

International

US Air force tested Minuteman missile from California

The US InterContinental Ballistic Missile Minuteman 3 was launched from Vandenberg Air force Base in California.

The missile blasted off at 34 PM towards west base of Los Angeles.

It carried a re-entry vehicle that can target 4200 Miles away to the Marshall Islands of Pacific Ocean.

World Cancer Day observed on 4th Feb

World Cancer Day (WCD) 2016 observed today across the world. The day was observed with year's theme – We can. I can.

- More than 8.2 million people died in 2012 due to cancer, making it a leading cause of death throughout the world.

India, Afghanistan ink pact for visa-free travel by envoys

India and Afghanistan have signed an agreement for visa-free travel for diplomatic passport holders of the two countries.

- This agreement was signed after Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Afghanistan Government Abdullah Abdullah met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.
- Both leaders also shared views on further deepening the India-Afghanistan relationship both in the bilateral and regional context and also to reenergised the strategic partnership between the two countries.

WHO declares Zika virus outbreak as International Emergency

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared an international public health emergency over the explosive spread of the mosquito-borne Zika virus.

- This is the fourth time the WHO has declared an international public health emergency.
- Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus transmitted by Aedes aegypti mosquitoes.

Sri Lanka lifts unofficial ban on Tamil national anthem on Independence Day

Lifting an unofficial ban, Sri Lanka's national anthem was sung in Tamil at a ceremony in Colombo to mark the country's independence day, in an effort to achieve reconciliation with the ethnic minority community.

- School children rendered the Sinhala and Tamil versions of the national anthem at a colour ful celebration at the Galle Face Green park to mark the 68th anniversary of Sri Lanka's independence from Britain.
- The move, despite opposition from some quarters, is being seen as an effort by the government to reach out to the Tamil minority after the nearly 26-year war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) that ended in 2009. About 100,000 people were killed during the civil war.

UN releases stamps on LGBT issue for first time

The United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA) had released a set of six dedicatory stamps on Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) issue. This is the first time the global body's post office had released the stamps with an LGBT theme.

- Objective :To promote awareness and global education about the equality of LGBT.

3rd US-ASEAN summit session begins in California

The summit between leaders from the Associations of Southeast Asian Nations and The United States has begun in California.

- The agenda of 2 day meeting includes Maritime security in the South China Sea.
- The focus will also be around innovation and entrepreneurship.

1st Silk Road Train Arrives In Tehran From China

The first cargo train to connect Iran and China has arrived in Tehran.

- The train had started its journey from China's eastern Zhejiang province and it took 14 days to reach final destination.
- The trains will run between both countries once in every month and the frequency will be increased if necessary.
- These trains will be run by private companies using existing routes.
- It marks the revival the ancient Silk Road and gives impetus to China's

ambitious One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative part of revived Silk Road diplomacy.

Japan launches ASTRO-H satellite to study black holes

Japan has successfully launched ASTRO-H space observation satellite to probe mysterious black holes.

- The satellite was launched by H2A rocket after it had successfully lifted off at the Tanegashima Space Centre.
- ASTRO-H satellite has been developed by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) in cooperation with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and others.
- It will orbit earth at an altitude of about 580 kilometres and observe X-rays emanating mainly from black holes and galaxy clusters.

India And Myanmar Sign Standard Operating Procedure On Joint Patrol

The 4th edition of India-Myanmar Coordinated Patrol (IMCOR) was conducted jointly by ships of both navies along the International Maritime Boundary Line in the Andaman Sea since 2013. Indian Navy ships Saryu and Bitra along with Union of Myanmar ships Aung Zeya and FAC 563 participated in the patrol.

- During the Ceremony of 4th IMCOR, the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for IMCOR was also signed between Indian Navy and Myanmar Navy.

- Cmde Atul Anand VSM from Indian Navy and Cmde Aung Zaw Hlaing from Myanmar Navy signed the document in the presence of H.E Gautam Mukhopadhaya, the Ambassador of India to Myanmar.

India Australia Energy Security Dialogue Held At Canberra, Australia

To implement the Prime Minister's vision of affordable energy for all, Shri Piyush Goyal Union Minister of State (IC) for Coal, Power and New and Renewable had an Energy Security Dialogue with Australian Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia, Mr Josh Frydenberg at Canberra.

- In this, both the countries discussed the issues, business cooperation in coal bed methane and LNG production and trade.
- The several roundtables have organized during the Energy Security Dialogue with a view to getting to know the state of art technologies in the relevant areas. The policy collaboration on issues pertaining to LNG trade have also been discussed.

EU and NATO cyber defence cooperation

The European Union and NATO have signed a Technical Arrangement between the NATO Computer Incident Response Capability (NCIRC) and the Computer Emergency Response Team – European Union (CERT-EU).

- The agreement facilitates technical information sharing between NCIRC and CERT-EU to improve cyber

incident prevention, detection and response in both organisations, in line with their decision making autonomy and procedures.

13 February: World Radio Day

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is celebrating

World Radio Day on 13 February.

- This year, the UNESCO theme for World Radio Day is "Radio in Times of Emergency and Disaster".
- It was proclaimed on 3 November 2011 by UNESCO's 36th General Conference after originally proposed by the Kingdom of Spain.

Discovery of The Centuary : Gravitational Waves

Scientists have observed a stunning discovery in their quest to fully understand gravity.

- They have observed the warping of space time generated by the collision of two black holes more than a billion light-years from Earth.
- The scientist team says the first detection of these gravitational waves will usher in a new era for astronomy.
- The gravitational waves were predicted by Albert Einstein in his general theory of relativity 100 years ago in 1915. The gravitational waves were detected on September 14, 2015 by LIGO detectors, located in

Livingston, Louisiana, and Hanford, Washington, USA.

Colorado state honors life of Gandhi

US state of Colorado had honored the life of Mahatma Gandhi.

- Colorado State honored Gandhi for dedicating his whole life for the sake of country.
- Some of the freedom moments led by Gandhi are Civil disobedience moment, Dandi Salt March, Quit India moment, Champaran and Kheda Satyagraha, Khilafat movement, Non-cooperation movement.

India exported six metro train coaches to Australia

According to the Union Ministry of Shipping, India has exported six metro coaches to Australia from Mumbai port.

- The shipment was made as part of a deal with Australian government to export 450 made-in-India coaches in two and a half year period.

Vietnam gets world's longest cable car system

Vietnam today inaugurated the world's longest three-rope cable car system in Lao Cai province.

- With a total length of 6,292.5 metres, the system was recognized by the Guinness World Records as the world's longest three-rope cable car route, and also the world's biggest height gap between its departure and arrival stations of 1,410 metres.

- The system, connecting Muong Hoa Valley and Fansipan mountain in Lao Cai, some 250 km northwest of capital Hanoi, has a capacity of 2,000 passengers per hour with each cabin accommodating 35 people.

National

42nd Khajuraho Dance Festival Begins In MP

The 42nd Khajuraho Dance Festival began in the temple town of Khajuraho, Chhattarpur district in Madhya Pradesh. The world famous dance festival began with Odissi group dance of Ranjna Gauher and others.

The festival will showcase classical dances, including Kathak, Bharatnatyam, Odissi and Kuchipudi, depicting the ancient tales like 'Mahishasur Mardini' and 'Krishna Rasa,' an official said. Madhumita Roy and Madhuri Majumdar gave presentation of Kathak-Kuchipudi and Purvadhanashree presented Bharatnatyam.

The festival has gained international recognition with a world heritage site being its venue. Khajuraho temples witness the maximum footfalls of foreign tourists in Madhya Pradesh.

India and Armenia Sign MoU on Agriculture Cooperation

India and Armenia have signed an agreement for cooperation in the agriculture sector.

An memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singhand Armenian Agriculture Minister Sergo Karapetyan.

The MoU provides for setting up of a joint working group (JWG) and preparation of work plans in priority areas of farm sector.

Bihar-The Sixth State To Enter Into Uday Scheme

UDAY(Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana) is a tripartite memorandum between Bihar government, state Discoms and the Power ministry for the revival of debt ridden state distribution utilities to save 9000 crores.

Bihar is the sixth state to join this UDAY scheme.

It is the second Non-UPA state after Uttar Pradesh to join this scheme.

It will help the debt ridden distribution system of the state to save 9000 crores in the next 3 years.

"Swachh Paryatan" Mobile App Launched By The Centre

The Ministry of Tourism in co-ordination with Ministry of Culture has launched the Swachh Paryatan mobile app in order to facilitate general public to communicate their complaints about any unclean area/garbage piles in and around tourist destinations.

According to the Ministry of Tourism the app will be soon available on Android Phones of Apple and Microsoft as well.

The objective is to increase citizens' participation in the protection and upkeep of heritage monuments in India.

It shall be monitored by the Project Monitoring Unit of Swachh Bharat Mission in Ministry of Tourism.

Centre Approves Heritage Development Projects In Andhra & Telangana

The Union Ministry of Urban Development approved projects worth more than Rs.12 crore for improving tourist infrastructure in heritage locations in Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh and Warangal in Telangana.

- An official press release said an Inter-Ministerial National Empowered Committee for the Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) approved the projects, which include a heritage park in Amaravati and developmental works at the 1000 Pillar Temple and Kazipet Durgah and rejuvenation of pondat Padmakshi Temple in Warangal city.

MoU on Health and School Renovation between India and Sri Lanka

India and Sri Lanka signed two memorandum of understanding (MoUs) in the health sector and renovation of schools.

- Under the MoU on health, India will construct a surgical unit at the Batticaloa Teaching Hospital in the island nation's Eastern province and supply medical equipment. In the second MoU, India will aid in the renovation of 27 schools in the Northern Province.

Odisha govt lifts ban on visit of foreign tourists to tribal areas

The Odisha government has relaxed the restrictions on visit of foreign tourists to tribal areas in the state allowing them to again trek and learn the lifestyle of primitive tribes living in the hilly terrain and lush green forest areas.

- Odisha is home to 62 tribal communities, including 13 categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG).
- The ban was lifted after three years.

India to host 3rd Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation

- India will host Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation from 12 April 2016 to save tigers. It will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- They are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- India is home to nearly 70% of the world's tiger population and according to the 2014 tiger census, there are 2,226 tigers in the country.
- State-wise, Karnataka has the highest number of tigers (406) followed by Uttarakhand (340),
- Madhya Pradesh (308), Tamil Nadu (229), Maharashtra (190), Assam (167), Kerala (136) and Uttar Pradesh (117).

Exercise IBSAMAR begins in Goa

The fifth edition of exercise IBSAMAR between Brazil, India and South Africa begins in Goa.

- This is the first time that Exercise IBSAMAR is being conducted in Indian waters. All the previous

editions were being held off South Africa.

- The primary aim of the exercise is to increase interoperability amongst the three navies as well as develop common understanding and procedures for maritime security operations.

India will host the first ever Global Maritime Summit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India will host the first ever Global Maritime Summit in April this year and called for maritime cooperation stating that the seas must be used to build peace, friendship, trust and curb conflict.

- The Prime Minister said that international maritime stability cannot be preserved by a single nation with the complexity of modern day challenges.
- He also said India is and has always been a maritime nation.

DIAL launches mobile application 'DIAL Cargo'

Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) has launched a mobile application 'DIAL Cargo' for cargo operations to reduce paperwork and track movement of shipments on real time basis.

- DIAL runs the international airport in the national capital.
- The mobile application would aid in electronic clearance of cargo through the customs Department.
- Delhi airport handled 7 lakh tonnes of cargo in 2014-15.

Homeo Vision 2016 - Inaugurated At Nagpur

The twenty fourth National Homoeo pathic Congress Homeo-Vision 2016 was inaugurated by the Minister of State for AYUSH (Independent Charge) and Health and Family Welfare, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik in Nagpur.

- Indian Institute of Homeopathic Physician (IIHP), Maharashtra State Branch, Nagpur has organized this two-day National conference (13th and 14th February, 2016) to discuss the recent advances in technology, innovative research and quality education in Homeopathy.
- The objective of Ministry of AYUSH to develop the four core areas such as education, research, drug development and health care delivery.

Jharkhand First Mega Food Park

Union Food Processing and Industry Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal and Chief Minister Raghubar Das inaugurated the first mega food park at Village Getalsud, Ranchi in Jharkhand.

- The food park costing Rs.114.73 crore is spread over 51.50 acres.
- It will have the facilities of multi-chamber cold storage, dry warehouse, vegetable dehydration line, modern quality control and testing laboratory and other processing facilities for fruit and vegetables.
- The Mega Food Park is expected to provide direct and indirect employment to about 6000 people and benefit about 25,000-30,000 farmers in its catchment area.

India test-fired its indigenously developed Prithvi-II missile.

- This missile is capable of carrying 500 kg to 1000 kg of warheads.
- Prithvi II missile tested as part of a user trial by the army from a test range at Chandipur. It was conducted by the Strategic Force Command (SFC) and was monitored by the scientists from Defense Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The missile test was carried out from a mobile launcher from launch complex-3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR).

India's 1st Lightest Gun "Nidar" Launched

India's first indigenously developed lightest revolver (gun) Nidar weighing merely 250 grams was successfully launched to boost the "Make In India" initiative.

- It has been designed and manufactured by the state-run Rifle Factory Ishapore located in West Bengal.
- The Nidar is lightest revolver ever made in India with cheapest price tag of Rs 35,000 only.

Madhya Pradesh's Katni To Have India's Longest Railway Bridge

Katni in Madhya Pradesh to have India's longest railway bridge of 14 km in length which is three and half folds longer than the Vembanad rail Bridge that connects Edappally and Vallarpadam of 4.6 Km in length.

Prithvi II Missile Successfully Test Fired

Its total length would be 21 Km included the down line of the bridge would be 7 Km .

CII Signs MoU With Dubai Exports To Boost Trade

With the aim to strengthen India-UAE economic ties, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has signed an MoU with Dubai Exports to boost trade and explore business opportunities.

CII, a non-government organisation, has signed an memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Dubai Exports, which works with other Dubai Government Departments to simplify the export process.

It develops long-term growth strategies to expand businesses and maximize the opportunities given by Dubai's unique position as a natural trade gateway between the East and West.

Haryana to become the first state in India to have Aquifer mapping

With the climate changes in the recent years, the groundwater sources have gone down to a critical level.

To find out the exact location of the Aquifer rocks a new mapping technique is to be introduced in Haryana by May making it as the first state to have such mapping.

Aquifer rock is an underground layer of water bearing rock which has groundwater stored in it.

Arun Jaitley releases 'India-2016' and 'Bharat-2016' Year Books

Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting Arun Jaitley released 'Bharat 2016' and 'India 2016' year books.

- These books give comprehensive information about the country and various States and Union Territories including functioning of the Government and the economy. It also provides detailed information on various schemes and projects of Government and its various departments.
- The E versions will be cheaper and easier to store and will be priced at 75% of the print book cost.

Tata unveils first ever India – made robot 'Brabo'

TAL Manufacturing Solutions, a Tata Group company, has designed the first ever India-made robot called 'Tata Brabo'.

- The robot will be developed for micro, small and medium enterprises which require cost-effective robotic solutions for their manufacturing purposes.
- Brabo will be priced at Rs 3 Lakh for 2kg payload and Rs 6 Lakh for 10kg payload. The main advantage Tata will have is the localized manufacturing of the robot which will help it to price the robots lower than foreign players.

Now, tricolour to fly high at all central universities

The national flag will now fly prominently at all central universities, the Union human resource development ministry said. The tricolour will fly on a 207-foot high mast on the campuses to signify "strong and united" India.

- A unanimous resolution to this effect was adopted by vice chancellors of the central universities in a meeting led by Union HRD minister Smritilrani in Surajkund.

Tamil Nadu announced Free Bus Pass

Scheme for senior citizens

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa announced a free bus pass scheme for senior citizens in Chennai.

- The scheme would come into effect from 24 February 2016, the day that coincides with the birthday of Jayalalitha.
- People above 60 years of age can avail the free travel facility in non-AC buses being run by the state run Metropolitan Transport Corporation in Chennai. The beneficiaries will be given ten tokens every month for the free travel.
- Based on the response to the scheme from the senior citizens, it would be extended to the whole state.

Make In India Week Concludes In Mumbai

The week long Make in India concluded in Mumbai.

- It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 13, 2016. The event has secured investment commitments worth Rs 15.2 lakh crore, with host state Maharashtra alone accounting for Rs 8 lakh crore. Besides, it received investment enquiries worth Rs 1.5 lakh crore.

- 102 countries were represented in the mega expo and more than 8 lakh people visited the expo and other events, out of which 49,74 were registered delegates.

Union Cabinet approves LIGO-India research project on gravitational waves

The Union Cabinet has given an in-principle approval to the LIGO-India mega science proposal for research on gravitational waves.

- The proposal is piloted by the Department of Atomic Energy and the Department of Science and Technology.
- It will establish a state of the art gravitational wave observatory in India in collaboration with the LIGO Laboratory in the US run by Caltech and MIT.

Kalikhho Pul sworn in as new chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh

Kalikhho Pul has been sworn in as the ninth chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh. He was administered the oath by governor KP Rajkhowa at a ceremony at the Raj Bhawan in Itanagar.

- Pul has the support of only 18 of the 45 Congress MLAs in the assembly. But 13 opposition MLAs — two Independents and 11 from the BJP — have given in writing to the Governor that they back him

PM Modi launches Rurban Mission from Chhattisgarh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched the ambitious Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban (rural-urban) Mission from Chhattisgarh's Dongargarh block. It aims to

draw an investment of over Rs 5,000 crore in three years to "transform rural areas to economically, socially and physically sustainable spaces."

- Rurban would create village clusters to minimise rural migration to cities through skill development programmes.
- The intention of launching national schemes from a small centre was to move the government out of Delhi and ensure it reached villagers, he said.
- Under the scheme, 300 clusters would be developed with an investment of Rs 5,100 crore in three years. Four clusters would be developed in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon, Dhamtari, Kawardha and Bastar districts. This year, 100 clusters would be taken up under the project.

PM Modi released guidelines for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana at Kisan Mela in MP
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 18 February 2016 launched the guidelines for operation alization of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). The guidelines were issued at a farmers' convention in Sherpur village of Madhya Pradesh.

- The PMFBY is a path breaking scheme for crop insurance and was approved by the Union Cabinet on 13 January 2016.
- The Yojna will come into force from the 2016 Kharif season (from June to October in India).
- It aims at boosting the agricultural sector of India and envisages a uniform premium of only 2 percent to be paid by farmers for Kharif

crops, and 1.5 percent for Rabi crops. The premium for annual commercial and horticultural crops will be 5 percent.

- On the occasion, the Prime Minister Modi also presented a trophy of Krishi Karman Award to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.
- On the other hand, Modi was conferred with Kisan Mitra and Kisan Hiteshi Samman on behalf of Madhya Pradesh government for his historic decisions in the interest of farmers' community.

Vibrant North East event concludes in Guwahati

The three-day long Vibrant North East event concluded in Guwahati, Assam.

- Rural banking, Make in North East and Horticulture and food processing etc. were the key areas of Vibrant North East. The event severed as a common powerful platform for the developmental projects and initiatives in the Northeast India.
- Around 500 young farmers had undergone an orientation course at the expo. Seminars, business meet and exhibitions were also organized during the event. Directorate of Advertising & Visual Publicity (DAVP), ISRO, National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) also had participated in exhibition.

Maharashtra government will introduce anti spitting bill

Concerned over the sharp rise in infectious disease like tuberculosis, Maharashtra

government will introduce a bill banning spitting in public places in the upcoming state Legislature Budget session scheduled next month.

- According to the proposed legislation, offenders spitting for the first time will have to pay a fine of Rs 1,000 and also do a day of community service at public places or at government offices.
- If caught second time, the offender will be slapped a fine of Rs 3,000 and do three days of community service. For repeated offence, the offenders will have to pay Rs 5,000 fine and do five days of community service.

Project Sunrise launched for prevention of AIDS in the eight North-Eastern states

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare J.P. Naddahas launched Project Sunrise for prevention of AIDS in the eight North-Eastern states. The project is funded by the Centre for Disease Control of the United States.

- The Project will be implemented in the North East, in addition to the existing projects of the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO).
- The AIDS prevention special programme for the North-East will be implemented in 20 districts of the eight states including four districts of Manipur- Imphal East, Bishnupur, Ukhrul and Churachandpur.

Indo-Nepal Battalion Level Combined Exercise Surya Kiran kicked off

The 9th Indo-Nepal Combined Battalion level Military Training Exercise Surya Kiran has been started off today at Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand. The 14 days military training exercise is under the aegis of Panchshul Brigade of Central Command.

- Nepalese Army would be training together and sharing their experiences of counter-terrorism operations and “jungle warfare” in hilly terrain.
- The Surya Kiran series of exercises is a bi-annual event which is conducted alternatively in Nepal and India.
- The training also focus on humanitarian aid and disaster relief including medical and aviation support.

India's first Aviation Park to come up in Gujarat

The state government had decided to set up the country's first Aviation Park in Gujarat. The park will have an airstrip, training school, helipad and space for setting up small manufacturing units.

- The park aims to raise the awareness among students about the potential of the aviation sector.
- The park set up in Gujarat will also attract national and international industrial houses to set up their manufacturing facilities in this park

Highlights of Economic Survey 2015-16

The Economic Survey is presented by the ministry of Finance in the parliament every year, before the Union Budget.

- The Economic Survey reviews the developments of the Indian

economy over the previous 12 months, summarizes the performance on major development programs, and highlights the policy initiatives of the government and the prospects of the economy in the short to medium term.

- It is the Finance Ministry's view on the annual economic development of the country that gives a broad idea on the macro-economic data, which will impact the budget decisions.
- This year the report is authored by chief economic adviser Arvind Subramanian.
- It contains data of various macroeconomic indicators which reflect the state of the economy such as Gross Domestic Product, Gross National Product, Inflation rate, foreign exchange trends, balance of payments etc.

E-Tourist Visa Scheme extended to 37 more countries

The Union Government has extended e-Tourist Visa Scheme to 37 more countries. With this, the total count of countries under the scheme will become 150.

- The new countries included in e-Tourist Visa scheme are Austria, Albania, Botswana, Brunei, Bulgaria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Cape Verde, Czech Republic, Croatia, Eritrea, Denmark, Gabon, Greece, Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Iceland, Lesotho, Liberia, San Marino, Moldova, Namibia, Romania, South Africa, Swaziland, Switzerland, Senegal, Serbia,

Slovakia, Trinidad & Tobago, Tajikistan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Lok Sabha passes Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2016

Lok Sabha has passed Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2016 to grant voting rights to people who became citizens of India following the exchange of enclaves between India and Bangladesh.

- The bill seeks to amend the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950 and the Delimitation Act, 2002. These Acts regulate allocation of seats to the Lok Sabha and state legislatures and delimitation (fixing boundaries) of parliamentary and state assembly constituencies.

India makes their mark at the RichList with 111 billionaires

The Hurun Global RichList 2016 shows an increase of 99 billionaires to the list of global of the wealthy taking the number up to 2188.

- Asia is the world's new billionaire's hub; China overtook USA to top the pack, while India added 14 to its list of richie rich for 2016.
- From 97 in 2015, India now has 111 billionaires with RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani at 21 in the global list of the wealthy.

US wins WTO dispute against India's solar rules

The United States won a ruling against India at the World Trade Organization on Wednesday after challenging the rules on the origin of solar cells and solar modules used in India's national solar power program.

- In a statement, the US Trade Representative's office called the ruling a significant victory that would hasten the spread of solar energy across the world and support clean-energy jobs in the United States.
- The United States complained to the WTO in 2013 about the Indian solar program, which sought to ease chronic energy shortages in Asia's third-largest economy without creating pollution.

Dr. Mahesh Sharma Launches 24x7 toll free Tourist Infoline in 12 International Languages

Dr. Mahesh Sharma launched the 24x7 Toll Free Tourist Infoline in 12 International Languages including Hindi and English. He is the Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism & Culture and Minister of State for Civil Aviation.

- This project will be implemented by the Ministry of Tourism.
- The languages that will handle the contact centres include ten International languages that are Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

Coast Guard to Induct 38 Aircraft And Helicopter By 2020

The Indian Coast Guard has proposed to induct 38 more aircraft and helicopters into its fleet by 2020. The CG at present has a fleet strength of 62 airplanes and helicopters.

- To boost its surveillance and search, and rescue capabilities. In this

regard, the maritime security will sign a contract with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to procure 16 Advanced Light Helicopters (ALHs) in the next three - four months.

- It is also exploring options to buy 14 twin-engine heavy helicopters and 6 more Maritime Multi-mission Surveillance Aircraft.

Union Government Releases Hydrocarbon Vision 2030

Union Ministry of state for Petroleum and Natural gas (MoPNG) has released the Hydrocarbon Vision 2030 for north-east India.

- The Hydrocarbon Vision 2030 outlines steps to leverage the hydrocarbon sector for social and economic development of the north-east region.
- The objectives of the plan are to leverage the region's hydrocarbon potential, enhance access to clean fuels, improve availability of petroleum products, facilitate economic development and to link common people to the economic activities in this sector.

UAE Crown Prince Is On 3 Day India Visit

United Arab Emirates leader and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan is on 3 day India visit along with seven ministers.

- The visit is expected to witness signing of a landmark civil nuclear cooperation pact among agreements across sectors, including a deal on security and information sharing

- The two countries are expected to sign about 16 agreements, including one on civil nuclear agreement.

First National Deworming day observed

First National Deworming day was observed across the country on 10th February.

- The initiative will be carried out at schools and anganwadic centres. And aims at improving the children's overall health and quality of life.
- The government has set a target of deworming approximately 27 crore children across the country. The government started the deworming campaign last year under which over 9 crore children out of total 10 crore 31 lakh children received deworming tablet.

Maharashtra Has Topped In Internet Readiness Index

As per the report compiled and published by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and Indicis Analytics, Maharashtra has topped in terms of the overall Internet readiness index.

- Maharashtra ranks at the top in terms of Internet readiness with a strong position in areas like e-infrastructure, e-Governance, IT services and consumer participation.
- Karnataka, Gujarat, Telengana and Tamil Nadu followed in the tally.

INS Viraat to Be Converted into luxury Hotel

The world's oldest aircraft carrier, INS Viraat, is all set to be converted into a luxury hotel to attract tourists once it is decommissioned from service in June this year.

- The Defence Ministry has given its nod to a proposal from Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) to convert the Centaur-class aircraft carrier into a hotel-cum-museum.
- The state government has drawn up plans to convert Viraat into a 500-room hotel. The warship would be docked at the shores of Visakhapatnam to serve as a tourist attraction. The project to be taken up under Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.

3rd Edition Of Taj Literature Festival In Agra

The 3rd edition of the Taj Literature Festival scheduled to begin in Agra (UP).

- The 3-day long festival beginning on February 26, will not have any particular theme.
- This edition will accommodate 16 different categories ranging from music, theater, politics, women cooking and comedy among others etc.

Railway Ministry launches 3 IT enabled apps

The Union Ministry of Railways has launched 3 IT (Information Technology) enabled apps to bring transparency in Indian Railways on the sidelines of Digital India initiative.

- Three IT enabled apps are Hand Held Terminals for TTEs: It is pilot project of Northern Railway that will help in updating status of passenger list of the whole train. Based on the list food-chart/occupancy chart will be manually prepared.

Delhi to conduct second round of odd-even from April 15

The second phase of the odd-even road rationing scheme to reduce the Capital's notorious air pollution and traffic snarls will begin for a fortnight from April 15, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced.

- Women driving alone or with young children, several categories of VIPs and two-wheelers will be exempted.
- This means there will be no changes in the exemption list that was in place when the formula designed to allow vehicles with registration plates ending with odd or even numbers to run on alternate days was tried out from January 1 to 15. But discussions on who should be spared the curbs are still on.

All About Railway Budget 2016-2017

Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu presented his second rail budget this year.

He kept the fares unchanged. In his budget speech, he said that for this budget he owes its inspiration to vision of PM Modi who said: "My vision is to make railways backbone of India's progress & economic development."

He outlined the 3 pillars of strategy - raise new revenues, raise productivity and efficiency and revamp the processes.

He also said that the Core objective is to become engine of economic growth, create employment and provide customer service.

Here are the highlights of the Rail Budget 2016:

The Capital plan of Rs 1.21 lakh crore. Operating ratio kept at 92% FY17 as against 90% in current year. To generate revenues of order of Rs.1,84,820 cr next year which is

a 10.1% higher than revised target of current year. Railways will get Rs 40,000 crore budgetary support from the government etc.

Actor Sanjay Dutt walks out free of Yerawada jail

Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt walked free out of the Yerawada prison here after completing his prison term, putting behind his turbulent past as a convict in the 1993 Mumbai serial bomb blasts case.

Clad in blue shirt and jeans, a smiling Dutt was escorted out of the imposing jail gates this morning after completing formalities and got into a car that drove him straight to Lohegaon Airport here to take a chartered flight to Mumbai.

India's first railway auto hub will come up near Chennai

The country's first rail auto hub will soon come up in Walajabad, near Chennai, to help automobile manufacturers in the region transport vehicles to other parts of the country. This has been one of the long-standing demands of the auto industry.

- The announcement made by the Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu on the auto hub along with the North-South dedicated freight corridor was a highlight for the Southern Railway in this Railway Budget.

Virat Kohli, Sania Mirza, Saina Nehwal in Forbes' Asia list

Tennis star Sania Mirza, Indian batting mainstay Virat Kohli and top-seeded badminton player Saina Nehwal lead the pack of over 50 Indians in Forbes' inaugural

list of top “promising young leaders and game changers” under the age of 30 in Asia.

- The Forbes '30 under 30 Asia' list includes 300 “young and driven entrepreneurs and game-changers” from countries including India, Indonesia, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Pakistan, Vietnam and Australia who are contributing to their industries in a significant way.

Cabinet approves setting up of Atal Innovation Mission

The Centre today approved a proposal to establish Atal Innovation Mission and Self Employment and Talent Utilisation in NITI Aayog, which will encourage innovations and entrepreneurship.

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its approval for establishment of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Self Employment and Talent Utilisation (SETU) in NITI Aayog with appropriate manpower,” an official release said.
- Establishment of AIM and SETU Directorate would result in implementation of Mission activities in a focussed manner, it added.
- It said that AIM would be a focal point for innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

The 6th National Science Film Festival Begins In Mumbai

The 6th National Science Film Festival & Competition (NSFF) has begun at Nehru Science Center in Mumbai.

- The festival has been jointly organised by Nehru Science Centre and Vigyan Prasar. Vigyan Prasar is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- The event was chaired by veteran director Shyam Benegal and science film maker Dr Mike Panday.
- The winners will be chosen among the 35 short-listed entries by a jury of eight people chaired by Shyam Benegal.

India sets target to eliminate malaria by 2030

India has set a target to eliminate malaria disease by 2030 and will allocate infrastructure and financial resources towards this task.

- Launching the National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) 2016-2030, which outlines India's strategy for elimination of the disease by 2030.
- NFME 2016-2030 also defines key strategic approaches such as programme phasing, considering the varying malaria endemicity in the country. An enabled environment and necessary resources would remain critical to realise the objectives in the pathway to malaria elimination.

Chhattisgarh And Railway Signed Joint Venture For Infrastructure Development

Indian Railway signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Chhattisgarh Government to establish a joint venture (JV) for laying tracks and expedite implementation of railway projects in the state.

- Under this MoU, state government will have 51% share and Indian Railways will have remaining 49% share in the JV company.
- The joint venture will focus on project development and implementation, resource mobilization, land acquisition and monitor the progress of critical rail projects in the state.

Narendra Modi opens 'Make In India' centre in Mumbai

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Make in India Centre at Bandra Kurla Complex, a commercial complex in the suburbs of Mumbai.

- The Make In India week will conclude on 18 February.
- Make in India is the current government's flagship initiative, launched by the prime minister in September 2014, to encourage international companies to manufacture their goods in India.

International Radio Fair 2016 Hosted By Bhubaneswar

International Radio Fair 2016 is to be held at Bhubaneswar.

- The fair will start on the occasion of World Radio Day i.e. 13th of February and close on 14th.
- Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan and eminent news reader Upendra Pahadsingh have given their consent join the Radio Fair this year among others.

BHU turns 100 years & set to honour PM Modi with Doctor of Law

Established in 1916 by freedom fighter Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has completed its 100 years of foundation on 13th February 2016.

- BHU had played an important role in the freedom movement of India.
- It was aimed to act as a bridge between India's past and modernising world system in the areas of social sciences, humanities particularly in evolving non-colonial history as a discipline.

Jayalithaa announces 'Amma Kudineer Thittam'

Jayalithaa the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu had announced 'Amma Kudineer Thittam' a new scheme for supplying drinking water.

- Under the Scheme the govt will supply the water to those who cannot afford to buy purified drinking water from private players.
- Under the first phase of the scheme water supplying points will be established.
- The family of poor people is provided with 20 liters of pure water every day.
- Smart cards will be issued to beneficiaries

India becomes associate member of Embo

India is second country outside the European region to be an Associate Member State of EMBO.

- First one being Singapore which had signed such agreement with European Molecular Biology Conference (EMBC) in 2015.

Vice President Hamid Ansari concluded his two-nation tour to Thailand and Brunei

Vice-President Hamid Ansari on 5 February 2016 concluded his two-nation tour to Thailand and Brunei.

During the 5-day visit that started on 1 February 2016, the Vice President held talks with the head of governments, political leaders and Indian diaspora to enhance bilateral relations.

Visit to Brunei

- He visited the country for three days starting from 1 February 2016 on the invitation of Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah.
- With this tour, Hamid Ansari became the first Vice President to visit Brunei since the establishment of diplomatic relations.
- He met the Sultan of Brunei Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah.
- Both the leaders discussed a number of issues of bilateral, regional and multilateral significance, and also hold discussions on cooperation in ASEAN and East Asia Summit (EAS).
- During his visit, India and Brunei signed 3 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) in the field of health, defence and youth affairs and sports.

Visit to Thailand

- He visited the country on official invitation of the Prime Minister of Thailand. This was also the first Vice Presidential visit from India after a gap of 50 years.

- During the visit, he held talks with Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha.
- He delivered a speech at the prestigious Chulalongkorn University on the topic India, Thailand and ASEAN: Contours of a Rejuvenated Relationship.
- He visited Wat Phra Kew (Emerald Buddha) and Reclining Buddha temple in the capital Bangkok.
- He addressed the Indian community and met Indologists from Thailand.
- During the visit, India confirmed its participation in the Cobra Gold 2016 amphibious military exercise that will be held in Thailand.

Prime Minister dedicated Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited to Nation

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 5 February 2016 dedicated the Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited (BCPL) at Lepetkata, Assam to the nation.

- The 10000-crore plant is the first ever petro-chemical project in the entire North-East and it will make raw material for manufacturing plastic.
- The Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Ltd was conceived as part of the Assam peace accord signed during the tenure of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and its foundation stone was laid in 2007 by the then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.

CSIR launches India's first ayurvedic anti-diabetic drug – BGR-34

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) launched the country's first

anti-diabetic ayurvedic drug for type two Diabetes mellitus.

The drug was launched by Senior Principal Scientist, CSIR-NBRI, Dr A K S Rawat in at a function in Kozhikode, Kerala.

India Develops World's First Zika Vaccine

Bharat Biotech, Hyderabad based vaccines and bio-therapeutic manufacturer, claimed to have achieved a breakthrough in developing a vaccine to fight the dreaded mosquito-borne Zika virus, which causes serious birth defects in children.

- Bharat Biotech is home to some of the most brilliant minds in the world and began work on the Zika virus a year ago, Krishna Ella, CMD Bharat Biotech, said.

Invest Karnataka 2016

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah today urged the global investor community at 'Invest Karnataka 2016' to consider Karnataka as their partner for growth. Citing the Global Startup Eco-system Ranking Report 2015, Siddaramaiah pointed out that Bengaluru is the only Indian city to be ranked amongst the 20 Startup Eco-systems in the World.

India's first Defence Industrial Park gets nod by DIPP

Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) of Union Government have given its final approval to Kerala Government's approval to set up India's first Defence Industrial Park at Ottappalam.

- The proposed defence park will be established as part of Union Government's flagship Make in India

programme and state government's Make in Kerala project.

- It will have modern common infrastructure facilities aimed at attracting component manufacturers in the defence industry.

30th Surajkund International Crafts Mela started at Faridabad

The 30th Surajkund International Crafts Mela, is begins at Faridabad in Haryana.

- The Mela is organized by the Surajkund Mela Authority and Haryana Tourism in collaboration with Union Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, Culture and External Affairs.
- This year Telangana will be the Theme State, which is showcasing its unique culture and rich heritage and the two focus countries are China and Japan.
- At least 23 countries are taking part in this edition of Mela and shall host performances by international folk artistes from Japan, Egypt, Congo, Maldives, Thailand, Vietnam, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan.

Anti-Leprosy Day observed on 30 January 2016

Anti-Leprosy Day was observed on 30 January 2016 nationwide to focus attention on the disease which is also known as the Hansen's disease.

Annually, the day is celebrated in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, who attained martyrdom on 30 January 1948, in order to re-memorize his selfless efforts and care for the people affected by the infectious

disease leprosy.

Trade/Banking

Corporation Bank inks pact with Universal Sampo for accident death coverage

Corporation Bank has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Universal Sampo General Insurance Co Ltd for providing accident death coverage to its savings bank account holders under Corp Signature, Corp Super and Corp Saral category.

- According to this pact the bank provides free personal accident death cover of ₹10 lakh to its Corp Signature and ₹5 lakh to its Corp Super account holders.

TCS Rated World's Most Powerful Brand in IT Services: Report

India's top multinational IT company Tata Consultancy Services has been rated as the world's most powerful brand in Information Technology Services by a leading global brand valuation firm, the company said on Wednesday.

- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) emerged as the IT services industry's most powerful brand with a score of 78.3 points - earning it an AA+ rating.

SBI Launches SBI e Smart SME to offer Ecommerce Loan

State Bank of India (SBI) in partnership with e-commerce platform Snapdeal has launched SBI e-Smart SME to provide a working capital loan for sellers on e-commerce platforms.

- SME Sellers on ecommerce platforms can apply for the loan online and get instant sanctioning of the loan with KYC documents.
- In order to assess the sellers' creditworthiness for loan sanctioning, the bank will use proprietary platform data and surrogates information from public domain.
- It is exclusive and easy finance that will be made available at lowest interest rates. Collateral free loan will be granted upto 10 Lakh rupees under MUDRA (Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency) scheme.
- Women entrepreneurs will be given concession of 0.25% on the loans.

Union Cabinet approved \$150 million Credit to Iran for Chabahar Port Development

Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 24 February 2016 approved the proposal for loan of 150 million US Dollars to Iran for the development of Chabahar Port.

- The credit will be provided from EXIM Bank and was made by Union Ministry of Shipping.
- The Cabinet authorized the Ministers of Finance, External Affairs and Shipping to approve the final contract with Iran and for resolution of any issue arising in implementation of the project.

Yes Bank wins inaugural Green Bond Award in UK

India's leading private lender Yes Bank has been awarded inaugural Green Bond

Pioneer Award at a ceremony held in London, United Kingdom.

- Yes Bank was bestowed with this award in recognition for its pioneering efforts in the Green Bonds market including successful issuance of India's first ever Green Infrastructure Bonds.
- Yes Bank was the first Indian Bank to issue Green Infrastructure Bonds (GIBs) in India. It had issued India's first-ever GIBs worth 1,000 crore rupees in 2015.

India's steel output falls 1.5% in Jan

Steel production in India fell by 1.5 per cent to 7.4 million tonnes (m.t.) in January 2016 compared with the output in the same month last year.

- This is the first fall since September 2015, when the crude steel production in the country had declined by 0.5 per cent to 7.3 m.t. as against the corresponding month of 2014.

Beijing overtakes New York City as 'Billionaire Capital'

Beijing is the new "Billionaire Capital of the World. The Chinese capital has overtaken the Big Apple as home to the most billionaires 100 to 95 according to Hurun, a Shanghai firm that releases yearly rankings and research about the 1 per cent.

- Beijing took the title from New York after minting 32 new billionaires last year, while New York gained four.

FINO, Reliance Finance to provide credit to rural poor in Maharashtra, MP

Payments technology company FINO PayTech (FINO) has tied up with Reliance Commercial Finance to provide credit to rural poor in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

- The tie-up will help FINO improve the product bouquet for its payments bank, for which it has received in-principle approval.

Alphabet becomes The Most Valuable Public Company In The World

Google's parent company Alphabet surpassed Apple to become the most valuable U.S. traded company in the world.

- Alphabet became the most valuable publicly-traded company in the world — coming in at a market cap \$558 billion after jumping about 8% after the company reported its fourth-quarter earnings, and passing Apple, which sits at a market cap of \$535 billion.

SEBI approved Mahindra AMC's mutual fund

Mahindra Asset Management Company has received markets regulator SEBI's approval for setting up of their mutual fund business.

- Mahindra AMC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services (MMFS), got the regulator's nod on February 4.
- However, the company did not disclose by when it will start offering mutual fund products. At present, there are over 40 mutual fund houses operating in the country

Rs 1 lakh crore disbursed under MUDRA Yojana: PM Narendra Modi

Under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had approved Rs 1 lakh crore loans to small entrepreneurs

- MUDRA Yojana was launched in April 2015.
- It aims to make youth to be job creators and not job seekers.
- Fund will be provided to youth to make them self sufficient.
- The loan is distributed among youth for their personal sector which will help them to utilize their skill and create new job opportunities.

Ricoh India wins Rs 344 crore contract to supply computer hardware to Odisha schools

Printing and IT solutions firm Ricoh India has bagged an order worth Rs 344 crore from Kerala State Electronics Development Corporation to supply computer hardware to 2,000 government schools in Odisha.

Ricoh India, a subsidiary of Ricoh Group, Japan, had said it is eyeing 55% growth in revenues this fiscal.

The company said it has also planned investments of about Rs 300 crore over the next one or two years for expanding its data centres.

At present, Ricoh India has two data centres - one each in New Delhi and Kolkata.

PIB Clears India Post's Rs 800 Cr Proposal for Payments Bank

The Public Investment Board has approved the Rs 800-crore proposal from India Post for setting up a payments bank and it will be placed before the Cabinet within a month for final approval.

The department is in the process of finalising the selection of a consultant for setting up India Post's payments bank. It had shortlisted six consultants but only three of them submitted the bids.

The India Post payments bank will primarily target unbanked and under-banked customers in rural, semi-rural and remote areas, with a focus on providing simple deposit products and money remittance services.

Govt. to divest 5% in NTPC

The government announced it will be divesting five per cent of its stake in NTPC through the offer-for-sale route on Tuesday.

The sale is expected to garner Rs.5,029 crore at a floor price of Rs.122 per share.

The stake sale is to be spread over two days, with institutional bidders getting to buy shares on Tuesday and retail investors on Wednesday. The retail investors have 20 per cent of the shares reserved for them.

RBI cancels registration of 4 NBFCs

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had cancelled the certificate of registration of 4 non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).

- The 4 NBFCs whose registration is cancelled are as follow Goyal Commercial Pvt Ltd Kolkata, First Debt Management Co. of India Ltd Nostalgia Finvest Private Limited and Narad Realtors Private Limited belongs to Mumbai.
- The decision for the cancellation of registration certificate comes under Section 45-IA (6) of the RBI Act 1934.

ONGC Approves Rs 5,050 Cr Investment In Tripura

The Public sector oil major ONGC has approved an investment of Rs 5,050 crore in Tripura for drilling of wells and creation of surface facilities to produce 5.1 mmscmd gas from the states fields.

The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has announced to develop northeast region as a dominant hydrocarbon hub as part of its Hydrocarbon Vision 2030.

Due to this geological mapping and exploratory efforts, so far 11 gas fields have been discovered by ONGC in Tripura.

India remains world's largest arms importer

India continues to remain the world's largest arms importer, accounting for 14% of the global arms imports in the 2011-2015 time frame.

It was revealed by report on international arms transfers released by a global think-tank, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

Top arms importers are: India (14%), China (4.7%), Australia (3.6%), Pakistan (3.3%), Vietnam (2.9%) and South Korea (2.6%).

Government imposes minimum import price on 173 steel items

The government imposed minimum import price (MIP) on 173 steel products ranging from \$341 to \$752 per ton.

- This is the government's action to give relief to domestic steel producers against cheap in-bound shipments. The discussion will directly affect the price of raw materials and will suitably give cheap imported materials.

- The prices will remain low only for six months. These rules were not implemented on advance authorization scheme and high-grade pipes used in the petroleum and natural gas industry.

Andhra Pradesh Government Signs Agreement With USTDA

The US Trade and Development Agency has signed MoU with the Department Of Municipal Administration of Andhra Pradesh on funding for drawing up the master plan for Visakhapatnam Smart City and a consortium of three US companies, comprising AECOM, KPMG and IBM.

- The MoU was signed by Principal Secretary (Municipal Administration) Karikal Velavan and Country Manager of USTDA Heather K Lanigan in the presence of Chief Minister and Director of USTDA Leocadila I Zak.

India and Sweden Signed MoU on Technical Cooperation For Railway

The ministry of railways signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the government of Sweden for technical cooperation.

- The main objective of the MoU, signed by Sweden's ministry of enterprise and innovation, is cooperation between the two countries to promote efficiency and sustainability and achieve concrete results with regard to bilateral trade, investment and technology transfer.

Make In India Week : National Capital Goods Policy Unveiled

The Government has unveiled the National Capital Goods Policy to give an impetus to the capital goods sector and a leg up to the Make in India initiative.

- This is for the first time that a national policy has been framed for the sector.
- Anant Geete, Minister, Heavy Industry & Public Enterprise, unveiled the Policy on the occasion of the Make in India Week held in Mumbai.

Apple to Setup Its 1st Technology Center In India

Apple has confirmed its 1st technology centre in India at Hyderabad, at a cost of \$25 million.

- Spread across 2,50,000 square feet, the centre will help Apple develop maps and make them available in its iPhones and Mac systems.
- It is set to open by June, becoming fully operational by the end of the year. The facility is projected to create 4,500 jobs

World's Cheapest Smartphone Is Going To Be Launch By Ringing Bells

Noida based Ringing Bells is all set to launch the world's cheapest 3G smartphone at just Rs 251 in India.

- The smartphone with a 4-inch WVGA resolution display, features a 1.3 Ghz quad-core processor, 1GB RAM, 8GB total storage space and a 3.2 megapixel camera on the back. It will have 0.3 megapixel camera on the front and has a 1450 mAh battery. This is dual-SIM 3G capable phone.

- Bookings for the Freedom 251 will start from Thursday 18 February from 6.00 am in the morning and will close on 21 February at 8.00 pm.
- Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar will launch the smartphone 'Freedom 251' on February 17.

SBI opens 'Japan Desk' in New Delhi

State Bank of India (SBI) launched 'Japan Desk', a first-of-its-kind initiative to facilitate Japanese corporates looking to invest with banking and advisory services.

- This will serve as an one-point comprehensive and reliable information support source for India-bound investments of Japanese companies.

BHEL commissions GVK Goindwal Sahib's 270-MW unit in Punjab

Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd has commissioned a 270-MW coal-based thermal power project of GVK Group in Punjab.

- The unit has been commissioned at the upcoming 540 MW (2x270 MW) Goindwal Sahib coal-fired plant of GVK Power & Infrastructure Ltd located in Tarn Taran district in Punjab.
- BHEL had commissioned four hydel power units of 82.5 MW each at Alaknanda hydropower project in Uttarakhand for GVK.

YES Bank, UltraCash partner to launch payments service

YES Bank has partnered UltraCash Technologies to launch payments processing through sound waves.

- Ultra Cash utilises a patent-pending technology through which payment data is securely transferred from one device to the other using unique ultra-high frequency sound waves.
- Ultra Cash's sound wave technology enables mobile payments to be done without the need for Internet connectivity using any of the options, such as bank accounts and cards.
- Ultra Cash will issue YES Bank-branded digital wallets to consumers to aid quicker, seamless and friction-free payments.

Punjab to sign MoU with British Pig Association

The Punjab government plans to sign a MoU with British Pig Association (BPA) to develop and promote piggery in the State.

- The tie-up of State Animal Husbandry department with BPA would turn around the stagnant economy of the peasantry, which is grappling with low returns from conventional farming.
- The company will export high-quality meat products from the upcoming plant to ensure better prices to pig farmers.

World Bank to help Rajasthan in energy reforms

The World Bank has decided to lend support to the Rajasthan government on energy reforms and a detailed project has been prepared in this regard.

- The decision was taken at a meeting between World Bank's country director in India, OnnoRuhl and Rajasthan Chief Minister

Vasundhara Raje at her official residence.

- Ruhl conveyed that World Bank was working with the Rajasthan government on energy reforms and a detailed report has been prepared focusing on conventional and non-conventional sources of energy.

MP, Rajasthan set up SPV for implementation of Smart City Plans

Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan Government have set up Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV) for the implementation of Smart City Plans.

- SPVs have been set up for five cities – Jabalpur, Indore and Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh and Jaipur and Udaipur in Rajasthan.
- These cities are among the first batch of 20 winners of Smart City Challenge Competition held by the Union Ministry of Urban Development. The Ministry will release 200 crore rupees for each of the 20 selected cities only after SPVs are set up. SPVs shall have 50:50 equity that will be held by the states and respective urban local bodies. Private equity is also allowed but the management control will rest with the Governments only.

Swachh Himachal Padhai bhi, Safaibhi campaign launched

Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) has launched 'Swachh Himachal – Padhaibhi, Safaibhi' campaign in Dharamsala.

- With this unique campaign, HPCA became the first cricket association in the country to work towards

Swatch Bharat Abhiyan initiated by the Union Government.

- The campaign aims at involving youth to promote good health and sanitation in urban and rural areas in the Himalayan state. Its objective is to showcase Himachal's beauty as India's cleanest and greenest state.
- Under it, the sport of cricket will be linked with Swatch Bharat Abhiyan and youth's will be termed as Swatch Captain and teachers as Swatch Coach.

India, Nepal ink nine Agreements

India and Nepal have signed nine agreements for cooperation in various fields. These agreements were signed at a summit meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his visiting Nepali counterpart KP Sharma Oli in New Delhi.

- MoU on Post-earthquake reconstruction assistance: It deals with utilization of US 250 million dollars Grant component India's Assistance package for Post-earthquake reconstruction assistance of Nepal. MoU on strengthening of road infrastructure in Nepal: It will enable speedy implementation of remaining work on 17 Roads in Terai area of Nepal. MoU in the field of performing arts Signed between Nepal Academy of Music and Drama and Sangeet Natak Academy. It aims to enhance relations in the field of performing arts between both countries.
- Inauguration of Muzaffarpur-Dhalkebar transmission line: Initial supply of 80 MW from Nepal to

India. It will be later augmented to 200 MW by October 2016 and 600 MW by December 2017.

Indian Government Sanctions Rs. 580 Crore For Railway Link With Bangladesh

The Indian government has sanctioned Rs.580 crore for the vital rail link.

- As it expected to complete the work on the 15-km-long rail line to connect Agartala with Akhaura in that country by 2017. Of the 15 km railway track, 10 km falls in the Bangladesh side and the rest in India.
- The entire project cost would be borne by the Center and over Rs 1,000 crore was sanctioned for completion of the track in Bangladesh side.
- The 1,700 km distance between Agartala and Kolkata through Chicken Neck near Siliguri would be reduced to 350 km.
- Currently, India and Bangladesh have four rail links with West Bengal.

Facebook Shuts Down Free Basics in India

Facebook has shut down its controversial Free Basics project in India, days after a Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) ruling barred operators from charging different rates for Internet access based on content, dealing a blow to Facebook's Free Basics and other such plans.

- Facebook had met a backlash in India from "net neutrality" advocates, who say that because Free Basics only allows access to

selected websites it violates the principle that the entire Internet should be available to everyone on equal terms.

- The service was available in India via RCom but had been shuttered in December after Trai ordered its closure pending its verdict on differential pricing.

Wipro To Buy US Healthcare Services

Global software major and India's 3rd largest exporter Wipro has made an announced buying "Health Plan Service" business in the US for \$460 million (Rs.3,150 crore).

- Health Plan Services is a leading independent technology and Business Process as a Service (BPaaS) provider in the US health insurance market that offers solutions to health insurance firms.
- By partnering with Health Plan, Wipro will have first-mover advantage in the high growth public and private exchange space for individual, group and ancillary markets.

Amazon To Invest In Westland (A Tata Group Company)

Ecommerce company Amazon has made an investment in Westland, a Trent Ltd subsidiary (Tata Group) in support of its publishing business.

- The investment will help to expand its international reach and scale its physical and digital book businesses.
- Westland had also signed a two-month exclusive deal with Amazon

to sell the book through its online platform.

BoB exhibited Highest Ever Loss by a PSB

Vadodara headquarter Bank of Baroda publicized its net loss of Rs 3,342 crore for the December quarter in comparison with Rs 332 crore profit last year. It is considered as the highest-ever quarterly loss by an Indian bank.

- The reason behind this huge loss is the provisions against bad loans which have jumped to Rs 6,164 crore against Rs 1,262 last year and increase in NPA percentage to 9.68% from 3.85%.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalithaa unveils new projects worth Rs 1,002.02 crore

J Jayalithaa Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu had inaugurated a series of projects worth Rs 1,002.02 crore which are taken up by Highways and Minor Ports Department.

- The project includes construction of new bridges, railway over bridges and buildings.
- Foundation stone for construction of five bridges and five railways over bridges had been laid down.

RBI keeps key rates unchanged

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) maintained a status quo in its sixth bi-monthly monetary review policy for year 2016 announced today.

- Keeping the rates unchanged, the apex bank has kept its stance on the credit policy accommodative.

Current Rates are as follows –

1. Repo Rate – 6.75% (Unchanged)
2. Reverse Repo Rate – 5.75% (Unchanged)
3. CRR (Cash Reserve ratio) – 4% (Unchanged)
4. Bank Rate – 7.75% (Unchanged)
5. MSF (Marginal Standing Facility) – 7.75% (Unchanged)
6. SLR (Statutory Liquidity Ratio) – 21.5% (Unchanged)

SBI Launches FlexiPay Home Loan Scheme For Professionals

State Bank of India introduced a new home loan scheme 'SBI FlexiPay Home Loan' for young working professionals/executives.

- Under the scheme, borrowers will get higher loan amount compared to their loan eligibility under normal home loan schemes and they will also have the option of step-up monthly repayments.
- Further, to lower the impact of such additional loan amount on monthly repayments in the form of equated monthly instalments (EMIs), customers taking home loans under the new scheme will also be offered the option of paying only interest during the moratorium (pre-EMI) period of three to five years.

HDFC Bank to sell loans to non-customers through ATMs

HDFC Bank, is now using its ATM network to grab new customers, including those of other banks who happen to use the bank's ATMs.

- ATMs is a game changer for the bank as ATMs are open round the

clock and available at more than double the locations as branches (4,281).

- The 'click to call' option enables the bank to work around the 'do not disturb' customers and the applicant can choose any number for a call-back.

ZTE Soft inks pact with AP

Chinese technology company ZTE has inked a pact with the Andhra Pradesh government to work on smart city projects in the state. As a company associated with a number of smart city projects, the diversified telecom and technology major ZTE plans to engage itself with the state and work on the upcoming smart city projects in Andhra Pradesh.

Govt bans zero duty import of capital goods for power plants

The Government today banned duty-free import of capital goods for power generation and transmission projects under the EPCG Scheme.

- The decision is aimed at encouraging manufacturing of power equipment and giving a push to domestic capital goods sector, with an aim to boost the overall economy.
- The Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme allows import of capital goods for pre-production, production and post-production at zero Custom duty.

Indo-Pak agreement on rail link extended for three years

India and Pakistan have extended their agreement relating to rail communication

by mutual consent through diplomatic channels for next three years.

- The agreement has been extended from January 19, 2016 to January 18, 2019, a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs said.

Appointments

Samariya given additional charge as CPFC

HL Samariya, a 1985 batch IAS officer from the Telangana cadre, has been given additional charge as Central Provident Fund Commissioner (CPFC), for three months or till the appointment of a regular incumbent or till further orders, a release said.

Ban Ki Moon appoints Major General Menon as UNDOF head

Major General Jai Shanker Menon of the Indian Army, a veteran of peacekeeping operations, has been appointed as the head of a key United Nations force stationed in Golan to maintain the ceasefire between Israeli and Syrian forces.

- U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has named Major General Menon as the Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF).

Indian-origin Sikh appointed Kuala Lumpur Police Commissioner

Amar Singh from Indian-origin Sikh Community has been appointed the Police Commissioner of the Capital city of Malaysia.

A third generation police from his family .He was Deputy Commissioner before being appointed to the post and will replace Tajuudin Mohammed.

Rahul Dravid in ICC's Anti-Corruption Oversight Group

Batting great Rahul Dravid has been named in ICC's newly appointed Anti-Corruption Oversight Group as part of the recommendation from its Integrity Working Party of the parent body.

- Dravid is currently coaching the Indian team in the ongoing U-19 World Cup, which is being held in Bangladesh.

Indian Origin Singaporean Is Diamond Trade Body's New President

Vishal Mehta, A 34-year-old Indian-origin man based in Singapore was today appointed President of the newly- formed International Grown Diamond Association (IGDA).

- Vishal Mehta, CEO of a Singapore-based company which makes lab diamond, was named President of the IGDA, a platform of more than 10 leading grown diamond producers, distributors and retailers.

Archana Ramasundaram became first woman to head a paramilitary force

Senior IPS officer Archana Ramasundaram appointed Director General of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), thus became the first woman to head a paramilitary force.

- The 1980-batch officer is the current head of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

- She has been appointed to the post till the date of her superannuation – September 30, 2017 – an order issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) said.

R.K. Pachauri Appointed As Executive Vice Chairman And Mathur As New DG Of TERI

Pachauri headed TERI, which works in the field of sustainable development, energy and climate change, for the past 35 years.

- Not-with-standing allegations of sexual harassment by a former colleague, TERI Chief RK Pachauri was appointed Executive Vice Chairman of the green body after new Director General Ajay Mathur took over the charge from him.
- In February last year, a junior colleague had accused him of sexual harassment following which he had to proceed on leave but joined work in July with a court quashing the internal committee report that found him guilty of misconduct.

Brijbhushan Sharan Singh Appointment As President Of SAWF

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brijbhushan Sharan Singh has been appointed as the president of the South Asian Wrestling Federation (SAWF).

- Ajar of Pakistan, U.H. Neville Pdmashri from Sri Lanka and Raj Mohammed Ansari of Nepal were elected vice presidents.

Justice Dharendra Hiralal Waghela appointed as Chief Justice of Bombay High Court

Justice Dharendra Hiralal Waghela was appointed the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court.

- Justice Waghela, currently serving as the Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court, has been asked to assume charge by 16 February 2016.
- The Bombay High Court has been functioning with an officiating Chief Justice since October 2015, after the retirement of Justice Mohit S Shah in September 2015.

Justice Dinesh Maheshwari sworn-in as Chief Justice of Meghalaya HC

Justice Dinesh Maheshwari was sworn-in as the new Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High Court.

- He succeeds Justice Uma Nath Singh who retired as Chief Justice, since then, Justice Sudip Ranjan Singh was serving as the acting Chief Justice of the state high court.

Govt appoints 3 information commissioners in CIC

The Centre today appointed Amitava Bhattacharyya, Bimal Julka & Divya Prakash Sinha as information commissioners in the Central Information Commission (CIC)

- Amitava Bhattacharyya is a former Chairman, Staff Selection Commission, Bimal Julka is a former Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and Divya Prakash Sinha is a former Secretary (Security), Cabinet Secretariat.

HL Dattu selected as the new Chairman of NHRC

Former Chief Justice of India (CJI) HL Dattu is selected as the next Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). He will have tenure of five years.

- The post was lying vacant since 11 May 2015, when KG Balakrishnan demitted office after five-year term. Justice Cyriac Joseph had been functioning as the acting chairperson since then.

KN Vyas took charge as Director of BARC

Eminent Scientist KN Vyas took charge as Director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).

- He took it over from Dr Sekhar Basu, who is the Chairman of Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary to the Union Government, Department of Atomic Energy.

R K Verma : New Secretary Of Railway Board

A 1980 batch officer of Indian Railway Services Of Engineers Mr. R K Verma has assumed the charge as Secretary, Railway Board.

- Earlier he has served as Adviser (Public Grievance) to the Minister of State (MoS) for Railways.
- In his previous assignments, he has worked with various railways, including Southern, North-East Frontier Eastern and Western comprising of Indian Railways Institute of Civil Engineering. He also has Life Fellowship of Institution of

Engineers (India), Institution of Permanent Way (India) and Indian Institute of Bridge Engineers.

Justice Subhro Kamal Mukherjee sworn-in as Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court

Justice Subhro Kamal Mukherjee on 23 February 2016 took oath as the 28th Chief Justice of the High Court of Karnataka.

- Governor Vajubhai R. Vala administered the oath to Justice Mukherjee in a ceremony held at the Raj Bhavan.

Rohit Sharma named Nissan's global ambassador

Japanese car manufacturer Nissan has named Indian cricketer Rohit Sharma as their new global ambassador.

- In its partnership with the International Cricket Council (ICC), Nissan also named West Indies all-rounder Andre Russell and New Zealand women's team captain Suzie Bates as its ambassadors.

Harinder Sidhu to be new Australian High Commissioner to India

Australia has appointed Harinder Sidhu as its next High Commissioner to India three years after another diplomat of Indian origin, Peter Varghese, served in this key post.

- Sidhu is a senior career officer with Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, having served

most recently as first assistant secretary of the Multilateral Policy Division. She previously served overseas in Moscow and Damascus, according to a note by the Australian foreign ministry.

Secretary-General Appoints Tamar Hahn of Israel Director of United Nations Information Centre

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appointed Tamar Hahn of Israel Director of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Buenos Aires, which serves Argentina and Uruguay. She assumes her duties on 10 February.

- Prior to this appointment, Ms. Hahn was the Regional Adviser for Resource Mobilization and Partnerships at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Panama City, Panama, since 2013.
- She developed strategic approaches for UNFPA resource mobilization and co-financing. She also established and managed partnership networks and provided strategic communications support.

Indian Origin Lawyer Davinder Singh Appointed As Vice - Chairman Of ICC

A top Indian origin lawyer has been named as Vice-Chairman of the Paris based International Chamber of Commerce Commission (ICC) on Corporate Responsibility and Anti-corruption.

- Davinder Singh, 58, is one of the top Indian origin lawyer in Singapore. He is the only Singaporean lawyer to be

appointed to the leadership of one of 13 Policy Commissions under the ICC.

- Currently he is the chief executive of the Singapore based law firm Drew & Napier. He was the member of Singapore Parliament from 1988-2006.

Ashok Chawla Appointed As Chairman of TERI

TERI's governing council appointed Ashok Chawla as its new chairman.

- Chawla is the former Union Finance Secretary and former Chairman of the Competition Commission.
- The Council decided after the elevation of climate scientist R.K. Pachauri indicted in a sexual harassment case to the post of Executive Vice Chairman on Monday, received widespread criticism from the media and women's rights lawyers.
- The Research and Resources Institute (TERI) re announced that the new Director General, Ajay Mathur, as a Member of the Council will operate with full executive powers. Mr. Mathur was brought in to replace Mr. Pachauri on DG's post.

Kamlesh Kumar appointed as Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities

Kamlesh Kumar Pandey was appointed as the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) for a period of three years.

- Before joining the post of CCPD, Pandey was associated with Saksham, an NGO working in the field of disability.
- He is a Science Graduate from University of Allahabad and Medical Graduate from Agra University in 1990.

Sri Srinivasan : To Become The 1st Indian American Judge Of US Supreme Court

Sri Srinivasan to become the first Indian-American Judge of the U S Supreme Court to replace Justice Antonin Scalia after his unexpected death.

- He made history in 2013 when he became the first Asian American and Indian American to serve in the Court of Appeals in the D.C. Circuit, long cited as the stepping stone to the uppermost echelon, the Supreme Court.
- He mostly defended views other than his own, arguing for both Republicans and Democrats.

Ri Myong Su Appointed As New Military Chief Of North Korea

North Korean state media has confirmed the country has a new military chief, following earlier reports in Seoul that the former holder of the post had been executed.

Ri Myong-Su, former People's Security Minister, was referred to as "chief of the Korean People's Army General Staff" when the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on an army exercise guided by leader Kim Jong-un.

Ri Myong-Su was again mentioned in a separate KCNA report on Mr Kim's inspection of an air force exercise.

His predecessor Ri Yong-Gil was reportedly executed early this month in what would be the latest in a series of purges and executions of top officials. Ri Yong-Gil was accused of forming a political faction and corruption.

Vinod Rai appointed Chairman of Banks Board Bureau

Vinod Rai has been appointed first Chairman of the Banks Board Bureau.

- The BBB (Banks Board Bureau) will advise the government on top-level appointments at public sector lenders and ways to address the bad loans problem among other issues.
- Vinod Rai was the 11th Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) between January 2008 and May 2013, during which a number of CAG reports led to various scams including in the telecom and coal sectors coming to light.

Prof. Yogesh Tyagi : New Vice Chancellor Of Delhi University

President Pranab Mukherjee appointed Yogesh Tyagi, dean of the law faculty at South Asian University (SAU), as the new Vice Chancellor of Delhi University (DU).

- The HRD ministry appointed Tyagi for a term of five years after his name was chosen from a panel of four persons by President Pranab Mukherjee, who is the Visitor of all central universities.
- . The appointment of the Delhi University Vice Chancellor had been pending for three months since Singh left that office on October 28

last year and Sudheesh Pachauri was the acting Vice Chancellor.

U.K. Sinha Gets Extension As SEBI Chairman

UK Sinha will continue to lead India's capital and commodities market regulator for one more year. The government extended Sinha's term as the chairman of Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) till March 01, 2017.

- Sinha took over as Sebi chairman in 2011 with a three-year term. After that he was given a two-year extension.

Christine Lagarde appointed for second term as IMF chief

Christine Lagarde has been re-appointed as its Managing Director for a second five-year term after an uncontested election.

- The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Friday selected 60-year-old Lagarde to serve as IMF Managing Director for a second five-year term starting on July 5, 2016, IMF said in a statement. The Board's decision was taken by consensus.
- Ms Lagarde, 60, a former French Finance Minister, took over as head of the IMF in 2011 following Dominique Strauss-Kahn's resignation amid scandal. Ms Lagarde said she was "delighted" to accept a second term to lead the IMF, which represents 188 member countries.

Ketan Shukla appointed as the new HC Of Botswana

The 1986 IFS batch officer Dr.Ketan Shukla is appointed as the new High Commissioner to the Republic of Botswana .

- He succeeds Ms.Hemalata C. Bhagirath as the High commissioner of the African state.

J K Garg takes over as MD of Corporation Bank

J K Garg has taken over as Managing Director and CEO of Corporation Bank following the retirement of S R Bansal.

- Prior to this appointment, Garg was Executive Director in UCO Bank, Corporation Bank said in a statement.
- He had started his career at Corporation Bank in 1986, and would head the bank for three years.

Muktesh Kumar Pardeshi appointed as India's Envoy to Mexico

Senior IFS officer Muktesh Kumar Pardeshi was appointed as India's Ambassador to Mexico.

- He is currently posted as Joint Secretary (Passport division) in the Union Ministry of External Affairs.
- He served as the Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of India in Jakarta from 2007 to 2010. During 1993-2001, he worked with Indian Missions in Mexico, Colombia and Nepal.

Aruna Sethi appointed as first women head of ICAs

Aruna Sethi, took over charge as the head of Indian Cost Accounts Service (ICoAS).

With this appointment, she became the first woman to occupy the post.

- Prior to the present elevation, Aruna, a 1985 batch ICoAS officer, held important portfolios in Government of India including Ministry of Consumer Affairs,

DJ Pandian appointed AIIB Vice-President

Former chief secretary of Gujarat DJ Pandian has been appointed vice-president and chief investment officer of the newly-created Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

- China had nominated its former finance minister Jin Liqun as the first president of AIIB.
- China, India and Russia are the three largest shareholders, taking 30.34 per cent, 8.52 per cent, 6.66 per cent stake, respectively, in the newly-formed bank. Their voting shares are calculated at 26.06 per cent, 7.5 per cent and 5.92 per cent, respectively.

- **Sports**

ICICI Academy aims to impart skills training to one lakh youth by 2017

The academy and the RSETIs will train close to 45,000 candidates in the 2017 fiscal and take the total number of trained youth to over a lakh.

- The academy has in the last two years (since inception in 2013) trained 25,200 youths (of which 32 per cent were women) belonging to the economically weaker sections.

- It has set up 22 centres across the country (including 10 centres exclusively for training of women).

Mumbai win Ranji Trophy title

Mumbai defeated Saurashtra by an innings and 21 runs today in the Ranji Trophy final at Pune to win their 41st Ranji title.

- The Ranji Trophy is a domestic first-class cricket championship played in India between teams representing regional cricket associations.
- The competition currently consists of 27 teams, with 21 of the 29 states in India and Delhi (which is an Union Territory), having at least one representation.
- The competition is named after first Indian Cricketer who played for England and Sussex, Ranjitsinhji who was also known as “Ranji”.
- A 28th team from Chhattisgarh will take part in the tournament from the 2016–17 Ranji Trophy.

Kerala emerges as winner of 61st National School Athletics championship

The National School Athletics championship began on January 29 and concluded yesterday, i.e on February 2. Kerala emerged as the overall winner for the 19th consecutive time. The national School Athletics championship was held at Olympian Rahman Stadium in Kozhikode, Kerala.

- Kerala, the host of the championship got 306 points winning 39 gold, 29 silver and 17 bronze medals. On the other hand, Tamil Nadu stood at second position with 116 points

winning 11 gold, 8 silver and 13 bronze medals.

Maharashtra with 101 points obtained the third position. The venue of this event of Athletics is at the Olympian Abdurrahman Stadium in Medical College Ground at Kozhikode, Kerala.

Rajkot franchise IPL team name as 'Gujarat Lions'

Intex Technologies, which owns the newly formed Rajkot IPL team, announced its official name as '**Gujarat Lions**'.

- The team also announced **Suresh Raina as its captain**. Other key players in the team include Brendon McCullum, Ravindra Jadeja, James Faulkner and Dwayne Bravo. Brad Hodge has been named as the coach of the team.
- This will be the first IPL team from the state of Gujarat, where Intex has a strong presence.

Australia rank world No.1 in ICC Test rankings

In Cricket, Australia has replaced India at the top of the world's test rankings with a 2-nil test series victory over New Zealand in Christchurch today.

- Captain Steven Smith and Joe Burns hit fifties on the final day as Australia achieved target of 201 set by the hosts losing just 3 wickets in their second innings.
- Joe Burns was selected as man of the match for his 170 and 65 runs from both innings. With this match, New Zealand skipper Brendon McCullum bid farewell to test cricket. The 34- years old wicket

keeper batsman has scored over 6000 test runs at an average of 39.

Shrikanth wins Syed Modi International Championships

Ace Indian shuttler K. Srikanth has clinched the Men's Singles title of the Syed Modi International Grand Prix Gold Badminton Championships.

- In the final played at Lucknow last evening, Srikanth, who was the top seed, defeated China's Huang Yuxiang, 21-13, 14-21, 21-14 to win his fifth title overall.
- The Women's Singles trophy was bagged by the second seeded Korean, Sung Ji Hyun. She beat the fifth placed Japanese, Sayako Sato, 12-21, 21-18, 21-18.

Aditya Mehta won 83rd Senior National Snooker Championship

Aditya Mehta defeated Manan Chandra 6-3 in the final to win the 83rd Senior National Snooker Championship held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

- In another event, Vidya Pillai won the National Snooker Championship in the women's category by defeating Ameer Kamani 4-2. For 38-year-old Vidya, it was her ninth national title.

Fukuoka to host 2021 World Aquatics Championships

The International Swimming Federation (FINA) announced that the Japanese city of Fukuoka will host the 2021 World Aquatics Championships. And the Qatar capital Doha will host the 2023 event.

- The FINA World Championships or World Aquatics Championships are the World Championships for aquatics sports: Swimming, Diving, High Diving, Open Water Swimming, Synchronized Swimming and Water Polo.
- The event was first held in 1973 and is now held every two years.

Dnipro FC Wins 2016 Nagjee International Club Football Tournament

Ukraine's Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk Football Club (FC) has won the 2016 Sait Nagjee International Club Football Tournament in Kozhikode. The goalscorers on the evening were Ihor Kohut (40'), Denys Balanuik (62') and Yuri Vakulko (85').

The Ukrainian FC also created a record in the Sait Nagjee tournament that was brought alive after 21 years with Ronaldinho inaugurating the same, as they scored the most number of goals in the championship (10) and also kept a clean sheet in all their three games.

Pietro Fittipaldi won 2015-16 MRF Challenge Formula 2000

Brazilian racing driver Pietro Fittipaldi on 31 January 2016 clinched the 2015-16 MRF Challenge Formula 2000 at Madras Motor Racing Track in Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu.

Fittipaldi won two of the four races which earned him the required points to clinch the title with a tally of 244 points while Colombian Tatiana Calderon finished second (199), just eight ahead of Nikita Troitskii of Russia (191).

India won three-match T-20 series against Australia, 3-0

India on 31 January 2016 won the three-match T-20 series against Australia, 3-0. In the third and final Twenty20 match played in Sydney, India defeated Australia by seven wickets.

- Winning the toss and electing to bat, Australia was able to score 197 for 5 in 20 overs after which India surpassed the target of 198 by making 200 for three in their 20 overs.
- Virat Kohli of India was declared as the player of the series.
- Meanwhile, Indian men's team also became the number one side in the ICC T20 rankings after whitewashing Australia in the three-match series in Sydney.

Novak Djokovic beats Andy Murray to win the 2016 Australian Open final

Novak Djokovic is Australian Open champion for the sixth time, equalling Roy Emerson's record, but it is unlikely he will be spending much time analysing a final in which he eked out a sub-par 6-1, 7-5, 7-6 (7-3) win over Andy Murray here on Sunday

night. It was Djokovic's fourth win over Murray in the final of these championships – and the most ordinary – and his 11th in their past 12 matches.

Yasir Shah suspended for three months for breach of anti-doping code

Yasir Shah Pakistan leg-spinner had been banned for three months for breaching the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) anti-doping code.

- He had temporarily suspended in late December because he had taken banned substance Cloralti done, which was found in his body for a blood test during Pakistan's 2nd One-Day International (ODI) against England.
- He breaks Article 2.1 of the ICC's anti-doping code that deals with "the presence of Prohibited Substance in a Player's body."

New Zealand cricketer Brendon Barrie McCullum retired from One-Day Internationals

Brendon Barrie McCullum (New Zealand) on 8 February 2016 retired from One-Day Internationals (ODIs). However, He announced his retirement on 22 December 2015.

- He played 260 ODIs and scored 6083 runs matches. They include 5 centuries and 31 half-centuries.

New Zealand cricket team won Chappell-Hadlee Trophy

New Zealand on 8 February 2016 won the three-match Chappell-Hadlee Trophy of cricket against Australia, 2-1.

- This win of the Black Caps can be termed as the best farewell gift for

Brendon McCullum who retired from One-Day International (ODI) cricket after the match.

- They also retained the Chappell-Hadlee trophy by putting tremendous bowling and fielding display.

Indian Wrestlers Win 14 out of 16 Gold In South Asian Games

Indian wrestlers simply grabbed, scooping 14 gold medals out of a total 16 on offer as the wrestling competition in the 12th South Asian Games.

- Indian wrestlers ended their campaign with a whopping 14 gold and two silver.
- India won gold in all the eight women's categories, while their men counterparts won 6 gold and 2 silver. Pakistan won 2 gold.

Chinappa Wins Gold In South Asian Games

India's ace squash player Joshna Chinappa has won the gold medal in women's individual category at the 12th South Asian Games (SAG).

- she defeated Pakistan's Maria Wazir by 10-12, 11-7, 11-9, 11-7 score. With this she became first Indian squash player to win individual gold medal in 2016 SAG.

Under 19 World Cup : West Indies Beat India To Win First Title

The West Indies won the Under-19 World Cup for the first time in their history after beating India by five wickets in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

It was the eleventh edition of the Under-19 Cricket World Cup, and the second to be held in Bangladesh, after the 2004 event.

Mirza-Hingis Win St Petersburg Title

Indian tennis ace Sania Mirza and her Swiss partner Martina Hingis extended their winning streak to 40 after clinching the St. Petersburg Ladies Trophy.

- The top-seeded pair continued their imperious form as they swept aside the Russian-Czech pair of Vera Dushevina and Barbora Krejckova 6-3, 6-1 in the finals of the women's double event that lasted for an hour.
- With the win, the Indo-Swiss pair bagged their 13th women's double titles. Earlier this year, the Indo-Swiss duo won their third consecutive women's doubles Grand Slam title by lifting the Australian Open trophy.

ICC Cricket for Good and UNICEF launched Team Swachh clinics in partnership with BCCI

International Cricket Council (ICC) and United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) had launched the Team Swachh clinics in partnership with BCCI during the ICC WT20 Host City Tour.

- The Team Swachh clinics were launched at the HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh.
- This is the first in the series of alliance between the ICC and UNICEF under the aegis of Cricket for Good.
- The alliance aims at building a social movement for sanitation and toilet use with the impact of cricket.

Lionel Messi first to score 300 La Liga goals

Lionel Messi became the first player to notch 300 La Liga goals as his double blast powered Barcelona to a 3-1 win at Sporting

Gijon that sent them six points clear at the top of the table.

- This was his 301st goal in 334 matches in La Liga .
- With this, Lionel Messias become the fifth player to notch 300 goals in a single league.
- Jimmy Graves, Gird Muller, Dixcy Dean and Steve Bloomer have scored 300 goals in different leagues.

Hockey India League 2016: Punjab Warriors beat Kalinga Lancers to clinch maiden title

Having lost the final in the last two seasons, the Jaypee Punjab Warriors finally struck gold to become third-time lucky as they clinched their Hockey India League (HIL) title in the fourth edition of the six-team tournament at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium.

- The Chandigarh-based outfit beat Kalinga Lancers 6-1 in the summit clash where Armaan Qureshi, Matt Gohdes and Satbir Singh scored a field goal each for the Warriors. Skipper Moritz Fuerste scored the Lancers' lone goal of the match, coming in a penalty corner.
- The unique feature of the tournament was that each field goal counted for two.

Brendon McCullum scores fastest 100 in Test Cricket History

New Zealand Skipper Brendon McCullum has smashed the fastest ever Test ton in his final international match on day one of the Second Test Match between Australia and New Zealand at Christchurch.

- A 54-ball effort that broke the record jointly held by Viv Richards and Misbah-ul-Haq.
- Australia chose to field and had New Zealand in trouble at 74/4 but McCullum, along with Corey Anderson, changed the entire course of the match.

Nirban Lahiri wins Hilton Asian Tour Golfer of the Year award

The Indian triumphed at the Maybank Malaysian and Hero Indian Open before going on to finish tied fifth at the PGA Championship last year.

- He also became the first Indian to feature at The Presidents Cup and ended the year by winning the Asian Tour Order of Merit title and finishing in 40th place in the world rankings.
- Lahiri won the award ahead of Thailand's Thongchai Jaidee, Malaysia's Danny Chia and Philippines' Miguel Tabuena.

BCCI bans Pakistani umpire Asad Rauf for 5 years

Pakistani umpire Asad Rauf was today banned for five years by the BCCI after its disciplinary committee found him guilty of corrupt practices and bringing the game into disrepute.

- The 59-year-old Rauf, who was part of the ICC's elite panel and officiated in Test matches, was accused of accepting expensive gifts from bookies besides placing bets on IPL matches in the 2013 edition.
- After a decision on his fate was deferred for several weeks, the

committee, headed by BCCI president Shashank Manohar and comprising Jyotiraditya Scindia and Niranjan Shah, finally announced the ban on him today.

- Rauf had been withdrawn by Pakistan from the ICC's elite panel after the allegations against him broke out.

Kavita Raut Clinched Gold In SAG Marathon

India long distance runner Kavita Raut clinches gold in marathon.

- The 30 year old Raut easily clinched the marathon gold in 2 hours 38 minutes and 38 seconds to become the 4th Indian women to have qualified for Rio Games women's marathon.
- Nashik girl Raut is the lone athlete to have qualified for the Olympics from the 12th SAG.
- With these two gold and one bronze, India ended the athletics competition with 28 gold, 22 silver and 9 bronze, medals thereby establishing their unrivalled superiority in the South Asian region.

Lionel Messi Named La Liga Player of Month

FC Barcelona forward Lionel Andres Messi has been named Liga BBVA Player of the Month for January, for the first time.

- The award has been given out since the beginning of the 2013-14 Primera División season but the five-times Ballon d'Or winner had not won it until now.
- Messi is the only football player in history to win the FIFA Ballon d'Or five times, four of which he won

consecutively, and the first player to win three European Golden Shoes.

India Women Lose Final T20I vs Australia, Clinch Series 2-1

Australia women clinched the third and final Twenty20 International by 15 runs but visitors India lifted the trophy with a 2-1 series victory at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) here on Sunday.

- Put into bat, Australia posted a total of 136/5 in 20 overs before halting the visiting team at 121/8.
- The Indian women cricketers created history at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on Friday where their 10-wicket win resulted in their first bilateral series victory over Australia, the defending World Twenty20 champions who are eyeing their fourth successive world title in March, in any format.

Awards

Geetu Mohandas wins Global Filmmaking award at Sundance Film Festival 2016

Actress-filmmaker Geetu Mohandas has received the Global Filmmaking award at Sundance Film Festival 2016.

- The award is given to emerging filmmakers from the World Cinema stage on the basis of their next screenplay and the 34-year-old director received it for her upcoming feature "Insha' Allah".

Lalita Babar named as the Sports Person of the Year

Long-distance runner Lalita Babar was today named as the Sports Person of the Year in the India Sports Awards 2015.

- The Indian Sports Award were were given away here at the conclusion of day one of 'Turf 2015-16', organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) with the support of the Sports Ministry. Babar qualified for Rio Olympics recently in the 3000m steeplechase event and is the current Indian national record holder.
- Besides Babar, gymnast Dipa Karmakar was named as the Breakthrough Sports Person of the Year while Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India was conferred with the Best National Sports Federation recognition.

Aryabhata award conferred on Avinash

Chander

Avinash Chander, former Scientific Adviser to Defence Minister and Director General of the DRDO, has been conferred with the Aryabhata Award of the Astronautical Society of India.

- The award was presented to Avinash Chander by R Chidambaram, Principal Scientific Adviser to Govt. of India and A S Kiran Kumar, Chairman ISRO during the ASI-ISRO Awards function held at Space Applications Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad.

Rajendra Singh appointed as the DG of Coast Guard

Rajendra Singh has been appointed as the Director General (DG) of Coast Guard, the country's coastal protection force.

- He will replace Vice Admiral HCS Bisht who has been promoted as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Naval Command.
- This is the first time that an officer who is not from the Indian Navy has been promoted as the Chief of Coast Guard since it was set up in 1978.

Afghan cyclist nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

Afghanistan's national women's cycling team has been nominated for the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize.

- Following an online campaign, 118 Italian ministers voted to nominate them for the Nobel Peace Prize.
- The team has used the bicycle as a vehicle for social justice, enduring violence and social stigma. In 2013, it became the first Afghan women's team to compete on the international stage, at the Asian Cycling Championships in Delhi, India.

Goverdhan Mehta conferred Germany's prestigious award

Goverdhan Mehta, a well-known researcher in Chemical Sciences & former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hyderabad (UoH), has been conferred with Federal Republic of Germany's prestigious 'Cross of the Order of Merit'.

- He is at present the National Research Professor and Lilly-Jubilant Chair Professor at the University of Hyderabad. He served as the Director of the IISc, Bengaluru (1998-2005) and was also President of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA).

Pandit Ram Narayan selected for Bhimsen Joshi Award

Sarangi maestro Pandit Ram Narayan was selected for the prestigious Bharat Ratna Pandit Bhimsen Joshi Classical Music Award for 2015-2016.

- Narayan's selection for the award was announced by Maharashtra's Cultural Affairs Minister Vinod Tawde in Mumbai.

'Phum Shang' bags the Golden Conch Award at MIFF

Manipuri documentary film 'Phum Shang' won the coveted Golden Conch Award for the best documentary at the 14th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF).

- Directed by Hao Bam Pabankumar, 'Phum Shang' critically examined the serious ecological problems encountered at Loktak Lake, the largest fresh-water lake in northeast India.

Malayalam Film 'Ottal' Wins Award At Berlin Film Festival

The National award winning Malayalam film 'Ottal' has been named the best children's film at the 66th Berlin International Film

Festival and honored with the Crystal Bear award in the 'Generation KPlus' section.

The film is about the story of an old fisherman and his grandson directed by Jayaraj Rajasekharan Nair. Jayaraj is known for adapting literary classic into films.

He has earlier made films based on Shakespeare's works such as "Othello" and "Antony and Cleopatra".

Nana Patekar will get the 'Godavari Gaurav' award

Well-known actor Nana Patekar will get the 'Godavari Gaurav' award, instituted by city-based 'Kusumagraj Prathishthan'.

- The other awardees include dancer KanakRele, Chetana Sinha, DrShashi Kumar Chitre, Dr. Balkrishna Joshi and endurance cyclists Hitendra and Mahendra Mahajan for their contribution in various fields.
- The award carries a prize of Rs 21,000 and a memento. The awards will be presented by Marathi writer Madhu Mangesh Karnik on March 10 – the death anniversary of well-known poet and writer V V Shirwadkar, who was popularly known as 'Kusumagraj'.

PM Shram Awards Announced For The Year 2014

The Government of India has announced the Prime Ministers Shram Awards for the year 2014.

- The award will be awarded to 54 workers employed in the Departmental Undertakings and Public Sector. The award has been given in recognition of their

distinguished performances, innovative abilities, outstanding contribution in the field of productivity and exhibition of exceptional courage and presence of mind.

- This year, 9 nominations for the Shram Bhushan Award, 19 nominations for ShramVir/ Shram Veerangana and 26 nominations for Shram Shree / Shram Devi Awards have been selected.

BAFTA Awards : 69th British Academy Film Awards

The 69th British Academy Film Awards held on 14 February 2016 in London. It has taken place in Central London at the Royal Opera House.

- The Revenant' scooped the best film, best actor and best director awards at the 69th edition of the biggest film awards outside the U.S.
- The other award of BAFTA's are as follow : Outstanding British Film: Brooklyn. Best Director: Alejandro G. Iñárritu (The Revenant). Best Actor: Leonardo Di Caprio (The Revenant). Best Actress: Brie Larson (Room). Most awards: The Revenant (5 wins). Most nominations: Bridge of Spies and Carol (9 nominations each).

President Pranab Mukherjee Conferred Infosys Prize 2015

President Pranab Mukherjee has conferred Infosys Prize 2015 on six winners for their outstanding contribution in the research fields in New Delhi.

- The awards were received by Prof Umesh Waghmare, Prof Jonardon

Ganeri, Dr. Amit Sharma, Prof Mahan Mj, Prof G Ravindra Kumar and Dr. Srinath Raghavan.

- The Prize were given across five categories: Engineering and Computer Science, Life Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Physical Sciences and Social Sciences and the Humanities.

Robin Chaurasiya Nominated For 'Global Teacher Prize'

Robin Chaurasiya, an Indian teacher who runs a non-profit school in Mumbai for girls from the city's red light areas has been named in the top 10 short-list for a global prize for teachers.

- Robin Chaurasiya, founder of Kranti, will compete with teachers from the UK, US, Nairobi, Palestine, Japan, Finland, Australia and Pakistan to win the \$1-million Global Teacher Prize 2016.
- The top ten have been narrowed down from 8,000 nominations and applications from 148 countries from around the world.

Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of The Year Award 2015

Chief Executive Officer Vinita Gupta and managing director Nilesh Gupta, Lupin Ltd have been chosen the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2015.

- An 11-member jury led by Adi Godrej selected the winners.
- F. C. Kohli, former Vice-Chairman of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), has been honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his

pioneering contribution towards the Indian software industry and nation-building.

Vidya Balan receives Pride of Kerala award

The 38-year-old Bollywood actress Vidya Balan has been awarded with the 'Pride of Kerala' award by the World Malayalee Council and Kairali TV.

- The National award-winning actress has starred in films like "Parineeta", "Paa", "No One Killed Jessica", "The Dirty Picture" and "Kahaani".

Titli became first Indian film to win Best First Foreign Film award by FSCC

Indian film-maker Kanu Behl directorial Titli on 1 February 2016 bagged the Best First Foreign Film Award conferred by the French Syndicate of Cinema Critics 2016 (FSCC).

- Titli has earlier won at various international film festivals at places like Bordeaux, Hawaii, New York, Turkey and Spain.

Deaths

NASA Astronaut Edgar Mitchell died

NASA Astronaut Edgar Mitchell, who was the sixth man to walk on the Moon, died in West Palm Beach, Florida.

- The lunar module pilot on Apollo 14 died at the age of 85.
- His death occurred on the eve of the 45th anniversary of his lunar landing, which took place on 5 February 1971.

Former Lok Sabha Speaker Balram Jakhar Passes Away

Veteran Congress leader and former Lok Sabha Speaker Balram Jakhar passed away in New Delhi on Wednesday. He was 92.

- Jakhar served as Speaker of Lok Sabha from 1980 to 1989 during which he contributed to the establishment of Parliament Museum. He also served as Agriculture Minister in the Cabinet of former Prime Minister Narasimha Rao.
- Jakhar also served as Governor of Madhya Pradesh from 30 June, 2004 to 30 May, 2009

Singer-songwriter Dan Hicks passed away

Renowned American singer-songwriter Dan Hicks passed away after a two-year long battle with throat and liver cancer. He was 74.

- He was known for his traditional mix of folk, jazz and country music.
- His musical career was started in San Francisco in the 1960s playing drums for rock band The Charlatans. His last album was Live at Davies which was released in 2013 to cap over forty years of music career.
- Some of his famous songs are I Scare Myself, Canned Music and How Can I Miss You When You Won't Go Away?.

Former Nepal Prime Minister Sushil Koirala Passes Away

Nepal's former prime minister Sushil Koirala passed away at his resident. He was 78.

- Koirala was suffering from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

(COPD) and has also been receiving treatment for "tongue cancer".

- Koirala was appointed President of the party (Congress) in 2008 by President Girija Prasad Koirala.

Noted Poet NidaFazli Is No More

Muqtida Hasan Nida Fazli has taken his last breath on 8th Feb. He was an Indian Hindi and Urdu poet. He was 78.

- He has got many awards for his work in his entire career, some of them are as follows In 1998 Sahitya Akademi Award in Urdu for Khoya Hua Sa Kuchh, In 2003 Star Screen Award for Best Lyricist for Sur, In 2003 Bollywood Movie Award - Best Lyricist for Aa Bhi Ja from Sur and In 2013 Padma Shri; the Government of India.

Biraja Prasad : Indian Ambassador To Tajikistan Passes Away

Biraja Prasad, India's Ambassador to Tajikistan passed away following a massive cardiac arrest.

- He was the youngest Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer to be appointed as India's Ambassador to any country.
- Mr. Biraja Prasad , who belonged to Odisha started his career as diplomat.

Rajamani : Music Director And Composer Passes Away

Rajamani, southern music director and composer has passed away.

- He was 60. He suffered a sudden cardiac arrest and passed away in Chennai, Tamilnadu.

- He had predominantly worked in Malayalam film industry and had composed music for around 70 films.

Former UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali passes away

Former United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali passed away in Cairo, Egypt. He was 93.

- Mr. Boutros-Ghali was Egyptian politician and diplomat who had served as sixth UN Secretary-General from 1992 to 1996.
- He was United Nations' first secretary-general from Africa.

K Garudachar, India's oldest first-class cricketer, passed away

India's oldest living first-class cricketer K Garudachar, who represented Mysore (as Karnataka was called till 1974), United Province and Bombay, died in Bangalore on Friday aged 99.

- A right-hand batsman and a leg-break bowler, Garudachar scored 1126 runs at an average of 29.63 from 27 matches in first-class cricket between 1935 and 1946.

Malayalam director Rajesh Pillai passes away

The Malayalam film director Rajesh Pillai, on Saturday, passed away at a private hospital located in Kochi.

- The director was due for a liver transplant and was suffering from liver cirrhosis. He had postponed the transplant in order to complete the shooting of his latest film 'Vettah' which released in theatres on Friday.

Veteran vocalist Abdul Rashid Khan dead

Veteran Indian classical vocalist Abdul Rashid Khan passed away here due to old age problems, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said. He was 107.

- Born in a family of musicians of the Gwalior 'gharana', Rashid Khan received his initial training from his father Chhote Yusuf Khan and uncle Bade Yusuf Khan as also other elders from the family. The SangeetNatakAkademi awardee was a resident guru at the ITC Sangeet Research Academy in the city.
- His traditional compositions have been recorded by reputed broadcasters and institutes like BBC, Iraq Radio and Uttar Pradesh SangeetNatakAkademi, Lucknow. Equally adept at khayal, thumri, dhrupad and dhamar, he was a regular performer in Akashvani and Doordarshan and reputed national and regional conferences.
- In 2013, he was honoured with the Padma Bhushan, becoming the oldest person ever to be conferred a Padma award.

US writer Harper Lee dies at the age of 89

Harper Lee, one of America's most celebrated novelists whose masterpiece "To Kill a Mockingbird" was read by millions worldwide, has died at the age of 89.

- She was a country girl who just wanted to tell an honest story about life as she saw it. Former, US President George W Bush, who awarded her the Presidential Medal

of Freedom in 2007, said she was a legendary novelist and lovely lady.

Italian writer and philosopher Umberto

Eco passed away

Italian writer and philosopher Umberto Eco, best known for his novel 'The Name of the Rose', has died at the age of 84 years.

- The 'Name of the Rose' was made into a film in 1989 starring Scottish actor Sean Connery. Eco, who also wrote the novel Foucault's Pendulum.

Veteran director Aurobindo Mukherjee passes away

Veteran film director Aurobindo Mukherjee passed away in Kolkata, West Bengal after ailing from geriatric problems. He was 97.

- Mukherjee was the maker of cult Bengali classics like 'Mouchak, 'Agniswar' and 'Nishipadma', all of them starred matinee idol Uttam Kumar in the early 1970s.

Siachen Avalanche Survivor Lance Naik Hanamanthappa Passes Away

Lance Naik Hanamanthappa, who had been battling for life at the Army's Research & Referral hospital, breathed his last on Today morning. "Really sorry to inform everyone that LNK Hanamanthappa is no more..He was 33.

- Hanamanthappa, hailed from Koppal in Karnataka. He belonged to a

farming family in Betadur village in Kundagoltaluk of Dharwad district.

Leslie Bassett : Pulitzer Winner Composer Passes Away

Leslie Bassett, Pulitzer winning composer passed away in Oakwood, Georgia. He was 93.

- He had also served as trombonist, composer and arranger in the US Army and Europe during World War II.
- Bassett received the Pulitzer in 1966 for "Variations for Orchestra," which had been given its United States premiere by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy the year before.

Padma Vibhushan awardee O N V Kurup passes away

Padma Vibhushan awardee, eminent Malayalam poet, lyricist, professor and environmentalist O N V Kurup passed away due to cardiac arrest. He was 84.

- He was one of the leading lyricists in Malayalam film, drama and album industry and also the much respected teacher of Malayalam literature.

Former Deputy Governor S.S.Tarapore passes away

S.S. Tarapore, former deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and a noted economist, passed away in Mumbai on Tuesday.

- Tarapore joined the RBI in 1961 and retired in 1996 as deputy governor, having been involved in almost all aspects of monetary policy.

Books

Book titled Nathuram Godse - The Story of an Assassin released

The book titled Nathuram Godse - The Story of an Assassin authored by Anup Ashok Sardesai was released on 30 January 2016.

The book narrates the story of Nathuram Vinayakrao Godse who died an untimely death and his brother suffered a life of immense mental torture. It also speaks of the family of Godse who faced countless abuses and humiliations.

Sachin Tendulkar's autobiography enters Limca Book of Records

He might have bid adieu to cricket but Sachin Tendulkar continues to make records with the his autobiography 'Playing It My Way' entering the Limca Book of Records for being the best-selling adult hardback across both fiction and non-fiction categories.

- The book, published by Hachette India, was released on November 6, 2014 and has broken all records for an adult hardback across both fiction and non-fiction categories with 1,50,289 copies confirmed on order subscriptions.
- The book's orders, on day one, already saw it pulling ahead of both pre-order and lifetime sales of the world's top adult hardbacks Dan Brown's Inferno, Walter Issacson's Steve Jobs and JK Rowling's Casual Vacancy.
- Boria Majumdar was the co-author of Tendulkar's autobiography.