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FEBRUARY 2017

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Current Affairs February 2017

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 **February 2017**. 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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APPOINTMENTS

1. Sanjeev Sanyal appointed as the Principal Economic Adviser of Economic Affairs

Famous Economist Sanjeev Sanyal was selected as the Principal Economic Adviser in the Department of Economic Affairs by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet for 3 years on a contract basis, replacing Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian. Mr. Subramanian will retire in October 2017, after which Sanjeev Sanyal should take over duties of the Economic Division of the Finance Ministry.



Prior to this appointment, he was the Global Strategist and Managing Director of Deutsche Bank. In the past, he has also been honoured with the Eisenhower Fellowship for his work on urban issues by the Singapore Government at the World Cities Summit in year 2014.

2. IDFC MD Vikram Limaye named as the new CEO, MD of NSE

IDFC Managing Director Vikram Limaye was named as the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of the National Stock Exchange of India. The appointment is yet to be cleared by the SEBI. Limaye has also been named to a 4-member committee set up by the Supreme Court to run the Board of Control for Cricket in India. At present, J Ravichandran has been holding post of the interim CEO of SEBI.



Vikram Limaye has experience of working with Credit Suisse First Boston, various committees of the Government and other international Government delegations.

3. Arun Kumar appointed as the CEO of KPMG India

Former US Government Official Arun M Kumar was selected as the new Chairman and CEO of KPMG India for 5 years, replacing Richard Rekhy. He was associated with KPMG US and KPMG Americas Boards between 2008 - 2013.



Before this appointment, he had working experience as the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Global Markets and Director General of the US and Foreign Commercial Service in the administration department of former US President Barack Obama. He has also played a pivotal role in establishing the India-US Strategic relationship.

4. Government appointed 3 directors on the RBI Central Board

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed Ashok Gulati, Manish Sabharwal and Rajiv Kumar as part-time non-official directors on the Reserve Bank of India's Central Board for a four-year term.



The ACC has also approved the proposal of Department of Financial Services for appointment of Prasanna Kumar Mohanty (Southern Local Board), Vallabh Roopchand Bhanshali (Western Local Board) and Sunil Mitra (Eastern Local Board) as members on the Local Board of RBI.

5. Hemant Bhargava appointed as the MD of LIC

The Appointments Committee of Cabinet has appointed Hemant Bhargava as the Managing Director of LIC till 31st July 2019. He is currently working as the Zonal Manager of LIC, Delhi.



He has rich experience of more than 33 years in the Life Insurance Industry in India and abroad. He is the founder CEO of LIC Cards Services Ltd. He is also founder President of Indo Mauritian Business Group in Mauritius.

6. Government appointed IAS officer Ajay Tyagi as the SEBI Chief

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed Senior Bureaucrat Ajay Tyagi as the new Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for a period of five years or till the age of 65 years or until further orders, whichever is the earliest.



Mr. Tyagi is a 1984-batch IAS officer of Himachal Pradesh cadre. He will replace U K Sinha. He is currently an additional secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs.

7. Sandeep Jajodia selected as the ASSOCHAM President

Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India appointed Sandeep Jajodia as the new president of the industry chamber. Prior to this, he was associated with Monnet Ispat & Energy Ltd. Other appointments made were Balkrishan Goenka as senior vice-president and Kiran Kumar Grandhi as the vice-president of ASSOCHAM.



ASSOCHAM, established in 1920, located in Delhi, is one of the apex trade associations of India to promote both domestic and international trade. ASSOCHAM covers a membership of over 4 lakh companies and operates 59 Expert Committees.

8. Neelu Rohmetra appointed as the first woman director of an IIM at Sirmour

The Government has appointed Dr. Neelu Rohmetra of Jammu University as the director of Indian Institute of Management Sirmour, Himachal Pradesh. She became the first woman director of an IIM.



She is currently the Rector of Kathua and Billawar Campuses of Jammu University Business School and is also the founder director of the International Centre for Cross-Cultural Research and Human Resource Management (ICCCR and HRM), University of Jammu.

9. Nilesh Shivji Vikamsey appointed as the President of ICAI

Nilesh Shivji Vikamsey has been appointed as the new President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) for the year 2017-18. Naveen N D Gupta was appointed as the Vice-President.

Prior to this, Vikamsey was the Vice President of the ICAI in 2016-17. He has been a member of the CA Institute since 1985 and is serving as ICAI Council member since 2010.

The council has 32 elected members and eight are nominated by the Central Government.



10. Vikas Swarup appointed as the High Commissioner to Canada

The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Shri Vikas Swarup (IFS Batch – 1986) as the next High Commissioner of India to Canada. He is currently the spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs since April 2015.

Mr. Swarup has previously served in Turkey, the United States, Ethiopia, the United Kingdom, South Africa and Japan. He was the Joint Secretary in charge of the United Nation's Division of the Ministry of External Affairs. He is famous for penning down the novel Q & A, adapted in film as Slumdog Millionaire.



11. Five new Supreme Court judges take oath to take the total to 28

Five new Supreme Court judges: Justice Sanjay K Kaul, Justice Mohan Shantanagoudar, Justice S A Nazeer, Justice Navin Sinha and Justice Deepak Gupta took oath of office. This took the total strength of the Supreme Court judges to 28, 3 short of its sanctioned target.



Prior to these appointments, the new judges were handling the following portfolios:

- Justice Kaul: Chief Justice of Madras High Court
- Justice Sinha: Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court
- Justice Shantanagoudar: Chief Justice of Kerala High Court
- Justice Gupta: Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court
- Justice Nazeer: A judge in the Karnataka High Court

12. Neelam Damodaran is Bank of India new ED

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the proposal of the Department of Financial Services (DFS) for the appointment of Neelam Damodaran as the Executive Director of Bank of India. His tenor is up to November 30th, 2019.

Prior to this appointment, Damodaran was the General Manager with Bank of Baroda. He has been a Non-Executive, Non-Independent Director at the Bank of Baroda (New Zealand) Limited since September 7, 2015.



13. Eight Executive Directors appointed in various PSBs

The Banks Board Bureau has appointed eight executive directors (EDs) in various public-sector banks for three years. The list of these Appointed Executive Directors is as follows:

- Neelam Damodharan and Atanu Kumar Das have been appointed as the EDs in the Bank of India. Damodharan is the General Manager in Bank of Baroda and Das is a GM in Vijaya Bank.
- K Swaminathan, General Manager in Indian Overseas Bank, has been appointed as the ED in the same bank, an order issued by Personnel Ministry said.
- Ashok Kumar Pradhan will be the ED in the United Bank of India. He is at present the Chief General Manager with the State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur.
- P Ramana Murthy will be the Executive Director of Central Bank of India. He is currently the GM of Allahabad Bank.
- Fareed Ahmed Khan, General Manager of the Corporation Bank, will be the ED in Punjab and Sind Bank.
- M K Bhattacharya and S Harishankar have been appointed as the EDs of Indian Bank and Allahabad Bank respectively. Bhattacharya and Harishankar are working as the Chief General Managers of State Bank of Mysore and State Bank of Travancore respectively.



14. Ranganathan, Mehta appointed as the Non-Official Director in IOB, PNB

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the proposal of the Department of Financial Services (DFS) for the appointment of Sunil Mehta as the Non-Executive Chairman of Punjab National Bank. The ACC also approved the appointment of T C A Ranganathan as the Non-Official Director in Indian Overseas Bank.

Both the appointments were made for a period of 3 years. Mehta is currently the Chairman & Managing Director at the SPM Capital Advisors Pvt Ltd. While, Mr. T C A Ranganathan has worked as the CMD of the Exim Bank.



15. V Ramakrishnan appointed as the CFO of TCS

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has appointed V Ramakrishnan as the Chief Financial Officer. Ramakrishnan takes over from Rajesh Gopinathan, who has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director of TCS.

Mr. V Ramakrishnan ("Ramki") joined TCS Finance in 1999 and served as the Finance head of TCS North America for 7 years. He is a graduate in commerce from Loyola College Chennai. He is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, the Institute of Company Secretaries of India and the Institute of Cost Accountants of India.



16. Ms. Suman Saxena took charge as a full-time Member of the (IBBI)

Ms. Suman Saxena took charge as the full-time Member, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI). She will look after the Research and Regulation Wing.

Ms. Saxena served as a member of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service for over 35 years. Her last assignment was as the Deputy Controller and Auditor General, where she oversaw three important sectors, namely, Defence, Communications and Railways. She has also been the Director of National Academy of Audit and Accounts.



17. N Chandrasekaran announced as the Chairman of Indian Hotels

Mr. N Chandrasekaran was announced as the Chairman of Board of Directors of Tata Group Hospitality Arm, Indian Hotels Company Ltd. Recently, he was announced as the Chairman of Tata Sons. N Chandrasekaran became the first non-Parsi Chairman of the USD 103 billion Tata Group.

N Chandrasekaran was initially appointed as a member of the board. IHCL grouped all its hotels under a single branded Taj Hotels, Palaces, Resorts and Safaris to restructure its brand image.



18. Former Nagaland CM Zeliang appointed as the Finance Advisor to the State Government

Former Nagaland Chief Minister T R Zeliang was appointed as Finance Advisor to the state government in the rank of a cabinet minister. Zeliang was appointed by the Governor P B Acharya and will receive the pay and allowances admissible to a cabinet minister.



Mr. Zeliang resigned from the chief ministership on February 19 following the demand of the Joint Coordination Committee and Nagaland Tribal Action Committee for his decision to hold elections to urban bodies with 33 percent reservation for women and subsequent incident.

19. US Democrats elect Tom Perez as their new National Chairman

Former Labour Secretary Thomas E. Perez was elected Chairman of the Democratic National Committee.



Mr. Perez, who served in the Obama administration, won the second round of voting at the Democratic National Committee meeting in Atlanta after a tightly-fought contest. He is the first Latino in the post.

Mr. Thomas Perez, the first Latino to hold the post, edged Keith Ellison in the second round of voting by Democratic National Committee members gathered in Atlanta.

AWARDS

1. National Entrepreneurship Awards 2016 presented by the Home Minister

Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh presented the First National Entrepreneurship awards 2016 in New Delhi, to recognise the entrepreneurial spirit of India's youth and encourage more young Indians to become entrepreneurs. Winning individuals/enterprises were given a prize amount of Rs. 5 lakhs, while the winning organisations were given Rs. 10 lakhs each.



Lucideus Tech was awarded under the IT &ITES, Financial category and JETSETGO Aviation Services under the E-commerce services. Swadha Energies was awarded for their Engineering Services.

2. Order of the British Empire Honour to Alastair Cook

England Cricketer Alastair Cook was honoured with the Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE), for his remarkable performance in cricket field. He has scored over 10,000 runs in Tests. He was awarded the CBE at the Buckingham Palace by Prince Charles.



Cook was appointed Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the 2011 Birthday Honours and Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2016 Birthday Honours for services to cricket.

3. Indian-Origin Sculptor Anish Kapoor won \$ 1 Million Israeli Prize

Indian-origin British sculptor Anish Kapoor has won Israel's prestigious \$1 million Genesis Prize for his commitment to Jewish values. The prize is also called as the Jewish Nobel.



The award recognises individuals whose actions and achievements express a commitment towards Jewish values, the Jewish community and the State of Israel. Mr Kapoor also created the Holocaust Memorial for the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in London and the 70 candles for Holocaust Memorial Day in Britain in 2015.

4. GMR Hyderabad Airport bags the CAPA award

GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL), has bagged the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation's (CAPA) Chairman's Order of Merit for its focus on environmental sustainability during the CAPA 12 Annual India Aviation Summit held in Mumbai.



The GHIAL became the first airport in the Asia Pacific region to become carbon neutral. The Airports Council International (ACI) has certified the Hyderabad International Airport with a Level 3+ Neutrality under its Airport Carbon Accreditation program.

5. Yo-Yo Ma bagged the Best World Music Grammy

The 59th Grammy Awards honoured Indian tabla player Sandeep Das for category 'World Music', who composed Chinese-American cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Sandeep Das was presented with a trophy. Das was a part of the Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble 'Sing Me Home,' which also had artists from different parts of the world.



Yo-Yo Ma's set up 'The Silk Road Ensemble' brings together musicians from the various folk musical route and connects the Middle East and Asia to find artistic talent together.

6. BAFTA 2017 Awards honours La La Land

British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) honoured many cinemas such as 'Manchester by the Sea', 'Lion', Arrival, I Daniel Blake, Fences, Jackie, and Hacksaw Ridge. The movie which took the maximum awards was Damien Chazelle's musical cinema 'La La Land'.

Some major awardees are as follows:

- **Best Film** – 'Manchester by the Sea', 'Lion', I Daniel Blake, La La Land and Moonlight.
- **Best Actor** – Andrew Garfield, Casey Affleck, Jake Gyllenhaal, Ryan Gosling, Viggo Mortensen.
- **Best Actress** – Amy Adams, Emily Blunt, Emma Stone, Meryl Streep, Natalie Portman.



7. Indian-Origin Shand Panesar received a top Scotland Yard award

Indian-origin, Shand Panesar has been awarded with the Outstanding Bravery of the Year Award 2017 for risking his life to rescue a couple from a burning building in London in September 2016. Panesar is a constable with Scotland Yard of the British Police. He won the award along with colleague Craig Nicholson.



Thousands of Londoners took part in the public vote to choose the winner of this year's Outstanding Bravery of the Year Award.

8. AIIMS, New Delhi won the First Prize for Sanitation & Hygiene under the Kayakalp Awards

The All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi won the first prize of Rs. 5 Crores under the Central Government Hospitals category of the Kayakalp awards for maintaining high standards of sanitation and hygiene.



The North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (NEIGRIHMS), Shillong got the second prize of Rs. 3 Crores and the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh received the third prize of Rs. 1 Crore. Commendation awards of Rs. 50 lakh each were given to AIIMS – Raipur, AIIMS – Jodhpur and National Institute of Tuberculosis and Respiratory Diseases (NITRD), Delhi.

9. Veteran Hindi Novelist Surendra Verma selected for the 2016 Vyas Samman

Veteran Hindi Novelist Surendra Verma has been selected for 2016 Vyas Samman for his novel "Kaatna Shami Ka Vriksha Padma Pankhuri Ki Dhar Se", published in year 2010.



Mr. Verma is the 26th recipient of the award. Mr. Verma would be presented a cash prize of Rs. 3.50 lakhs, a citation and a logo for the prestigious award instituted by K K Birla Foundation. He has also received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1992 and the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1996.

10. Melody Queen Lata Mangeshkar honoured with the 'Legendary Award ' 2017

Melody Queen Lata Mangeshkar has been honoured with the 'Legendary Award ' 2017 by Brand Laureate. The Brand Laureate Awards recognises world-class achievement in branding amongst individuals and companies.

In 2012, actor Shah Rukh Khan was honoured with the Brand Laureate Legendary Award for his unmatched contribution to Indian Cinema. The Brand Laureate Legendary Award has been earlier given to the likes of former South African President Nelson Mandela, Nobel Laureate Mohammad Yunus, Indian businessman Ratan Tata, Late Apple Co-founder Steve Jobs, Facebook CEO Marck Zuckerberg and F1 ace Michael Schumacher.



11. Indian Movie “Newton” and “Aaba” Won top Honours at the Berlin Film Festival

Indian movie "Newton" won the International Federation of Art Cinemas (CICAIE) award at the 67th Berlin Film Festival. The movie starring Raj Kummer Rao and Anjali Patil is a political satire. The movie is directed by Amit V Masurkar.

Amar Kaushik's short film, Aaba, won the Special Prize of Generation KPlus International Jury for Best Short Film. It is a tale about the bond between a grandfather and granddaughter.



12. EDII wins the International Mercury Award 2016-17

The Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) has received the prestigious International Mercury Awards for the year 2016-17 for the best overall presentation of its 2015-2016 annual report.

EDII is an Ahmedabad-based National Resource Institute for Entrepreneurship Education, Research, Training and Institution-building. The International Mercury Awards honour for outstanding achievement in professional communications in around 80 countries. The award is instituted by MerComm, Inc. and founded in 1987. It promotes excellence, quality and performance in the various fields of public relations.



13. Tata Steel's Katamati iron mine wins Best Green Organisation of the Year Award

Tata Steel's Katamati iron mine was conferred the Best Green Organisation of the Year Award at the Global Green Future Leadership Awards organised by World CSR Day in recognition of its environmental protection measures.



The Global Green Future Leadership Awards is for any organisation that participates in environmentally friendly or green activities to ensure that all its processes, products and manufacturing activities adequately address current environmental concerns while maintaining a profit.

14. Vivek Chaand Sehgal of Motherson Sumi Systems received EY Entrepreneur of The Year Award

Vivek Chaand Sehgal of Motherson Sumi Systems has been named Indian entrepreneur of the year 2016 by EY. Infosys Ltd co-founder Nandan Nilekani was honoured with a lifetime achievement award for spearheading India's Aadhaar project as head of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).



Motherson Sumi's revenue soared from Rs100 crore in 2000 to around Rs35,000 crore currently. Sehgal will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award in Monte Carlo from June 7 to 11.

15. OSCAR AWARDS 2017

The 89th Academy Awards ceremony was held at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. The ceremony was hosted by Jimmy Kimmel. The winners are:

- **Best Picture** – 'Moonlight' by Adele Romanski, Dede Gardner and Jeremy Kleiner.
- **Best Actress in a Leading Role** – Emma Stone for 'La La Land'.
- **Best Actor in a Leading Role** – Casey Affleck for 'Manchester by the Sea'.
- **Best Director** – Damien Chazelle for 'La La Land'.



BOOKS & AUTHORS

1. World's first Braille Atlas for visually impaired people launched in New Delhi

The Union Ministry of Science and Technology has released a Braille atlas for nearly 50 lakh visually challenged people in India. It is the world's first such comprehensive atlas.

The Braille Atlas has been prepared by National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation (NATMO) under Department of Science & Technology. The Braille atlas has 20 maps on different themes like physical, socio-economic, river system, crops pattern, natural vegetation, cultural, metropolitan areas, roads and railways, soil types and crops.



2. Hema Malini: Beyond the Dream Girl to be released in October 2017

A biography of Hema Malini, titled Hema Malini: Beyond the Dream Girl will be released by HarperCollins Publishers in October 2017, on the 69th birthday of the actress.

This book is authored by Ram Kamal Mukherjee, a senior journalist and author. This book will showcase Hema Malini's incredible journey from an actor, a danseuse and filmmaker to a politician. Hema Malini has been a filmmaker and producer, directing films and television serials, a Member of Parliament from Mathura, and has also performed the classical dance ballets Draupadi, Radha Krishna and Durga.



3. Salman Rushdie's novel 'The Golden House' to be released in September 2017

Penguin Random House announced the release of a novel titled 'The Golden House' written by famous author Salman Rushdie in September 2017. This novel is going to be published by the Penguin Random House. Salman Rushdie's new novel, The Golden House will reveal story of a wealthy family from Mumbai, who intend to forget the tragedy of 26/11 as they try to re-discover themselves in New York City.



Salman Rushdie bagged the Booker Prize for his novel Midnight's Children in 1981. His last novel was published in 2015 titled as 'Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights'.

COMMITTEES

1. Centre formed a committee to suggest measures for improving the Haj Policy

The Centre has formed a six-member committee to give a report on ways to improve India's Haj policy and to consider the issues of subsidy to the pilgrimage. The panel has been constituted in the light of 2012 Supreme Court order on gradually reducing the subsidy and abolishing it by 2022.

The committee will submit its report in a month or two on how India's Haj policy can be improved and how the pilgrims can get maximum concessions. The committee will also review the effectiveness of Haj Committee management of pilgrims' accommodation and air travel.



2. Agriculture Ministry constitutes a committee to double the income of farmers by March 2022

To achieve the target of doubling of income of farmers by March 2022, the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare has constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary.

This Committee will study the current income level of farmers, measure the historical growth rate of the current income level, determine the needed growth rate to double the income of farmers, consider and recommend various strategies and recommend an institutional mechanism to review and monitor implementation to realise the goal.



3. RBI's committee to strengthen Cyber Security

In a move to overcome cyber-attacks and form a strong cyber security landscape, Reserve Bank of India formed an interdisciplinary Standing Committee on cyber security. This committee will not only examine various threats, but also suggest measures to deal with it. A panel will come up with appropriate policies and follow up its implementations as well.



This panel will be headed by Meena Hemachandra. The decision came after there was recent breach of debit card data, as many as 32.14 lakh cards in 2016.

4. AP Government constituted a 33-member committee for Sagarmala Project

The Andhra Pradesh State Government has constituted a 33-member committee under the chairmanship of Andhra Pradesh's Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for the speedy implementation of the Sagarmala Project in Andhra Pradesh. The committee will monitor the implementation of these projects. Visakhapatnam Port Trust will be the nodal agency for the implementation of inland waterways projects.



The Andhra Pradesh Government and Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT) have submitted proposals for 90 projects with an outlay of Rs. 1,30,763 crores under the Sagarmala project.

5. FSSAI sets up a 11-member panel for food fortification

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India constituted a 11-member panel to identify critical nutritional gaps and formulate final regulations on fortification of foods. Panel to be headed by Ambrish Mithal from Medanta, include 11 experts and scientists from institutes such as AIIMS, Indian Institute of Toxicology, Bharati Vidyapeeth, etc.



Fortification means improving quality of food by adding the content of essential micro-nutrients in food items to improve quality. Previously, The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India issued draft guidelines on fortification for salt, milk, wheat flour, rice and edible oil.

6. Justice Sapre to head the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal

The Supreme Court sitting Judge, Justice Abhay Manohar Sapre has been appointed to head the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal. This post was vacant after the resignation of Justice B S Chauhan following his appointment as the Law Commission chairman, which happened in March 2016.

Justice Sapre was nominated by Chief Justice of India Jagdish Singh Khehar. Along with Justice Sapre, Justice N S Rao and Justice Agrawal are the other two members of this tribunal.



7. Saina Nehwal to represent the Olympic Committee in BWF

Adding another feather in her cap, star shuttler Saina Nehwal, who was appointed a member of the International Olympic Committee's Athletes' Commission (AC) last year, would be representing the panel in the Badminton World Federation (BWF).

The IOC said in a communication to Nehwal that she would join the BWF Athletes' Commission as a representative of the IOC AC. In a rare honour for an Indian sportsperson, Saina was appointed as a member of the IOC Athletes' Commission soon after the Rio Olympics last year.



DEATHS

1. Well-known Urdu author Bano Qudsia died

Popular Pakistani Urdu novelist and playwright Bano Qudsia passed away at the age of 88 years. She was born in Ferozepur, India and later migrated to Pakistan after partition. She was awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz in 2003 and Hilal-i-Imtiaz in 2010.

Some of her notable writings include Aadhi Baat, Aatish-i-zer-i-paa, Aik Din, Amer Bail, Asay Pasay, Chahar Chaman, Chhotaa Sheher Baray Log, Footpath ki Ghaas, Hasil Ghaat and Hawa Kay Naam.



2. Veteran freedom fighter Racharla Samrajyam passed away

Racharla Samrajyam, freedom fighter, passed away at age of 98 years due to illness. She was associated with Hindi Pracharak training at Anantapur where she joined Quit India Movement in 1942 and quit her training. She was honoured with the 'Tarmra Patra' from the Government of India in 1972.

She was also associated with Kasturi Ba Smaraka Trust at Seva Gram through the Hindustan Naya Talmi Sangh, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in 1945.



3. MRI Pioneer Sir Peter Mansfield passed away

MRI pioneer and Nobel laureate Sir Peter Mansfield passed away at the age of 83 years. Dr. Mansfield was awarded the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine in 2003 for his work developing MRI, a technique that changed the face of modern medicine.

Dr. Mansfield was an emeritus professor of physics at Nottingham since 1994. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1993. He was also awarded gold medals by the Royal Society Wellcome Foundation.



4. Japanese manga legend Jiro Taniguchi passed away

Japanese manga writer and artist, Jiro Taniguchi, passed away at the age of 69 years.

Some of his popular works include "The Walking Man," "The Summit of the Gods" and "The Magic Mountain".

He earned several television credits, including writing 61 episodes of the ongoing series "The Solitary Gourmet". He received many awards including the Osamu Tezuka Culture Award (1998) and the Shogakukan prize. His work has been translated in many languages.



5. Veteran Journalist T V Parasuram died

Veteran journalist T V Parasuram passed away at the age of 93 years. He was a former correspondent of the Press Trust of India. He was known to take shorthand notes at 170 words per minute.

Parasuram served as the Washington correspondent of the Indian Express. He served briefly as correspondent at the UN in New York. He had received the Harvard Niemen Fellow in journalism. He also wrote two books, "A Medal for Kashmir" and "India's Jewish Heritage".



6. Grammy Winning Jazz Singer Al Jarreau passed away

Legendary American Jazz Singer Al Jarreau passed away at the age of 76 years. He was a seven-time Grammy winner. He released more than 20 albums during his career. He was also nicknamed as the "Acrobat of Scat" for his innovative vocal stylings.

Jarreau was best known for the hits "Breakin' Away," "We're in This Love Together" and the theme song to the popular 1980's TV show, "Moonlighting".



7. Former Maharashtra MP Jambuvantrao Dhote passed away

Veteran pro-Vidarbha leader Jambuvantrao Dhote passed away at Yavatmal Civil Hospital following a heart stroke at the age of 83 years.

The staunch leader, who strived continuously for creation of separate Vidarbha state, represented Yavatmal constituency five times in Maharashtra Legislative Assembly. Dhote became a Member of the Lok Sabha in 1971 on the Forward Bloc ticket. The senior leader left the Congress and founded Vidarbha Janata Congress in September 2002. He was quite active in the pro-Vidarbha movement till last.



8. Bengali singer Banasree Sengupta passed away

Noted Bengali Singer Banasree Sengupta passed away at Kolkata hospital after prolonged illness at the age of 71 years. Besides singing for Bengali and Hindi movies, she also lent her voice to Assamese, Odisha and Bhojpuri films.

She was bestowed with the Sangeet Samman and the Mahasangeet Samman by the West Bengal Government in 2012 and 2013, respectively. Some of her memorable songs are Aaj Bikeler Dake Tomar Chhithi Pelam, Amar Angey Jaley Rangmoshal, Chhi chhi Eki Kando Korechi etc.



9. Former Chief Justice of India Altamas Kabir passed away

Former Chief Justice of India Altamas Kabir passed away at the age of 68 years. Kabir was appointed as the Chief Justice of India on September 29, 2012 and retired on July 19, 2013.

Justice Kabir started practising in the Calcutta High Court in Civil and Criminal sides in 1973. He was appointed as a permanent judge in the Calcutta High Court in 1990. He was further appointed as the Chief Justice of Jharkhand High Court in 2005 and as judge of Supreme Court in 2005.



10. Norway Nobel Committee Chairwoman Kaci Kullmann Five passed away

Kaci Kullmann Five, the Chairwoman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee which selects the Peace Prize laureates, passed away at the age of 65 years.

Kullmann became a member of the Norwegian Nobel Committee in 2003 and was elected chair in 2015. She was involved in the decisions to award the Nobel Peace Prize to, among others, Shirin Ebadi, Al Gore, Martti Ahtisaari, Barack Obama, Liu Xiaobo and the European Union.



11. Noted bureaucrat V. K. Srinivasan passed away

Noted bureaucrat V. K. Srinivasan passed away at the age of 76 years. He was also a columnist and director of the Institute of Economic Studies.

He was a 1963 batch IAS officer. He rose to the position of Special Chief Secretary in the combined Andhra Pradesh state. He was closely involved with the activities of the Federation of AP Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FAPCCI). He also worked at the Centre with the Ministry of Finance and the Khadi & Village Industries Commission, Mumbai.



12. Popular Hindi novelist Ved Prakash Sharma passed away

Popular Hindi novelist Ved Prakash Sharma passed away at the age of 62 years. Mr. Sharma started his writing career at the age of 14. He wrote more than 173 novels in all. He has also written scripts for about half-a-dozen Hindi movies.

Mr. Sharma has been honoured with "Meerut Ratna" award twice in the year 1992 and later, in 1994. He has also received the "Natraj Bhushan Award" in 2008 and "Natraj Award" in 1995.



13. Russia's ambassador to UN, Vitaly Churkin died

Russia's ambassador to the United Nations, Vitaly Churkin, passed away at the age of 64 years. He was known as a deeply intelligent, combative, disarming and humorous fixture at the UN Security Council.

A veteran diplomat known as a potent and personable voice for his country's interests at the UN, Vitaly Churkin, had been Russia's envoy at the United Nations since 2006. He was currently the longest-serving member of the Security Council, the UN's most powerful body.



14. Nobel-Winning Economist, Kenneth Arrow, passed away

Nobel-Winning Economist, Kenneth J. Arrow, passed away at the age of 95 years. He was one of the most brilliant economic minds of the 20th century. He was the youngest economist ever to win a Nobel at the age of 51 years.

Mr. Arrow shared the Nobel memorial prize in economic science in 1972 with Sir John R. Hicks for their pioneering mathematical work on general equilibrium theory. Interestingly, Five of Arrow's former students also went on to become Nobel winners.



15. Former Union Minister P. Shiv Shankar passed away

Former Union Minister P Shiv Shankar passed away at the age of 88 years. He also served as the Governor of Sikkim and Kerala.

Mr. Shiv Shankar served as a judge in the then Andhra Pradesh High Court. He won as an MP from Secunderabad in 1978 and 1980. He served as the Union Law Minister in 1980 and as the Minister for Energy (Petroleum). He served as the Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha and as the Leader of Opposition in the Upper House.



DEFENCE

1. Indian Navy Ship made a goodwill visit to UAE

Indian Coast Guard Ship Samudra Pavak visited Mina Al Rashid (Dubai Port) from February 4th to 7th as part of a goodwill visit with an aim to strengthen the bilateral relations between the two nations. The ship started off from Gujarat and will sail to Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.



The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) will also take part in a joint exercise and sharing of operational expertise with their UAE counter parts.

2. Indian Navy launched underwater harbour defence and surveillance system

Indian Navy has launched an Integrated Underwater Harbour Defence and Surveillance System (IUHDSS) in Mumbai. It is third IUHDSS to be installed in India.



IUHDSS is designed and developed by Israeli Aerospace Industries ELTA for surface and sub-surface surveillance of the harbour. It is a state of the art system with integrated radars, advance sensors, electro optic cameras and sound navigation and ranging systems (SONARs). It is capable of detecting, tracking, identifying and generating warning for all types of underwater and surface threats to harbour security.

3. NSG organized the 17th International Seminar on "Counter-IED Strategy"

The National Security Guard organized the 17th International Seminar on "Counter-Improvised Explosive Device strategy for two days. Close to Thirty-Three International delegates from 12 countries and 225 delegates from various states of India participated in the seminar. The theme of the seminar was "synergizing the National and International special forces to meet challenges of terrorism and IED".



The CT Expo: 2017 helped various industries to showcase their latest equipment in the field of counter terrorism. Besides, demonstrations on IED, simulation of IED blasts and futuristic IEDs were also organized.

4. India Successfully Test Fires Exo-Atmospheric Interceptor Missile

India successfully conducted a test wherein an incoming ballistic missile target was intercepted by an Exo-atmospheric interceptor missile off the Bay of Bengal.



With this commendable scientific achievement, India has crossed an important milestone in building its overall capability towards enhanced security against incoming ballistic missile threats. It has entered an exclusive club of four nations with developing capabilities to secure its skies and cities against hostile threats. Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar lauded the efforts of the DRDO and all the scientists involved for their dedicated efforts in this significant achievement.

5. INS Sarvekshak became India's first ship to be installed with a Solar Power System

Indian Navy's survey vessel INS Sarvekshak has gone green by installing a solar power system on board.



It works on sunlight and hence is 100% reliable for power source. It is "maintenance free" as well. The 5 KW solar power system will help avoid around 165kg of carbon a day, 60,225 kg of carbon a year plus 22,995 litres of diesel. if used for 25 days in one year, the system can repay its cost in less than 10 years.

6. Reliance Defence signed a Warship Repair Agreement with the US Navy

Reliance Defence and Engineering Ltd signed a Master Ship Repair Agreement (MSRA) with the US Navy for undertaking service, maintenance and repair of Seventh Fleet of US Navy. Reliance Defence's Pipavav shipyard has been qualified by the US Navy as an approved contractor.



The deal may generate Rs. 15,000 crores revenue over next three to five years. The Seventh Fleet of US Navy has about 100 vessels of different types.

7. L&T entered a JV with France's MBDA Missile Systems to Develop Missiles in India

Larsen & Toubro Ltd has formed a joint venture (JV) with France's MBDA to develop and supply missiles and missile systems to the Indian armed forces. MBDA has expertise in developing all kinds of missile systems. It is jointly held by Airbus Group, BAE Systems and Leonardo.



L&T will own 51 percent stake in the JV named L&T MBDA Missile Systems. The JV will initially develop and supply 5th generation anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM5s), missiles for coastal batteries and high speed target drones.

8. Axiscades partnered with a Slovakian firm, Virtual Reality Media

Axiscades, an aerospace and defence technologies company, and Virtual Reality Media, a Slovakian firm, have signed an Industrial Cooperation Agreement (ICA) at the Aero India 2017.



Under the ICA, both companies will evaluate opportunities for full flight simulator for the aerospace and defence sector and to address the requirements for Russian platforms, such as the Dornier 228 aircrafts and other platforms.

9. Raytheon signs MoU with TASL for the co-production of Stinger Missile Components

Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) has inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the US based Raytheon Company to co-produce Stinger Air Defence Missile Components. Stinger has both surface-to-air and air-to-air applications against a variety of airborne targets.

TASL is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tata Sons. Raytheon Company is a technology and innovation firm specialising in defence, civil government and cyber security solutions headquartered in Waltham, Massachusetts.



10. Tarini Inducted into Indian Navy

The Indian Navy's second ocean going sailboat Tarini was inducted into Indian Navy. INSV Tarini is a sloop built by M/s Aquarius Shipyard Pvt Ltd at Divar, Goa. It is slated to be the platform for First Indian All Women Circumnavigation of the Globe expedition of the Indian Navy.

INSV Tarini carries a suite of six sails including a Main sail, Head sails (Genoa and stay sails), Downwind sails and Storm sail. Her mast is 25 meters tall and has been custom built by M/s Southern Spars, Cape Town, for sailing in extreme conditions.



11. Indian Coast Guard Ship ICGS AYUSH commissioned at Kochi

Indian Coast Guard Ship ICGS AYUSH has been commissioned at Kochi. ICGS AYUSH is the 20th and the last in the series of 20 Fast Patrol Vessels being built by Cochin Shipyard Ltd. The ship is fitted with state-of-the-art navigational and communication equipment including Integrated Bridge System and Machinery Control System.

The ship can undertake multifarious tasks such as surveillance, interdiction, search and rescue and medical evacuation. Post commissioning, the ship will be based at Krishnapatnam port.



12. IAF inducted indigenous early warning system NETRA

The Indian Airforce (IAF) has formally inducted the first indigenously built Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEW&C), NETRA. It has been indigenously developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).



AEW&C are airborne radar systems mounted on a carrier jet for airborne surveillance system i.e. to detect and track aircraft, missiles, ships and vehicles and provide command and control to direct friendly forces. It has self-protection suite and mid-air refuelling capability to enhance surveillance time. With this India, joins group of other countries such as United States, Russia and Israel which have developed the AEW&C system.

13. Russia to start deliveries of military helicopters to India in 2019

Russia will start initial deliveries of military helicopters to India in 2019. India and Russia signed an agreement in October to jointly manufacture 200 of the KA-226T helicopters for the Indian Armed Forces.



60 helicopters will be delivered to India and the remaining 140 will be assembled or manufactured in India. Both countries have agreed to cooperate in energy and defence.

The state-owned Russian Helicopters has started production of the advanced medium multirole Mi-171A2 helicopter too.

14. Indian Coast Guard offshore patrol vessel “Shaunak” commissioned in Goa

Union Minister for Railways Suresh Prabhu commissioned Indian Coast Guard offshore patrol vessel 'Shaunak' in Goa. It is the fourth ship in the series of six Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV).



'Shaunak' is built by Goa Shipyard Limited and is designed to carry one twin-engine light helicopter, five high-speed boats. It can carry out swift boarding operations, search and rescue, law enforcement and maritime patrol. The features include 30 mm CRN 91 naval gun, integrated bridge system (IBS), integrated machinery control system (IMCS), power management system (PMS) and high power external firefighting system.

15. Defense Ministry approved the Phase II of Coastal Surveillance Project

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) under the Defence Ministry has approved a project to set up 38 radar stations to significantly ramp up surveillance of the country's over 7,500 km long coastline.

The cost of the project is Rs 800 crore. A total of 46 radar stations have already been set up under the first-phase. The lead integrator of the project would be Bharat Electronics Limited, Bengaluru.



India had decided to significantly strengthen its coastal surveillance following the Mumbai terror attacks in 2008.

16. India to jointly develop MR-SAM Missile System for Army with Israel

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) approved a deal with Israel to jointly develop a medium range surface-to-air missile (MR-SAM) system for the Army.

The ₹17,000-crore worth deal is to be executed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI).

As part of the deal, 200 missiles will be developed for five regiments, each getting 40 units. The missile has a range of 50-70 km.



17. Indian Navy Concludes Theatre Level Exercise Tropex 2017

The Indian Navy's Annual Theatre Level Readiness and Operational Exercise (TROPEX 17) was conducted on the Western Seaboard from 24 Jan 17 till 23 Feb 17.

The month-long exercise saw participation of over 45 ships from both the Western and Eastern Naval Commands of the Indian Navy, including the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya, 05 submarines including the nuclear-powered Chakra, 50 Naval aircraft, 11 ships from the Coast Guard, troops from the Army and 20 aircraft from the Air Force including Su 30s, Jaguars and AWACS.



ECONOMIC

1. Finance Minister presented the Economic Survey 2016-17

The Economic Survey 2016-17 presented in the Parliament by the Union Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley stated that Indian Economy has sustained a macro-economic environment of relatively lower inflation, fiscal discipline and moderate current account deficit coupled with broadly stable rupee-dollar exchange rate. Indirect taxes grew by 26.9 percent during April-November 2016.



Agriculture sector is estimated to grow at 4.1 percent in 2016-17 and industrial sector is estimated to moderate to 5.2 per cent. Service sector is estimated to grow at 8.9 percent in 2016-17. Trade deficit declined to US\$ 76.5 billion in 2016-17.

2. GDP growth in 2017-18 is projected between 6.75% to 7.5%

The Economic Survey 2017 presented in Parliament stated that once the cash supply is replenished, which is likely to be achieved by end March 2017, the economy would revert to the normal. Therefore, the real GDP growth in 2017-18 is projected to be in the range of 6.75% -7.5%.



The cash squeeze will have significant implications for GDP, reducing 2016-17 growth by 0.25% to 0.5% points compared to the baseline of 7%. It stated that an improved tax system could promote greater income declaration.

3. Union Minister for Finance presented the General Budget 2017-18

The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Shri Arun Jaitley presented the General Budget 2017-18 in Parliament. This is the first of its kind which included the Railway Budget. The total expenditure in Budget for 2017-18 was placed at Rs. 21.47 lakh crores. The total resources being transferred to the States and the Union Territories with Legislatures will be Rs. 4.11 lakh crores. Defence expenditure excluding pensions, is to be Rs. 2,74,114 crores.



The fiscal deficit for 2017-18 has been pegged at 3.2% of GDP and revenue deficit for next year is pegged at 1.9%.

4. General Budget 2017-18 proposed Reduction in Customs and Excise

The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Shri Arun Jaitley while presenting the General Budget 2017-18, announced substantial relief in Customs and Excise Duties for Renewable Energy Sector and for manufacture of Cashless Transaction Devices.



Proposals for reduction in Customs duty on inputs and raw materials to reduce costs and for incentivizing domestic value addition under Make in India have been submitted for certain items like Liquefied Natural Gas, Nickel, Vegetable Tanning Extracts and certain Capital Goods.

5. Total allocation for Infrastructure Development stands at Rs. 3,96,135 crores

The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs announced total allocation for infrastructure development in 2017-18 of amount Rs. 3,96,135 crores. This has been divided into Highways (Rs. 57,976 crores), Civil Aviation infrastructure (Rs. 2,41,387 crores) and Telecom sector's BharatNet Project (Rs. 10,000 crores).



A new and restructured Central scheme, namely, Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES) will be launched in 2017-18 to focus on our export infrastructure in a competitive world.

6. Finance Minister reduced the tax rate from 10% to 5%

The Union Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley reduced the rate of taxation from existing 10% to 5% for individual assesses between income of Rs. 2.5 lakhs to Rs. 5 lakhs. This would reduce the tax liability of all persons below Rs. 5 lakh income either to zero (with rebate) or 50 percent of their existing liability.

It is decided to have a simple one-page form to be filed as Income Tax Return for the category of individuals having taxable income up to Rs. 5 lakhs other than business income.



7. CSO released first revised estimates for the year 2015-16

Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the first revised estimates of National Income, Consumption Expenditure, Saving and Capital Formation for the financial year 2015-16 as per the revision policy.

Nominal GDP or GDP at current prices for the year 2015-16 is estimated as Rs. 136.75 lakh crore exhibiting a growth of 10.0 percent during 2015-16. Real GDP stood at Rs. 113.58 lakh crore during 2015-16. Per Capita Income is estimated at Rs. 94,178 for 2015-16.



8. Government ruled out tax incentive beyond Rs. 2 lakhs for a second home

The Government has ruled out the rollback of the proposal to restrict tax incentive for second home to 2 lakh rupees per annum.

The Finance Bill 2017 has restricted set-off loss towards second home against other heads of income up to 2 lakh rupees under Section 71 of the Income Tax Act. Under the present dispensation, there is no such limit for set-off loss from house property, which is mainly the difference between the rental income and interest on home loan. In other words, a buyer could deduct the entire net interest paid on the home loan.



9. Google's Terra Bella business sold to start up Planet Labs

Google's satellite business, Terra Bella, was acquired by American start up 'Planet Labs' which will allow Planet to combine its current constellation of medium resolution satellites with Terra Bella's high-resolution satellite images, however Google will continue to license Earth imaging for its use from Planet in a multi-year contract which is part of the sale arrangement.



With this business merger, Planet labs will soon launch additional 88 so-called cubists which will be lower cost satellites and largest single launch of satellites at one time.

10. CBDT signed 4 Unilateral Advance Pricing Agreements

Central Board of Direct Taxes signed four more unilateral Advance Pricing Agreements. The four APAs signed pertain to the Manufacturing, Financial and Information Technology sectors of the economy. The international transactions covered in these agreements include Contract Manufacturing, IT Enabled Services and Software Development Services.



With this, the total number of APAs entered by the CBDT has reached 130. The APA Scheme was introduced in the Income-tax Act in 2012, to provide certainty to taxpayers in the domain of transfer pricing.

11. Nokia to buy Finnish telecom software company Comptel for \$371 million

Nokia plans to acquire Finland-based telecommunications software company Comptel in a cash deal worth €347 million (\$371 million).

Comptel is founded in Helsinki. It develops software for Operations Support Systems (OSS). Nokia plans to combine Comptel's business with its own OSS offering, analytics, and cloud infrastructure to provide an "end-to-end orchestration of complex NFV and SDN deployments. The aim of the acquisition is to help phone carriers manage their networks.



12. Nomura projected India's GDP at 5.7 % in January-March quarter, 2017

Global financial services major Nomura has predicted India's GDP growth at 5.7% in the January-March quarter because of demonetization of high value currency.

The GDP growth was 7.3% during July-September 2016 and is expected to slow to 6% during the October-December 2016 quarter. The Reserve Bank of India has lowered its GVA forecast to 6.9 per cent for the fiscal. The index of industrial production (IIP) contracted by 0.4 per cent in December 2016 and manufacturing growth dipped by two percent.



13. SoftBank to buy Fortress Investment for \$3.3 billion in cash

Japanese Internet and telecommunication giant SoftBank Group would buy U.S.-based private equity and asset management firm Fortress Investment Group for about \$3.3 billion in cash.

With this SoftBank is looking to add investment expertise as it prepares to launch the world's largest private equity fund. SoftBank will pay \$8.08 a share for Fortress, a 39% premium to the company's 13 February closing price. The deal is subject to approval by Fortress shareholders as well as regulators.



14. Tata Motors inked Strategic Technological Agreement with Microsoft

Tata Motors and Microsoft announced a strategic agreement to redefine connected and personalized driving experiences for Indian customers. Tata Motors will leverage Microsoft's connected vehicle technologies.

The technology brings together artificial intelligence (AI), advanced machine learning, and the Internet of Things (IoT) capabilities on the global hyper-scale Azure cloud, to traverse the digital and physical worlds and create a highly personalized, smart and safer driving experience across the digital life of a vehicle owner.



15. Havells India to buy Lloyd Electric's consumer business

Havells India Ltd will acquire the consumer durables business of Lloyd Electrical and Engineering Ltd, run by the BR Punj Group.

The acquisition is at an enterprise value of R1,600 crore on a debt-free, cash-free basis subject to closing adjustments. Post-acquisition, acquisition, Lloyd Consumer will remain a division of Havells, but its brand name will be preserved. With the deal, Havells wants to get a toehold in the fast-growing Indian air conditioners business.



16. Coal imports declined by 21.7% to 14.31 million tonnes in January

Coal imports declined by 21.7% to 14.31 million tonnes last month on the back of sufficient availability of domestic fuel. Imports in January 2017 stood at 14.31 million tonnes against 18.28 million tonnes in same month last year.



The government had said, in September, 2016, that it was working on a plan to end dependency on coal imports in next three to four months to facilitate consumption of the surplus fossil fuel produced by Coal India. Coal India accounts for over 80% of domestic coal production.

17. Flipkart and Microsoft enter a cloud partnership to expand e-commerce in India

Microsoft and Flipkart announced a strategic partnership to provide consumers in India with the best online shopping service. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella and Flipkart Group CEO Binny Bansal announced the news at an event in Bengaluru.



As a part of the agreement, Flipkart will adopt Microsoft Azure as its exclusive public cloud platform. Flipkart's partnership with Microsoft is aimed at jointly accelerating the digital transformation of e-commerce and creating personalized experiences for customers.

18. Britannia Industries signed an MoU with Greek-company Chipita

Britannia Industries has signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding with Greece's cakes and confectionery major, Chipita. The two companies are in advanced stages of discussion to finalise definitive agreements including a Joint Venture.

Chipita is internationally in 4 major product categories — croissants and similar dough products, savoury snacks (bake rolls), cakes and confectionery. Chipita started in 1973 and has been operating outside Greece since 1995.



19. CII inked MoU with Singapore trade and business agencies

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has inked a Technology Partnership MoU with two Singapore agencies, International Enterprise (IE) Singapore and the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), to promote expertise in expanding businesses.

The MoU is a first of its kind between Indian and Singapore business institutions. The MoUs would help in building platforms to establish partnerships which can connect the start-ups and small enterprises in both the nations.



20. IMF projected India's GDP to slow to 6.6% due to demonetization

The international Monetary Fund has projected India's growth to slow down to 6.6% in 2016-17 fiscal due to the strains that have emerged in the economy because of temporary disruptions caused by demonetisation.

The IMF, however, has predicted the Indian economy to bounce back and grow at more than 8% in the next few years. The post-November 8, 2016 cash shortages and payment disruptions caused by the currency exchange initiative have undermined consumption and business activity, posing a new challenge to sustaining the growth momentum. India's economy grew at 7.6% in 2015-16.



21. Gross Value Added growth dropped to 6.2% in Q3

As per ICRA rating agency, the economy based on the gross value added dropped from 6.9% to 6.2% in quarter Oct – Dec 16, due to note ban. GDP growth is also estimated to decline to 6.5 percent from 7.2 percent due to slowdown in growth of the industry, services and agriculture expansion.

However, ICRA announced a growth in the performance of agriculture, forestry and fishing due to better kharif harvest and services sector is also expected to ease to 8 percent from 9.1 percent.



22. Bharti Airtel acquired Telenor India

Major telecom player Bharti Airtel has bought Telenor (India) Communications Pvt. Ltd operations in seven circles of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh (East), Uttar Pradesh (West) and Assam. Airtel will be able to increase its spectrum in the 1800 MHz band.

This acquisition will not only include transfer of all Telenor India's assets, but also its customer base to Bharti Airtel. The proposed acquisition will undergo seamless integration, both on the customer as well as the network side, as and when acquisition will be completed on paper.



23. Indian digital payments market to reach \$500 Billion by 2020

Digital payments industry in India is expected to reach 500 billion US dollars by 2020, with over 50 percent of Internet users in the country will be using it. In India, BCG estimates that digital technologies will influence up to 45 percent of all retail sales by 2025.

The report counts government's plans to build 100 smart cities across the country and 'Digital India', which aims to increase the optical fiber network to thousands of villages where two-thirds of the population lives.



24. India to be the fastest growing economy among the G-20 Nations: Moody's

International rating agency Moody's Investors Service has predicted India to be the fastest growing economy among G-20 countries with a 7.1% growth in year 2017 in its report titled 'Modest Acceleration in the Global Economy'.

Moody also predicted the growth in G-20 countries to pick up modestly to 3% in 2017 and 2018 from 2.6% in 2016. As per the report, China's economy has stabilised around the official growth target of 6.7% in 2016 but will likely continue to decelerate to 6.3% and 6% in 2017 and 2018.



25. India's steel exports registered three-fold increase in January

India's steel exports registered a three-fold increase to 8.89 lakh tonnes in January 2017, compared to Jan 2016. The massive jump in exports comes amid government providing extensive support to the domestic steel industry by way of various trade remedial measures including anti-dumping.

As per the Joint Plant Committee data, the country shipped out 58.65 lakh tonnes in the first 10 months of the ongoing fiscal, registering an increase of 71%. Export in January, 2017 was up 224% over January 2016 and was up by 19% over December 2016. The country's steel export in January 2016 was 2.74 lakh tonnes.



26. FDI inflow zooms 18% to \$46 billion in 2016: DIPP

As per the data released by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Foreign Direct Investment in the country grew 18 per cent in 2016, to 46 billion dollars. The country attracted Foreign direct investment of \$39.32 billion in 2015.

The sectors which attracted the highest foreign inflows include services, telecom, trading, computer hardware and software, and automobiles. The bulk of this Foreign direct investment came in from Singapore, Mauritius, the Netherlands and Japan.



27. Gorb partners with Ola

Food technology company, Gorb has entered a partnership with Ola to offer food to consumers at discounted rates in Mumbai. As a part of the partnership, Ola riders will receive a code via SMS and mail every time they book a cab, which can be availed on the Gorb app or website to order food.

The offer, valid till April 30, will provide a discount of Rs. 100 on a minimum order value of Rs. 200. Gorb was launched in 2016 with a tagline 'Jaisa Mood Waisa Food'.



ENVIRONMENT

1. A 540-million-year-old human ancestor discovered

Scientists discovered fossil traces of the 540-million-year-old microscopic sea animal 'Saccorhytus'. Scientists discovered that Saccorhytus was about a millimetre in size, and is thought to have lived between grains of sand on the sea bed. The researchers discovered Saccorhytus as the most primitive example of a category of animals called "deuterostomes" which are common ancestors of a broad range of species.



The study was carried out by an international team of researchers, from the UK, China and Germany. Among them was Prof Simon Conway Morris, from the University of Cambridge.

2. New bird species discovered in Nepal

A new species of birds has been discovered in the high mountainous region of Nepal, near the Shey monastery within the Shey-Phoksundo National Park. It brought the total number of avian species in the Himalayan country to 866.



Researchers from an NGO Friends of Nature (FoN) Nepal spotted the Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*) last year. Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush is considered an autumn passage migrant bird species in Pakistan and India.

3. January 2017 was the third-warmest January on record: NASA

January 2017 was the third warmest January in 137 years of modern record-keeping, as per a monthly analysis of global temperatures by scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) in New York.



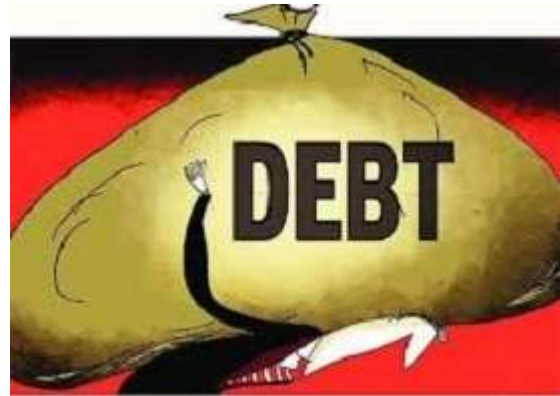
Last month's temperature was 0.20 degrees Celsius cooler than the warmest January in 2016. However, it was 0.92 degrees Celsius warmer than the mean January temperature from 1951-1980. Two of the three top January temperature anomalies have been during the past two years.

FINANCE

1. Economic Survey 2016-17 suggested setting up of Public Sector Asset Rehabilitation Agency

To curtail NPAs, Economic survey invited setting up of a centralised Public Sector Asset Rehabilitation Agency (PARA) that could take charge of the largest, most difficult cases, and make politically tough decisions to reduce debt.

Various problems such as failure of Asset Reconstruction Companies, debt repayment problems and bad debts of the state banks have involved creation of Public Sector Asset Rehabilitation Agency. As per the Survey, gross NPAs has climbed to almost 12 percent of gross advances for public sector banks at end-September 2016.



2. Government allows carry forward of Minimum Alternate Tax

The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs announced in the Union Budget 2017-18 that the income tax for smaller companies with annual turnover up to Rs. 50 crores will be reduced to 25% to make MSME companies more viable and to encourage firms to migrate to company format.

As per the data of Assessment Year 2015-16, there are 6.94 lakh companies filing returns of which 6.67 lakh companies fall in this category and, therefore, percentage-wise 96% of companies will get this benefit of lower taxation.



3. Provision for NPAs increased from 7.5 % to 8.5% in Union Budget 2017-18

To give a boost to the banking sector, Shri Arun Jaitley proposed to increase allowable provision for Non-Performing Asset from 7.5% to 8.5% in Union budget 2017-18. This will reduce the tax liability of banks.

He also proposed to tax interest receivable on actual receipt instead of accrual basis in respect of NPA accounts of all non-scheduled cooperative banks also at par with scheduled banks.



This will remove hardship of having to pay tax even when interest income is not realised.

4. Fiscal deficit for 2017-18 pegged at 3.2% of GDP

The Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs while presenting the General Budget 2017-18, announced the fiscal deficit roadmap for the next three years. Considering the need for higher public expenditure in the context of sluggish private sector investment and slow global growth, the Finance Minister Shri Jaitley pegged the fiscal deficit for 2017-18 at 3.2% of GDP and further committed to achieve 3% in the following year i.e. 2018-19.



The Government will further improve upon fiscal deficit through focus on expenditure and higher tax realisation from the huge cash deposits in Banks, triggered by demonetization.

5. Union Budget 2017-18 proposed 'No Cash' Transaction above Rs. 3 lakhs

In a bid to give a push to Digital Economy and weed-out corruption and black money, the Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Shri Arun Jaitley in his Budget Speech announced that Government has decided that no transaction above Rs 3 lakh will be permitted in cash, for which Finance Ministry has proposed an amendment to the Income-tax Act in the Finance Bill.



Government will launch two new Schemes to promote the usage of BHIM App i.e., Referral Bonus Scheme for individuals and a Cashback Scheme for merchants, to promote cashless economy.

6. Lakshmi Vilas Bank develops mobile app in union with Fisdom start up

Bangalore based fin tech start up Fisdom developed a mobile app called as 'Mission FINFIT' for Lakshmi Vilas Bank to provide financial planning and wealth management services for its customers. 'Mission FINFIT' is made on Robo-advisory Platform. App will offer services like verifying KYC, smart investment of money, account summary details, personal wealth management services, redeem of invested money, etc.



FISDOM is product and service delivery partner of Lakshmi Vilas Bank. App is made to increase cashless economy and make India digital.

7. ICRA rating agency projected Banks' credit growth at 5-6% for FY17

As per the rating agency ICRA, credit growth is likely to remain muted at 5-6% in 2016-17, due to low demand. Low demand is further letting debt markets to offer more attractive pricing. It has been predicted that deposit growth will drop further to 12% by end-March 2017 from present from 14.7% due to cash availability in the system, low deposit rates and low credit pick up.



Bank deposit growth rate increased due to note ban, from 11.3% on a year-on-year basis on September 30 to 15.2% on December 23.

8. Centre infused Rs. 10,000 crores for PSB recapitalization 2017

Centre allocated budget of amount Rs. 10,000 crore for recapitalization of public sector banks in FY2017-18. This additional allocation will be made whenever required, because as per Indradhanush plan, banks should raise Rs. 1.1 lakh crores more from the markets to meet their capital requirement as per Basel—III norms.



Under the Indradhanush roadmap 2015, the government will infuse Rs. 70,000 crores in state banks over four years, where public sector banks have been given Rs. 25,000 crores in each fiscal, 2015—16 and 2016—17.

9. Government proposed to create a Payments Regulatory Board in RBI

For strengthening the digital economy further, the Finance Minister proposed to create a Payments Regulatory Board in the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) by replacing the existing Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems. Finance Ministry has proposed formation of 6-member committee, headed by Urjit Patel.



The Committee on Digital Payments have recommended structural reforms in the payment eco system, including amendments to the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007. The Government will undertake a comprehensive review of this Act and bring about appropriate amendments.

10. Proposal to waive off bank transaction charges by RBI

Reserve Bank of India has decided that till 31.3.2017, banks and prepaid payment instrument issuers shall not levy any charges on customers for transactions up to Rs. 1,000 settled on Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) and Unified Payments Interface (UPI).



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given banks the freedom to fix bank service charges for transactions. RBI has deregulated interest rates on credit card dues. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has approved a scheme for giving 0.5% incentive on payments made through the Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS) to merchants.

11. Rs. 10000 crore Special Banking Arrangement made in Budget 2017

To reduce the burden of fertilizer subsidy backlogs, a Special Banking Arrangement of Rs. 10000 crores has been approved in this Budget to clear fertilizer subsidy dues and improve service delivery to farmers. The overall budget allocation for the Department of Fertilizer for the year 2017-18 is Rs. 74,235 crores.



The fertilizers companies used to receive subsidy on receipt of fertilizers at the district, will now get subsidy after the fertilizers are sold to farmers/ beneficiaries by the retailers to point of sale (POS) machines through biometric authentication.

12. Government announced amendment in Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Deposit Scheme

The Government of India has decided to allow declarants to make deposits on one or more occasions in the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Deposit Scheme, 2016.



The deposit under this Scheme shall be made by any person who declared undisclosed income under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, 2016. The deposit sum, which shall not be less than twenty-five per cent of the declared undisclosed income, can be deposited at the authorized banks from December 17, 2016 to March 31, 2017.

13. Government adopted speedy measures for the recovery of NPAs

The Government has taken sector specific measures (Infrastructure, Power, Road, textiles, Steel etc.) where incidence of NPA is high. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy code (IBC) has been enacted and SARFAESI and RDDBFI acts have been amended.



Six new Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRTs) have been established for improving recovery. RBI has provided a number of tools in this regard- Corporate Debt Restructuring (CDR), Formation of Joint Lenders' Forum (JLF), Flexible Structuring for long term project loans to Infrastructure and core industries.

14. Bank of Maharashtra partnered with Cigna TTK

Bank of Maharashtra entered an agreement with Cigna TTK Health to sell its products in their bank's branches. The bank had recently entered into an agreement with Future Generali India Insurance to offer its customers non-life insurance products of the insurer.



The Managing Director & CEO of Bank of Maharashtra is Ravindra Marathe while Sandeep Patel is the CEO & MD of Cigna TTK Health Insurance Company Ltd.

15. Axis Bank tied up with Earthport Plc

Axis Bank has tied up with Earthport Plc to enable faster outbound cross-border payments for its customers. This, it became the first bank in India to connect with Earthport.



Earthport is a regulated Financial Institution. It provides clients with access to a global Payment Network, maintaining local banking partnerships, through which client business is settled directly via local clearing to banked beneficiaries in over 60 countries. It is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

16. Ujjivan Small Finance Bank opened five pilot branches in Bengaluru

Ujjivan Financial Services started operations as a small finance bank (SFB) with five pilot branches of in Bengaluru. It plans to open 457 branches over the next few months across 24 states.

It is a Bengaluru-based bank. Samit Ghosh is the Founder of Ujjivan and Managing Director and CEO of the SFB. The other SFBs to get approval from RBI are:

- Equitas Small Finance Bank Ltd
- Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Ltd
- Suryoday Small Finance Bank Ltd
- AU Financiers (India) Ltd



17. RBI released the Monetary Policy Review

The Reserve Bank shifted its monetary policy stance from 'accommodative' to 'neutral'. 'Repo rate, or the rate at which the RBI lends to banks, stands unchanged at 6.25%, and the reverse repo rate, or the rate at which the RBI absorbs excess liquidity remained unchanged at 5.75%. The RBI also revised down its GDP growth forecast from 7.4% to 6.9%.



The central bank also decided to form a separate enforcement department for stricter enforcement of its regulatory and supervisory actions. Inflation will be brought down by 4%.

18. India's ForEx increased by USD 1.588 billion to USD 363.146 billion

India's foreign exchange reserves increased by 1.588 billion US Dollars to 363.146 billion US Dollars. Foreign currency assets, a major part of the overall reserves increased by 914.7 million to 340.126 billion US Dollars.



Gold reserves also surged by 664.3 million to 19.248 billion US Dollars. India's special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund also rose by 3.8 million to 1.448 billion US Dollars, while the country's reserve position also increased by 6 million to 2.324 billion US Dollars.

19. Government to come out with Indradhanush 2.0 for Recapitalization of PSBs

The Government has plans to launch 'Indradhanush 2.0' a comprehensive plan for recapitalisation of public sector banks to ensure that the banks fully comply with the global capital adequacy norms, Basel-III. 'Indradhanush 2.0' will be finalised after completion of the Asset Quality Review (AQR) by RBI by March 2017.



The public-sector banks were given Rs. 25,000 crores in 2015-16, and similar amount has been earmarked for the current fiscal. Besides, Rs. 10,000 crores each would be infused in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

20. Centre Allocates Rs. 500 crores to India Post Payments Bank for FY-18

The Government has allocated Rs. 500 crores to India Post Payments Bank for the financial year 2017-18 to help it increase up to 650 branches across country by September 2017.

Out of the allocated amount, Rs. 125 crores have been allocated as "capital infusion into corporate entity for India Post Payments Bank" and Rs. 375 crores as "grant in aid to India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)". The total paid up equity of the IPPB is Rs. 800 crores, of which the government has already infused Rs. 275 crores.



21. IFC to conduct training programs for NBFCs

International Finance Corporation (IFC), part of the World Bank Group, has teamed up with Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC) to conduct training programmes on 'movable asset financing' and 'commercial credit reporting' for Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs).

These training programmes would be conducted at various centres across the country and will help enhance the awareness, expertise and professionalism of NBFCs. The Country Head for India of IFC is Jun Zhang and Chairman of FIDC is Raman Aggarwal.



22. Union Cabinet approved the SBI merger with five subsidiary banks

The Union Cabinet approved the merger of State Bank of India with five of its associate banks including State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, State Bank of Hyderabad, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Patiala, and State Bank of Travancore.

The merger make SBI among top 50 banks in the world. Post-merger, SBI will have an asset base of Rs. 37 trillion, 22,500 branches, 58,000 ATMs and over 50 crore customers.



23. IMF launched the South Asia Training and Technical Assistance Center in New Delhi

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) launched its first fully integrated capacity development centre, South Asia Training and Technical Assistance Centre (SARTTAC) in New Delhi.

SARTTAC is a collaborative venture between the IMF, the member countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka), and development partners. The centre's strategic goal is to help its member countries strengthen their institutional and human capacity to design and implement macroeconomic and financial policies that promote growth and reduce poverty.



24. HDFC Life launched 'Pragati' Plan for low income group

HDFC Life launched Pragati, a traditional life insurance plan that has been specifically designed to empower low income families. The plan offers the dual benefit of systematic savings (with guaranteed premium returns) and wholesome life protection.

HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company Limited ('HDFC Life' / 'Company') is a joint venture between HDFC Ltd., India's leading housing finance institution and Standard Life, a global investment company.



25. RBI to Reimburse Banks MDR Charges from January 1, 2017

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will reimburse banks the merchant discount rate (MDR) on debit cards used for payment of tax and non-tax dues to the Government of India with effective from 1st January, 2017.

MDR is the commission paid by the merchant to the acquiring bank for every digital transaction allowed by the bank. The banks need to forward their claim for reimbursement of MDR along with statutory auditor's certificate to RBI every quarter.



26. Citibank launched instant chat service for customers

Citibank announced the launch of instant chat services for customers logged in to Citibank Online (CBOL) in India. The real-time chat facility focuses on resolving queries instantly, in a safe environment, across cards, domestic and non-resident accounts, and loans, for clients as they transact online.

India is the first country in Asia Pacific within the Citi network, which spans 12 countries in the region, to launch the generic chat capabilities.



27. RBI permits RRBs to grant Gold Loans up to Rs. 2 lakhs

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has allowed the regional rural banks (RRBs) to grant gold loans up to Rs. 2 lakhs with bullet repayment option (loan amount is paid at the end of maturity). The earlier limit was capped at Rs. 1 lakh.

The period of the loan cannot exceed 12 months from the date of sanction. RRBs are required to maintain a Loan to Value (LTV) ratio of 75%. Jewellery of lower purity of gold will be valued proportionately regarding 22 carat gold. Interest will be charged to the account at monthly rests.



28. Cash Credit Limit for MSMEs increased to 30%

The Government has increased the cash credit limit for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to 30% of turnover from the existing 20%, subject to the condition that such ventures need to conduct businesses digitally.

The digital transaction would reflect a clean balance sheet. The government also reduced the tax from current 8% to 6% for MSMEs for revenue of up to Rs. 2 crores.

On the cash-GDP ratio, India's cash GDP ratio was at 12 per cent, compared to 4 per cent of developed countries.



29. Canara Bank signed MoU with HRD Ministry

Canara Bank has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to operationalise the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA).

HEFA has been jointly promoted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and Canara Bank with an authorised capital of Rs. 2,000 crores. It would leverage the equity to raise up to Rs. 20,000 crores for funding projects for infrastructure and development of world class Labs in IITs/IIMs/NITs and such other institutions.



30. MasterCard to offer Payments Processing Solution for Airtel Payments Bank

MasterCard will offer payment processing solutions to Airtel Payments Bank. As a part of the agreement, MasterCard will provide a complete outsourced payments processing platform that delivers several payment services including switching, card management, along with support for reconciliation and dispute management processes.



An online debit card has been launched to enable Airtel Payments Bank customers make digital payments at over 1 lakh online merchants.

31. Corporation Bank received National MSME Excellence Award 2017

Corporation Bank has been awarded with the National MSME Excellence Award 2017 at a function in New Delhi. The award is instituted by the Federation of Industry, Trade and Services (FITS).

Corporation Bank has taken several initiatives recognising the constructive role played by MSME Sector in the nation development like online loan facility for MSME borrowers, online facility for revival and rehabilitation of MSME, campaign for growth with various concessions and collateral free loans up to Rs two crore under Credit Guarantee Scheme.



32. RBI allows multilateral FIs to invest in masala bonds

Reserve Bank of India has allowed multilateral and regional financial institutions, where India is a member country, to invest in rupee denominated bonds popularly known as 'masala bonds' issued by Indian entities.



The Masala bonds refer to rupee-denominated bonds through which Indian entities can raise money from foreign markets in rupee, and not in foreign currency. Basically, they are debt instruments that are typically used by corporates to raise money from investors.

33. Oriental Bank of Commerce launched mobile wallet 'Batuaa'

Oriental Bank of Commerce launched mobile wallet 'Oriental Batuaa' along with several other digital offerings on its 75th Foundation Day.



The bank launched two new variants of debit cards - i) Oriental Premium card which is a RuPay based Platinum international debit card with airport lounge access and 2) Oriental Prepaid Card which is a RuPay card for individuals and corporates. The Bank also launched two MSME schemes - 'Oriental Sanjeevani' and 'Oriental Budget Hotels and Restaurants'.

34. Karnataka Bank entered an agreement with Daimler India

Karnataka Bank Ltd. has entered a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Daimler India Commercial Vehicles Pvt Ltd (DICV). According to the MoU, the bank would extend finance to its customers for the purchase of commercial vehicles manufactured by Daimler India.



DICV has nominated Karnataka Bank as a preferred financier for the purchase of commercial vehicles manufactured by the company. The Karnataka Bank is a major banking institution based in the coastal city of Mangalore in Karnataka, India.

35. Bharat QR code launched to push less-cash economy

RBI Deputy Governor R Gandhi launched BharatQR code the world's first interoperable and low-cost acceptance solution as part of efforts to move towards less-cash economy at an "insignificant cost".

It was developed by MasterCard, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and Visa. Bharat QR code is seen as a better alternative to physical Point-of-Sale (PoS) machines which involves capital costs. BharatQR code would require merchants to only display one QR code instead of multiple ones. It will make payments seamless for buyers as they just have to "scan to pay" for transactions instead of swiping their credit/debit cards.



36. BHIM App creates a World Record with 17 Million downloads

As per the Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, the indigenous digital payments app BHIM has recorded 17 million downloads, which is a world record. It was launched in December 2016 for fast and secure cashless transactions.

The Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) app was launched on the iOS platform in February 2017. BHIM App has seen one update since launch. 'Pay to Aadhaar' number as added as a new payment option. it now functions on seven new languages apart from Hindi and English - Odia, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil, and Gujarati.



37. Jewellery purchase over Rs. 2 lakh in cash to attract 1% tax from April 1, 2017

Jewellery purchased in cash for an excess of Rs 2 lakh will attract 1% TCS (Tax Collected at Source) from April 1, 2017. The current threshold is Rs 5 lakh.

Once the Finance Bill 2017 is passed, jewellery will be treated on par with general goods which attract 1% TCS on cash purchase of above Rs. 2 lakhs.

The Union Budget 2017-18 has proposed to ban cash dealings of over Rs. 3 lakhs.



38. State Bank of India rebrands its website

The State Bank of India (SBI) will rebrand its website to bank.sbi.Bank.sbi, which is the highest domain protocol, known as generic Top Level Domain (gTLD). gTLD adoption enables an organisation to use its corporate name (.sbi) as their website's top-level identifier, instead of using a more traditional ".com" or ".co.in" domains.



SBI has become the first banking organisation in India to use a gTLD for its internet presence and providing an exclusive experience of assurance and security to its customers.

39. SIDBI signed MoU with Vijaya Bank to provide concessional loans to micro, small units

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Vijaya Bank for providing concessional finance to micro and small enterprises (MSEs).



The MoU also aims for joint financing/co-financing of MSMEs for meeting capital expenditure under the 'SIDBI Make in India Soft Loan Fund for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises' scheme at concessional rate of 9.60 percent, along with working capital from Vijaya Bank.

40. DishTV partnered with ICICI Bank for digital payments

DishTV, Asia's largest DTH service provider, has tied up with ICICI Bank with an aim to encourage cashless transactions. The association enables subscribers of DishTV to recharge their connections on any Unified Payment Interface (UPI) enabled app and through *99#, a National Unified USSD Platform (NUUP) in a hassle free and cashless manner.



Customers should dial *99# from their mobile number registered with their respective bank accounts, select the option 'send money' and enter the UPI ID (egdishtv.12345678901@icici) as the 'payment address' for making the payment.

41. Karnataka Bank bagged top awards presented by ASSOCHAM

Karnataka Bank bagged 'Best financial inclusion initiatives (small bank)' award under 'IBA-Banking Technology' awards and 'Best MSME Bank Award (Private sector) 2016' given by Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM). It also stood as runner up in 'Best use of digital and channels technology (small bank)' category.



Karnataka Bank was honoured due to its smart banking technologies in MSME segment and quick business solutions in customer convenience.

42. Dena Bank rolls out RFID-enabled cards to serve valued clients better

Dena Bank has introduced RFID (Radio Frequency Identification)-enabled banking cards. The card would help a branch/relationship manager identify a valued client entering a branch with the card. The branch manager would get the complete customer detail on his/her desktop for such customers.



Once the customer leaves the branch after completion of the transaction, the information will go into an analytics system that allows the bank to evaluate how long a customer waited before being helped and how much time the customer spent in completing the transactions and other details of his transactions.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. World Wetlands Day celebrated at Bhopal

World Wetlands Day is celebrated on February 2nd each year to mark the Day the Convention on Wetlands was adopted in the Iranian City of Ramsar in 1971. India is a party to this Convention since 1982 and committed to the Ramsar approach of wise use of wetlands.

The World Wetland Day 2017 was celebrated in collaboration with the Government of Madhya Pradesh at Bhoj Wetlands, Bhopal, which is one of the 26 Ramsar sites that India has designated under the Ramsar Convention. The theme of World Wetlands Day for 2017 was 'Wetlands for Disaster Risk Reduction'.



2. February 4th observed as the 'World Cancer Day' worldwide

February 4th was observed as the World Cancer Day based on 2017 theme 'We can. I can' which has an objective to prove that every single individual can make a difference in fighting against cancer. World Cancer Day is observed as a part of the World Cancer Campaign.

The campaign was adopted after the World Summit against Cancer for the Millennium, on February 4, 2000. The World Health Organization made aware that tobacco and alcohol abuse and unhealthy diets increase the risk of cancer.



3. International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation: 6th February

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is observed annually on the 6th of February. The day has been dedicated to the intolerance of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

The theme for 2017 is "Building a solid and interactive bridge between Africa and the world to accelerate ending FGM by 2030."



4. Health Ministry observed Third Annual National Deworming Day

To improve child health scenario of the country, National Deworming Day was observed on the 10th of February. It aims to reach every child, regardless of their socio-economic circumstance. India has the highest burden of worm infections in the world, with the WHO estimating in 2014 that over 22 crore Indian children aged 1-14 years are at risk.



The National Deworming Day 2017 reached around 34 crore children in the age group of 1-19 years in 34 states and union territories in government and government-aided schools, anganwadis and private schools.

5. World Day of Social Justice

The United Nations' (UN) World Day of Social Justice is observed every year on February 20. The day recognizes the need to promote efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, exclusion and unemployment. It also encourages people to look at how social justice affects poverty eradication.



The theme for 2017 is "Preventing conflict and sustaining peace through decent work". The day supports efforts of the international community in poverty eradication, the promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and access to social well-being and justice for all.

6. International Mother Language Day

UNESCO celebrates International Mother Language Day (IMLD) annually on February 21. The theme for 2017 is "Towards Sustainable Futures through Multilingual Education".



The day promotes linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. The date represents the day in 1952 when students demonstrating for recognition of their language, Bangla, as one of the two national languages of the then Pakistan, were shot and killed by police in Dhaka.

7. The 74th Central Excise Day celebrated by CBEC

The Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) celebrated the 74th Central Excise Day on 24th February 2017. The day encourages encourage the employees of excise department to carry out the central excise duty all over the India in better way.

This day is celebrated by organizing a variety of theme based programs, cultural events, workshops, awareness programs, competitions and seminars in various states of the country. The CBEC is the single largest contributor to the national exchequer with the collection of Rs. 8,50,000 crores a year.



INTERNATIONAL

1. UNICEF launched 3.3 Billion USD appeal for crisis suffered children

To help millions of children caught up in crisis worldwide, UNICEF came forward and launched an appeal for amount 3.3 billion US Dollar. 2017 appeal represents an 18% increase from the initial request for funding in 2016, as 42% of the UNICEF appeal for 2017. USA has always been topmost donor followed by Germany, Britain and the European Commission.



UN agencies have been requesting funding for war suffered countries such as Syria, Yemen and South Sudan, especially for children not going to school, children not being protected etc.

2. Ireland became the World's first country with no budget for funding in fossil fuels

Ireland created history by passing legislation in Parliament with 90 to 53 vote in favour of dropping coal, oil and gas investments from the 8 Billion (£6.8bn) Ireland Strategic Investment Fund. It was done to save underdeveloped people from alarmist climate change such as famine, mass emigration and civil unrest.



As the bill gets passed in legislation, the bill would bind the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund to sell its investment in fossil fuel industries over the next five years. Prior to Ireland, Norway's sovereign pension fund divested from some fossil fuel companies, but not all, in 2015.

3. China examined the DF-5C missile with 10 nuclear warheads

China tested the flight missile of DF-5C missile that can carry up to 10 nuclear warheads, from the Taiyuan Space Launch Centre in Shanxi province. The DF-5C is a three-stage, liquid-fuelled ballistic missile with a range of around 15,000 kms.



The DF-5C missile is a new variant of the DF-5, a Chinese intercontinental ballistic missile. It is developed with an aim to deliver nuclear weapons. Missile carrying 10 dummy warheads weighs 183,000 kgs and is a response to development of US's ballistic missile defence system.

4. India, Sri Lanka inked MoU to build tri-lingual secondary school

India to construct multi-ethnic tri-lingual school in a north central district of Sri Lanka that would provide learning opportunities in a multi-cultural environment to Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim students. India inked an agreement with island nation for building ethnic school in Sri Lanka at the cost of 30 crore rupees. Indian Government will provide SLR 300 million to Sri Lanka for building school.



It involves building class rooms, laboratories, library, sports club as well as instalment of furniture and other equipment.

5. Kathmandu hosted the 53rd SAARC programming committee meeting

Since the postponement of the 19th SAARC Summit in November 2016, a 2-day meeting of SAARC Programming Committee was held in Kathmandu. The Programming Committee is the lowest level meeting in SAARC after the SAARC Standing Committee, which is held at the foreign secretary level. Meeting was done with the aim to mark revival of the regional bloc.



Budget allocation of 5 SAARC regional centres, some specialised bodies and SAARC annual program was discussed in a 2-day meeting.

6. Bill introduced in US senate to cut legal immigration by half

In the United States of America, two top Senators have introduced a legislation in the Senate, proposing to cut the level of immigrants to the country by half. The RAISE Act, introduced by Republican senator Tom Cotton and Democrat David Perdue has proposed to reduce the number of green card or Legal Permanent Residency issued every year from currently about a million to half a million.



The current wait period of an Indian to get a green card varies from 10 years to 35 years and this could increase if the proposed bill becomes a law.

7. World's longest commercial flight landed in New Zealand

The world's longest non-stop commercial flight landed in Auckland, New Zealand. Qatar Airways flight QR920 from Doha to Auckland arrived after 14,535 kms trip. It took 16 hours 23 minutes to complete the trip. The long-range Boeing 777-200LR crossed 10 time zones on its marathon flight.



The flight had four pilots on board as well as 15 cabin crew members. Air India's Delhi-San Francisco flight claims the world's longest by flying distance.

8. Iran Lifts Ban on American Wrestling Team

Iran has lifted a ban on U.S. wrestlers. It will allow the American wrestlers to participate in the Freestyle World Cup to be held in Kermanshah. Freestyle World Cup is one of the most prestigious competitions in international wrestling.



Iran had imposed the ban following the announcement of President Donald Trump to suspend travel from seven Muslim-majority countries, including Iran. However, the ban was lifted after a US Federal judge overruled the "discriminative restrictions".

9. Nepal to host the 4th BIMSTEC Summit 2017

Nepal will host the fourth edition of BIMSTEC Summit-2017. The agenda for the summit would include connectivity, energy and economic development.

BIMSTEC - Bay of Bengal Initiative on Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, is the sub-regional group of seven countries in South Asia and South East Asia lying in the Bay of Bengal. The member countries are India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka from South Asia and Myanmar, Thailand from South East Asia.



10. China becomes the world's largest producer of solar power

China aimed to double its current solar energy capacity by 2020, following which it generated 66.2 billion kilowatt-hours of energy at 43 GW installed capacity in 2016. With this, China has surpassed Germany and became world's largest solar energy producer after nearly doubling its installed photovoltaic capacity in 2016.

Other developed countries, including Japan, Belgium, Italy, and the United States are still far ahead of China in per-capita solar production, as China produced 40.78 gigawatts in November 2016.



11. India proposed Global Services Accord Pact to WTO Chief Roberto Azevedo

India presented the proposed Trade Facilitation in Services (TFS) Agreement to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Director General Roberto Azevedo and India Inc. in an event organized by Confederation of Indian Industry in New Delhi.

India is pitching for this agreement as the services sector contribute about 60% in the country's GDP, and 28% in the total employment. The Trade Facilitation in Services (TFS) Agreement aims to ease norms including those relating to movement of foreign skilled workers/professionals.



12. US, Japan successfully test the Interceptor Missile in space

The U.S. and Japan successfully tested the latest ballistic-missile interceptor that intercepts enemy missiles in space. The test took place at the Pacific Missile Range Facility at Kauai, Hawaii.

The Raytheon-built SM-3 Block 2A interceptor can sense ballistic missile attacks from space and neutralize the threats. It is a bigger and more capable version of the Raytheon-built SM-3 Block 1A and 1B interceptors in terms of boosters and the kinetic warhead, which allows for increased operating time.



13. Longest elevated cycle path in the World opened in China

The longest elevated cycle path in the world was opened in Xiamen city of China. The route has been named as the "winding viaduct". It was designed by the Copenhagen-based architecture firm "Dissing + Weitling".

The track is five miles long and 16 feet wide. It can carry 2,023 cyclists per hour. Individuals without bicycles can also hire one of 300 hire bikes along the route. There are 11 entrances onto the path which connect to 11 bus stops and two underground rail stations.



14. Frank-Walter Steinmeier elected as the new President of Germany

Frank-Walter Steinmeier has been voted as the new President of Germany by a Parliamentary Assembly made up of 1,260 MPs and representatives of Germany's 16 states. He previously served as vice chancellor and foreign minister under current Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Steinmeier will replace Joachim Gauck who will step down on March 18. He was chairman-in-office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2016. Steinmeier is a member of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD).



15. Tehmina Janjua Appointed as the First Woman Foreign Secretary of Pakistan

Pakistan has appointed Tehmina Janjua as the new Foreign Secretary of the country. Prior to this appointment, she was serving as Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations (UN) in Geneva.



Janjua is the first woman appointed to the Foreign Office's top post. She will replace the outgoing foreign secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry. She joined the Foreign Service in 1984. She has served as the Pakistan envoy to Italy from December 2011 to October 2015.

16. Exercise Cobra Gold 2017 began in Thailand

Thailand and the United States co-hosted the annual, multilateral Exercise Cobra Gold in various areas throughout the Kingdom of Thailand.



The 36th version of the military exercise, brought together more than two dozen nations to address regional and global security challenges and to promote international cooperation and stability within the region. As many as 30 nations participated in the drill including China, India, Singapore, South Korea and Malaysia, who were either involved in or were observing the exercises.

17. UNICEF Makes \$110 Million Appeal for Sudan Children

The United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) office in Sudan has made an appeal to raise \$110 million to meet humanitarian needs for children in Sudan as a part of its annual global Humanitarian Action for Children.



The UN Agency has plans to reach out to over two million children this year across Sudan. According to the UNICEF figures, two million children under the age of five in the country are acutely malnourished, 550,000 of them severely malnourished.

18. India sanctioned \$340 million to Nepal for various development programs

India has sanctioned a soft loan of 340 million US dollars to Nepal for various infrastructure development programs. Under this program, Mahakali bridge and 15 roads will be constructed in various parts of Nepal.

Indian Ambassador to Nepal, Ranjit Rae handed over the approval papers to Physical Infrastructure and Transport Minister of Nepal Ramesh Lekhak in the presence of Railways Minister Suresh Prabhu. Mr. Suresh Prabhu was in Nepal to attend the Nepal Infrastructure Summit 2017.



19. Apple acquired Israel based start-up RealFace

Apple has acquired Israel-based start-up RealFace. The terms of the deal aren't public, but it's estimated at "several million dollars."

RealFace is a small start-up, founded in 2014. It is a cyber security and machine learning firm specialising in facial recognition technology. RealFace had earlier raised around \$1 million prior to the acquisition. RealFace had earlier developed an app, Pickeez, that used facial recognition technology to choose the best pictures of a user from all their social networks.



20. Zealandia: a submerged continent in the Pacific Ocean

Scientists in the journal of the Geological Society of America have reported to have been found a continent beneath the south-west Pacific Ocean.

The land mass of 4.5 million square kilometres is 94% underwater with only its highest points – New Zealand and New Caldeonia above the surface. 'Zealandia' is believed to have broken away from Australia about 80 million years ago, and sank beneath the sea as part of the breakup of the super-continent known as Gondwanaland.



21. US President appointed Lt. Gen. Herbert Raymond McMaster as the new National Security Advisor

US President Donald Trump has appointed Lt. Gen. Herbert Raymond McMaster as his new National Security Advisor following the ouster of Michael Flynn. Mr. McMaster is currently Director of the Army Capabilities Integration Centre.



Flynn had been forced out by Mr Trump following revelations that he misled Vice President Mike Pence about discussing sanctions with Russia's ambassador to the US during the presidential transition. The acting National Security Advisor, Gen (Retd.) Keith Kellogg, will now serve as Mr Trump's National Security Council Chief of staff.

22. Azerbaijan President names his wife as the Country's First Vice President

Azerbaijan's President, Ilham Aliyev, appointed his wife, Mehriban, as the first vice-president of the nation. The first vice president takes over the presidency if the president is unable to perform his or her duties.



Aliyeva is a Deputy Chair-Woman of the ruling New Azerbaijan Party. She is also the Head of the Heidar Aliyev Foundation – a large non-governmental organization. Mehriban graduated from a medical university.

23. WTO's trade facilitation agreement seeks to ease norms

WTO's trade facilitation agreement, which seeks to ease customs norms with its two-thirds members ratifying the pact. The TFA, which has been ratified by India, will give a boost to the global trade, which has been impacted due to slowdown in the world economy. As per experts, the agreement comes at a time when India's efforts to improve exports are gaining momentum.



As this pact has come into force, the member countries who have ratified would now be required to ease customs barriers.

24. China to host the 9th annual BRICS Summit

China will host the ninth BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) annual summit in Xiamen city from September 3-5, 2017. The theme of this year's event is 'BRICS: Stronger Partnership for a Brighter Future'.



Xiamen, also historically known as Amoy, is a major resort city in Fujian Province on the Taiwan Strait. The city is well known for its amiable climate. It was ranked as China's "most romantic leisure city" in 2011.

25. China emerged as the biggest trading partner of Germany for first time

China has emerged as the biggest trading partner of Germany for the first time beating the United States and France. German imports from and exports to China rose to 170 billion euros (\$180 billion) in 2016.



France remained the second-most important business partner with a combined trade volume of 167 billion euros. The United States came in third with 165 billion euros. The USA was the biggest imported of goods from Germany with total import worth 107 billion euros in 2016.

26. India, Germany exchange instruments of ratification of Social Security Agreement

India and Germany exchanged instruments of ratification of Social Security Agreement (SSA). The agreement establishes the rights and obligations of nationals of both countries and provides for equal treatment of their nationals and unrestricted payment of pensions even in the case of residence in the other contracting state.



The SSA will come into force from 1st of May this year. India has so far signed and operationalized Social Security Agreements (SSAs) with 18 countries including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and South Korea.

27. SoftBank, Foxconn form a joint venture

Japan's SoftBank Group and Taiwan's Foxconn Technology Co. Ltd have come up together to form a joint venture. Foxconn will get 54.5% stake in one of SoftBank's existing subsidiaries for \$600 million.

The joint venture will invest in initiatives that will integrate SoftBank's investment expertise and Foxconn's advanced manufacturing and technology services. The deal is expected to take effect on 1st of March. Foxconn will manage the operation.



MISCELLANEOUS

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the 112-foot bust of 'Adiyogi' or Lord Shiva built by Isha Foundation in Coimbatore.
- Border Security Force and Border Guards of Bangladesh (BGB) have agreed to carryout joint patrolling to check trans-border crimes along - the Indo-Bangla International border.
- Union Minister of Railways dedicated the Antyodaya Express service to the nation from Delhi Safdarjung Station.
- The Chief Secretary of Uttarakhand issued a shoot-at-sight order to curb poaching in Corbett Tiger Reserve.
- As per a survey conducted by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the percentage of 'Not of Standard Quality' (NSQ) drugs in India is – 3.16%.
- Canada is planning to spend about 28 million dollars to give asylum to Yezidi refugees.
- The Union Government has launched Bharat QR code, a quick response (QR) code to enable digital payments without card swiping machines.
- The Digital Payments 2020 report released by Google and Boston Consulting Group said that digital payment industry in India is expected to reach USD 500 billion by 2020.
- The nationwide military operation launched by Pakistan army to eliminate terrorists and consolidate gains of its counter-terrorism operations is - 'Radd-ul-Fasaad'.
- The Defence Acquisition Council approved Rs 800 cr to set up 42 radar stations to boost coastal surveillance.
- Gujarat that presented a revenue surplus budget for 2017-18 in the legislative Assembly.
- IDBI Bank Ltd announced its plan to sell some of its non-core businesses to raise Rs. 6,500 crores.
- Model-turned actor, Milind Soman, successfully completed the gruelling 517.5 km-long Ultraman race barefoot.
- Microsoft launched Project Sangam to assist the Indian government in training and helping people get jobs through LinkedIn.
- Myanmar will host the 2017 ASEAN Football Federation U-18 Youth Championship.

- The Union Health Ministry, as part of the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) program for adolescents, launched a resource kit called SAATHIYA.
- Maharashtra State Government announced a Cloud Seeding Project for the year 2017.
- The ICGS AYUSH was commissioned at Kochi.
- Haryana State Tourism Department prepared a Tirath Darshan scheme under which senior citizens above 60 years of age would be able to visit various religious places.
- The Union Cabinet recently approved the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA). The program aims at making 6 crore rural households digitally literate.
- Jovenel Moise was sworn-in as the President of Haiti.
- Mr. P Raghu Ram was selected for the prestigious 2016 Dr. B C Roy National Award.
- Veteran agriculture scientist, M S Swaminathan received an honorary medallion from Canada for his contribution towards development of various agricultural practices.
- The book titled 'Veerappan, Chasing the Brigand' was written by the author K. Vijay Kumar.
- The women's singles title in the 81st Senior National Badminton Championships was won by Rituparna Das.
- The men's singles title in the 81st Senior National Badminton Championships was won by Sourabh Verma.
- The author of the book "The Golden House" is Salman Rushdie.
- The Lok Sabha on 7th February 2017 passed the Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill, 2017, which seeks to enable employers to pay wages to workers through cheque or directly crediting to their accounts.
- The theme of the 2017 Maritime Power Conference is "The Blue Economy: Concept, Constituents and Development".
- Mr. Samit Ghosh was appointed as the MD and CEO of the Ujjivan Small Finance Bank.
- Railways Ministry laid the first railway line in Andaman and Nicobar Island that will connect Port Blair to Diglipur.
- Alastair Cook resigned as the test captain of the England Cricket Team.
- Sanjeev Sanyal was appointed as the Principal Economic Adviser in the Union Finance Ministry.

- Qatar recorded its lowest ever temperature in February 2017, which was 1.5 Degree Celsius.
- India was ranked at the 143rd position in the 2017 Economic Freedom Index (EFI).
- Search engines, Google, Yahoo and Microsoft (Bing), were directed by the Supreme Court to set-up in-house expert body to delete materials that goes against Indian laws that prohibits pre-natal sex determination.
- The new Under-Secretary-General for the United Nations' Peacekeeping Operations is Jean Pierre Lacroix.
- The Consumer Price Index for January 2017 was pegged at 3.17%.
- The Wholesale Price Index for January 2017 was pegged at 5.25%.
- Indian-origin actor Dev Patel received best supporting actor award at the 70th British Academy Film Awards for the film "Lion".
- Larsen and Turbo (L&T) entered a joint venture (JV) with European defence major MBDA to develop and produce new-generation tactical missiles.
- India was ranked at the 43rd position in the 2017 International Intellectual Property Index.
- Yusuf Pathan became the first Indian cricketer to sign for a foreign T20 league.
- Indian survey vessel, INS Sarvekshak, has gone completely green by installing a solar power system on board.
- The Billiards and Snooker Federation of India (BSFI) announced that India will host the World Billiards Championship for the next four years.
- Indian professional hockey player Sandeep Singh has been honoured with an Honorary Doctorate Degree by Desh Bhagat University, a private educational institution in Amloh, Fatehgarh Sahib District of Punjab.
- Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) has unveiled a new communication radio for the Indian armed forces, called STARS-V Mk III, at the Aero India 2017 show.
- Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan will soon host the Hindi version of popular international show TED Talks on Star India.
- South Indian Bank has been awarded with ISO 27001: 2013 certification for its Information Security Management System (ISMS).
- Muthoot Exim has tied with Divine Solitaires Pratham to retail Swarnavarsham diamond jewellery. To start with, the company will offer 18-karat gold rings studded with 0.14 cents diamond of EF colour and VVS clarity.
- In Haryana, with the start of digital transactions from November 9 last year, a total of 27,000 crore rupees have so far been saved under the Direct Benefit

Transfer scheme and about 35% people have taken to the debit card, RuPay card and e-wallet services for making payments.

- Fabindia has started removing the brand name 'Khadi' it uses to promote its cotton products after a legal notice by Khadi India that the use of the word amounted to unfair trade practice and misusing its trade name.
- Kolkata-based United Bank of India (UBI) has launched a railway ticket booking facility by having a direct tie-up with IRCTC.

NATIONAL

1. IIDM Kurnool to be declared as the Institute of National Importance

The Union Cabinet gave approval for introduction of The Indian Institutes of Information Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2017. The amendment Bill provides for inclusion of Indian Institute of Information Technology Design and Manufacturing (IIITDM), Kurnool. Subsequently, IITDM Kurnool will be declared as an institute of National Importance with the power to award degrees to students.



The emerging needs of the industry and the economy for skilled technical manpower is expected to be met from the talent pool of trained personnel of the Institute.

2. Cabinet approved the extension of tenure of loans under CLSS

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi gave ex-post facto approval for extension of tenure of loans under the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme from 15 to 20 years and introduction of a new Credit-Linked Subsidy Scheme for MIG. It has also been approved for allocation of Rs. 1000 crore in the budget for 2017-18 for CLSS.



The operational guidelines for CLSS for MIG will be issued with approval of the Minister-in-charge.

3. Union Budget 2017-18 provided renewed impetus to manufacturing and Make in India

Union Budget 2017-18 provided renewed impetus to manufacturing and Make in India, export infrastructure and Government e-marketplace. Several measures have been announced such as a proposal of special scheme for creating employment in leather and footwear industries, long standing demand of start-ups have been accepted and income tax for companies with annual turnover up to Rs. 50 crore is reduced to 25%.



A new and restructured Central scheme with a focus on export infrastructure, namely, Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES) will be launched in 2017-18.

4. “SWAYAM” Platform will be launched to leverage Information Technology

The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Shri Arun Jaitley while presenting the General Budget 2017-18 in Parliament announced that the Government proposes to leverage information technology and launch SWAYAM Platform with at least 350 online courses.



In his Budget Speech, the Finance Minister said this will enable students to virtually attend the courses taught by the best faculty; access high quality reading resources, participate in discussion forums; take tests and earn academic grades.

5. 100 India International Skills Centers to be set up under “SANKALP”

The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Shri Arun Jaitley while presenting the General Budget 2017-18 announced that that the Government proposes to extend the number of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra’s from current 60 to cover more than 600 districts across the country. These centres would offer advanced training and also courses in foreign languages.



A programme SANKALP (Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion Programme) will also be launched at a cost of Rs. 4,000 crores. SANKALP will provide market relevant training to 3.5 crore youth.

6. Government announced a slew of pro-farmer measures in General Budget 2017-18

Union Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley announced that adequate credit would be made available to the farmers in time and the target for agricultural credit in 2017-18 has been fixed at a record level of Rs. 10 lakh crores.



Under the pro-farmer measures, a Long-Term Irrigation Fund has already been set-up in NABARD and the Prime Minister has announced an addition of Rs. 20,000 crores to its corpus which will take the fund to Rs. 40,000 crores. The coverage of Fasal Bima Yojana will be increased to 40% in 2017-18 and 50% in 2018-19.

7. Budget Allocation for Tribal Affairs Ministry goes up by more than 10%

The budget allocation for the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has gone up from Rs. 4827 crores in the year 2016-17 to Rs. 5329 crores in the Union budget 2017-18. Allocation for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes across all Ministries has also witnessed an increase of more than 30 per cent. The allocation which was Rs. 24,005 crores in the year 2016-17 has gone up to Rs. 31,920 crores.



The allocation for National fellowship and scholarship for higher education of ST students has been raised by 140 percent.

8. Budget Allocation for Water Resources Ministry increased by more than 11%

The allocation for the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has been raised by more than 11 percent. The allocation for the Ministry in the year 2016-17 was Rs. 6201 crore which has been increased to Rs. 6887 crore.



The allocation for Namami Gange programme has also been increased from Rs. 2150 crore to Rs. 2250 crore. The corpus of Long Term Irrigation Fund (LTIF) instituted in NABARD as part of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) has been doubled from Rs. 20000 crores to 40000 crores.

9. New Benefits announced for NPS Subscribers in Union Budget 2017-18

In a bid to provide further impetus to the National Pension System (NPS), certain provisions have been introduced in the Finance Bill 2017 laid down in the Parliament such as to provide exemption on partial withdrawal not exceeding 25% of the contribution made by an employee and contribution up to 20% of the Gross Income of the Self-employed individual.



This benefit will be available on contribution made by the self-employed persons on or after 1st April 2017. This increased limit for tax benefit will help the self-employed individuals, to save taxes on higher contribution in NPS.

10. India inked financing agreement with World Bank for US\$ 201.50 Million

A Financing Agreement for IDA credit of US\$201.50 million (equivalent) for the "Third Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP III)" was signed between India and the World Bank.



The objective of the Program is to enhance quality and equity in participating Engineering Education Institutes and improve the efficiency of the Engineering Education System in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, 8 North Eastern States and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The World Bank loan will be disbursed on achievement of specific outcomes.

11. India and Italy inked an MOU for Technical Cooperation in Rail Sector

Ministry of Railways and Ferrovie Dello Stato Italiane Group (FS Group) a Government Company of Italy managing the Italian railway sectors signed an MoU for technical cooperation in rail sector especially in the areas safety in train operations.



The cooperation areas identified in this MoU includes safety audit of Indian Railways and measures required for enhancing safety in train operation, assessment and certification of advanced technology based safety products and systems to Safety Integrity Level (SIL4), Training and competency development etc.

12. 1500 crores defence project to be established in Madhya Pradesh

Indian defence Ministry has planned to set up defence unit in Madhya Pradesh at Morena district's Kailaras and Sabalgarh tehsil areas. Project costs Rs 1500 crore where Chief Minister, Shivraj Singh Chouhan has already allotted 334.584-hectare revenue land for the purpose to set up defence unit.



Out of proposed land, 34.745 hectare is private land and 600.406 hectare is forest land. Forest land is sent for proposal for the diversion of forest land to the Union Environment Ministry.

13. Rs.4658 lakhs sanctioned for setting up of One Stop centers

The Ministry is implementing the scheme for setting up One Stop Centre since 1st April 2015 to support women-affected by violence. The scheme aims to facilitate access to an integrated range of services including medical aid, police assistance, legal aid/case management, psycho-social counselling, and temporary support services to women affected by violence.



Around 150 additional Centres are taken up in second phase during 2016-17. Funds of Rs. 1102.49 lakhs and Rs. 3555.87 lakhs have been sanctioned to States/UTs during 2015-16 and 2016-17 respectively for the setting up One Stop Centres.

14. India and Austria Sign a Protocol amending the India-Austria DTAC

India and Austria signed a Protocol amending the existing Convention between the two countries for Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income here today.



The Protocol will broaden the scope of the existing framework of exchange of tax related information which will help curb tax evasion and tax avoidance between the two countries and will also enable mutual assistance in collection of taxes.

15. Around 1.05 Crore LPG consumers have voluntarily Given Up their LPG subsidy

As per the Petroleum Ministry, implementation of PAHAL has resulted in identification of 3.34 crore and 3.56 crore ghost/fake/duplicate accounts during Financial Year 2014-15 and 2015-16 respectively. The total subsidy/under recovery on domestic LPG during the financial years 2014-15 and 2015-16 was Rs. 40569 crores and Rs 16074 crores, respectively.



Government has also issued a circular stating that the benefit of the LPG subsidy will not be admissible for the LPG consumers, if the consumer or his wife/her spouse had taxable income of Rs. 10 lakhs and above.

16. Around 11,931 Villages Electrified Under DDUGJY

Out of 18,452 un-electrified villages, 11,931 villages have been electrified as on 30.01.2017 under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and remaining villages are targeted to be electrified by May, 2018.



As on 15th January, 5,775 projects have been sanctioned under DDUGJY for various rural electrification works, including electrification of un-electrified villages. Around 4.27 crore Below Poverty Line (BPL) households have also been sanctioned under the scheme. The project cost of DDUGJY is Rs.75,893 crore.

17. CBDT issues Certificates of appreciation to nearly 3.74 lakh tax payers

In continuation of the initiative of the Government to acknowledge the contribution of tax payers by paying taxes towards nation building and promptness in filing of Income Tax Returns, CBDT has issued the third round of Certificates to nearly 3.74 Lakh tax payers. With this, the total number of certificates issued by CBDT now stands at approximately 23 Lakh.



The CBDT urged taxpayers to e-file their returns in time and verify their return by submitting the Electronic Verification Code online or sending their ITR-V within the 120-day period, so that they can be also acknowledged for their contribution.

18. Parliament passed Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill, 2017

The Lok Sabha as well as the Rajya Sabha passed the Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

The Bill amends the Payment of Wages Act, 1936. The Bill replaces the Payment of Wages Ordinance, 2016 which was promulgated on December 28, 2016. The Bill amends the 1936 Act to permit the employer to pay an employee's wages in:



- Coin or currency notes
- By cheque
- By crediting them into their bank account.

19. India-UK Deal to Allow More Flights to Boost Tourism

India and the UK signed a MoU to ease restrictions on the number of scheduled flights between the two countries. Building new links with important trading partners is a key part of the government's plans for a Global Britain, opening up new export markets and creating jobs and economic growth. The agreement also opened all destinations in the UK for Indian carriers for code share flights through domestic code share arrangements.



The agreement signed will allow airlines to develop new services and air routes.

20. Aadhaar made mandatory for beneficiaries under NFSA

The Ministry Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution issued a Notification under Aadhaar Act on 8-2-2017 which requires individual beneficiaries having Ration Cards under NFSA to furnish proof of possession of Aadhaar number or undergo Aadhaar authentication to receive subsidies under NFSA [i.e. subsidised food grains or Cash Transfer of Food Subsidy under NFSA].



The State/UT Govt shall also advise beneficiaries to get themselves enrolled at the nearest enrolment centres available in their areas by 30th June, 2017 and a list of locally available enrolment centres shall be made available to them.

21. 1000 Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras inaugurated by Union Ministry

Union Minister of Chemicals & Fertilizers Shri Ananthkumar inaugurated launching of 1000 Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras in the country. The workshop was targeted to educate and channelize youth to synergize their efforts for taking ahead the mission to open 3000 PMBJKs by March 2017.



Representatives from 24 States and 106 districts from across the country attended the programme to further help spread the scheme in their respective zones and bring momentum in opening of PMBJKs. Currently there are 777 PMBJKs and the target is to achieve 3000 kendras by March 2017.

22. Mission XI Million sports outreach program launched in Delhi

With vision of making football the sport of choice in India, Mission XI Million, the biggest school sport outreach programme was launched by the Sports Ministry in New Delhi. A first of its kind, the programme will encourage children to play the beautiful game of football, gain healthy habits and learn important life lessons in teamwork and sportsman spirit.



Vying to reach out to over 37 cities and 12,000 schools across all 29 states of India, the initiative will focus on games that can be adapted to different field sizes.

23. 'India Pharma 2017' & 'India Medical Device 2017' International Conference inaugurated

Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Ananth Kumar inaugurated the 2nd edition of India Pharma & India Medical Device International Conference in Bengaluru. This three-day event, with the Vision - 'For Responsible Healthcare', was organized from 11th - 13th February, 2017.



The Minister said that the highlights of the 2nd edition of the conference would be the International Drug Regulators Meet and the interface between the regulators and the industry. This is the second time Karnataka is hosting this conference, to emerge as the desired destination for investments under pharma & medical devices sector.

24. The 2nd Edition of "Hunar Haat" inaugurated

The Union Minister of State for Minority Affairs inaugurated the second edition of "Hunar Haat", to encourage, promote and provide national and international market to master artisans/craftsmen belonging to the Minority communities from across the country. With the theme "Craft Aur Cuisine Ka Sangam", the second "Hunar Haat" was organized from 11th to 26th February, 2017 at New Delhi.



A total of 100 artisans and 30 culinary experts from about 24 states and Union Territories participated at about 130 stalls in the second "Hunar Haat", which also had "Bawarchikhana" where various cuisine from different parts of the country showcased.

25. Cabinet approved 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (PMGDISHA) to make 6 crore rural households digitally literate. The outlay for this project is Rs. 2,351.38 crores to usher in digital literacy in rural India by March, 2019.



Under this scheme, 25 lakh candidates will be trained in the FY 2016-17; another 275 lakhs in the FY 2017-18; and around 300 lakhs more in the FY 2018-19. Digitally literate persons would be able to operate computers, send and receive emails, browse internet, etc.

26. Government to open 56 Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) facilities

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Department of Posts (DOP) announced to utilize the Head Post Offices (HPO) in the various States as Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) for delivering passport related services to the citizens of our country. The objective of this partnership is to extend passport services on a larger scale and to ensure wider area coverage.



The Government has decided to open 56 such facilities across the country.

27. Observer Research Foundation organized a seminar on Indo-Pacific Region

The Minister of State for Home Affairs Shri Kiren Rijiju addressed the seminar on 'Indo-Pacific Region: Converging India-Japan interests', organised by Observer Research Foundation.



India and Japan signed a Declaration on security cooperation and took several steps to strengthen the cooperation in defence production and civil nuclear energy. He also highlighted Japan's participation in the Malabar joint exercises for maritime security. ORF began its journey in 1990 and brought together leading Indian economists and policymakers to present the agenda for India's economic reforms.

28. I-T department issues refund of Rs. 1.42 lakh crores

The income tax department issued refunds of 1.42 lakh crore rupees which is 41.5% higher than 2015-16. The centralised processing centre of the tax department has already processed over 4.19 crore income tax returns and issued over 1.62 crore refunds. Of which 92% of the refunds issued are below 50 thousand rupees, due to the high priority given to expeditious issue of refunds to small taxpayers.



Around 92% of all I-T returns were processed within 60 days. CBDT has advised taxpayers to verify and update their e-mail address and mobile number on the e-filing portal.

29. Government gave nod to the Electronics Development Fund

A fund of Rs. 6,800 crores as a corpus fund under the electronic development fund was approved by the Government of India, under which Rs. 681 crores were approved as seed capital for building a total corpus of Rs. 6,800 crores. This fund will be utilized to support entrepreneurship and innovation in electronics and IT such as creation of intellectual property rights in the field of electronics and IT.



Indian electronics production has increased by 65% from Rs. 2,172 crores in 2014-15 to Rs. 3,590 crores in 2015-16.

30. MEA & Gateway House Co-Hosts the 2nd Gateway of India Geo-Economic Dialogue

The Ministry of External Affairs co-hosted the Second Gateway of India Geo-Economic Dialogue with Gateway House on 13-14 February 2017 in Mumbai. This is India's premier geo-economics conference on the theme "Where Geopolitics meets Business" focussed on building synergies between business and foreign policy.



Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar, Power Minister Piyush Goyal, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and former Prime Minister of Belgium Yves Leterme figured among the list of participants.

31. International Conference on NexGen Technologies for Mining and Fuel Industries-NxGnMiFu-2017 inaugurated

The Union Minister for Science & Technology and Earth Science Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the International Conference on "NexGen Technologies for Mining and Fuel Industries" [NxGnMiFu-2017] in New Delhi.



The conference focussed mainly on issues related to Innovative Mining Technologies for Complex Geo-Mining Conditions; Mine Safety, Monitoring and Risk Management; Clean Coal Initiatives; Coal to Liquid, Methanol and Urea; Harnessing Coal Bed Methane, Shale Gas and Underground Coal Gasification; Technological Developments in Oil and Gas Sectors and Alternate Clean Energy Initiatives.

32. India and Croatia inked an agreement to boost bilateral trade

India and Croatia have signed an agreement to boost bilateral trade and enhance economic cooperation. The agreement was signed between Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Croatia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Economy Martina Dalic.



India's bilateral trade with Croatia during 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 stood at \$148.86 million, \$205.04 million and \$148.44 million respectively. India and Croatia had earlier signed an Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation in September, 1994.

33. India Joins UN Network to prevent Maternal, Newborn and Child Deaths by 2030

India along with Bangladesh, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda will work to improve the quality of care mothers and babies receive in their health facilities through a new Network for Improving Quality of Care for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, supported by WHO, UNICEF.



These countries have committed to halving preventable deaths of pregnant women and new-borns in their health facilities within the next 5 years. This Network aims to strengthen national efforts to end preventable deaths by 2030.

34. Science Express Climate Action Special (SECAS II) flagged off

Science Express Climate Action Special (SECAS II) was flagged off from Safdarjung Railway station in Delhi. The SECAS was open for public viewing at Delhi Cantonment Railway Station on February 18 and February 19.



The SECAS II will run from February 17 to September 8 2017, culminating its journey at Gandhinagar. During its journey, the Science Express will cover over 19,000 kms, and will be exhibited at 68 stations across 20 states of the country.

35. Shri Radha Mohan Singh inaugurated Indian Seed Congress - 2017 in Kolkata

The Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare inaugurated the Indian Seed Congress – 2017 in Kolkata. The theme of Seed Congress is “Seed of Joy”.



The Union Minister highlighted about National Farmer Policy of the Union Government. The objective of this policy is to accelerate agricultural output, develop infrastructural facilities in the villages, promote value addition, expedite the growth of agro-business, create employment in the rural areas, ensuring better livelihood status of the farmers and agriculture workers and their families.

36. NALCO inked MoU with TERI for sustainable rehabilitation

An MoU was signed between Nalco and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) for various scientific, technological and educational activities in mining rehabilitation especially bauxite mining and sustainable development.



The activities under the MoU will cover mining rehabilitation methods and technologies, sustainable rehabilitation on red mud areas, capacity building, workshops & preparation knowledge documents on mining rehabilitation.

37. Cabinet approved establishment of Food Legumes Research Platform (FLRP)

The Union Cabinet has approved the Establishment of Food Legumes Research Platform (FLRP) at Amlaha, Sehore, Madhya Pradesh with Satellite Hubs in West Bengal (for pulses) and Rajasthan (for Natural Resource Management) by the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA).



The establishment of FLRP in India will enable India to harness the best of international science in meeting the emerging food security challenges. The research output would benefit farmers of all regions.

38. Cabinet approved signing of Air Services Agreement between India and Rwanda

The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Air Services Agreement between India and Rwanda.



The Agreement has the potential to spur greater trade, investment, tourism and cultural exchange between India and Rwanda, bringing it in tune with developments in the civil aviation sector. It will provide enabling environment for enhanced and seamless connectivity while providing commercial opportunities to the carriers of both the sides ensuring greater safety and security.

39. Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan inaugurated the South Asian Speakers Summit

The two-day South Asian Speakers Summit was inaugurated by Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan at Indore in Madhya Pradesh. President of Inter-Parliamentary Union Saber Chowdhury, Speakers of National Assemblies of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal participated in the summit.



The Lok Sabha Speaker stressed on the need of cooperation between the South Asian Countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The speakers discussed achieving sustainable goals, including poverty, development, environment and gender concerns in South Asia, the home to over 25 percent of the world population.

43. ICAI's Accounting Research Foundation signed agreement with Railways

The Accounting Research Foundation (ARF) of the ICAI has signed an agreement with the Indian Railways for moving its accounting system to the accrual format as an additional set of accounts to existing cash-based government accounts. The foundation is the research arm of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).



The agreement will be valid for 18 months. Accrual based financial statement will support Indian Railways in better utilisation of available resources, estimation of future liabilities and prioritisation of spending.

44. Apollo Hospitals Foundation inked agreement with WWF-India

Apollo Hospitals Foundation and WWF-India have entered a memorandum of understanding (MoU). As a part of the MoU, Apollo Hospitals Foundation will provide medical support to forest department employees and local communities in the areas where WWF-India operates for conservation.



The Medicare will be available to over 27,000 staff and people in about 17 states of WWF-India operations. They will be provided with medical treatment, including air ambulance services in critical and emergency conditions.

45. India & Rwanda signed MoUs in innovation, aviation and visa requirements

India and Rwanda have inked agreements in the fields of innovation, aviation and visa requirements. The agreements were signed in the presence of Vice President Mohammed Hamid Ansari and Rwandan Prime Minister Anastase Murekezi during a business forum meet.



The three important agreements have signed by India and Rwanda are bilateral air service agreement between two countries, an establishment of an Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Rwanda duly financed by Government of India and an agreement for exemption of visa requirements for diplomatic and service passports.

46. MoU signed for welfare of Handicraft Artisans belonging to Scheduled Castes

An MoU was signed between Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles and National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), a Central PSU under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, with the objective of working together to improve the earnings of artisans across the country, belonging to Scheduled Castes categories.



The MoU aims at: Assessing and gap identification through popularising various schemes by holding awareness camps. Enhanced participation of Scheduled Caste artisans and their producer groups in domestic and international marketing events. Working capital credit for Scheduled Caste artisans at concessional rates

47. India's first heliport built in New Delhi

India's first heliport will become functional by Feb 28. The heliport is built by state-owned Pawan Hans Helicopters Ltd (PHHL) at a cost of Rs. 100 Crores and set up at Rohini area of North Delhi.



The heliport has a capacity of 150 passengers, four hangars with parking space of 16 helicopters and nine parking bays. It also has a maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility. The heliport will also promote regional air connectivity through helicopters in the northern region.

48. GCGSC to go for a JV with GAIL to supply natural gas through pipelines

The Greater Calcutta Gas Supply Corporation Limited (GCGSC) has decided to go for a joint venture with Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) to supply natural gas through pipelines in households and small industries in cities and towns.

GCGSC will be having 26 percent equity with it and the rest 74 percent will be with GAIL. The initial cost of the project is 3,000 crore rupees.



49. Cabinet approved signing of Air Services Agreement between India and Greece

The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Air Services Agreement (ASA) between India and Greece.

The key essential features of the ASA are – Both countries shall be entitled to designate one or more airline. The designated airlines of either country shall have the right to establish offices in the territory of the other country for the promotion and sale of air services. The Indian carriers can operate to Athens, Thessaloniki, Heraklion and any 3 points to be specified later in Greece from points in India, whereas the carriers of Hellenic Republic can establish direct operation to 6 metros - New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Chennai.



50. Cabinet approved MoU between India and Australia for promotion and development of cooperation in civil aviation security

The Union Cabinet approved for signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Australia for promotion and development of cooperation in civil aviation security.

The MoU will provide an opportunity to Indian aviation security authorities to share the expertise of their Australian counterparts and enhance the overall aviation security environment in India. The MoU will provide compliance of international obligation as well as enhance promotion in the area of security cooperation between the two countries.



51. Cabinet approved agreement between India and Poland on cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors

The Union Cabinet approved for signing of an Agreement between India and Poland on cooperation in the field of agriculture and allied sectors.

The agreement covers various activities in the field of agriculture and allied sector including exchange of information on the current situation in agriculture, the phytosanitary conditions of crops, threats posed by animal infectious diseases. It also covers the participation in fairs, exhibitions, seminars and conferences related to agriculture and agri-food processing; constitution of a Joint Working Group (JWG) comprising of representatives from both countries.



52. Cabinet approved the investment proposal for generation component of Arun-3 Hydro Electric Project in Nepal

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved an investment proposal for generation component of Arun-3 Hydro Electric Project (900 MW) in Nepal by public sector undertaking Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) Limited for an estimated cost of Rs. 5723.72 crore at May 2015 Price Level.

The Completion period of the project shall be 60 months from the date of financial closure which is planned for September this year. SJVN limited bagged the project through International Competitive Bidding.



53. Cabinet approved Rs. 8,100 crores to double solar parks capacity from 20,000 MW to 40,000 MW

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the enhancement of capacity from 20,000 MW to 40,000 MW of the Scheme for Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects. The enhanced capacity would ensure setting up of at least 50 solar parks each with a capacity of 500 MW and above in various parts of the country.

The parks will be set up by 2019-20 with a budget of Rs.8100 crore. The total capacity when operational will generate 64 billion units of electricity per year.



54. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology launched Cyber Swachhta Kendra

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) launched the Cyber Swachhta Kendra-Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre for analysis of malware and botnets that affect networks and systems.



The centre is operated by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In). Some of the tools released for citizens are: USB Pratirodh – A desktop security solution, which protects from USB mass storage device threats. AppSamvid – A desktop solution which protects systems by allowing installation of genuine applications through white listing. This helps in preventing threats from malicious applications. M-Kavach – An indigenously developed solution to address the security threats in mobiles.

55. Railway Ministry unveiled Antyodaya Express for common man

Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu unveiled Antyodaya Express a new fully unreserved train for the common man with specially designed colourful first class coaches, cushioned seats, LED lights, facilities like water purifiers, mobile phone charging points and fire extinguishers. Antyodaya is part of four new passenger services launched in Rail budget, one of which is already launched called as 'Humsafar'.



"Antyodaya is meant for Aam Aadmi (common man). The Antyodaya Express will be launched between Mumbai and Tatanagar, and between Ernakulam and Howrah.

56. India signed MoC with Japan on Rail Safety

India signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with Japan on enhancing railway safety in the Indian Railways with focus on railway track and rolling stock safety.



The areas of cooperation include rail inspection, rail welding and providing automatic railway track safety inspection, maintenance of rolling stock and "any other relevant railway safety matters jointly determined by both sides" with the aim to prevent major rail accidents.

57. India inked a \$375 million loan agreement with ADB

To build the Visakhapatnam — Chennai Industrial Corridor, India and ADB signed a USD 375 million pact for loans and grants for the first phase of the 2,500 kms East Coast Economic Corridor. Prior to this, in September 2016, ADB had approved USD 631 million in loans and grants for the industrial corridor.



ADB had approved USD 500 million multi-tranche facility to build key infrastructure in the four main centres i.e. Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Amaravati, and Yerpedu-Srikalahasti in Andhra Pradesh. Tranche-1 loan will have a 25-year term, including a grace period of 5 years.

58. India and Bangladesh signed an MoU for the upliftment of Sylhet city

To develop the Sylhet city of Bangladesh, Indian High Commissioner Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Additional Secretary of the Economic Relations Division Shah Md. Aminul Haque and Sylhet City Corporation CEO Enamul Habib signed the tripartite agreement where, India will provide financial aid.



The MoU has been signed for 3 projects i.e. construction of Kindergarten & High School Building, a six-storeyed Cleaner Colony Building and Development of Dhupa Dighipar area. The signing was the follow-up of an earlier MoU which was signed by the two governments in April 2013.

59. World Integrated Medicine Forum inaugurated by AYUSH Minister

The Ayush Ministry inaugurated World Integrated Medicine Forum on Regulation of Homeopathic Medicinal Products: National and Global strategies in New Delhi. This is the first-of-its-kind forum considering the increased perception of the international world towards India as a key player in the progress of the homoeopathy drug industry.



This event is organised by Ministry of AYUSH where manufacturers and pharmacopeia experts from 25 countries participated in the two days' forum to strategize the actionable aspects in the homoeopathic drug industry.

60. Centre frames infrastructure policy to check challenges of urbanisation

Centre has formulated an infrastructure policy to promote living close to mass public transport corridors like metro, monorail and bus rapid transit. The move is aimed at addressing the challenges of urbanisation.



The National Transit Oriented Development Policy seeks to promote Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), a type of infrastructure development which enables people to live within walking or cycling distance from transit corridors. The TOD is considered a viable solution to urban challenges including haphazard growth, mobility problems, congestion on roads and pollution.

61. India, ADB ink a \$375 million assistance for the East Coast Economic Corridor

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed \$375 million in loans and grants to develop the 800-kilometer Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor, which is the first phase of a planned 2,500-kilometer long East Coast Economic Corridor (ECEC).



Earlier in September 2016, ADB had approved \$631 million in loans and grants for the industrial corridor. The assistance includes a \$500 million multi-tranche facility to build key infrastructure in the four main centres along the corridor — Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Amaravati, and Yerpedu-Srikalahasti in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

62. ICFRE gave approval for release of 20 high-yielding varieties of plant species

Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, ICFRE, Dehradun, an autonomous body under the Environment Ministry has given its approval for the release of 20 high-yielding varieties of plant species developed by three forest research institutes.



The three institutes under ICFRE that developed the varieties are Forest Research Institute in Dehradun, Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding in Coimbatore and Tropical Forest Research Institute in Jabalpur.

PERSONS IN NEWS

1. UNODC chose Satinder Sartaaj for campaign against trafficking

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has roped in Punjabi folk singer Satinder Sartaaj for the Blue Heart Campaign, an awareness project against human trafficking.

The campaign is an initiative for raising awareness to fight human trafficking and its impact on society. AR Rahman, Sonu Nigam and 30 artists from around the world have come together for the campaign and released an album 'Music to Inspire'.



2. Sudarsan Pattnaik creates a Guinness World Record

Sudarsan Pattnaik created yet another world record by building the world's tallest sand castle which is 48 feet and 8 inch (14.84 metre) at the Puri beach. He has broken the record of 45 feet and 10 inch sand castle which was created in USA, a Guinness World Records.

The sand sculpture was built with theme of World Peace. It featured sculptures of Mahatma Gandhi, Gautama Buddha, and Nelson Mandela.



3. Diego Maradona named ambassador at FIFA

The 56-year-old Argentina's former soccer player Diego Maradona was named as brand ambassador of the FIFA by the FIFA governing body to promote the game worldwide. Maradona was Napoli's veteran player in the European Cup encounter in 1987. Diego was famous player as he led Argentina to the World Cup title in 1986, and to a runner-up finish in 1990.

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association is the international governing body of association football and beach soccer and conducts football's major international tournaments.



4. Virat Kohli signs a Rs. 100 crore deal with Puma

Indian Cricket team captain, Virat Kohli, became the first Indian sportsperson to sign a Rs. 100 crore endorsement deal with a single brand. He has signed an eight-year deal with sports lifestyle brand Puma worth about Rs. 110 crores.

Puma is expected to work with Kohli in markets like UK, Australia, South Africa and the Middle East. Kohli has joined the likes of Usain Bolt, Asafa Powell, Thierry Henry and Oliver Giroud as a global ambassador for the brand.



5. Shilpa Shetty named as the Swachh Bharat brand ambassador

The Government roped in actress Shilpa Shetty as a brand ambassador for its cleanliness initiative Swachh Bharat Mission. The actress will feature in TV and radio campaigns aimed at discouraging people from littering on roads.

Campaign posters featuring the actress will be displayed at various places across the country. Ministry has also approached other celebrities like Priyanka Chopra to support the mission, which aims cleanliness and eradication of open defecation by 2019. Shilpa Shetty joined the list of the mission's ambassadors like Amitabh Bachchan, Salman Khan, Shankar Mahadevan and Sachin Tendulkar.



6. Gopi, Athare won men's and women's races in Delhi Marathon

Rio Olympian Thanackal Gopi won the men's title in the second edition of the IDBI Federal Life Insurance New Delhi Marathon. Monika Athare claimed the honours in the women's section.

In Men's full marathon New Delhi, Gopi clocked 2 hours, 15 minutes and 37 seconds to win the race in his first appearance in the event. Bahadur Singh Dhoni finished second while T H Sanjith was third. In women's full marathon, Monika Athare from Nashik completed the race in 2 hours, 39 minutes and 08 seconds, to bag her maiden title at this distance. Athare was followed by Jyoti Gawate in the second position, while Ranjan Kumari finished third.



PLACES IN NEWS

1. DRDO young Scientists Meet at Yelahanka, Bengaluru

DRDO Young Scientists Meet (YSM) 2017 was inaugurated at Yelahanka, Bengaluru on the side-lines of the Aero India Seminar. For the first time the event has been planned during Aero India to provide an opportunity for the young scientists to witness the biennial mega event.



YSM is a two-day technical event with participation of young scientists coming from DRDO laboratories all over India. The program emphasizes on making participants to enthusiastically take part in various open competitions and team building activities.

2. The 11th Biennial Edition Aero India 2017 held at Bengaluru

Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar inaugurated the 11th biennial edition of International Aerospace and Defence Exhibition and declared the Aero India 2017 in Bengaluru. Aero India witnessed the emerging dynamism of defence manufacturing in India, especially the rising role of Indian defence industry.



Aero India witnessed the participation of 549 companies with 53 Aircrafts gracing the event. The Air Show witnessed a fly past by the Make in India formation consisting of HTT-40, Hawk-i, Dornier-228, Su-30MKI and the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft.

3. National Workshop on Training on Autism Certification tools held in Delhi

The 2nd three-day Workshop for Training Master Trainers in Autism Tools-INCLIN & ISAA" was organized by the National Trust for the welfare of persons with Autism in collaboration with Department of Paediatrics, AIIMS, New Delhi from 09-Feb-2017 to 11-Feb-2017 in New Delhi.



This workshop was organized for Northern and Eastern states of India in which more than 53 doctors from Government Hospitals attended. The aim of the workshop was to train the health care professionals and certify Autism using INCLIN and ISAA tools, which are the basis for issuing Certificate for Autism.

4. The 43rd edition of the IHGF–Delhi Fair Spring 2017 held in Delhi

The IHGF–Delhi Fair Spring 2017, the 43rd edition of the world's largest handicrafts and gifts fair held from February 16 - 20, 2017, spread over an area of 1,97,000 sq. metres in NCR region of Delhi.

More than 3,000 exhibitors including 900 permanent marts from all over the country showcased a wide range of products.

One of the main highlights of the show was thematic display of products from North Eastern Region and Jodhpur Mega cluster.



5. A 5-day Indian Panorama Film Festival organized in Port Blair

The five-day Indian Panorama Film Festival (Public Screening of films) was organised in Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The festival was organized by Directorate of Information and Publicity, Andaman & Nicobar Administration jointly with Directorate of Film Festivals, Government of India.

The five-day festival saw screening of 15 films of different languages and genres. The Directorate of Film Festivals in India is an organisation that initiates and presents the International Film Festival of India, the National Film Awards and the Indian Panorama.



6. Aero India–2017 concluded at Yelahanka in Bengaluru

The 11th biennial edition of the International Aerospace and Defence exhibition – Aero India concluded at the Air Force Station, Yelahanka in Bengaluru. A total of 549 companies, 270 Indian Companies and 279 foreign companies, participated in the five-day event.

On the first three days, several MOUs were signed under manufacturing sector. HAL, the premier Aeronautics giant received several crore rupees worth contracts for manufacturing sub-parts of aircrafts. Boeing and Rolls Royce have signed MOUs to set up manufacturing base in India and Airbus will set up Centre of Excellence for Aerospace skills development in Hyderabad.



REGIONAL

1. Meghalaya's first ever Apparel and Garment Centre inaugurated at Ampati

The Union Textiles Minister, Mrs. Smriti Zubin Irani inaugurated the first ever Apparel and Garment Making Centre in Meghalaya, near Ampati. Union Ministry of Textiles is implementing projects worth Rs. 70 crores in sericulture and weaving sectors for Meghalaya.



The sprawling Apparel and Garment Making Centre, covering an area of 45,000 sq. ft., has been set up at Hatisil near Ampati, at a cost of approximately Rs. 14.26 crores. The foundation stone for this centre was laid in 2015 by the Chief Minister of Meghalaya.

2. Rs. 1,350 crores investment approved in Andhra Pradesh under AMRUT

The Ministry of Urban Development today approved an investment of Rs. 1,350 crores in Andhra Pradesh for improvement of basic urban infrastructure over the next three financial years, under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).



The Ministry also approved central assistance of Rs. 405 crores in support of investments in projects for augmenting water supply, sewerage networks, drainage and provision of parks and open spaces in 32 Atal Mission cities in the State. This initiative has been taken to enable the States plan for early planning and execution of basic urban infrastructure projects.

3. The 2017 e-governance awards honored to Rajasthan and Telangana

Computer Society of India – Nihilent eGovernance Awards together honoured Rajasthan and Telangana State Government as Winners of Excellence under the State category, whereas the Award of Recognition was honoured to Odisha and Nagaland states.



The Computer Society of India's (CSI) Special Interest Group with sponsorship from Nihilent Technologies Awards are given to honor efforts made by states and district administrative in making India digital. Winners are selected among 34 projects from government departments and organizations across the India.

4. Haryana hosted the Surajkund International Crafts Mela

Union Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, Culture and External Affairs in union with Haryana Tourism Corporation and Surajkund Mela Authority, organized 15 day Surajkund International Crafts Mela in Faridabad, Haryana. Haryana was selected as theme state of mela.



The State showcased its handicrafts, handlooms, performing arts, dance forms, cuisine and state tourism specialities to celebrate diversity of culture. Almost 20 countries and all the states of India witnessed events with Egypt as an event partner for 2017. Every year, one such country is selected as event partner and Indian state as theme state.

5. First ever training center for Para Athletes

Sports Minister Vijay Goel laid the foundation stone of Boundary wall of World Class Para athletic Centre for Differently Abled Sportspersons at SAI Gandhinagar, Gujarat, the first ever training centre dedicated for Para athletes in India. A Talent Search Portal is being launched soon to spot the budding sports persons in the country.



The centre is proposed for an estimated budget of over Rs. 50 crores where Para athletes will be trained for various International Competitions including Asian Games, Common Wealth Games and Olympic Games.

6. Maharashtra to become Open Defecation Free by March 2018

The Chief Secretary of Maharashtra, Shri Swadhin Kshatriya has conveyed to the Centre that the State will be declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) by March 2018. Under the Zila Swachh Bharat Prerak initiative, a Prerak will be provided at district-level in the State.



Maharashtra is not only aiming for ODF achievement, but also aiming to include handwashing, menstrual hygiene, community toilets etc. as part of Swachh Bharat implementation in the State. Multiple cleanliness campaigns – such as Clean Offices, Clean GPs, Clean Schools – are also underway in the State.

7. Health Ministry launched single vaccine for dual protection against measles

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched Measles Rubella (MR) vaccination campaign in Bengaluru. The campaign against these two diseases will start from five States/UTs (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Goa and Lakshadweep) covering nearly 3.6 crore target children. Following the campaign, Measles-Rubella vaccine will be introduced in routine immunization, replacing the currently given two doses of measles vaccine, at 9-12 months and 16-24 months of age.



8. Assam inaugurated Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana in Guwahati

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the 'Chief Minister Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana (CMSGUY)' in Guwahati, with budget outlay of 30,000 crore rupees, to double the farm income in the State, as it was recorded only 0.88 percent increase as against national average of 5.2 per cent. Scheme to begin in 2021-22.



This scheme will prove to be massive investments in rural areas for complete rural transformation in a period of 5 years to stimulate rural productivity.

9. Telangana comes up with India's first social innovation hub

Telangana launched 'Kakatiya Hub for Social Innovation' in Nizamabad, which will function like a rural incubator to encourage entrepreneurship at the grassroots level. It will be funded by the Telangana government. The government will make sure that the rural incubator in Telangana will be run exactly in the same as any other high-end incubator like the T-Hub of Hyderabad.



Also, this hub will promote rural and semi urban entrepreneurs. The incubator will be run through Kakatiya Sandbox, a centre that encourage problem-solvers.

10. CESC bagged Bikaner power distribution franchise

In order to expand business opportunity in Rajasthan, CESC Ltd bought franchise for power distribution in Rajasthan's Bikaner, the other two being in Kota and Bharatpur. Bikaner's business opportunity is based on a competitive bidding and distribution agreement for a tenure of 20 years.



The RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group's CESC Ltd would be investing Rs 135 crore for 3 years, to make over distribution network and metering. Power distribution in Bikaner suffers from a net loss which CESC will try to recover in two years, spread over 155 sq.km area.

11. First Smart Police Station of Andhra Pradesh inaugurated

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated the State's first Smart Police Station at Nagarampalem in Guntur city. It is equipped with a "custody" room and under watch of CCTV network.



The police station was built at a cost of Rs. 91 lakh. It is one of the two model Smart Police Stations constructed in Guntur as a pilot project. The government has plans to build another 100 Smart Police Stations across the state.

12. The 2nd edition of International Spice Conference held in Thiruvananthapuram

International Spice Conference held at Thiruvananthapuram representing various states, industry leaders from 40 countries and International Spice Associations representatives who participated in the three-day conference.

The Conference deliberated on effective strategies and innovative technologies to improve the livelihood of spice farmers, address spice industry challenges and food safety concerns among other things. The conference was hosted by the All India Spices Exporters Forum in association with Cochin Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



13. Assam presented a Rs. 2,350 crore Deficit Budget for 2017-18

Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma presented the state Budget for the session 2017-18, based on theme "Resurgent Assam" with Rs. 2,349.79 crore deficit Budget. Budget estimated to have a receipt of Rs. 84,732.16 crore under the consolidated fund of the state.

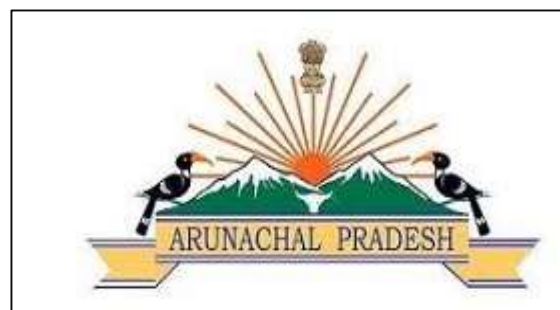
As per the new amendments made, budget merged Plan and Non-Plan expenditures. The budget announced to enhance Other Backward Class reservation in the higher educational institutions from 15% to 29% and offer interest free crop loans for farmers.



14. Arunachal Pradesh becomes the first state to apply for e-Cabinet solution

To ensure more professional way of conducting cabinet meetings, Arunachal Pradesh has come up with e-cabinet solution for the state cabinet members. With this, the cabinet members can go through the cabinet notes before the meeting. Also, business of the Cabinet can be conducted using the e-Cabinet solution.

It will ease decision-making process, provide proper analysis and feedback, keeps relevant information organized, save meetings time span by 2 hours. This will provide a clear overview of each item under discussion to ministers.



15. PNB Housing Finance limited entered an MoU to train construction workers in West Bengal

PNB Housing Finance Limited entered an MOU with CREDAI West Bengal to help skilled labours and train 1000 construction workers in Kolkata and nearby villages. The training cost will be co-funded by West Bengal State Government and PNBHFL.

CREDAI-Bengal would also be constructing skill development centres in Medinipur and Murshidabad, in partnership with its training partner Kushal, Rustomjee Academy for Skills, Ashiana Training Institute and Dr. K.L. Garg Memorial Vocational Training Institute.



16. Gujarat became the first state to establish a cashless system for PDS

Gujarat became the first state in the country to establish cashless distribution of food grain. The state government has successfully installed the Aadhaar Enabled Payment System in 17,250 Fair Price Shops (FPS) much before the target, March 31.



The Gujarat government has partnered with common service centres, a special purpose vehicle of ministry of Electronics and IT by offering 30 digital services through the FPSs. As per the Food ministry, there are over 81 crore beneficiaries under the NSAI in the country.

17. A 3-day National Women’s Parliament conducted in Andhra Pradesh

The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly conducted a 3-day National Women’s Parliament in Andhra Pradesh. It was organized on theme ‘Empowering Women — Strengthening Democracy’ to boost women’s confidence, promote social, political and economic women empowerment. Also, to empower young girls with their potential of their field.



The National Women’s Parliament gave away ‘International Woman Icon of the World’ award and 12 best young achievers awards to women of various fields such as politics, arts and culture, sports, education, industry, media, cinema, judiciary and social sector.

18. India's first floating elementary school inaugurated on Manipur's Loktak Lake

India's first floating elementary school at Langolsabi Leikai of Champu Khangpok village in Manipur was inaugurated on Loktak lake. It is the largest freshwater lake in the country.

The school aims to provide education to drop outs students, who were rendered homeless due to the recent evacuation of phumdis, also known as "phumshongs". It was initiated by All Loktak Lake Fishermen's Union in collaboration with People Resources Development Association.



19. Bill Passed in Karnataka Assembly to allow 'Kambala'

The Karnataka Legislative Assembly passed the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Bill, 2017 and allowed to conduct "kambala", the traditional buffalo race.

The Bill seeks to exempt kambala and bullock-cart racing from the ambit of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960. The race is widely held in the coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi. Governor Vajubhai R. Vala is likely to refer the Bill to the President for his assent.



20. GNFC township becomes India's first 100% cashless Township

Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizers (GNFC) township at Bharuch became the first township in India to become 100% cashless. The township has a population of around 5,000 and floating population of around 10,000 every day.

Residents of the township have embraced various digital mode of payments instead of cash and are making cashless payments at shopping centres, schools, colleges, hospital, stadium, laundry and even at tea stalls.



21. Haryana Government imposed curbs on liquor consumption in public places

The Haryana Government has imposed curbs on liquor consumption at a place which has not been licensed or authorised under the Punjab Excise Act, 1914, except at one's dwelling.

Violation of the law would attract a penalty of Rs 5,000 per person for the first offence, Rs 10,000 per person for the second and every subsequent offence. The Deputy Excise and Taxation Commissioner (Excise)-cum-Collector of the district may refer the case to the court of law, if the offender does not pay the penalty.



22. The International Coin Fair began in Thiruvananthapuram

A three-day International Coin Fair was organized at Kanakakunnu Palace in Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala) by the District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC).

More than 2,500 coins from around 500 regions were on display. The exhibition also featured collections of Justin Gilbert Lopez, who holds a Guinness world record for the largest coin collection. The coins on display included those from the time of Alexander the Great, to various Mughal emperors, besides Persian, Roman and Islamic coins.



23. Edappadi Palanisamy became the new Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

The Tamil Nadu Governor C Vidyasagar Rao appointed Edappadi K Palaniswami as the new Chief Minister of the state. He took over as the 13th Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

Palanisamy has won the election to the state assembly four times, in 1989, 1991, 2011 and 2016 from the Edapadi constituency. Earlier he has served as Minister for Highways & Minor Ports in the Jayalalithaa and O. Panneerselvam-led ministries of government of the state.



24. City based group in Kerala launched a helpline number for waste management

A city-based group called Thanal in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, has launched a helpline number - 9400147150 to provide technical support to treat organic waste and manage non-biodegradable solid waste.

People can get information and guidance for composting kitchen waste, terrace farming, organic farming, and pest/fungi control by organic means. Thanal is a public interest research, education, advocacy and action group. Its main mission is "gather for all beings".



25. J&K Government launched a e-Prison project

The Jammu and Kashmir Government launched the e-Prison project to enumerate jail inmates in the State. The project is being implemented by J&K e-Governance Agency. The e-Prison Project will digitize 25 district jails, two central jails and one sub-Jail across the State.

The digitalisation of the Prison department is being done to avoid manual recording of jail inmates that would save time. Data of 500 inmates has already been digitized which is available on National Prison Information Portal of Government of India.



26. WB Chief Minister announced Kalimpong as a separate district

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced a new district of Kalimpong carved out of Darjeeling. Kalimpong has become West Bengal's 21st district.

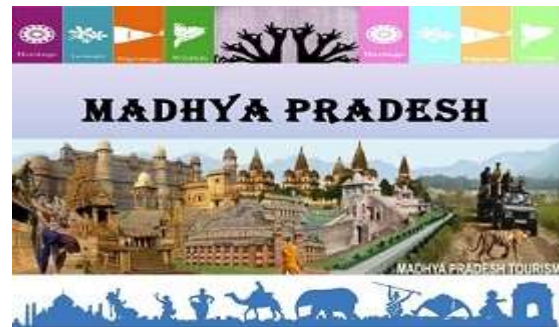
A Rs. 220 crore road link project will connect Kalimpong with Sikkim via the old Silk Route. To address Kalimpong's water scarcity problem, the government also announced a Rs. 50 crore water supply project by the public health engineering department.



27. MP Government to set up Tourism Board

The Madhya Pradesh Government has decided to constitute MP Tourism Board for expansion of facilities at tourist spots and draw investment in the sector.

The Board would be a non-profit company, to be registered under the Companies Act. The board would work to frame, execute and monitor new policies for inviting investors, increase land bank by selecting appropriate places for increasing tourism projects with the help of private investment.



28. Airbus inked an MoU for setting up centre of excellence in Hyderabad

Airbus signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for establishing a Centre of Excellence for aerospace skill development in Hyderabad, together with the Telangana government, National Skill Development Corporation India and AEROCAMPUS France. The Centre will come up at Begumpet Airport.

The Centre will offer short-term refresher modules as well as long-term certificate and diploma courses on aircraft manufacturing, logistics, Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO), ground handling and special aviation processes.



29. Kerala cabinet gave In-Principle approval for Greenfield Airport at Sabarimala

The Kerala cabinet gave in-principle approval for setting up a green-field airport at Sabarimala. The Kerala State Industrial Development Corp. (KSIDC) will conduct a study on the proposed airport.

Sabarimala is known for a hill-top Ayyappa temple which attracts a 50 million plus pilgrims annually between November and January. The two closest airports, at Kochi and Trivandrum, lie 80 kms and 100 kms away respectively.



30. AirAsia signs MoU with Odisha Government for two-ways Direct Flights

Malaysia-based low-cost carrier AirAsia inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Odisha government for running direct international flights from Bhubaneswar to Kuala Lumpur. The airline will begin its flight service from the Biju Patnaik International Airport.



To incentivise global flight operations, the Orissa government has announced the complete waiver of VAT (value added tax) on aviation turbine fuel (ATF). The subsidy would be provided monthly.

31. HAL inked an MoU with CPWD to build a Helicopter facility at Tumakuru, Karnataka

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at Aero India 2017 with Central Public Works Department (CPWD) for execution of infrastructure development works at HAL's new Greenfield helicopter facility at Tumakuru, Karnataka.



The project spread over 615 acres of land allotted by the Karnataka government will house infrastructure for production and testing facilities, self-sufficient manufacturing capabilities of a wide range of helicopters of 3-ton to 12-ton class.

32. Madhya Pradesh: 'Mil Banche' program held in all Government Schools

In Madhya Pradesh, 'Mil Banche' program was held in all the Primary and Middle Government Schools. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, his minister colleagues, public representatives and other dignitaries took classes in these schools to motivate children.



More than one lakh 50 thousand persons have got registered for the 'Mil Banche'. The programme was held at a total of 1705 primary and middle government schools in Indore district.

33. Momentum Jharkhand: 209 MoUs signed between different companies

Around 209 MoUs were signed between different companies at the closing day of the Two-day Global Investors Summit - branded as "Momentum Jharkhand " at the Khelgaon venue in Ranchi bringing in investment worth Rs 3,39,087 crores rupees in the state. It would also help for creation of direct job for 2,09,176 people.



The maximum number of MoU, out of total 209, were signed in mining sector -which is 121. Next was in the IT and e-governance, with 30 MoU while Urban development and housing was at third with 17 MoU.

34. First Foreign Airline Service started from Srinagar Airport

AirAsia became the first foreign airline ever to start its operations from Srinagar international airport in Jammu and Kashmir. The airline started its operations in Kashmir with the launch of its morning and evening flights daily between Delhi and Srinagar. It is expected to give a boost to the tourism industry in the state.



AirAsia India is a joint venture between the Tata's and Malaysia's AirAsia Berhad. The Tata Sons holds 49% while 49% is with AirAsia Investment Ltd.

35. Center announced a grant of Rs. 54 crores to Tripura under the PMKVY

The Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Rajiv Pratap Rudy announced a grant of 54 crore rupees to Tripura under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna, PMKVY while addressing a DigiDhan Mela in Agartala.



The funds would be utilized for various activities of skill developments in Tripura. Multi skilled training centres would be established in each block. The Tripura Government held first position in e-governance program amongst North Eastern states.

36. Gujarat Assembly passed the Aadhaar Bill, 2017

The Gujarat Assembly passed "The Gujarat Aadhaar Bill, 2017" which will empower the state government to use Aadhaar number as the sole identifier for the delivery of various subsidies and benefits in an effective and targeted manner.

It will help create a credible system to authenticate the identity of actual beneficiaries. Two other bills, the Gujarat Panchayats (Amendment) Bill and the Gujarat



Town Planning and Urban Development (Amendment) Bill were also passed.

37. Arunachal CM Pema Khandu inaugurated the Composite Regional Centre for Persons with Disabilities

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu inaugurated the Composite Regional Centre for Persons with Disabilities with an aim to create resources and infrastructure required for developing services for persons with disabilities in the state.

The centre is established under the National Institute for Locomotor Disabilities (NILD), Kolkata of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India. The Union Government has announced Rs 20 crore for establishment of the centre.



38. 2017 to be observed as the Year of Apple in J&K

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti announced to observe 2017 as 'Year of Apple' with an aim to promote the famed Kashmiri apples in domestic and foreign markets.

Ms Mufti launched the High-Density Apple Plantation Scheme in Srinagar and will provide 50% subsidy. These plants have a yield of 50-70 metric tonnes per hectare against 10-12 tonnes in case of conventional plants. Jammu and Kashmir is the largest apple producing State in India at 11.2 metric tonnes, which accounts for 71% of national production.



39. Telangana Government inked an MoU with NABARD for a Rs. 874 crore loan

The Telangana Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) for a loan of Rs. 874 crore to the Horticulture Development Corporation to cover 3.15 lakh acres under Micro Irrigation scheme for 2016-17 and 2017-18.



The target for the year 2016-17 under the NABARD project is to cover 2.23 lakh acres allotted to all districts in the state and the balance of 89,000 acres would be covered during the next financial year.

40. Microsoft to deploy Azure Stack in Andhra Pradesh

Government of Andhra Pradesh, has entered an MoU with Microsoft to utilise Microsoft Azure Stack for AP Government state data centre. Once deployed, it will be the first of its kind in the world.



As a part of the MoU, Microsoft Azure Stack will be used to migrate live applications currently hosted in Hyderabad State Data Centre (SDC) to Vizag data centre. Microsoft Azure Stack encompasses three key components of the data centre – application, server, and the storage – into one physical box and deliver to the client.

41. National Biodiversity Congress 2017 held in Kerala

The 3rd National Biodiversity Congress (NBC) was held in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India from 22nd to 26th February 2017. It is one of the important biodiversity mega events of India conducted as a biennial event. The congress included an array of programmes including Conference, Exhibition, Capacity building workshops and Children's Biodiversity Congress.



The focal theme of NBC 2017 was "Mainstreaming Biodiversity for Sustainable Development". It was hosted by the Kerala State Biodiversity Board.

42. Shurhozelie Liezitsu sworn-in as Nagaland Chief Minister

Shurhozelie Liezitsu has been sworn-in as the 17th Chief Minister of Nagaland. The 81-year old Naga People's Front Party President succeeded TR Zeliang. He was administered the oath of office and secrecy by the Governor P.B. Acharya in Kohima.



Shurhozelie, has held the office of the Education Minister in state government. He has also authored four novels and several collections of poetry. He is also the first to have been conferred a DLit (honorary) by the Nagaland University in 2003.

43. Punjab prohibits sale of processed, flavored tobacco & nicotine products for 1 year

The Punjab Government has banned the manufacture, storage, sale or distribution of gutkha, pan masala, processed/flavoured/scented chewing tobacco and any other food products containing tobacco or nicotine as ingredients for a period of one year.



This ban will continue whether the product is packaged or unpackaged or sold as one or separate products throughout the state. The decision was taken in view of the orders of the Supreme Court.

44. Sikkim became the 22nd State to join the UDAY Scheme

The Government of India and the State of Sikkim signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under the Scheme Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY), for operational improvement of the State's Power Distribution Department. With this, the total number of States covered under UDAY has reached twenty-two.



Sikkim would derive an Overall Net Benefit of approximately Rs. 207 crores through UDAY by way of cheaper funds, reduction in AT&C and transmission losses, interventions in energy efficiency, etc. during the period of turnaround. Andhra Pradesh was the first state to join UDAY Scheme.

45. Visa inked an MoU with AP to make Vizag the first 'less cash' city of India

Global payments network Visa inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Andhra Pradesh government to help transform Vishakhapatnam into India's first 'less cash' city to help the city emerge as India's 'Fintech Valley'.

Visa will focus on driving payments digitisation, building talent pool and supporting Fintech start-ups. The AP government also signed a MoU with Thomson Reuters for cooperation in Fintech initiatives in the state.



46. Kerala to launch sex offenders' registry

Kerala will set up a public registry of sex offenders, a first in the country. The registry will contain all identification details of sex offenders and would be kept in public domain.

The state government is also planning to set up of women police stations at taluk levels and enhance women representation in police to 15 percent. It was announced by Governor P. Sathasivam while speaking on the inaugural day of the budget session.



47. Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd commissions a 15 MW solar plant in Telangana

Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd. (TPREL) commissioned the 15 MW solar plant at Belampally in Telangana. With this development, Tata Power's total installed operating capacity crossed 10, 500 MW mark.

The solar plant has been built over 80 acres of land, and includes an 18-km transmission line. Sale of power from solar plant has been tied up under a 25-year Power Purchase Agreement with the Northern Power Distribution Company of Telangana Ltd. at a tariff of Rs. 5.72 per unit.



48. Annual 2-day long Liker & Leh Dosmochey festival began in Ladakh

The annual centuries old two-day long Liker and Leh Dosmochey festival began in Ladakh Region of Jammu and Kashmir.

Dosmochey is the major festival in the Ladakh region during the winter season. Mask dances with different monastic religious musical instruments are the main features of the Dosmochey celebration. Leh Dosmochey, which used to be known as the king of Ladakh's annual festival, is now organized by the villagers of Leh town.



49. Rajasthan announced as the 2nd largest crude oil producer

The Governor of Rajasthan, Kalyan Singh announced Rajasthan as the second largest crude oil producer of India, owing to its achievement of production of nearly 90 lakh tones oil annually. Rajasthan state government has been working for the last few years for increasing happiness index in the state.



The Governor highlighted the efforts of Rajasthan government in implementing Bhamashah scheme, Mukhyamantri Jal Swavalamban Abhiyan, decline in child mortality rate, strengthening tourism infrastructure, intra-state air connectivity, etc.

50. MP Chief Minister inaugurated India's first post office passport SevaKendra

India's First Post Office Passport Seva Kendra was inaugurated in Vidisha district headquarters of Madhya Pradesh by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. The Vidisha's Post Office Passport Seva Kendra will work as Laghu Passport Seva Kandra.



With this, residents of Vidisha and adjoining districts Raisen, Guna, Ashoknagar, Sagar and Damoh will not need to go Bhopal to get a passport. Laghu passport kendras will also be opened in Jabalpur, Gwalior and Satna of the state.

51. Rajasthan launched a medical project called RAHAT

Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje inaugurated a medical project Rajasthan Heart Attack Treatment programme (RAHAT), launched by Eternal Heart Care Centre Hospital in Jaipur.

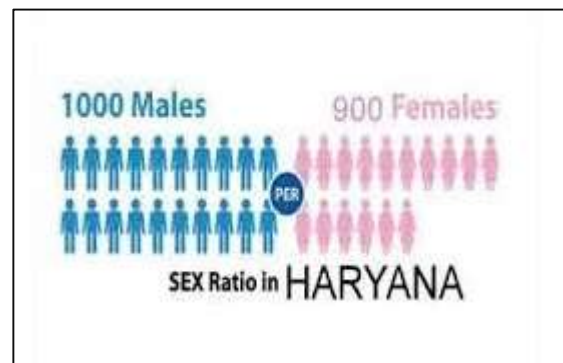
RAHAT program aims to provide people in remote and rural areas with timely treatment during heart attacks. Under the program, the patients facing heart attack would be provided with emergency ambulance service and telemedicine service. The program captures and transmits patient's EKG along with clinical history from remote geographical locations to heart command centre hub.



52. Haryana Government sets up a sex ratio monitoring dashboard in Panipat

The Haryana government has set up an online system called sex ratio monitoring dashboard as part of the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' Scheme to monitor the sex ratio in the Panipat district.

The system will have the data of child sex ratio collected from all villages every month in the district by the state Health and Women and Child Welfare Departments. The sex ratio monitoring dashboard as a pilot project has been developed in association with National Informatics Centre.



REPORTS

1. IATA Survey says India has the highest Domestic Air Passenger Growth

As per the Global Airlines' Grouping International Air Transport Association, India's domestic passenger traffic grew by 23.3% in 2016 to 998.88 lakh beating China's 16.7% Russia at 13.4%, Japan at 4.7% and USA at 3.4%. Demand for air travel is still expanding in India, which should be supported by the government planning and infrastructure to earn growth.



As per the statistics, India's domestic revenue passenger kilometres and available seat kilometres were the highest beating the major aviation markets such as Australia, Brazil, Russia etc.

2. India Ranked 143rd in the 2017 Economic Freedom Index

India ranked 143rd in an annual index of economic freedom as progress on market-oriented reforms has been "uneven". The report was published by a top American think-tank, the Heritage Foundation.



India ranked below Pakistan and Bhutan. India's overall score of 52.6 points is 3.6 points less than that of last year, when India was ranked 123rd. Hong Kong, Singapore and New Zealand topped the index. China with a score of 57.4 points was placed at 111th position. The United States of America was ranked 17.

3. JLL Named in FORTUNE's 2017 World's Most Admired Companies List

Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) has again been named to FORTUNE magazine's World's Most Admired Companies list. The list is a major authority on corporate reputations compiled each year by FORTUNE and Korn Ferry Hay Group through a survey of top executives, directors and financial analysts.



JLL is a leading professional services firm that specializes in real estate and investment management. JLL helps real estate owners, occupiers and investors achieve their business ambitions. It has over 230 offices worldwide in 80 countries.

4. India as the World's Largest Arms Importer in the Last Five Years

As per the latest report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India was the world's largest importer of major arms in the last five years and its overseas procurement was far greater than that of China and Pakistan.



India accounted for 13 percent of the total global arms import between 2012-16. Saudi Arabia was the second largest arms importer in 2012-16. Russia accounted for a 23 percent share of global exports during the period. The US accounted for 1/3rd share of global arms exports.

5. Survey revealed 3.16% substandard drugs

A survey conducted by the Health Ministry has revealed that 3.16% of the drugs have been found to be substandard and 0.025% of the drugs as spurious. The Ministry had entrusted the work to the National Institute of Biologicals, Noida.



As part of the survey, around 48 thousand drug samples relating to 23 dosage were drawn from 654 districts of 36 States from the supply chains including retail outlets and government hospitals.

6. Mumbai wealthiest Indian city with a total wealth of \$820 billion

As per a report published by New World Wealth, Mumbai is the wealthiest city in India with total wealth of USD 820 billion followed by Delhi and Bengaluru at the second and third place respectively.

Mumbai is home to 45,000 millionaires and 28 billionaires. Delhi has a total wealth of USD 450 billion and Bengaluru has USD 320 billion. As per the report, the total wealth held in India amounts to USD 5.6 trillion (as of June 2016). The report defines 'wealth' as the net assets of a person.



7. Brand Finance ranks TCS as one of the Top 3 global brands in IT Services

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has broken into the list of the Top 3 most valuable brands in the IT Services industry, in an assessment done by Brand Finance, the world's leading brand valuation firm.

IBM and Accenture ranked in the top two respectively. Cognizant was the fourth-most valued brand among IT services players. TCS has also been recognized for running one of the most innovative marketing programs in Europe and featured as a top 100 brand in the United States.



RESIGNATIONS & RETIREMENTS

1. Adam Voges of Australia announced retirement from International Cricket

Australian cricketer Adam Voges, 37 years, has announced his retirement from international cricket. He holds the second highest Test average of all time behind Australian great Sir Donald Bradman among players to have played a minimum of 20 test matches.

Voges retired with an international batting average of 61.87 from 31 innings in 20 test matches. He became the oldest debut centurion when he scored an unbeaten 130



against West Indies in Dominica after making his debut at the age of 35 years.

2. Pakistani Batsman Nasir Jamshed Suspended from all forms of Cricket

Pakistan batsman Nasir Jamshed has been suspended from all forms of cricket for violating the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) anti-corruption code. Two players, Sharjeel Khan and Khalid Latif, were already suspended for similar reasons.

Jamshed has played in two Tests, 48 one-day internationals and 18 Twenty20 matches for Pakistan. He also came under probe two years back by the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) anti-corruption officials.



3. BCCI General Manager RP Shah resigned

The BCCI General Manager RP Shah resigned from his post citing his age as a "reason". He is more than 61 years old. He was one of the three General Managers of BCCI. BCCI CEO Rahul Johri accepted his resignation.

He was the General Manager for the commercial wing of BCCI. The BCCI now has two General Managers standing; Ratnakar Shetty, General Manager-Administration, and MV Sridhar, General Manager-Cricket Operations.



4. Nagaland Chief Minister T R Zeliang stepped down

Nagaland Chief Minister T R Zeliang decided to step down as Chief Minister. He met Governor P Acharya and put in his papers.

CM Zeliang has been under fire for his handling of the protests quota for women in urban local bodies and the violence that followed. The 60-member Nagaland Assembly has no Opposition.

All of them are members of the ruling Democratic Alliance of Nagaland (DAN) — 49 NPF, 4 BJP and 7 Independents.



5. Shahid Afridi announced retirement from International Cricket

Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi has announced his retirement from international cricket. The 36-year-old star had already quit Test in 2010 and ODI cricket after 2015 World Cup but still captained the Pakistan Twenty 20 team at the 2016 World Championships in India.

Afridi played 398 one-day internationals with 8,064 runs and 395 wickets. He played 98 T20I matches with 1,405 runs and 97 wickets. In 27 Tests, he scored 1,176 runs and 48 wickets.



1. NASA's Juno spacecraft completed fourth Jupiter flyby

NASA's Juno spacecraft made the fourth flyby over Jupiter. Juno was about 2,670 miles (4,300 kilometres) above the planet's cloud tops and traveling at a speed of about 129,000 mph (57.8 kilometres per second) relative to the planet.

All of Juno's eight science instruments and the spacecraft's JunoCam were operating during the flyby to collect data. Juno launched on Aug. 5, 2011, from Cape Canaveral, Florida, and arrived at Jupiter on July 4, 2016.



2. Scientists develop terahertz transmitter that can send data 10 times faster than 5G

Panasonic Corporation, Hiroshima University and Japan's National Institute of Information and Communications Technology are developing a terahertz transmitter.

The technology can transmit digital data at a rate exceeding 100 gigabits per second over a single channel using the 300-gigahertz band which is at least 10 times faster than fifth-generation mobile networks. It paves way for faster downloads and improve in-flight network connection speeds. Its possible applications include fast download from contents servers to mobile devices.



3. Scientist unveil the World's smallest pacemaker in US

Scientists in the United States have successfully implanted the world's smallest pacemaker for the first time in a patient. The pacemaker is as big as a large vitamin capsule and provides the most advanced pacing technology. It is approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The Micra Transcatheter Pacing System (TPS) is for patients with bradycardia. It is a condition characterised by a slow heart rate, usually fewer than 60 beats per minute.



4. ISRO sets a world record by launching 104 satellites in a single mission

ISRO created history with the successful launch of 104 satellites in a single mission on a single rocket. This is the highest number of satellites ever launched in a single mission.

The PSLV-C37 launched the 714 kg Cartosat-2 series satellite for earth observation and 103 co-passenger satellites from the First Launch Pad (FLP) of Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota. The co-passenger satellites comprised of 101 nano satellites, one each from Kazakhstan, Israel, The Netherlands, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and 96 from United States of America (USA), as well as two Nano satellites from India.



5. First Indian Genomics Beacon Launched in the UK

Global Gene Corp and Global Alliance for Genomics and Health (GA4GH) launched the first-ever beacon for Indian genomics data, ggcINDIA.

A beacon is an online web service that allows researchers to determine whether an institution has genomic data in its data set.

It is expected to help scientists develop more effective drug delivery systems. The aim of the Indian beacon is to address the gap in shared Indian genomics data.



6. ISRO successfully tested engine for GSLV Mark III rocket

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully ground tested its indigenously developed Cryogenic Upper Stage engine for GSLV Mark III at its Liquid Propulsion Complex at Mahendragiri in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.

The C25 stage is the most powerful upper stage developed by ISRO and uses Liquid Oxygen and Liquid Hydrogen propellant combination. The development of C25 cryogenic stage will provide ISRO capability to launch four-tonne class satellites in Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit. The engine will be put into use in April.



7. SpaceX launched 1st Private Rocket from the Historic NASA Pad

SpaceX has launched the first private rocket from the historic NASA Pad. The California-based company's Falcon 9 rocket launched a robotic Dragon cargo capsule towards the International Space Station from the Launch Complex 39A at the NASA's Kennedy Space Centre.



Once the Dragon would arrive at the International Space Station, European astronaut Thomas Pesquet will use a 58-foot robotic arm to snare the spacecraft and reel it into a docking port.

8. Seven new earth sized exoplanets revolving around single star discovered

NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope revealed the first known system of seven Earth-size planets around a single star. Three of these planets are firmly located in the habitable zone.



The discovery sets a record for the greatest number of habitable-zone planets found around a single star outside our solar system. Since they are located outside of our solar system, these planets are scientifically known as exoplanets. This exoplanet system is called TRAPPIST-1. The system of planets is in constellation Aquarius.

9. Volcanic activity of 2 billion years discovered on Mars

A discovery was made following an analysis of a meteorite from the planet, which was found in Africa in 2012. Scientist found evidence of two billion years of volcanic activity on Mars. Scientist confirmed presence of oldest volcanoes in the solar system found on Mars.



Discovery provided new evidence on the planet's evolution and paved way for more insight into its history of volcanic activity. Discovery confirmed some of the longest-lived volcanoes in the solar system.

10. World's first robot table tennis tutor sets Guinness record

The world's first robot table tennis tutor in Japan has set a new Guinness World Record for its uncanny ability of being able to play the game better than most humans. FORPHEUS (Future Omron Robotics Technology for Exploring Possibility of Harmonised Automation with Sinic Theoretic's) has officially been given the Guinness title for its unique technological intelligence and educational capabilities.



As per the project's lead developer Taku Oya, from Omron Corporation, the goal of FORPHEUS is to harmonize humans and robots, by way of teaching the game of table tennis to human players.

SPORTS

1. Government Constituted Task Force for preparing Action Plan for Next three Olympic Games

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the constitution of the Task Force committee for preparing action plan for next three Olympic Games 2020, 2024 and 2028. The members of the Committee are – Shri Pulella Gopichand Olympian and Coach, Shri Abhinav Bindra Olympic Gold Medallist, Shri Rajesh Kalra Chief Editor, The Times Group Online, Shri Rajesh Kalra Chief Editor, Times Group Online, Shri Om Pathak School Sports Promotion foundation.



At the meeting, Shri Vijay Goel said, the Committee may invite other specific sports experts, if required. He said, the tenure of the committee will be for three months or till the time its submits its report, whichever is earlier.

2. The 15-year-old Lakshya Sen became World's No.1 Junior Badminton player

Lakshya, just 15 years old created history by becoming World No 1 junior badminton player in the world in the latest rankings of the Badminton World Federation. 15-year-old shuttler Lakshya Sen is the first shuttler from Uttarakhand to attain the number one ranking at the international level. Lakshya Sen backed Chia Hao Lee of the Chinese Taipei, to attain the top spot by scoring 16,903 points in eight tournaments.



He won the Senior India International Series Badminton Tournament and became the first ever from Uttarakhand to win the title at senior level.

3. Pankaj Advani bagged the National Snooker Championship 2017

Indian National Snooker Championship was bagged by cueist Pankaj Advani beating Pandurangaiah of Railways. It was Pankaj's 29th national title overall. With this win, he became the only Indian men's cueist to be the holder of all national billiards and snooker titles at the same time in Billiards, 6-red Snooker and 15-red Snooker.



At present, Pankaj Advani is topmost ranked in National Snooker Championship rankings, followed by Pandurangaiah at 2nd spot and Malkeet Singh at the 3rd spot.

4. Sourabh Verma clinches the National Badminton Championship

Sourabh Verma clinched the Men's Singles title defeating Lakshya Sen in the 81st Senior National Badminton Championships tournament played in Patna. Rituparna Das claimed the Women's Singles title defeating Reshma Karthik in the tournament. Second seed Rituparna defeated 9th seed Reshma.



In Women's doubles event, the pair of Aparna Balan and Prajakta Sawant clinched the title defeating the pair of Shikha Gautam and Sanyogita Ghorpade. In the mixed doubles, the duo of Satwik Sai Raj and Maneesha K defeated Venkat Gaurav Prasad and Juhi Dewangan.

5. Bengaluru to host FIBA Women's Asia Cup basketball tournament

The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) has allotted the Basketball Federation of India (BFI) to host FIBA Women's Asia Cup basketball tournament in July 2017. It will be held in Bengaluru. Fourteen teams have already confirmed their participation.



India is also set to host the FIBA U-16 Women's Asia Cup in Telangana from October 22-28. The under-16 event was held in Pune back in 2009. The President of BFI is K Govindraj.

6. Virat Kohli to feature on the Wisden 2017 cover

Virat Kohli will feature on the latest cover of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack 2017. A photograph of Kohli playing a reverse sweep in a Test match will be on the cover. The 154th edition of the Wisden Almanack will be published on April 6.

The only other Indian to feature on the cover of 'The Bible of Cricket' was Sachin Tendulkar in 2014 following his retirement from the game.

As a sign of the changing times, the image used was Kohli playing a reverse-sweep in a Test match.



7. India won the T20 Blind World Cup 2017

India beat Pakistan by 9-wickets to win T20 Blind World Cup at Bengaluru. India achieved the victory target of 198-runs in the 18th over in the final of the tournament. Pakistan scored 197 for 8 in their 20 overs.

India had beaten Sri Lanka by 10 wickets in the semi-final, while Pakistan defeated England by 147 runs.

This emphatic victory of India in the finals over Pakistan is significant as the visiting side enjoyed unbeatable record in the championship till their defeat in finals by India.



8. Russia is banned from the 2017 London World Athletics Championships

Russia has been barred from World Athletics Championships to be held in London in the month of August by IAAF Council. Russia has been banned from international competition since November 2015 due to doping charges. This ban was earlier extended in March, followed by again in June 2016, preventing Russia's athletes from competing at the Rio Olympics.

Russia has come up with solutions to reinstatement such as repeated testing of Russian athletes before final testing. 35 Russian athletes have applied to compete as neutral athletes in international competition.



9. The official mascot of FIFA U-17 World Cup 'Kheleo' unveiled

The Official Mascot of the FIFA U-17 World Cup to be held in India was revealed today at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. The young and charismatic face of the FIFA U-17 World Cup India 2017, a clouded leopard called "Kheleo", was introduced.



The clouded leopard is a vulnerable wild cat whose habitat extends from the Himalayan foothills to mainland Southeast Asia. The tournament will be played from 6 to 28 October 2017.

10. Cheteshwar Pujara broke a 52-year-old batting record

Cheteshwar Pujara broke a 52-year-old Indian batting record during first day's play of the one-off Test against Bangladesh. He broke the long-standing record of most runs by a batsman in an Indian first-class season.



Pujara, who has now scored 1,605 runs in 21 innings (13 matches) in the 2016-17 season broke the record of Chandu Borde, who had scored 1,604 runs in 28 innings (21 matches) in the 1964-65 season.

11. Ravichandran Ashwin became the fastest bowler to claim 250 wickets

Ravichandran Ashwin became the fastest bowler to claim 250 Test wickets. Ashwin achieved the feat in his 45th test match. He surpassed Australian fast-bowler Dennis Lillee's record, who had achieved the milestone in 48 matches.



Ashwin dismissed Bangladesh skipper Mushfiqur Rahim to reach the milestone. He is the highest wicket-taker in the world for the second consecutive year. He was also the second fastest bowler to take 200 Test wickets in his 37th test match.

12. Jehan Daruvala wins the New Zealand GP, finishes fifth in the Toyota series

Jehan Daruvala won the final race of the 2017 Toyota Racing Series' New Zealand Grand Prix at the Chris Amon Circuit in Manfeild, New Zealand. Prior to this, Jehan had nine podiums in the Toyota Racing Series this year. He has ended the 2017 Toyota Racing Series in fifth position overall.

Thomas Randle of New Zealand, with 855 points, was crowned champion. Brazilian Pedro Piquet (850 pts) stood second ahead of Dutch driver Richard Verschoor (843).



13. Kush Bhagat awarded the CM Title by the World Chess Federation

Kush Bhagat from Mumbai has been awarded the title of Candidate Master (CM) by the World Chess Federation body. He is a second-grade student from the Hill Spring International School.

Kush was honoured for his three-gold medal wins at the first ever Western Youth Chess Championship 2016 at UAE. He has also won the U-7 Maharashtra State Championship 2016 title and the World Schools Under 7 Blitz champion in Sochi (Russia).



14. Usain Bolt awarded the Laureus 'Sportsman of the Year' award

Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt was honoured as the sportsman of the year at the Laureus Sports Awards while gymnast Simone Biles clinched the top honour in the women's category. Bolt joined Roger Federer, Serena Williams and Kelly Slater as four-time Laureus award winner.

Michael Phelps bagged the 'Comeback of the Year' award. Nico Roseberg claimed the 'Breakthrough of the Year' award. Italy's Beatrice Vioclinched the disability award. The Olympic refugee team won the Laureus Sport for Good award.



Olympic refugee team won the Laureus

15. FIBA Appoints Norman Isaac as its First Indian Technical Delegate

The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) has promoted Norman Isaac as Technical Delegate (TD). He, thus, became the first Indian to be appointed a TD.

Isaac was appointed after he successfully cleared a battery of tests at Doha, Qatar. He has been assigned to prepare for the preliminary rounds of matches in the qualifiers to kick off in November this year towards the first ever FIBA World Cup in China in 2019. In 2006, FIBA had appointed him as the FIBA Commissioner at Muscat, Oman.



16. PV Sindhu jumped to a career-best number 5 in the BWF rankings

India's star shuttler PV Sindhu has risen to a career best BWF ranking of number five. She overtook Japan's Akane Yamaguchi, as per the latest rankings released. This is the first time that Sindhu has broken into the top five.

Saina Nehwal, who is ranked ninth, is the other Indian in the top 10, while Chinese Taipei's Tai Tzu Ying continues to lead the rankings. Sindhu became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic silver medal this year.



17. India won a silver medal at the Asian Women's Rugby Sevens Trophy

The Indian Women's team won a silver at the Asian Rugby Sevens Trophy tournament at Vientiane, Laos. A total of seven countries from across Asia including South Korea, Philippines, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, India and hosts Laos participated in the tournament. All the seven teams played on a Round Robin basis.

Hupi Majhi from Odisha, India was the joint top try scorer of the tournament and Meerarani Hembram was the third highest in conversions.



18. Sandeep Kumar breaks his own national record in the 50-km race walk

Sandeep Kumar of Haryana won the men's 50 kilometre event of the National Race Walking Championships in New Delhi. He smashed his own national record, clocking 3 hours, 55 minutes and 59.05 seconds. Services athlete Jitender Singh won the silver, while his compatriot Chandan Singh bagged the bronze.



With his brilliant performance, Sandeep also qualified for London World Championships in August. His earlier national record was 3 hour, 56 minutes and 22 seconds.

19. India to host Uzbekistan in the next Davis Cup tie in Bangalore

India will host Uzbekistan in Bangalore for the Asia Oceania Zone group I Davis Cup tie in April 2017. The game will be played on the hard courts of Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA).



The last time Bengaluru hosted a Davis Cup tie was a World Group play-off against Serbia in 2014.

The winner of the tie will advance to the World Group Play-offs, to be held in September.

20. Akhil, Jitender Kumar and 13 other boxers sign a deal to turn professional boxers

Indian boxers Akhil Kumar and Jitender Kumar including 13 more boxers have signed a multi-year professional boxing agreement with IOS Boxing promotions.



Akhil and Jitender turned professional earlier and are now set to make their pro debuts on April 1, 2017 in Mumbai. The others to have joined includes Olympian Diwakar Prasad, Commonwealth Games medallist Amandeep Singh, WBC Asia Welter Weight Champion Neeraj Goyat and MMA champion fighter (SFL) Pawan Mann.

21. Afghan players Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan create IPL history

Afghan cricketers Mohammad Nabi and Rashid Khan became the first from the war-torn nation to be picked in the Indian Premier League (IPL) auction for Rs. 30 lakh and Rs. 4 crore respectively. Both the players were bought by Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Nabi has represented his country in 72 ODIs and 52 T20 Internationals. He has also played in Pakistan Super League (PSL) and Sylhet Royals in Bangladesh. Khan has 62 international wickets, 31 each in ODIs and T20 Internationals.



22. Tsonga defeated Goffin to win the Rotterdam tennis title

Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga has claimed the Rotterdam tennis title. In the ABN AMRO World Tennis Tournament final in Rotterdam, sixth seeded Tsonga defeated third seeded David Goffin of Belgium 4-6, 6-4, 6-1.

It is the first title for 31-year old Tsonga since 2015. It was his 13th career single title. The 26-year-old Goffin, without a title since 2014, became the first Belgian man to break into the top 10.



23. India defeat South Africa in the final of the ICC Women's World Cup Qualifier 2017

India beat South Africa by one wicket in the final of ICC Women World Cup Qualifier 2017 at Colombo. India achieved the target of 245 runs on the last ball of the 50th over.

Deepti Sharma was awarded the Player of the Match award. This was India's highest successful run-chase in a WODI.

Along with the two finalists, both Sri Lanka and Pakistan have qualified for the 2017 Women's Cricket World Cup.



24. Dustin Johnson ranked world No. 1 in the World Golf Ranking

Dustin Johnson of the United States was ranked world number one after he won the Genesis Open. Johnson became the 20th player to reach No. 1.

Johnson replaced Jason Day's 47-week stay at the top. The other four players in the top five include:

- Jason Day: 2nd Rank
- Rory McIlroy: 3rd Rank
- Henrik Stenson: 4th Rank
- Hideki Matsuyama: 5th Rank



25. Haryana CM gave away Bhim Awards to 42 sportspersons

The Haryana government conferred the Bhim award to 42 outstanding sportspersons of the state which included Sakshi Malik, Babita Phogat, Vinesh Phogat for wrestling, Sardara Singh and Rani Rampal for hockey.

Each recipient of Bhim award would get Rs five lakh in cash, a memento, citation, blazer, tie and a scarf. This award was given for the players' performances in the year 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-2016.



26. The ISSF World Cup tournament began in New Delhi

The first leg of the 2017 International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Series kicked-off at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi. Around 452 athletes from 50 nations will compete in the 15 Olympic events in the disciplines of Rifle, Pistol and Shotgun shooting, from the 23rd of February through the 4th of March.

The competition was officially opened by the ISSF President Olegario Vazquez Raña. India will also host the 2017 edition of the World Cup Finals in October 2017.



27. ICC batswomen's rankings placed Indian batswomen in the top slot

ICC batswomen's rankings were released by International Cricket Council, which placed Indian batswomen Mithali Raj and Harmanpreet Kaur at 2nd and 10th spot respectively. Rankings were topped by Australia's Meg Lanning with 804 points. In the women's bowlers list, list was topped by Marizanne Kapp of South Africa, followed by Stefanie Taylor of West Indies and Jhulan Goswami of India.



Indian women players placed among the top 20 'ICC All-rounder' list were: Jhulan Goswami, Shikha Pandey and Deepti Sharma.

28. Adidas announced as the performance partner of FIFA U-17 World Cup

German Sportswear giant Adidas announced its partnership with FIFA U-17 World Cup Local Organising Committee as exclusive performance partner for the Mission XI Million programme. Mission XI Million is an initiative to millions of youth across India to motivate youth in football and train them.



Adidas, as exclusive performance partner will conduct master-classes for the players at the Mission XI Million festivals to improve their technical skills in the sport.

29. 2019 Combined World Cup to be held in India

The 2019 Combined World Cup for shooting is to be organized in India, which is to be 2020 Tokyo Olympics. India has been awarded the hosting rights of the 2019 Combined World Cup by the ISSF Executive Board.



In the upcoming tournament, a total of 50 countries will be represented by 452 athletes and among them will be reigning and former Olympic champions, world champions and continental champions lining up against India's top guns.

30. Hockey Federation's Player of the Year awards announced

Belgium's John-John Dohmen and Netherlands' Naomi Van were named as male and female Hockey Federation's Player of the Year award. Great Britain's Olympic gold medallist Maddie Hinch won the Hockey Stars 2016 female Goalkeeper of the Year award.



Ireland's David Harte was crowned the best in the world for the second year in a row as he received the male Goalkeeper of the Year award. Belgium's Arthur Van Doren was named male Rising Star of the Year. Maria Granatto from Argentina picked up the female Rising Star of the Year.

31. Ravichandran Ashwin broke Kapil Dev's record of most wickets in a home season

Ravichandran Ashwin broke Kapil Dev's 37-year-old Indian record of most Test wickets in a domestic season during the second day of the first Test against Australia in Pune.



Ashwin has taken 64 wickets in 10 test matches in the current home season. Kapil Dev had taken 63 wickets in 13 Tests. During the home season, this year, Ashwin took 27 wickets in 3 Test matches against New Zealand, 28 in 5 against England and 6 in 1 against Bangladesh.

32. Pooja Ghatkar won bronze in the ISSF World Cup

Pooja Ghatkar won the women's 10m air rifle bronze medal in the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup. Ghatkar clinched bronze with a score of 228.8 in the final round. It was India's first medal at the ongoing ISSF World Cup. This was Ghatkar's first World Cup medal. Earlier, she has won gold in the Asian Air Gun Championship in 2014.



China's Mengyao Shi won the gold medal with a score of 252.1. Dong Lijie of China bagged the silver with a score of 248.9.

33. HIL 2017: Kalinga Lancers beat Dabang Mumbai to lift title

Kalinga Lancers have lifted the fifth edition Hockey India League Title. In the final in Chandigarh, they defeated Dabang Mumbai by four goals to one. The Bhubaneswar-based Lancers also bagged the 'fair play trophy'.



Earlier, Uttar Pradesh Wizards claimed the bronze medal. In the encounter between the two losing semi-finalists, they beat Delhi Waveriders 5-4. Mumbai Dabang's Harmanpreet Singh bagged the award for emerging player of the league, which carries a cash award of Rs 20 lakh.

34. Jo-Wilfried Tsonga won the 2017 Open 13

Jo-Wilfried Tsonga of France won the final of the 2017 Open 13 after defeating fellow Frenchman Lucas Pouille 6-4, 6-4.



It was the 14th career title at the indoor event for the 11th-ranked Tsonga. It was the 3rd Open 13 trophy to his collection after victories in 2009 and 2013.

Tsonga had recently won the Rotterdam title. Tsonga is expected to return to the top 10 at No. 7 when the new ATP rankings are revealed.

35. Rs. 350 crores Central fund to provide high-quality facilities to sportspersons

The Centre would spend 350 crore rupees for providing high-quality facilities to sports persons and 200 trainers will be recruited soon in the Sports Authority of India. Recovery physiotherapy centre would be established at the Centre for helping sports persons recover from injuries. The government would also provide all possible help for laying Astroturf for hockey in the premises of the Training Centre.



The Central Government has also approved CSR fund with budget of about 6,500 crore rupees to involve companies in the promotion of sports and sports persons.