appointed during the UPA rule, will be returning to academics. A 1973-batch IAS officer, Mr. Jung had assumed charge as Lt Governor of Delhi in July 2013. His nearly three-and-half-year-long regime mostly witnessed bitter confrontation with AAP government on a range of issues related to power sharing.



Jung thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for all the help and cooperation he received during his tenure.

8. Tata Motors shareholders remove Nusli Wadia from Board of Directors

Shareholders of Tata Motors have voted to remove independent director Nusli Wadia from the board of directors at an extraordinary general meeting held during which 71.20 percent of the shareholders voted in favour of a resolution moved by Tata Sons to remove Mr. Wadia as independent director of Tata Motors.



Earlier, Mr. Wadia was also removed as independent director from the board of Tata Steel.

9. Ana Ivanovic announced retirement from Tennis

Ana Ivanovic, the former world No1 and 2008 French Open champion, announced her retirement from tennis at the age of 29.

The Serb had held the top spot for 12 weeks in 2008. She has won 15 titles on the WTA Tour and played in three Grand Slam finals and a Federation Cup final.

Ivanovic became the first Serbian woman to win a grand slam tournament when she won the 2008 French Open final.



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1. ISRO to launch 83 satellites in one go in 2017

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch 83 satellites in one go in January 2017. 80 of these satellites will be foreign, weighing 500 kgs and belonging to Israel, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Switzerland and the U.S.



The foreign satellites are being launched as part of the commercial arrangement between them and Antrix Corporation Ltd. The three Indian satellites that are going to be launched are - i) Cartosat – 2 series, ii) INS-IA and iii) INS-1B.

2. Nihonium becomes Asia's 1st Periodic Table element discovery

Japanese scientists who discovered the 113th element of the periodic table have dubbed it "Nihonium" after the Japanese-language name for their country.



It is the first atomic element found in Asia and, the first found outside Europe or the United States. Element 113 was first found in 2004. It does not exist naturally and has had to be synthesized. The other atomic elements endorsed by International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry are Moscovium (115), Tennessine (117) and Oganesson (118).

3. Scientists discover hot hydrogen atoms in Earth's upper atmosphere

Researchers of University of Illinois have discovered the existence of hot atomic hydrogen (H) atoms in thermosphere, an upper layer of Earth's atmosphere. It was published in the report titled Nature Communications. The presence of H atoms in the thermosphere significantly affects the distribution of the H atoms throughout the entire atmosphere.



The discovery was enabled by the development of new numerical techniques and their application to years' worth of remote sensing measurements acquired by NASA's Thermosphere Ionosphere Mesosphere Energetics and Dynamics (TIMED) satellite.

4. ISRO launches PSLV-C36 carrying a remote sensing satellite

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched its PSLV C36 Resourcesat-2A from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. The launch completes the fourth stage (PS4) of the PSLV-C36, the 38th flight of the launch vehicle.

The 1,235-kg remote sensing satellite was placed into an 817-km polar Sun Synchronous Orbit (SSO) and is intended for continuing the resource monitoring data services to global users. The spacecraft has a mission life of five years.



5. Japan launched Kounotori 6 cargo spaceship to ISS

Japan has successfully launched a robotic spacecraft, Kounotori 6, to deliver supplies for astronauts living in the International Space Station (ISS). The unmanned H-II Transfer Vehicle 6 (HTV-6) was launched from southern Japan's Tanegashima Space Center atop an H-IIB rocket.

HTV-6 is packed with more than 4.5 tons (4.1 metric tons) of supplies, spare parts, scientific equipment and water for the astronauts aboard the orbiting lab. The first mission of the HTV, or Kounotori 1, was launched in 2009.



6. Scientists create Nanoceramic material for safer nuclear reactors

Scientists have created a nanoceramic material that can be used in next-generation nuclear reactors. It will operate at higher temperatures and radiation fields, thus, producing energy more efficiently and economically. Moreover, it also becomes tougher under radiation.

The new material is made of aluminum oxide nanoceramic coating. The team included Fabio Di Fonzo and Kumar Sridharan and others. Water is the traditional coolant used in for absorbing the heat released from fission reactions.



7. ISRO inked contract for first privately built satellite by 2017

The Indian Space Research Organisation entered contract with six companies to have India's first industry-built spacecraft by 2017. It was signed between M. Annadurai, Director of ISRO Satellite Centre (ISAC), and the consortium lead, Alpha Design Technologies P Ltd.



Contract involves assembly, integration and testing of two spare navigation satellites consecutively in around 18 months. Alpha is a defence manufacturing contractor that already supply components to ISRO. This is the first time that ISRO has outsourced an entire satellite to industry.

8. NASA inked \$127 million contract with California's Space systems

California's Space Systems has been given contract of worth \$127mn by National Aeronautics and Space Administration for giving shape to its robotic spacecraft 'Restore-L Spacecraft' equipped with the tools, technologies and techniques needed to service satellites like refuel or repair, currently in orbit.



Three-year core period and a two-year indefinite-delivery contract will provide spacecraft bus, critical hardware to spacecraft related services to accomplish mission integration, test, launch and operations. Restore-L's capabilities will provide facility to satellite operators so that they have ways to manage their fleets.

9. NASA launched 8 mini-satellites for hurricane forecasting

NASA has successfully launched eight spacecraft of its latest Earth science mission, Cyclone Global Navigation Satellite System (CYGNSS), that will provide scientists with advanced technology to see inside tropical storms and hurricanes.



CYGNSS was launched into orbit aboard an Orbital ATK air-launched Pegasus XL launch vehicle. The CYGNSS constellation will make frequent and accurate measurements of ocean surface winds in and near a hurricane's inner core. CYGNSS is the first orbital mission competitively selected by NASA's Earth Venture program.

10. China opens its first fully-owned satellite ground station near the North Pole

China has launched its first fully-owned overseas satellite ground station near the North Pole. The China Remote Sensing Satellite North Polar Ground Station is located in Sweden about 200km north of the Arctic Circle.

China already has four domestic ground stations. Domestic stations can receive a signal from each satellite five times a day when it passes overhead, while the new station can receive signals up to 12 times a day. In addition, the new station can acquire satellite data in any part of the world within two hours.



11. China has cloned the **world's first such Goat that gives superfine wool**

Experts from agricultural universities of North China's Inner Mongolia Region cloned world's first cloned goat bearing superfine wool. The goat will be raised in a base of southwest China's Yunnan Province and Inner Mongolia.

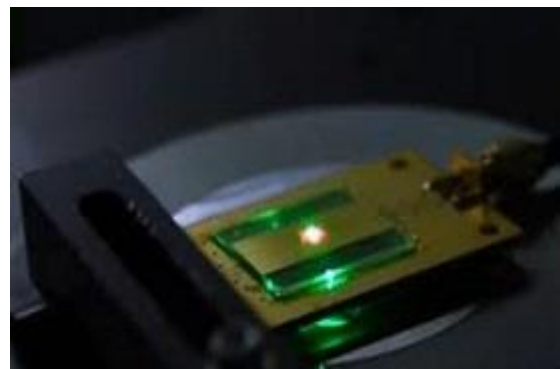
Cashmere wool is obtained from Cashmere goats. The Cashmere fiber from the goat is less than 13.8 micrometers thick, much finer than the average of 15.8 micrometers grown by the famous Erlang Mountain goats in Inner Mongolia,



12. Harvard researchers create the **world's smallest radio** receiver

Researchers from the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS) have made the world's smallest radio receiver. It is made out of an assembly of atomic-scale defects in pink diamonds.

The building blocks of the radio are that of a size of two atoms. It is biocompatible. The radio uses tiny imperfections in diamonds called nitrogen-vacancy (NV) centers. NV centers can be used to emit single photons or detect very weak magnetic fields.



13. China commissions its first 7-tonne civil helicopter

China has commissioned its first seven-tonne helicopter. It can be used in fields including offshore transportation, search and rescue, law enforcement, general transport and medical assistance.

The AC352 civil helicopter is a multi-purpose twin-engine helicopter with a 7.5-tonne maximum take-off weight, and can carry up to 16 passengers. The new helicopters are expected to be delivered to clients in 2018. The chief designer of the AC352 is Lu Weijian.



The chief designer of the AC352 is Lu Weijian.

14. Flock launched world's first chat Operating System

Flock launched world's first chat operating system "FlockOS" which allows developers to build customized apps, bots and integrations on Flock. Flock is a team messenger for businesses.

The developers can either use the customized apps within their organizations or publish it on Flock's App Store, making them available for all Flock users. This OS provides setup slash commands, providing an additional option for users to interact with the app.



15. Scientists develop first Chikungunya Vaccine

Researchers from The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston have developed the first vaccine for chikungunya fever. It is made from an insect-specific Eilat virus. Its single dose can produce neutralizing antibodies that lasted for more than 290 days.

The vaccine is safe and effective. The newly developed vaccine quickly produces a strong immune defense. Chikungunya is a mosquito-borne virus that causes a disease characterized by fever and severe joint pain.



16. Japan launched solid fuel Epsilon-2 rocket

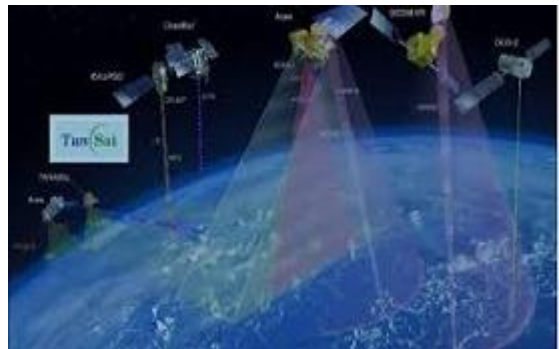
Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's Epsilon-2 rocket carrying the satellite called as Exploration of Energization and Radiation in Geospace (ERG) was successfully launched from the Uchinoura Space Center in southern Japan, to put communication and weather satellites in space.



The Epsilon-2 is a 26-meter-long three-stage new generation solid propellant rocket with least possible launch cost. Exploration of energization and Radiation in Geospace (ERG) is a satellite for studying radiation belts around the earth.

17. China launched CO2 monitoring TanSat satellite

China launched a carbon dioxide monitoring satellite via a Long March-2D rocket called as TanSat satellite. China became the third country after Japan and the United States to monitor greenhouse gases through its own satellite.



TanSat is a 620-kg satellite, sent into the synchronous orbit about 700 kilometers above the earth to analyze global CO2 levels every 16 days, accurate to at least 4 ppm and examine the concentration, distribution and flow of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere.

18. ISRO to deploy five communication satellites in 2017

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will be deploying five communication satellites in 2017 to meet the urgent transponder requirements of the country.



The next communication satellite would be GSAT17 which would have 48 transponders and this would be followed by a SAARC satellite with 12 transponders. ISRO is also planning next generation communication satellites which would have increased number of beams, up to 32 beams. The next cluster of satellites in a single lift off would be taking place towards the end of January 2017.

19. First functional pacemaker developed from human stem cells

Canadian scientists at the McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine have developed the first functional biological pacemaker cells from human pluripotent stem cells. Sinoatrial node cardiomyocytes were grown from induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells) per 21 days.

It can regulate heart beats with electrical impulses, paving the way for alternate, biological pacemaker therapy. These human pacemaker cells were tested in rat hearts. Currently the disruption in the heartbeat is usually treated by an electronic pacemaker implantation.



SPORTS

1. Magnus Carlsen won the 2016 World Chess Championship

Magnus Carlsen won the World Chess Championship as he defeated Sergey Karjakin in Game 10. It's the third time that Carlsen has won the championship.

Magnus Carlsen became a chess Grandmaster in 2004, at the age of 13 years. He became World Champion by defeating Viswanathan Anand in the World Chess Championship in 2013. In 2014, he also won the World Rapid Championship and the World Blitz Championship, thus holding all three world championship titles.



2. Indian Women's Cricket Team won the Asia Cup

India women's Cricket Team won the Asia Cup T20. They defeated Pakistan in the final by 17 runs. India had scored 121/5 in 20 overs, batting first. With this, they also successfully defended the title which they won in 2012 in Guangzhou. This is India's sixth Asia Cup crown.

Mithali Raj of India was adjudged the Player of the Match and the Player of the Tournament. This win also stretched India's unbeaten run in the Asia Cup to 32 matches.



3. All India Football Federation won the AFC Developing Member Association Award

The All India Football Federation won the AFC Developing Member Association of the year Award at the Asian Football Confederation's Annual Awards Night.

The award is given to a member association for its professional administration and governance as well its exceptional contribution to the development and promotion of the game at all levels within the country. In 2014, AIFF had won the AFC President's Recognition Award for grassroots football.



4. Pankaj Advani claimed the bronze medal at the IBSF World Snooker Championship

India's Pankaj Advani won a bronze medal at the IBSF World Snooker Championship at Doha, Qatar. He suffered a 2-7 loss in the semi-finals against Andrew Pagett of Wales. His opponent Andrew kept the pressure and reached the final after notching up a 14-74, 8-71, 0-87, 78-64, 0-81, 70-37, 7-80, 37-68, 19-74 win.



Pankaj is a fifteen-time world champion and is the only player in the world to compete at the world championship level in both sports and be successful in all the formats of both billiards and snooker.

5. Usain Bolt and Almaz Ayana win IAAF World Athlete of the Year Award

Jamaica's Usain Bolt and Ethiopia's Almaz Ayana have been named the male and female World Athletes of the Year at the IAAF Athletics Awards 2016.



Other awards:

- MALE RISING STAR: Canadian sprinter Andre De Grasse
- FEMALE RISING STAR: Belgian Nafissatou Thiam
- COACHING ACHIEVEMENT: The US coach Harry Marra
- PRESIDENTS AWARD: Tegla Loroupe (Chef de Mission for the Refugee Olympic Team in Rio)
- WOMEN IN ATHLETICS: Former Greek champion Polyxeni Argeitaki

6. Praful Patel appointed as the Senior VP of AFC

All India Football Federation President Praful Patel has been appointed as the Senior Vice-President of the Asian Football Confederation.

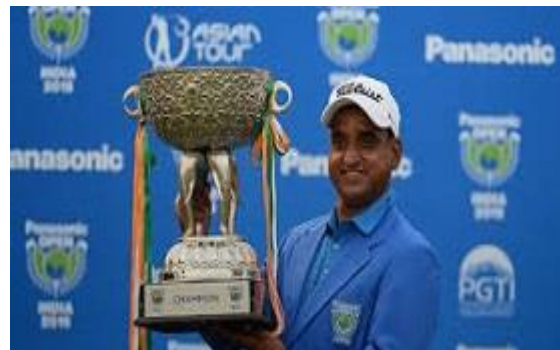
Patel helped India win the rights to host the FIFA U-17 World Cup India 2017 and hosted the AFC U-16 Championship in September 2016. The AIFF has also won the AFC Developing Member Association of the Year Award. The prestigious award is given to a Member Association in recognition of its professional administration and governance.



7. Mukesh Kumar made history in Golf Asia Tour

Indian Golfer Mukesh Kumar became the oldest golfer to win an Asian Tour title at Delhi Golf Club (DGC) after winning the Panasonic Open India. Mukesh closed with a two-under-par 70 for a winning total of 10-under-par 206 at the US\$400,000 Asian Tour event. The 51-year-old Mukesh has won 123 PGTI titles.

Jyoti Randhawa and Rashid Khan shared second place. For the record, this is the first time in an Asian Tour event where nine out of the top-10 finishers are Indians.



8. MCC Committee recommended limiting bat size edges and red card suspension

The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) committee has recommended limiting the bat size depths and edges. The Cricket's law making body also recommended the introduction of 'Red-Cards' for players like in football or hockey to punish disciplinary breaches.

The committee is headed by former England player and Chairman of MCC, Mike Brearly and includes former Australian Captain Ricky Ponting, former Pakistani batsman Rameez Raja and MCC's head of cricket – John Stephenson. The committee met in Mumbai.



9. PR Sreejesh appointed as the Goalkeeping Coach of India Under-21 Hockey team

Indian senior men's hockey team captain PR Sreejesh was appointed as the goalkeeping coach of the India Under-21 team which begins its Junior Hockey World Cup campaign against Canada, in Lucknow.

Sreejesh will take over the charge of from South Africa's Dave Staniforth. Sreejesh has also been nominated for FIH Goalkeeper of the Year 2016. The head coach of the junior team is Harendra Singh.



10. Jehan Daruvala signs up for Formula 3

The 18-year-old Mumbai-based racer, Jehan Daruvala, has been signed up by Carlin, one of the most renowned teams outside Formula One, in the FIA Formula 3 European Championship.

The Sahara Force India Academy racer will participate in the 2017 season. Formula 3 considered to be one of the most important steps on the ladder to F1.

Jehan started his racing career in karting in 2009 and won his first national title in 2010 aged 11.



11. Peter Gilchrist won his 3rd IBSF World title

Former World Champion Peter Gilchrist of Singapore won the 2016 IBSF World Billiards Long Up title held at Bengaluru, India after he defeated Sourav Kothari of India by nearly 900 points (1500-617). Rupesh Shah and Dhvaj Haria of India shared the joint Bronze.

The IBSF World Billiards Championship (previously known as the World Amateur Billiards Championship) is the premier, international, non-professional tournament for the game of English billiards.



12. L&T to convert Sardar Patel Stadium to the **world's biggest cricket stadium**

Larsen & Turbo (L&T) has bagged a contract from Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) to make Sardar Patel Cricket Stadium in Ahmedabad, the biggest stadium in the world.

The new stadium will house 1,10,000 people, the biggest in terms of seating capacity. The new stadium will also be made to meet all the latest the international standards. Motera Stadium will surpass the Melbourne Cricket Ground which can hold 100,024 people.



13. Virat Kohli became the first Indian Captain to score 3 double centuries

Indian skipper Virat Kohli became the first Indian captain to score three double centuries. His score of 235 is also the highest by an Indian skipper, surpassing Dhoni's 224.

Kohli is also the first Indian and the fifth batsman overall to score three double tons in a calendar year. During the process, he also got past 1,000 Test runs for 2016 and 4,000 for his career. He has 2580 runs in international cricket this year.



14. Pankaj Advani bagged his 11th World Billiards Championship

Veteran player Pankaj Advani has bagged his 11th World Billiards Championship by defeating Singapore's Peter Gilchrist. With this win, he became winner of the 16th world title. The winner defeated Myanmar's Aung Htay in the semi-finals.

Advani scored the first two games by 150 points against 33 and 150 against 95 and further he posted his only century break of 110 in the eighth game of the match, which almost declared the clear winner of the title.



15. Cristiano Ronaldo wins **Ballon d'Or'** for the 4th time

Ballon d'Or honoured veteran football player Cristiano Ronaldo for the fourth time as best player in the world. This announcement came as earlier this year, he bagged Champions League for the second time and led Portugal win first major title at Euro 2016.

Ronaldo is now one Ballon d'Or after Messi, who was second this time with French striker Antoine Griezmann at third spot. The Ballon d'Or is decided on the basis of vote of 173 journalists.



16. ITF announced players of the year 2016 in different categories

Britain's Andy Murray and Germany's Angelique Kerber won 2016 ITF World Champions title. It's been first such honour to both the players. Other players who were honoured in different categories were Jamie Murray and Bruno Soares under category Men's Doubles World Champions and Caroline Garcia and Kristina Mladenovic under category Women's Doubles World Champions.

Gordon Reid won ITF Wheelchair World Championship whereas ITF Junior World Championship title was bagged by Miomir Kecmanovic and Anastasia Potapova. Award ceremony will take place in Paris in June 2017.



17. Badminton World Federation honoured PV Sindhu with the Most Improved Player award

Veteran Badminton player PV Sindhu was honoured with the 'Most Improved Player of the Year award' by Badminton World Federation (BWF) in Dubai. Malaysia's Lee Chong Wei won the title of 'Male Player of the Year award' and Japanese pair Misaki Matsutomo and Ayaka Takahashi won the Female Player of the Year award.

China's Chen Qingchen was honoured with the Eddy Choong Award for the most promising player. He Bingjiao, Li Junhui, Liu Yuchen and Goh Jin Wei won the coveted prize.



18. Russian City, Sochi, lost right to host Bobsleigh & Skeleton World Championships 2017

The Russian city of Sochi will not host the 2017 Bobsleigh and Skeleton World Championships.

The International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation will announce a new host city for the February event. The IBSF decision comes after Canadian lawyer Richard McLaren released the second part of a World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) report, which made further claims that Russia operated a state-sponsored doping program for its athletes between 2011 and 2015.



19. Smriti Mandhana named in ICC Women's Team of the Year

International Cricket Council (ICC) announced India batswoman Smriti Mandhana in the Women's Team of the Year 2016. West Indies' Stafanie Taylor was named the Captain of the team.

ICC announced the list to acknowledge and appreciate outstanding performances of women's cricketers over a 12-month period. This is the first time that the ICC has named a women's team of the year. Suzie Bates clinched both the ICC Women's ODI and T20I Player of the Year awards, thus becoming the first women cricketer to achieve this feat.



20. Vijender Singh beats Francis Cheka to retain the WBO Asia Pacific Title

Indian boxer Vijender Singh retained his WBO Asia Pacific Super-middleweight crown by a TKO victory over Francis Cheka of Tanzania at the packed Thyagraj Stadium in New Delhi. He won it in the third round of what was to be a 10-round contest.

With this win, Vijender successfully defended his title. He also extended his unbeaten streak to eight bouts since turning professional. Cheka is the current African champion in the International Boxing Federation (IBF) Super Middleweight division.



21. India beat Belgium to lift Men's Junior Hockey World Cup

India has lifted Men's Junior Hockey World Cup, in the final match played at Lucknow after they defeated Belgium by 2-1. India took home their second title after a span of 15 years. Earlier, India won the trophy in 2001 in Hobart, Australia. In 1997 they had finished runners-up.



Awards:

- Up and Coming Player of the tournament: Timm Herzbruch of Germany
- Goalkeeper of the tournament: Loic van Doren of Belgium
- Top scorer of the tournament: Edward Horler of England with 8 goals
- Player of the tournament: Enrique Gonzalez de Castejon from Spain

22. Atletico De Kolkata won the ISL title for the 2nd time in three years

Atletico De Kolkata created history after winning Indian Super League football tournament for the second time in three years.



Kolkata defeated Kerala Blasters 4-3 in a penalty shootout in Kochi. Both teams were one goal each in the stipulated time. In the penalty shootout, the Kolkata team scored four goals against the three by Kerala Blasters. Kerala made a double replacement in the 77th minute with Antonio German and Mohammed Rafique coming in for Duckens Nazon and Rafi.

23. Andy Murray named BBC Sports Personality of the Year

Andy Murray has been voted as the BBC Sports Personality of the Year for a record third time after he had been voted in 2013 and 2015. Triathlete Alistair Brownlee came second and show jumper Nick Skelton stood third.



2016 has been a remarkable year for Andy Murray as he took Olympic gold, claimed his second Wimbledon title and became tennis' world number one. He reached the final of 13 of the 17 tournaments he entered in 2016.

24. Karun Nair becomes the second Indian to score a triple century in a test match

Karun Nair created history by becoming the only second Indian batsman to hit a triple hundred in a Test match. He smashed an unbeaten 303 runs off just 381 balls and powered India to their highest ever team total in the Tests. Virender Sehwag got two triple hundreds: 319 against South Africa and 309 against Pakistan.



He also became the third batsman in the world to convert his first Test century into a triple ton. Nair took three innings to hit his first triple-hundred in Tests - the least by any batsman.

25. AIBA granted full membership to the Boxing Federation of India

AIBA unanimously granted full membership to the recently-formed Boxing Federation of India, BFI. The BFI was voted to office in September earlier this year, ending four years of administrative logjam in the sport.



The BFI President is Ajay Singh. India's international suspension for the past four years had resulted in the isolation of the country's boxers, who were deprived of foreign exposure for most part.

26. Ashwin, Jadeja occupy the top two spots in the ICC Test bowling chart

Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja have made it a rare instance of two India bowlers topping the ICC Test rankings. The pair has emulated left-arm spinner Bishan Singh Bedi and leg-spinner Bhagwath Chandrasekhar who were ranked one and two in 1974.



The all-rounders list is headed by Ashwin and Jadeja at his career-best third rank. Team India also ended the year as the No.1 ranked Test side after winning the five-Test series against England 4-0. Australia ranks second.

27. Arjun Bhati bagged the Kids Golf World Championship 2016

Out of the 21 countries that participated in the Kids Golf World Championship 2016, Arjun Bhati from Noida bagged the first position by defeating South Africa's Methu Denish. He won by scores of total 234 points followed by South Africa and Malaysia at 2nd and 3rd position with 236 and 239 points respectively.

The competition was held for the 4th consecutive year in Malaysia and is the international version of the US Kids Golf tournament.



28. Ashwin won the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the year

Ravichandran Ashwin has become only the third Indian player ever to win the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy after being named the ICC Cricketer of the Year. The other two Indians who won the Award earlier were Rahul Dravid in 2004 and Sachin Tendulkar in 2010.

Other awardees were as follows:

- Quinton de Kock (SA) – ICC ODI Cricketer of the Year.
- Carlos Brathwaite (West Indies) – ICC T20 International Performance of the Year award
- Mustafizur Rahman (Bangladesh) – ICC Emerging Cricketer of the Year award
- Mohammad Shahzad (Afghanistan) – ICC Associate and Affiliate Cricketer of the Year



29. CSA introduced Proteas milestone program to honour players

Cricket South Africa has introduced a new Proteas player milestone program that will recognize the players for their achievements across all three formats of the game.

The milestone program is inclusive of both Proteas men and women players and will honour players dating back to South Africa's re-admission into international cricket in 1991. This Program will highlight the excellent achievements of men and women national players. The first milestone awards will be presented during the upcoming series against Sri Lanka.



30. India jumped to two places reaching 135 in FIFA football rankings

In the FIFA football rankings, India jumped two places at 135. It is their best in the last six years. In 2009, India had finished at 134. National coach Stephen Constantine attributed the upsurge to all his players and the staff.

The draw for the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers UAE 2017 will be held on January 23, 2017 and India would be playing their first match in the Qualifiers on March 28.



31. Maharashtra women's team bagged the National Shooting Championship

Maharashtra won the team title in the women's 50-meter rifle prone event at the 60th National Shooting Championships in Pune. Maharashtra team comprised of former world champion and double Commonwealth Games gold medalist Tejaswini Sawant, Dipali Deshpande and Shweta Dvivedi.

The Railways team which had Tejasvini Mule, Ruchira Lawand and Jayashri Das got the Silver. BSF team won the Bronze. In the women's 50-meter rifle 3 position event Gayatri N of Tamilnadu won the Gold.



32. Argentina bagged the top position in the FIFA Team of the Year list

As per FIFA's latest rankings, Argentina replaced Belgium to gain topmost position with 1634 points. Argentina's total 10 wins from 15 games has earned them 179 points to end 2016. Brazil finished at 2nd place followed by Germany at 3rd place and Chile at 4th place. Belgium was ranked at 5th position.

India has moved up from 137th ranking to 135th rank. The SAFF cup victory in January remains India's most remarkable achievement of 2016.



33. India bagged bronze medal at women's U18 Hockey Asia Cup

India gave bronze-winning performance at women's U18 Hockey Asia Cup. Sangita Kumari contributed by scoring twice and let India defeat Korea by 3-0. Ritu Rani put India ahead in the 45th minute in the bronze-medal play-off.



Despite a late Korean penalty corner, India maintained its control over the game to clinch medal. Hockey India announced prize money of Rs 1 lakh for each player and Rs 50,000 for each of the support staff.

34. Shiva Keshavan clinched gold at the Asian Luge Championships

India's seasoned Winter Olympian Shiva Keshavan clinched a gold medal at the Asian Luge Championships after finishing the 2-heat race with a time of 1 minute, 39.962 seconds at Nagano in Japan.



Japan's Tanaka Shohei came in second for the Silver. The bronze medal was claimed by Chinese Taipei's Lien Te-An. Shiva is slated to take part in the 2017 World Championship in Innsbruck, Austria, and will compete in the World Cup circuit.

35. Virat Kohli leads Lord's Cricket Ground list of top 20 players of 2016

Lord's Cricket Ground have released the list of best players of 2016 and selected top 20 players for this calendar year.

Indian Test skipper Virat Kohli was placed in the No.1 spot in the list on the back of an astounding run in 2016 across all three formats of the game. Three other Indians including R Ashwin, Cheteshwar Pujara, and Ajinkya Rahane have also found themselves into the list. Jonny Bairstow of England was ranked 2nd while the ICC No. 1 Test bowler Ravichandran Ashwin came in third.



36. Kohli nominated as Cricket Australia's 'ODI Captain of Year'

India's Test captain Virat Kohli was named skipper of Cricket Australia's ODI team of the year. Kohli was earlier also picked captain of the ICC's ODI team of the year. Australia's Steve Smith was picked in the 'All-Star' team.

Cricket Australia's ODI Team of Year: Virat Kohli (India, captain), David Warner (Australia), Quinton de Kock (wk) (South Africa), Steve Smith (Australia), Babar Azam (Pakistan), Mitchell Marsh (Australia), Jos Buttler (England), Jasprit Bumrah (India), Imran Tahir (South Africa).



37. Meghalaya to host the 2022 National Games

Meghalaya will host the 2022 National Games coinciding with its 50 years of statehood. IOA accepted Meghalaya's bid to host the National Games overshadowing four other bidders Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand.

Meghalaya had successfully hosted the South Asian Games earlier in 2016. Meghalaya had pledged 5 crore rupees as the bid amount for the game. It will be the third north-eastern state after Manipur and Assam to host the National Games. Goa will host the next National Games in November 2017.



38. Government Suspends the Deemed Recognition of the Indian Olympic Association

Government has suspended the deemed recognition to the IOA until the IOA reverses its decision to appoint Shri Suresh Kalmadi and Shri Abhay Chautala as Life Presidents. Following the suspension, IOA will cease to enjoy the privileges and prerogatives bestowed on it by the Government.

Government has issued a show cause notice to IOA regarding the non-eligibility of Suresh Kalmadi and Abhay Chautala. Since the Government is not satisfied with the response of IOA, it has been decided to suspend the deemed recognition granted by the Government to IOA.

