

BankExamsToday Editorial

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Current Affairs

Antyodaya Express flagged off

- Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu flagged off the country's first Antyodaya Express.
- Tejas and UDAY Express will be launched soon.
- Antyodaya Express is a long-distance, fully unreserved, superfast train service, for the common man to be operated on dense routes. Antyodaya Express will have facilities like Cushioned luggage racks which can serve as seats Additional hand holds in doorway area, J-Hook near longitudinal luggage racks, Multiple Unit cables at both ends of the coach, Vestibuled ends for internal movement of the passengers, Potable Drinking water dispenser, Mobile charging points, Fire Extinguisher with anti-theft lock, FRP (Fibre Reinforced Plastic) Modular Toilets, Pleasing interior colour scheme, Toilet Occupation indication display board, LED Lights, SS Slip-free flooring at Doorway & Gangway, Anti-Graffiti coating for exterior painting, etc

Virat Kohli named captain of the year at ESPNcricinfo Awards

- India Test skipper Virat Kohli has been named as the 'Captain of the Year' at the 10th annual ESPNcricinfo Awards.
- Kohli led India to nine wins out of 12 Tests in the year gone by.
- Englishman Ben Stokes won the Test Batting Performance of the Year for his incredible counterattacking innings of 258 runs off 198 balls against South Africa in Cape Town.
- Stokes team-mate Stuart Broad's 6 for 17 in the third Test ensured a series victory for England and fetched him the Test Bowling Performance of the Year award - for the second year running.
- Sunil Narine was awarded the ODI Bowling Performance of the Year award
- Bangladesh left-arm fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman took away the T20 Bowling Performance of the Year award

Kabir Bedi appointed honorary brand ambassador of Sightsavers

- Noted film actor Kabir Bedi was appointed as the honorary brand ambassador of Sightsavers, a global organisation working to prevent avoidable blindness.
- Sightsavers with its presence in several nations across the world as well as 13 states in the country needs all the support in its endeavour to help eradicate blindness which is avoidable if treated in time
- Six blind girls from Madhya Pradesh, who had participated and won medals in the 5th National Blind and Deaf Judo Competition held in Gurgaon in January, were felicitated by Bedi and and SY Quraishi, honorary chairman of the India chapter of the organisation and former Chief Election Commissioner of India.

Government to issue Sovereign Gold Bonds 2016 - 17 – Series IV

- Government of India, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India(RBI), has decided to issue Sovereign Gold Bonds 2016-17–Series IV. Applications for the bond will be accepted from February 27, 2017 to March 03, 2017.
- The Bonds will be issued on March 17, 2017. The Bonds will be sold through banks, Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL), designated post offices and recognised stock exchanges viz., National Stock Exchange of India Limited and Bombay Stock Exchange.
- The Bonds will be restricted for sale to resident Indian entities including individuals, HUFs, Trusts, Universities and Charitable Institutions.
- The Bonds will be denominated in multiples of gram(s) of gold with a basic unit of 1 gram.
- The tenor of the Bond will be for a period of 8 years with exit option from 5th year to be exercised on the interest payment dates.
- Minimum permissible investment will be 1 grams of gold.

- The maximum amount subscribed by an entity will not be more than 500 grams per person per fiscal year (April-March). A self-declaration to this effect will be obtained.
- In case of joint holding, the investment limit of 500 grams will be applied to the first applicant only.
- The investors will be compensated at a fixed rate of 2.50 per cent per annum payable semi-annually on the nominal value.

Paytm arm unveils online shopping portal Paytm Mall

- Paytm E-Commerce, the online marketplace arm of One97 Communications Pvt. Ltd, launched Paytm Mall, a mobile app and online shopping portal.
- Paytm Mall is the new avatar of Paytm's three year-old e-commerce business. According to a Paytm statement, Paytm Mall will allow customers to shop from 68 million products across categories such as fashion, electronics, consumer durables and home furnishings, from about 140,000 sellers.
- It will manage its deliveries through 17 fulfilment centres of third-party warehouse providers and those owned by sellers and will leverage the network of its 40 courier partners.
- Paytm Mall also marks the formal entry of Alibaba into the e-commerce sector in the country.
- Paytm Mall will focus on structured categories and brand authorised stores.
- It will also be focusing on electronics, top fashion brands and FMCG categories, while another section under Paytm Mall called Paytm Bazaar will focus on fashion, home furnishing and goods from small sellers

Puducherry ranks third in having lesser infant mortality rate

- Director of Health and Family Welfare Services K V Raman said that Union Territory was having 11 deaths of children per 1000 babies born.
- This is a record and is culmination of initiatives of various departments including the Social Welfare, Women and Child Development, Health and other departments implementing the Integrated Child Development scheme"
- Puducherry ranked third in the achievement next to Goa and Kerala.

Kalinga Lancers beat Dabang Mumbai to clinch maiden Hockey India League title

- Last year's finalists Kalinga Lancers made amends to lift their maiden Hockey India League title, defeating Dabang Mumbai 4-1 in the final
- Dabang Mumbai, who were leaders at the end of the league stage, could not find their best as Kalinga Lancers emerged victorious to claim the purse of Rs 2.5 crore. The runners-up received Rs 1.25 crore.
- Kalinga Lancers skipper Moritz Fuerste of Germany, who has won three Olympic medals, converted two penalty corners and the team's Australian import Glenn Turner scored a field goal to seal the issue. A field goal gets two points.
- Fuerste and Turner also finished as the league's joint highest scorers with 12 goals each in as many matches.

Apollo Munich enters into bancassurance tie-up with Dena Bank

- Standalone health insurer Apollo Munich Health Insurance is expanding its footprint across the country with bancassurance tie-up with state-owned Dena Bank .
- Under the tie-up the bank will distribute customised Apollo Munich Health insurance

and personal accident policies to the bank's 20 million customers nationwide.

- Apollo Munich Health has developed specialised health insurance solutions with distinctive benefits and an uncomplicated application process, exclusively for Dena Bank customers.

Haryana Sets Up Sex Ratio Monitoring System For Panipat

- The Haryana government has set up an online system for Panipat to monitor the sex-ratio in the district as part of the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' programme.
- The system, called the sex ratio monitoring dashboard, will have the data of child sex-ratio collected from all villages by the Health and Women and Child Welfare Departments every month.
- It will also have the data on critical villages where more attention was required towards skewed child sex-ratio and steps needed to taken to set up the efforts accordingly
- The dashboard had been developed in association with National Informatics Centre (NIC) as a pilot project.
- The dashboard is also proving to be an effective tool for enhancing ground-level coordination between the Health and Women and Child Welfare Departments.

Osacar Awards 2017: La La Land wins 5 awards

- The 89th Academy Awards ceremony, presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) to honor the best films of 2016, was held at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, California, on February 26, 2017.
- During the ceremony, AMPAS will present Academy Awards (commonly referred to as Oscars) in 24 categories. The ceremony, televised in the United States by ABC, was



produced by Michael De Luca and Jennifer Todd and directed by Glenn Weiss.

- Comedian Jimmy Kimmel hosted the ceremony for the first time.
- Casey Affleck won best actor award for Manchester by the Sea as Lee Chandler and
- Isabelle Huppert bagged the best actress award for Elle as Michèle Leblanc

Saina Nehwal chosen as representative of IOC Athletes' Commission in BWF

- Adding another feather in her cap, star shuttler Saina Nehwal, who was appointed a member of the International Olympic Committee's Athletes' Commission (AC) last year, would be representing the panel in the Badminton World Federation (BWF).
- She would join the BWF Athletes' Commission as a representative of the IOC AC, the IOC said in a communication to Nehwal. Nehwal has received an official communication in this regard.
- The Chair of BWF AC has informed others on the panel about Saina's joining the BWF AC as a representative of the IOC AC.
- In a rare honour for an Indian sportsperson, Saina was appointed as a member of the IOC Athletes' Commission soon after the Rio Olympics last year.

Gopi, Athare win men's and women's races in New Delhi Marathon

- Rio Olympian Thanackal Gopi and Monika Athare won the men's and women's titles respectively, clocking impressive timings, in the second edition of the IDBI Federal Life Insurance New Delhi Marathon
- Gopi, who ran without much practice early in the season, clocked 2 hours, 15 minutes and 37 seconds, just a few seconds off his personal best of 2:15:25, to win the full marathon race in his first appearance
- Gopi, who is from Army Sports Institute in Pune, has already qualified for the World

Athletics Championships to be held in London in August when he clocked 2:15:25 while finishing 25th during Rio Olympics.

Dohmen, Naomi named best hockey players of 2016

- Olympic silver medallist John-John Dohmen of Belgium and retiring Netherlands star Naomi Van As were named the male and female Players of the Year for 2016, respectively, by the International Hockey Federation (FIH)
- Britain's Olympic gold medallist Maddie Hinch was won the female Goalkeeper of the Year award while David Harte of Ireland was bagged the best goalkeeper in the world for the second year in a row among the men.
- Maria Granatto from Argentina picked up the title of the female Rising Star of the Year
- The coaching team who guided the Britain women's team to their first ever Olympic gold medal were also recognised as Danny Kerry and Karen Brown were adjudged the male and female Coach of the Year respectively. Brown won the award for the second consecutive year.

Mumbai richest Indian city with wealth of \$820 billion

- Mumbai is the richest Indian city with a total wealth of \$820 billion
- According to the latest New World Wealth report, India's financial capital here is home to 46,000 millionaires and 28 billionaires, and is followed in terms of wealth by Delhi in second place and Bengaluru in third place.
- Delhi is home to 23,000 millionaires and 18 billionaires with total wealth of \$450 billion, while Bengaluru has 7,700 millionaires and 8 billionaires and an aggregate wealth of \$320 billion. Home to 9,000 millionaires and 6 billionaires, Hyderabad is next with a total wealth of \$310 billion. Pune, with a total



wealth of \$180 billion, has 4,500 millionaires and 5 billionaires.

- The total wealth held in India as of December 2016 amounts to \$6.2 trillion, while the country is home to 264,000 millionaires and 95 billionaires

Vasundhara Raje inaugurates medical project RAHAT

- Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje today inaugurated a medical project Rajasthan Heart Attack Treatment programme (RAHAT), launched by a private hospital
- The programme is a ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI), a very serious type of heart attack, management telemedicine platform that captures and transmits patient's EKG along with clinical history from remote geographical locations to heart command center hub.
- A team of expert cardiologists at HCC-Hub provided immediate EKG interpretation and real time STEMI guidance and management via tele-consultation by instantly recognising fatal EKG abnormalities.



TCS among top three IT services brands globally

- India's largest software services firm Tata Consultancy Services has broken into the list of Top 3 most valuable brands in the IT services industry by Brand Finance, the leading global brand valuation firm.
- TCS was also rated as the industry's highest brand strength of AA+, and contributes 69 per cent of the value of the larger Tata brand.
- Over the past year, TCS has also been recognised for running marketing programmes in Europe and featured as one of the top 100 brands in the US.

Normani Kordei named American cancer society global ambassador

- Fifth Harmony star Normani Kordei has been named a global ambassador for the American Cancer Society.
- The singer has partnered with charity bosses to raise awareness about breast cancer screenings and HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccines.
- The 20-year-old singer said the organisation's work is something she can really relate to.

ONGC to take control of HPCL to create larger oil sector entity

- India's state-run Oil and Natural Gas Corp will take control of Hindustan Petroleum Corp as part of the government's plan to create an integrated public sector oil entity.
- India plans to create a giant oil company by combining state-owned firms, finance minister Arun Jaitley said in the budget speech earlier this month as the world's third largest oil consumer looks to better compete with global majors in acquiring foreign assets.
- The government of India will transfer its majority shareholding (of 51.11 percent in HPCL) to ONGC, which will then become the holding company of HPCL

ISSF World Cup: Pooja Ghatkar clinches bronze in 10m air rifle event

- Pooja Ghatkar secured India's first medal at the ongoing ISSF World Cup with a score of 228.8 in the final round.
- Ghatkar clinched bronze with a score of 228.8 in the final round. China's Mengyao Shi secured gold with a score of 252.1 - setting a new world record in the event. The silver went to China's Lijie Dong for a score of 248.9.

- This was Ghatkar's first World Cup medal. Earlier, she has won gold in the Asian Air Gun Championship in 2014.
- The shooter narrowly missed an Olympic berth last year even after winning the bronze at the Asia Olympic Qualifying Competition as Ayonika Paul won silver.

Gorb, Ola tie up to offer food to riders at discounted rates

- Food technology company Gorb has partnered with cab aggregator Ola to offer food to consumers at discounted rates in Mumbai.
- As per the deal, Ola riders will receive a code via SMS and mail every time they book a cab, which can be availed on the Gorb app or website to order food.
- The offer, valid till April 30, will provide a discount of Rs 100 on a minimum order value of Rs 200
- Launched in 2016, Gorb is a food-tech startup with a tagline 'Jaisa Mood Waisa Food'.

Air India's new fuel-efficient Airbus A320 Neo takes flight

- Government-run Air India has put into operation its newly-leased Airbus A320 Neo with its maiden flight arriving in Chennai from New Delhi.
- The first A320 Neo aircraft with 161 passengers on board touched down at the Chennai International Airport from the Indira Gandhi International Airport at 8.30 pm
- The A320 New Engine Option aircraft is configured with 162 seats, including 12 in the business class. Air India has plans to induct a total of 29 A320 Neos into its fleet by March 2019.
- The fuel-efficient Airbus A320 Neo aircraft is highly environmental-friendly with reduced noise levels and 50% less carbon emissions

R Ashwin breaks Kapil Dev's record for most Test wickets in home season

- Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin added yet another feather to his cap by becoming the highest wicket-taker in a home Test season.
- Ashwin achieved the feat when he snared Mitchell Starc to bundle out Australia for 260 in their first innings on the second day of the ongoing first Test in Pune.
- The lanky Tamil Nadu bowler, who now has 67 wickets from 10 Tests - the most in a home season, surpassed legendary allrounder and former India captain Kapil Dev, who had 63 wickets from 13 matches in the 1979-80 season.
- Meanwhile, Sri Lanka spinner Muttiah Muralitharan holds the No.3 and No.4 spots with 54 wickets in 2001-02 and 2003-04 seasons, respectively.

Three Poets From Maharashtra Conferred with Vishakha Awards

- Three poets from Maharashtra have been conferred with the Vishakha Awards on February 26, 2017 at the Kalidas Kalamandir Hall in Maharashtra during the occasion of Marathi Bhasha Gaurav Din.
- The first prize of Rs 21,000 was given to Dr Yogini Satarkar-Pande from Nanded for her book 'Janivanche Hirve Komb'. She is an English professor at Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University.
- The second prize of Rs 15,000 was given to Mohan Kumbhar from Sindhudurg for his book 'Jagnyache Gatha'. He is a professor at B V Desai College, Kankavli.
- The third prize of Rs 10,000 was given to Vishnu Thore of Nashik for his book 'Dhulpera Usvata'. He is a farmer and an artist from Chandwad tehsil town and has designed over 450 book covers.

- The award which also has a memento and a certificate of honour was presented by senior litterateur Uttam Kamble in key presence of chief guests MLA Balasaheb Sanap, MLA Prof Devyani Farande and registrar Bhonde.

UBI ties up with IRCTC to launch railway booking facility

- Kolkata-based United Bank of India (UBI) has launched a railway ticket booking facility by having a direct tie-up IRCTC.
- The facility was launched on February 21.
- Post the introduction of this facility, UBI customers can now book railway tickets seamlessly through IRCTC website using the bank's debit card

Vivek Chaand Sehgal named EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2016

- Vivek Chaand Sehgal, the 60-year-old chairman of auto parts maker Motherson Sumi Systems Ltd, has been named Indian entrepreneur of the year 2016 by EY, the consulting firm formerly known as Ernst & Young.
- Infosys Ltd co-founder Nandan Nilekani was honoured with a lifetime achievement award for spearheading India's Aadhaar project as head of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).
- Sehgal won the entrepreneur of the year award, based on a self-nomination, largely on the track record he built over the last 17 years during which Motherson Sumi's revenue soared from Rs100 crore in 2000 to around Rs35,000 crore currently.
- In 2015, the company set itself the target of more than tripling its revenue to \$18 billion (Rs1.19 trillion) by 2020.

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

- Dena Bank has introduced RFID-enabled banking cards whereby a branch/relationship manager can identify a valued client entering a branch with the card.
- Once the client enters the branch, complete information about him/her will pop up on the manager's desktop.
- This will help the branch staff to take care of the customer's needs and offer services quickly without any delay.
- When the customer holding the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) card completes the transaction and leaves the bank branch, the system will capture his/her exit, indicating that transactions have been completed.
- This information will go into an analytics system that allows the bank to evaluate how long a customer waited before being helped and how much time the customer spent in completing the transactions and other details of his transactions.
- The RFID card is being introduced in select branches, and Dena Bank JVPD branch (Mumbai) is the first branch to be enabled with RFID technology.

India's 1st hill station bicycle only path in Darjeeling

- Darjeeling has opened the country's first hill station bicycle path, with views of the world's highest mountains as cycling grows in popularity among Indians.
- Darjeeling is reportedly the first hill station in the country to get such a trail, and it is a welcome escape from India's diesel-belching vehicles and tooting horns.
- It is a 20km cycle only trail at an altitude of over 2,000 metres, with thick pine forest under clear blue skies. In the distance the third-highest mountain in the world, Kanchenjunga can be seen. It runs through

Senchal wildlife sanctuary, one of India's oldest nature reserves.

- The route, opened by the local authority at the beginning of January, runs from near Jorebunglow, south of Darjeeling, to a small local eco-village resort.
- Some minimal charges need to be paid to access to the trail.

Online payment of court fees introduced in Goa

- The High Court of Bombay at Goa has introduced online payment of court fees through e-payment gateway in coordination with the Goa Government and National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- The Goa Assembly had last year amended the Court Fees (Goa Amendment) Act, 2016 enabling e-payment of the court fees.
- The High Court in a notice issued on its official website has said that e-payment of court fees would be available for it (the High Court of Bombay at Goa), District and Sessions Courts as well as all subordinate Courts in the coastal state. Presently, all the court fees are paid by way of impressed and adhesive stamps.
- The notice mentions that to avail this service and for making electronic payment of court fees, user must have internet banking account, debit/credit card of respective bank specified by payment gateway website.

School buses must have CCTVs, GPS, speed governors: CBSE

- School buses will now have to be equipped with GPS, CCTV arrangements and speed governors as per the revised guidelines issued by the CBSE to ensure greater safety of children.
- These guidelines have been issued on the directions of Human Resource Development minister Prakash Javadekar after a recent school bus accident in Uttar Pradesh,

- Windows of the bus should be fitted with horizontal grills with mesh wires. School buses should be fitted with speed governors with maximum speed limit of 40 km/h.
- GPS and CCTV arrangement should be made compulsorily in each vehicle and should be in working condition all the time.
- The management and the head of the school will be held responsible for any lapse and it could lead to disaffiliation too. School buses will have to be fitted with alarm bells and sirens

Govt ropes in Shilpa Shetty as Swachh Bharat brand ambassador

- The government has roped in actress Shilpa Shetty as a brand ambassador for the Modi governments cleanliness initiative Swachh Bharat Mission.
- The 41-year-old actress will feature in TV and radio campaigns aimed at discouraging people from littering on roads.
- Soon, campaign posters featuring her will be displayed at various places across the country.
- Littering is a major problem in urban areas wherein people, specially vendors or shopkeepers, do not use bins to throw the waste, he said.
- The Ministry has also approached other celebrities like Priyanka Chopra to support the mission, which aims cleanliness and eradication of open defecation by 2019.
- Shetty is the latest entrant in the list of the missions ambassadors like Amitabh Bachchan, Salman Khan, Shankar Mahadevan and Sachin Tendulkar

Kumar Sangakkara becomes second Asian to feature in 1000 matches

- Former Sri Lankan skipper Kumar Sangakkara is undoubtedly one of the finest



left handed batsmen to have ever played the game. Despite having retired from the international cricket over a year ago, the elegant batsman continues to play his trade in different T20 leagues around the world. Currently, he is leading the Karachi Kings in the ongoing second edition of the Pakistan Super League. On 23 February, when he stepped on the field for the Kings against the Quetta Gladiators, he entered the record books.

- He became only the 16th player and the second Asian batsman to play 1000 professional matches. He joined the elite list that has his former Sri Lanka team mate Mahela Jayawardene in the list. Mahela Jayawardene was the first Asian to accomplish the rare feat. His career has spanned for close to a decade and a half and that serves as the time frame during which the southpaw played the game of cricket.

New Zipline Connects Spain and Portugal

- Limite Zero, a new zipline that connects Sanlucar de Guadiana, in Andalucia, Spain, to Alcoutim, in Algarve, Portugal—which is one hour behind. A privately funded passion project of Englishman David Jarman, the 2,362-foot-long zipline (called "la tirolina" in Spain) crosses the Guadiana River at 50 feet above sea level.
- A 4x4 takes you to the departing platform, set near Spain's San Marco Castle, and in less than a minute, you arrive on the Portuguese side, no passport required. (Speeds can reach up to 45 miles per hour.) A short walk takes you to Alcoutim village, where a small passenger ferry awaits anyone who needs a ride back to Spain; fare is included in the 15 euro price.

Gujarat Assembly Passes Bill To Impose Complete Ban On Hookah Bars

- The Gujarat Assembly on Thursday passed an amendment bill which proposes a total ban on hookah bars and imposes maximum jail term of three years on those operating such joints despite absolute restriction.
- The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution)(Gujarat Amendment), Bill, 2017 was passed through majority voice vote by ruling BJP members in the absence of Congress MLAs.
- Advertisement opens in new window
- The Bill, which proposes some amendments to the present COTP Act, has replaced an Ordinance passed by Gujarat Government in December last year in this regard, after which, all the hookah bars in the state have been asked to shut their shops with immediate effect.
- In his speech explaining the need to bring such amendment Bill, Gujarat Minister of State for Home Pradeepsinh Jadeja told the House that the current Act does not cover hookah bars in it.
- As per the Bill, running a hookah bar in Gujarat will be considered as an offence punishable under this Act, the minister added.
- Running a hookah bar will be considered as a cognizable offence which would attract a maximum fine of Rs 50,000 and a jail term up to three years, he said.

Somali president names Hassan Ali Khaire prime minister

- Somalia's new President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed has chosen political newcomer Hassan Ali Khaire, a former oil company executive, as the country's prime minister.

- Mohamed took office peacefully this month after legislators selected him from 21 possible candidates. A dual US-Somali citizen with a reputation as a technocrat, he has promised to tackle hunger, corruption and violence in Somalia, which has been mired in civil war for a quarter of a century.
- Khaire is a dual Norwegian citizen who once worked as a primary school teacher in Norway and also for the Norwegian Refugee Council before joining British energy explorer Soma Oil and Gas.

Rajasthan 2nd largest crude oil producer in country: Governor

- Rajasthan has become the second largest crude oil producer in the country after the offshore field Bombay High, Governor Kalyan Singh said in the Assembly today, highlighting the achievements of the state government.
- The state government has been working for the last few years for increasing happiness index in the state. Positive efforts have been made by the government to link every section of the society with mainstream by providing them the benefits of welfare schemes and through responsible, transparent and sensitive functioning,"



AYUSH Minister to inaugurate the World Integrated Medicine Forum on Regulation of Homeopathic Medicine

- Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AYUSH, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik will inaugurate the World Integrated Medicine Forum on Regulation of Homeopathic Medicinal Products: National and Global strategies in New Delhi . This is the first-of-its-kind forum considering the increased perception of the international world towards India as a key player in the progress of the homoeopathy drug industry,. Drug

lawmakers, regulators, manufacturers and pharmacopeial experts from various regulatory authorities, eminent scientific organisations and pharmaceutical industries from 25 countries, are participating in the two days forum to strategize the actionable aspects in the homoeopathic drug industry, which, in turn, will promote global harmonisation in the sector. The event is organised by Ministry of AYUSH and Central Council for Research in Homeopathy (CCRH) and supported by Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIMH) & Central Drugs Standard Control Organization...

J&K weddings: Govt limits number of guests and food served

- The Jammu and Kashmir government has banned the big fat weddings to curb the wastage of food in these social events.
- The restructuring, announced by the state government is aimed at the number of guests invited for weddings, engagement parties to avoid wastage of food during these functions.
- Now you can only invite 500 guests for a daughter's wedding and 400 for a son's wedding. For the ring ceremonies people can invite 100 guests
- If the implementing agencies found anyone violating the government orders they will have to face the law.
- Kashmiri weddings are prolonged and lavish celebrations where tonnes of meat and rice is consumed which allegedly causes sharp rises in local food prices during the fall.
- The state government has asked the deputy commissioners of the state to implement the decision and ensure its full implication.
- The government has also restricted number of dishes served during the wedding: seven non-veg and seven vegetarian dishes can be

made available in marriages besides two items of sweets or ice cream.

PM releases the book "Judicial Reforms – Recent Global Trends"

- The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, released the book "Judicial Reforms – Recent Global Trends" and presented the first copy to President Pranab Mukherjee.
- The book, written by Dalveer Bhandari, a judge at the International Court of Justice, talks about the need of judicial reforms.
- "The simple point which I am trying to drive at is that it is high time for all of us to collectively not only think but also to act how to address these issues. Without Bench, without adequate infrastructure, we cannot have any sort of reforms worthwhile," Mukherjee said.

AAI, IATA launch e-billing solution for airport operators

- The state-owned AAI, along with International Air Transport Association (IATA) launched its e-billing solution for airport operators and air navigation services providers across the world.
- Developed in-house, the electronic billing solution for data, e-invoicing and collection of tariff from the airlines is being used by the AAI for several years now.
- The e-billing solution, "SKYREV360" will help airport operators and air navigation services providers worldwide to overcome the issues of revenue leakages, besides reducing redundancies
- The launch of the e-billing solution for global clients is aimed at shoring up Airports Authority of India's revenue

Bharat Financial launches instant micro loan facility

- Microfinance institution Bharat Financial Inclusion Ltd today launched an initiative for instant loan approval and disbursed them to three women in a village near Bassi in Jaipur district.
- The initiative is expected to help rural areas embrace cashless transactions.
- The loans are cashless since they are deposited directly to the loanee's bank account.
- Three women were approved instant loans through the technology in Dev village near Bassi
- It will now be rolled out by June 2017 across the country in the microfinance company's nationwide network with several being in Rajasthan, Bihar and Delhi.
- Rao also said that it will boost operational efficiencies, enhance customer satisfaction and reduce the risk of fake customers.
- The company provides non collateral loans up to Rs 60,000 for one year to women in rural areas.

India to host Combined World Cup for shooting in 2019

- India will be hosting the Combined World Cup for shooting in 2019, a qualifying event for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, which will further boost the country's profile as a global shooting destination.
- The National Rifle Association of India's (NRAI) bid was approved by the International Shooting Sport Federation's Executive Board in its meeting held in New Delhi.
- Combined World Cup comprises all the three categories — shotgun, rifle and pistol, and at stake in the 2019 edition will be a number of quota places for the Tokyo Games.
- The tournament will be one of the last few events heading into the quadrennial extravaganza in the Japanese capital.

- In the upcoming tournament, a total of 50 countries will be represented by 452 athletes and among them will be reigning and former Olympic champions, world champions and continental champions lining up against India's top guns.

Ms. Suman Saxena takes charge as the Whole Time Member of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)

- Ms. Suman Saxena took charge as the Whole Time Member, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).
- She will look after Research and Regulation Wing comprising Corporate Insolvency, Corporate Liquidation, Individual Insolvency, Individual Bankruptcy, Research and Publications, Data Management and Dissemination and Advocacy.
- She will also look after National Insolvency Programme, Continuing Professional Programme, and Knowledge Management and Partnership.
- She served as a member of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service for over 35 years. Her last assignment was Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General, where she oversaw three important sectors, namely, defence, communications and railways.
- She has also been the Director of National Academy of Audit and Accounts.



Airtel buys Telenor India

- Bharti Airtel Ltd agreed to acquire the assets of Telenor ASA's India business, as the country's biggest telecom operator seeks to preserve its position in a market where new entrant Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd's aggressive pricing has spurred a wave of consolidation.
- As part of the deal, Airtel will assume the Telenor unit's liabilities related to licence fees and lease obligations for phone towers

- The transaction, which won't involve any cash payments to Telenor, will give Airtel access to 44 million customers (increasing its user base to 307 million), 43.4 megahertz (MHz) of spectrum in the 1,800MHz band and 20,000 base stations.

Azerbaijan strongman Ilham Aliyev names wife as vice-president

- Azerbaijan's president Ilham Aliyev has named his wife as his deputy, tightening the family's grip on power in the small former Soviet oil-producing state.
- Mehriban Aliyeva will become Azerbaijan's first vice-president
- He binstalled the first lady as the country's second most powerful person and consolidated her position as a frontrunner to succeed her husband.
- Energy-rich Azerbaijan has been controlled by the Aliyev family for most of the past five decades. Mr Aliyev's father Heydar was head of the country's governing Communist party before becoming president of the post-Soviet republic in 1993. His son took over as leader in 2003.

Justice Sapre to head Cauvery Tribunal

- Supreme Court sitting judge Justice Abhay Manohar Sapre will head the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, a post that had been lying vacant for nearly one year.
- Supreme Court Chief Justice J S Khehar has nominated Justice Sapre as the tribunal chairman. The post was vacant after the resignation of Justice B S Chauhan following his appointment as Law Commission chairman, in March 2016.
- Before his elevation to the Supreme Court, Sapre served as chief justice of Gauhati High Court and the High Court of Manipur.
- He also served as judge at Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan High Courts. He was

appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court and assumed charge on August 13, 2014. He is due to retire on August 27, 2019.

- The appointment of Sapre assumes significance since the Supreme Court is set to hear the Cauvery case on a regular basis from March 21.

Amarinder Singh's biography 'The People's Maharaja' released

- Punjab Congress chief Amarinder Singh's biography, 'The People's Maharaja', was released
- The authorised biography of the erstwhile scion of Patiala royalty, authored by Chandigarh-based writer Khushwant Singh, sheds a new light on the sequence of events that led to the 1984 army action at Golden temple in Amritsar.

UK Names Cressida Dick As London's First Female Police Chief

- Britain appointed experienced counter-terrorism officer Cressida Dick as London's new police chief, the first woman to hold the job.
- She is best known for heading an operation which led to the killing of an innocent Brazilian.
- Ms Dick, 56, who left the Metropolitan Police in 2015 to work for Britain's Foreign Office, becomes the most senior officer in the country, heading a force of some 43,000 officers and staff
- Highly respected and popular with ordinary officers, Ms Dick joined the London force in 1983 as a constable and made her way up the ranks including a spell back in charge of her hometown of Oxford.
- In July 2005, she was in charge of the operation that led to Jean Charles de Menezes, 27, being shot seven times in the

head on a Tube train at Stockwell station in south London after he was mistaken for a would-be suicide bomber.

Sebi Eases Norms For Debt Mutual Fund Investment In Housing Finance Firms

- Debt mutual funds can now invest up to 15 per cent of their total net assets in housing finance companies with Sebi easing the regulations in this regard.
- The norms have been relaxed as part of efforts to channelise more funds towards affordable housing activities.
- Debt mutual funds were allowed to have an exposure of only up to 10 per cent to housing finance companies. This has been increased to 15 per cent with the immediate effect subject to certain conditions.
- According to the regulator, the guidelines for sectoral exposure in debt oriented mutual fund schemes put a limit of 25 per cent at the sector level and an additional exposure not exceeding 10 per cent (over and above the limit of 25 per cent) in financial services sector only to HFCs (Housing Finance Companies).

Vodafone Offers 'Private Recharge Mode' Without Disclosing Number

- In a step to maintain secrecy of one's mobile phone number getting exposed to retailers for possible misuse, Vodafone on Wednesday introduced its Private Recharge Mode for its subscribers in West Bengal.
- Vodafone Private Recharge Mode (PRM)- a free of cost service for West Bengal subscribers, enables users to recharge their mobile phones, without sharing their mobile numbers with retailers.
- To avail the Vodafone PRM option, a customer needs to send a toll free SMS - 'Private' - to 12604 and would be provided

with an OTP, which can be used for subsequent recharges till midnight of the same day at any multi-brand outlets.

- The customer simply needs to share the OTP, instead of the mobile number with the retailer

Netanyahu is first Israeli prime minister to visit Australia

- Benjamin Netanyahu arrived in Sydney on Wednesday on the first visit to Australia by a serving Israeli prime minister.
- Netanyahu will start his four-day visit with talks with his Australian counterpart Malcolm Turnbull at his official Sydney address.
- High on the list of discussion topics is likely to be whether Israel remains committed to a two-state solution to resolve the Palestinian conflict and whether Netanyahu will heed President Donald Trump's call to "pull back" on settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank.
- Netanyahu and Turnbull will sign agreements on technology and air services as well as discuss expanding co-operation in areas including cyber-security, innovation and science.

India win 'Handball-on-skates' World Championship

- short by Abhishek Bansal / 10:25 pm on 22 Feb 2017, Wednesday
- India won the men's Roll Ball World Cup Championship as they beat Iran 8-7 in the final on Wednesday.
- India also won the tournament in the women's category, defeating Iran 6-4 in the final.
- Roll Ball is a combination of roller-skating, handball, and basketball, and it was invented by an Indian sports teacher Raju Dabhade in 2003.

Punjab bans manufacture of gutkha, pan masala

- Punjab government has prohibited the manufacture, storage, sale or distribution of food products containing tobacco or nicotine like gutkha and pan masala in the state for one year.
- The ban also applies on processed, flavoured, scented, chewing tobacco, whether they are packaged or unpackaged or sold as one or separate products, an official spokesperson said.
- The decision has been taken in view of the orders of the Supreme Court wherein it observed that to circumvent ban of sale of gutkha, the manufacturers are selling pan masala (without tobacco) with flavored chewing tobacco in separate sachet

Namma Metro enters into a 'First in India' strategic partnership with Ola

- Ola, India's most popular mobile app for transportation, has entered into a first of its kind partnership with Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited.
- The association will enable easy and affordable mobility experience for commuters as key stations on the metro route get equipped with dedicated Ola kiosks.
- With this association, Ola aims to provide a consistent mobility experience to hundreds of thousands of passengers, who use the Bangalore Metro service for their daily commute.
- Consumers will have access to Ola's wide range of mobility solutions including, Micro, Mini, Share, Prime and Lux. Ola representatives will also be available at the kiosks to help commuters get a reliable ride with ease. The Ola Kiosks will be operational from March 2017 in Trinity, Cubbon Park, City Railway Station, Peenya,



Goraguntepalya, Yeshwanthpur and Mahalaxmi metro stations.

First Gramin Khel Mahotsav to be held next month in Delhi

- Union Sports Minister Vijay Goel announced that the first Gramin Khel Mahotsav will be held from 25th to 31st of next month in New Delhi.
- Addressing a press conference in the national capital, Goel said the games will be held in five sports disciplines Athletics, Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Volley Ball and Wrestling. He said a need has been felt to deepen the sports culture among the rural youth.
- The Sports Minister said this festival will help participation of rural youth in large numbers in popular sports and encourage them to achieve excellence and adopt healthy life style.
- These games are intended to act as a catalyst to promote sports in rural areas across the country and will be replicated in other states and union territories as well.
- In order to capture the popular imagination and encourage the youth of Delhi to take keen interest in sports, renowned wrestlers Sushil Kumar, Yogeshwar Dutt and Geeta Phogat are being invited to participate in demonstration matches.

Abhijit Sarkar appointed Vice President of Asian Hockey Federation

- The Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) on Wednesday confirmed the appointment of Abhijit Sarkar as it's new Vice Chairman and also the Chairman of the AHF Commercial and TV Committee with immediate effect.
- Abhijit Sarkar has been associated with the Sahara India Pariwar for last 24 years, where he led the group in promoting various sports in India by sponsoring both the Indian

National Cricket Team as well as the Indian National Hockey Team.

- Sarkar has served as the Head of Corporate Communications, Corporate Affairs and Relations, and the Sports Division at Sahara India Pariwar. His ability to form and execute strategies relating to the promotion of sports in India has played a major role in his appointment as the Vice President of AHF.
- Abhijit Sarkar has also been deeply involved in the development of Indian hockey in recent times, as under his leadership Sahara India bought the Uttar Pradesh Wizards' franchise in the ongoing Hockey India League (HIL). Earlier this year, Sahara had also renewed its sponsorship with Hockey India until 2021 which includes promoting both the men's and women's senior and junior teams

Health Secretary launches 'SAATHIYA' Resource Kit and 'SAATHIYA SALAH' Mobile App for Adolescents

- Shri C K Mishra, Secretary, Health and Family Welfare launched the SAATHIYA Resource Kit including 'Saathiya Salah' Mobile App for adolescents as part of the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) program.
- One of the key interventions under the programme is introduction of the Peer Educators (Saathiyas) who act as a catalyst for generating demand for the adolescent health services and imparting age appropriate knowledge on key adolescent health issues to their peer groups.
- In order to equip the Saathiyas in doing so, the Health Ministry has launched the Saathiya Resource Kit (including 'Saathiya Salah' Mobile App).
- To address and cater to the health and development needs of the country's adolescents, Ministry of Health and Family

Welfare launched Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) in January 2014.

- RKSK identifies six strategic priorities for adolescents i.e. nutrition, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), non-communicable diseases (NCDs), substance misuse, injuries and violence (including gender-based violence) and mental health.
- This Resource Kit comprises i) Activity Book, ii) Bhranti-Kranti Game iii) Question-Answer Book and iv) Peer Educator Diary. In addition to the kit is the mobile app 'Saathiya Salah' (downloadable from Google play-store) which acts as a ready information source for the adolescents in case they are unable to interact with the Peer Educators.
- The mobile app is also linked to another important piece of cost-effective information platform of a toll-free Saathiya Helpline (1800-233-1250) which will act as an e-counselor.

Coast Guard ship Ayush commissioned

- Adding to the growing strength of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG), vice admiral A R Karve, flag officer commanding-in-chief, Southern Naval Command, commissioned CGS Ayush, the final vessel in the series of twenty fast patrol vessels (FPVs) designed and built by the Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL)
- The ship will be under command of Commandant Asheesh Sharma and will be under operational control of the commander, Coast Guard region (east), Chennai.
- The 50-m-long ship having a maximum speed of 33 knots was delivered to the CG on December 30, 2016, almost three months ahead of contractual schedule.

India launches 'Cyber Swachhta Kendra' to protect citizens

- The government through its Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-in) launched "Cyber Swachhta Kendra" — a new desktop and mobile security solution for a secure cyber space in the country. The new solution will notify, enable cleaning and secure systems of end-users to prevent further infections.
- This centre will work in coordination with the internet service providers (ISPs) and Industry.
- This Kendra will also enhance awareness among citizens regarding botnet and malware infection along with measures to be taken to secure their devices
- Part of the solution, USB Pratirodh is a desktop security solution that controls the usage of removable storage media like pen drives, external hard drives and other USB-supported mass storage devices.
- M-Kavach tool offers a comprehensive mobile device security solution for Android devices addressing threats related to mobile phones.
- AppSamvid is a desktop solution which protects systems by allowing installation of genuine applications through white listing.
- This helps in preventing threats from malicious applications.
- The Cyber Swachhta Kendra is part of the government of India's Digital India initiative under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

Dish TV partners with ICICI Bank for digital payments

- Direct-to-home operator Dish TV has tied-up with private lender ICICI Bank for digital payments.
- The new payment method which is another customer-oriented initiative in the DTH industry to recharge through unified payment interface (UPI) transactions

- This alliance with ICICI Bank through UPI will drive higher customer adoption and allow them to be a part of the digital economy.
- This will also aid our vastly spread customers with or without Internet access to recharge conveniently

Digital payments: Govt launches its own QR code platform - BharatQR

- In yet another move to aid digital or cashless payments in the post-demonetized economy, the government launched BharatQR its own QR code platform.
- BharatQR will be the first platform with interoperability which will allow payments from various cards, including Visa and Mastercard.
- QR code or Quick Response code is a two-dimensional machine-readable code made up of an array of black and white squares, used for storing URLs or other information for reading by the camera on a smartphone.
- It will make payments seamless for the buyer, making them possible without card swiping machines. It will also enable the buyer to make payments to retailers without using the merchant's ID or number
- BharatQR will also let the users make Aadhaar-enabled payments and through UPI.

EDII wins International Mercury Award 2016-17

- The Ahmedabad-based Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), an acknowledged national resource institute for entrepreneurship education, research, training and institution-building, has received the prestigious International Mercury Awards for the year 2016-17 for the best overall presentation of its 2015-2016 annual report.
- Instituted by MerComm, Inc. the world's only independent awards organization, the

International Mercury Awards, honor outstanding achievement in professional communications in around 80 countries

- Founded in 1987, the Mercury Awards promote excellence, quality and performance in the various fields of public relations.
- The award entertains participation from agencies, associations, corporations, government agencies, nonprofit groups, and organizations from around 80 countries worldwide every year.
- Judges from the International Academy of Communications Arts and Sciences (IACAS) evaluate entries on the basis of objectivity, audience connection, use of imagination and original solutions, use of illustration and overall expression of the message

TCS chairman N Chandrasekaran takes over as chief of Tata Sons

- Tata group entered into a new era on Tuesday as N Chandrasekaran took over as chief of the holding company of multinational conglomerate.
- Along with chairmanship of Tata Sons, Chandrasekaran will also be holding the chairmanship of the group's crown jewel Tata Consultancy Services.
- One of his major focus areas will be the European operations of Tata Steel, particularly in the UK which has become a drag to the group after the unsuccessful acquisition of Corus.
- While Tata Steel has already started selling assets in the UK, Chandra will have to decide how much assets are to be put on the block and how much could be turned around, especially keeping in mind the implications of Brexit.

Kashmir to observe 2017 as the 'Year of Apple'

- Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti declared 2017 as 'Year of Apple' in a major bid to promote the famed Kashmiri apples in domestic and foreign markets.
- The Chief Minister launched the High Density Apple Plantation Scheme in Srinagar. These high-density plants will be routed through J&K Bank along with the subsidy.
- Fifty per cent subsidy would be provided by the government to the farmers under the scheme,
- These facilities would be set up at Jablipora in Anantnag and Aglar in Pulwama in first stage, besides establishment of e-markets for the online sale of the produce
- The government has launched a Market Intervention Scheme to stabilise the rates of apple produce and benefit growers. A network of mandies is being laid to maximise direct interface between growers and buyers
- Jammu and Kashmir is the largest apple producing State in India at 11.2 metric tonnes, which accounts for 71% of national production

Trump Chooses H.R. McMaster as National Security Adviser

- President Trump appointed Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster as his new national security adviser picking a widely respected military strategist known for challenging conventional thinking and helping to turn around the Iraq war in its darkest days.
- A battle-tested veteran of both the Persian Gulf war and the second Iraq war, General McMaster is considered one of the military's most independent-minded officers, sometimes at a cost to his own career.
- The selection encouraged Republicans who admire General McMaster and waged a behind-the-scenes campaign to persuade Mr. Trump to select him.

SpaceX Launches 1st Private Rocket from Historic NASA Pad

- SpaceX has launched the first private rocket from the same historic site that saw some of NASA's greatest space missions, then landed a booster nearby in a resounding success.
- The California-based company's Falcon 9 rocket launched a robotic Dragon cargo capsule toward the International Space Station from Launch Complex 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center — the same pad that once hosted Apollo moon missions and space shuttle launches.
- The Falcon 9's first stage came back to Earth successfully, landing a few miles from the Florida launch site about 8 minutes after liftoff as planned.
- It was SpaceX's first daytime landing at the site, called Landing Zone 1, at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.

Tata Steel's Katamati Mine wins Best Green Award

- Tata Steel's Katamati iron mine has been honoured with the the Best Green Organisation of the Year Award at the Global Green Future Leadership Awards in recognition of its environmental protection measures.
- The award was presented at a function organised by World CSR Day
- Katamati iron mine has been engaged in environmental protection efforts for years and has successfully implemented Environmental Management System as per the requirements of ISO 14001:2004
- The Global Green Future Leadership Awards is for any organisation that participates in environmentally friendly or green activities to ensure that all processes, products, and manufacturing activities adequately address environmental concerns while maintaining a

profit.

Virat Kohli first Indian sportsperson to ink Rs 100-cr deal with Puma

- Virat Kohli became the first Indian sports personality to strike a Rs 100-crore endorsement deal with a single brand
- Kohli signed an eight-year deal with sports apparel brand Puma worth Rs 110 crore. The Indian cricket captain is now set to join the likes of Usain Bolt, Asafa Powell and Thierry Henry, among others, as a global ambassador for the brand.
- The long-term deal could potentially cover Kohli's remaining career with the Indian team. A bulk of the endorsement deal, estimated between Rs 12 crore to 14 crore annually, is locked up in fixed payout.
- Only Sachin Tendulkar and Mahendra Singh Dhoni have been in the Rs 100-crore club through multi-year contracts with talent management agencies, but they have never been signed by a single brand for such a big amount.



- American Ryan Harrison beat Nikoloz Basilashvili of Georgia 6-1 6-4 to win his first ATP title at the Memphis Open.

Microsoft-Flikpkart announce strategic tie-up

- IT giant Microsoft today announced a "strategic partnership" with Flipkart, wherein as a first step, the online retailer will adopt Microsoft Azure as its exclusive public cloud platform.
- The strategic partnership was aimed at providing consumers in the country the best online shopping service,
- Starting with computing infrastructure, Microsoft Azure will ultimately add a layer of advanced cloud technologies and analytics to Flipkart's existing data centres.
- Flipkart in its tenth year of operations had taken e-commerce to about 50 million customers and the question now was how to take this to 500 million people in the next ten years.
- Flipkart plans to leverage artificial intelligence, machine learning and analytics capabilities in Azure, such as Cortana Intelligence Suite and Power BI, to optimise its data for innovative merchandising, advertising, marketing and customer service.
- With 'powerful insights' about its business and new, intelligent services, Flipkart can deliver increasingly relevant and personalised experiences to its customers

Jo Wilfried-Tsonga beats David Goffin to win Rotterdam Open

- Jo-Wilfried Tsonga engineered a comeback to defeat David Goffin at the Rotterdam Open and earn a first ATP title
- Tsonga moved up to 11th in the world rankings Goffin, playing his second ATP final in a row after losing in Sofia to Grigor Dimitrov, is set to become the first Belgian man to enter the world top 10.
- In Buenos Aires, Japan's world number five and top seed Kei Nishikori suffered a surprise defeat by Alexandr Dolgoplov in the Argentina Open final.
- Ukraine's Dolgoplov won 7-6 (7-4) 6-4 on the clay to win his third ATP title and first in five years.

Bihar Government Prohibits State Officials from Consuming Liquor Anywhere In The World

- After making Bihar a dry state in keeping with his 2015 Assembly election promise, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has taken his policy to a whole new level.
- The minister has made a new rule, according to which, no officials of the state government are allowed to consume liquor

outside the state or country. Bihar is the only state to have passed such a rule.

- State's governor declared an amendment to the Bihar Government Servants' Conduct Rules 1976 and said the rule was effective immediately.
- The decision was taken by Nitish during a Cabinet meeting. The government officials have gone a step ahead to sign pledges promising that they would abstain from consuming alcohol anywhere in the world.
- Guilty officials will either be dismissed, suspended or face salary cuts.

Khajuraho Dance Festival 2017

- The Khajuraho Dance Festival started at Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh from February 20, 2017. The seven day festival will conclude on February 26, 2017.
- The dance festival is conducted every year by the Madhya Pradesh Kala Parishad.
- This cultural festival showcases various Indian classical dance styles such as Kathak, Bharathanatyam, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Manipuri and Kathakali with performances of some of the best exponents in the field.
- The dances are performed in an open-air auditorium, usually in front of the Chitragupta Temple dedicated to Surya (the Sun God) and the Vishvanatha Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- Some of the activities to be undertaken as a part of the festival include, international art conclave, dialogue on art, documentaries, short films among others

Bangalore to host India's next Davis Cup tie in April

- India will host Uzbekistan on the hard courts of Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA) in Bangalore when the two sides clash in an Asia Oceania Zone group I Davis Cup tie in April, the AITA announced

- India outplayed New Zealand 4-1 at home while Uzbekistan beat Korea 3-1 in the away first round tie early this month.
- The last time India played in Bangalore was in September 2014 when the hosts lost 2-3 to formidable Serbia in a World Group Play off tie.
- India and Uzbekistan are locked 2-2 in Head-to-Head record and the last time two teams clashed against each other was in April 2012 when Uzbekistan emerged 3-2 winners in a home tie.
- It will be the first tie for veteran Mahesh Bhupathi as the non-playing captain of India and the team for the second round rubber will be picked in the first week of March.
- The winner of the tie will advance to the World Group Play-offs, to be held in September.

India Vetiver Network (INVN) has been launched at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University

- About 250 delegates are participating in this conference. India Vetiver Network (INVN) a non-profit scientific network to promote vetiver in India, was launched as part of the conference. Vetiver (Indian grass with fragrant root) has worldwide application to tackle many environmental issues like soil erosion, mitigation of soil and water pollution.
- Emeritus professor of Banaras Hindu University, G P Dubey today emphasised the need for validation of traditional knowledge to keep pace with the growth of world market for medicinal plants. Speaking at the two-day National Conference on Agrotechnology and Profitable marketing of Tropical Medicinal and Aromatic Plants here, Dubey pointed out that a few medicinal plants grown in Tamil Nadu were proven to be efficacious for the management of type 2

diabetes.

Indian films 'Newton' and 'Aaba' bag top honours at Berlin Film Festival

- Two Indian films bagged top honours at the annual Berlin International Film Festival
- Rajkummar Rao-starrer Newton, directed by Amit V Masurkar, won the CICAIE Art Cinema Award presented by the independent jury of the International Confederation of Art House Cinemas. Amar Kaushik's short film, Aaba, won the Special Prize of Generation KPlus International Jury for Best Short Film. Aaba was produced by No One Killed Jessica (2011) director Rajkumar Gupta.
- Newton, co-written by Mayank Tiwari, was selected in the international forum of new cinema and had its premiere on February 10. It was attended by Rajkummar with co-stars Anjali Patil and Pankaj Tripathi, director Masurkar and producer Manish Mundra
- The CICAIE forms two juries for every Berlinale, one of them for the forum programme in which Newton was nominated along with 42 films. The jury comprised Spanish film composer, Pedro Barbadillo; Croatian director Tanja Milicic, and French producer Rainer Wothe.

'Hema Malini: Beyond the Dream Girl' launched

- Dream Girl Hema Malini's incredible journey from an actor, a danseuse and filmmaker to a politician is being chronicled in a new book which will hit stores on her 69th birthday this October. Billed as an authorised biography, 'Hema Malini: Beyond the Dream Girl' is penned by author-columnist Ram Kamal Mukherjee.
- The book will be published on her birthday on October 16.
- A truly multi-faceted personality, Hema Malini has been a filmmaker and producer, directing films and television serials, a

Member of Parliament from Mathura, and has also performed the classical dance ballets Draupadi, Radha Krishna and Durga

Akhil Kumar and Jitender Kumar turn professional boxers

- Melbourne Commonwealth Games gold medalist boxer Akhil Kumar and Olympian Jitender Kumar today confirmed turning professional after signing a multi-year deal with IOS Boxing, the company which has been managing Vijender Singh's pro-boxing career.
- Both the boxers are expected to make their pro debut when Vijender will take on China's WBO Oriental Super Middleweight champion Zulpikar Maimaitiali in Mumbai on April 1.
- 28-year-old Olympian Jitender Kumar won bronze medal in the 2006 Commonwealth Games



NASA to create Space Technology Research Institutes for Deep Space Exploration

- In order to focus on deep space missions, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has proposed to set up of two multi-disciplinary, university-led research institutes that will work to develop technologies having potential to extend human presence deeper into the solar system.
- The Space Technology Research Institutes (STRIs) will be created in the two institutes namely Centre for the Utilization of Biological Engineering in Space (CUBES) and Institute for Ultra-Strong Composites by Computational Design (US-COMP) with expected outcome within 5 years.
- The new STRIs created under the proposals will bring together researchers from various disciplines and organizations to collaborate on the advancement of cutting-edge

technologies in bio-manufacturing and space infrastructure.

- Through the new institutes NASA aims to shift the focus from low-earth orbit to deep space missions by way of developing technologies that will allow long-duration mission crews to manufacture the products they need rather than relying on the current practice of resupply missions from Earth.
- The technological advancement will meet their goal of creating Earth-independent, self-sustaining exploration mission capabilities.
- Each STRI will receive up to \$15 million over the five-year period of performance.

Haryana's Sandeep Kumar breaks own national record in 50km Race Walking Championship

- Sandeep Kumar of Haryana smashed his own national record en route to winning the gold medal in the gruelling men's 50km event of the National Race Walking Championships
- Sandeep clocked three hours 55 minutes and 59.05 seconds in a brilliant performance to win the race and qualify for the London World Championships in August. The earlier national record which stood in his name was 3:56:22 which he clocked in the IAAF World Race Walking Cup at Taicang, China in May 2014.
- Services athletes Jitender Singh (4:02:11.58) and Chandan Singh (4:04:18.41) won the silver and bronze respectively in the energy-sapping race. Both Jitender and Chandan also booked their berths for the August 4-13 World Championships.
- The entry standard for the men's 50km race walk event for the World Championships is 4:06:00.



- T C A Ranganathan and Sunil Mehta were appointed as Non-Official Directors in Indian Overseas Bank and Punjab National Bank respectively.
- The Appointments Committee of Cabinet has cleared their appointment as Non-Official Director/Non-Executive Chairman in the respective banks for a period of three years
- Mehta's appointment is subject to a condition that he needs to resign from the board of State Bank of India before joining the new post.

India's only volcano active again

- India's only live volcano in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands has started spewing smoke and lava again.
- After lying dormant for 150 years, Barren Island volcano erupted in 1991 and has been showing sporadic activity since then, scientists of Goabased National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) said.
- Researchers from Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and NIO have sampled sediments and water in the vicinity and recovered coal-like black pyroclastic material representing proximal volcanic ejecta.
- These samples will help in deciphering the nature of present and past volcanic activity in the region.
- The volcanic island is uninhabited and its northern part is, as the name suggests, barren and devoid of vegetation. Indian citizens can visit the island by chartered boats after obtaining permission from the forest department in Port Blair.

First foreign airline AirAsia lands at Srinagar airport

- AirAsia became the first foreign airline ever to start its operations from Srinagar international airport in Jammu and Kashmir.

Ranganathan, Mehta appointed Non-Official Director in IOB, PNB

- Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti waved the flag to clear the landing for the AirAsia flight at Srinagar airport on Sunday morning.
- Srinagar airport is christened 'The Sheikh-ul-Alam International Airport' for the last five years, but no foreign airlines has operated services from there so far.
- The flight operation by AirAsia is expected to give a fillip to tourism in the valley.
- To begin with, AirAsia, a Malaysian low-cost airline, will operate one flight daily between Delhi and Srinagar.

Oriental Bank launches mobile wallet 'Batuaa'

- On the occasion of its 75th Foundation Day, Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) has come up with several digital offerings including launch of mobile wallet 'Oriental Batuaa'.
- Besides introducing a new version of mobile banking, OBC has also launched two new cards
- While the Oriental Premium card is a RuPay based Platinum international debit card with airport lounge access, the other card- Oriental Prepaid Card is a RuPay card for individuals and corporates.
- The two MSME schemes that have been launched are 'Oriental Sanjeevani' and 'Oriental Budget Hotels and Restaurants'.
- Oriental Sanjeevani is a specialised scheme for doctors for setting up new hospitals and clinics. The other scheme is for individuals, proprietors, companies etc for setting up new hotels, restaurants, lodges, motels etc.



- The agreement signed by ARF with Railways will seek to introduce accrual accounting at 17 Railway zones and 8 production units across the country, sources said. The agreement will be valid for 18 months.
- The agreement was signed by V. Sagar, Director, ICAI ARF and Secretary, ICAI and Sanjeev Sharma, Deputy Chief Project Manager (Accounting Reforms), Northern Railway in the presence of Shahzad Shah, Financial Commissioner, Indian Railways and Nilesh Shivji Vikamsey, Chairman, ICAI ARF and President, ICAI.
- The interesting aspect is that accrual based financial statements will serve as an additional set of accounts to existing cash based accounting.
- Accrual based financial statement will support Indian Railways in better utilisation of available resources, estimation of future liabilities and prioritisation of spending. It will also pave way for best financial management practices to be introduced in Indian Railways.
- This agreement follows implementation of the pilot project for introduction of the Accrual based Financial Statement as an additional set of Accounts at North Western Railway at Jaipur and Rail Coach Factory at Kapurthala by ICAI ARF.
- The CA Institute's ARF will not be implementing this on a pro-bono basis

Indian Navy Inducts First All-women Global Circumnavigation Vessel 'Tarini'

- The Indian Navy's second sailboat 'Tarini' was inducted into service
- The vessel is slated to be the platform for the first Indian all-women global circumnavigation by the Indian Navy to begin in August.
- The sailboat Tarini is being inducted into the Navy and is slated to be the platform for

ICAI's Accounting Research Foundation signs pact with Railways

- After a long wait, the decks have been cleared for the national rollout of accrual accounting in Railways. The CA Institute's Accounting Research Foundation (ARF) has signed an agreement with Railways for this purpose.

First Indian All-Women Circumnavigation of the globe expedition of the Indian Navy,

- Extensive trials of the newly-built vessel were successfully completed in January.
- The boat is skippered by Lieutenant Commander Vartika Joshi and crew members include Lieutenant Commander Pratibha Jamwal, Lieutenant Aishwarya Boddapati, Lieutenant Patarapalli Swathi, Lieutenant Sh Vijaya Devi and Lieutenant Payal Gupta, it said.
- The Indian Navy is operating four sailing vessels capable of open ocean deployments - Tarangini, Sudarshini, Mhadei and Tarini, all four of which have been built in shipyards at Goa.

Govt Cuts Tenure Of SEBI Chairman-Designate Ajay Tyagi By 2 Years

- The government said that the tenure of the next chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), Ajay Tyagi, will "initially" be for three years.
- The earlier order issued had said Tyagi's term will be for a period not exceeding five years or till the age of 65.
- A government official said the latest order was issued to clear up ambiguity on the length of the tenure. The new order said the term will be for an initial three-year period.



RBI allows multilateral FIs to invest in masala bonds

- Reserve Bank permitted multilateral financial institutions to invest in rupee denominated bonds popularly known as 'masala bonds' issued by Indian entities.
- In order to provide more choices of investors to Indian entities issuing rupee denominated bonds abroad, it has been decided to also permit multilateral and regional financial institutions where India is a member country, to invest in these rupee denominated bonds

- Meanwhile, the RBI has withdrawn the instruction regarding submission a fortnightly return on Forward Rate Agreement (FRA) and Interest Rate Swap (IRS) to Monetary Policy Department with a copy to various departments of the central bank.
- In a further step towards rationalization of returns it has been decided to withdraw the said return with immediate effect. The banks are hereby advised to stop sending the hard copy of the said return to RBI

South Asian Speakers' Summit starts in Indore

- Speakers of six countries will deliberate on ways to achieve sustainable development goals during a two-day South Asian Speakers' Summit
- The summit, was inaugurated by Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan on Saturday, will be attended by presiding officers and delegates from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Nepal. It will conclude with the adoption of an 'Indore Declaration' - laying down the outcome of the discussions and action points agreed upon by the participants - at a closing ceremony
- The summit will have a plenary session on 'Identifying Resources for SDGs Implementation in South Asia: Opportunities for Parliamentary Cooperation' on the inaugural day.
- The session will inform the delegates about the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the South Asian region and will discuss ways in which legislatures can ensure that adequate financial and other resources accompany implementation of national and regional strategies.

India bag silver medal at women's Asian Rugby Sevens Trophy

- India won the silver medal at the women's Asian Rugby Sevens Trophy having won five matches and lost one
- In the seven-nation round-robin competition, India defeated Laos 22-7, Philippines 12-5, Nepal 43-0 and Malaysia by 26-12. On the second day, India defeated Pakistan by 5-0 and in the last match were beaten by South Korea by 0-29.
- As per Asia Rugby's tournament statistics, Indian Hupi Majhi was one amongst the top three Try Scorers of the tournament and Meerarani Hembram was the third highest in the conversions.
- The sterling performance that this power-packed team of women has showcased at an international level has made India proud. Tremendous potential for women's rugby to grow leaps and bounds in our country and make our mark globally.



SBI ties up with Greenply to offer financial services to the dealers

- State Bank of India has announced a tie-up with Greenply Industries to grow a channel financing business.
- Forging a business partnership is rather routine, though this turns out to be special as a bargain allows SBI to take nonetheless another step in flourishing a digital banking footprint.
- The dual companies sealed a chit of bargain on Saturday for financing a dealers of Greenply Industries on electronic platform.
- SBI pronounced it will extend financial services to Greenply dealers to grow serve on a really rival pricing.
- SBI, that is slated to suffer one-fourth marketplace share with a partnership of an associate bank with itself in FY18, is formulation to emanate a digital-only bank

height to concede exchange to be finished with a assistance of apps, internet banking and mobile banking.

- It has also taken beginning to stop use of paper from a branches for end-to-end digitisation.

BEL launches communication radio for India Army

- Bharat Electronics (BEL) has reportedly launched a new communication radio for the Indian armed forces, called STARS-V Mk III, at the Aero India 2017 show.
- The radio is completely designed, developed and made in the company. It is a multi brand, high data rate, software intensive IP radio with mobile ad hoc networking (MANET) functions supporting up to 64 nodes.
- Bharat Electronics is a multi-product, multi-technology, multi-unit conglomerate with over 350 products in the areas of military communication, radars, naval systems, C4I systems, weapon systems, homeland security, telecom & broadcast systems, electronic warfare, tank electronics, electro-optics, professional electronic components and solar photovoltaic systems.

OMA Emirates enters Indian payments market; buys MobiSwipe

- UAE based merchant solutions provider OMA Emirates today said it has entered into Indian market with the acquisition of mobile point of sale (mPOS) firm MobiSwipe.
- MobiSwipe enables merchants to accept credit and debit card payments through a mobile application.
- OMA, which is currently having presence in Middle East, Europe and select parts of Asia, will provide services like business development, sales and marketing.

- The company said its operations will be located in Mumbai and plans to open offices in other parts of the country gradually.
- OMA Emirates is in the business of providing solutions like electronic funds transfer (EFT) POS application, mobile e-top-up solution, EMV card personalisation solutions, central issuance solutions, branch issuance solutions, among others.

India's vaccine regulatory body NRAI gets highest WHO ratings

- The National Regulatory Authority of India (NRAI) has been given the maximum ratings by global health body World Health Organisation for vaccine regulations.
- WHO completed the assessment of the status of the Indian vaccine regulatory system against WHO NRA Global Benchmarking Tool (GBT) and measured the maturity of the system in India.
- The assessment has been done in respect of 9 different functionalities and Indian NRA has been declared 'functional' with a maturity level of 4 which is the highest level as per currently evolved definitions in respect of 5 functions, and maturity level 3 in respect of 4 functions
- While, maturity level 4 indicates good results and sustained improvement trends, level 3 reflects systematic process based approach, early stage of systematic improvements, data availability regarding conformance to objectives and existence of improvement trends

SC introduces scheme to provide legal services to middle income group

- Now, it is easier for the middle and relatively lower income group to avail the legal services of the country.

- The Supreme Court (SC) of India has introduced the Middle Income Group Scheme.
- It is a self supporting scheme which provides legal services to the middle income group citizens i.e. citizens whose gross income is not exceeding Rs 60, 000 per month or Rs 7, 50, 000 per annum.
- The members of the governing body to whom the management of the Society is entrusted as required under Section 2 of the Societies Registration Act, 1860, as applicable to the National Capital Territory of Delhi include Chief Justice of India as Patron-in-Chief, Attorney General for India as Ex-officio Vice-President, Solicitor General of India as Secretary and other senior advocates of the Apex Court as its members. As per the Supreme Court rules it is only through advocates on record that cases can be filed before it, according to a PIB release.
- A sum of Rs 500 shall be payable to the Supreme Court Middle Income Group Legal Aid Society (SCMIGLAS) as service charges.
- The applicant shall have to deposit the fee indicated by the Secretary, which will be in accordance with the schedule attached to the scheme.
- It is the Secretary, who will register the case under the MIG Legal Aid Scheme and proceed to forward the papers to the Advocate-on-Record/Arguing Counsel/Senior Counsel on the panel for opinion.
- If Advocate-on-Record is satisfied that it is a fit case to be proceeded with, then the Society will consider that the applicant is entitled to legal aid, said the PIB release.
- Under the scheme, middle class people who cant afford the expensive litigation in the Supreme Court can avail the services of the society for a nominal amount

To avail scholarship, Aadhaar now mandatory for college and varsity students

- To avail benefits under the Central Sector Scholarship Scheme for College and University students, applicants will now have to furnish proof of possession of Aadhaar card or undergo Aadhaar authentication
- Those receiving these scholarships but who don't have an Aadhaar card will have to apply for enrolment by June 30 this year, the ministry said in a notification. However, this will not be applicable in Jammu & Kashmir.
- As per another notification issued by the ministry, students who wish to avail the National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme will also have to apply for Aadhaar by June 30, though it exempts the states of J&K, Assam and Meghalaya.
- The move will bring in transparency and enable beneficiaries to get their entitlements directly in a convenient and seamless manner, and Aadhaar obviates the need for producing multiple documents to prove identity.
- However, till the time Aadhaar is assigned to the students, they may get scholarships on the basis of documents like Aadhaar Enrolment ID slip, Aadhaar enrolment application, voter identity card, PAN card etc.
- Exhibits of eight coaches of the train are devoted to information, caste studies and materials related to various aspects of climate change.
- The exhibitions mounted by the Environment Ministry will also showcase the underlying science, impacts, adaption activities, mitigation solutions and policy approaches in a manner that is easy to understand and interesting for not just school students but also the masses.
- Since railways is focusing on clean energy, three coaches are fitted with solar panels on the roofs. The train will stop at each station for students and others to visit the exhibitions in coaches.
- The train will cover 68 stations ending the journey at Gandhinagar station on September 8.

Ace shuttler PV Sindhu attained her career best BWF women's singles ranking, jumping to the fifth spot.

- Sindhu, who was previously on the sixth spot, surged ahead of Akane Yamaguchi of Japan, to attain her career best ranking.
- Saina Nehwal, who stayed put at No. 9, is the second Indian in the top 10 spots of the BWF rankings, which is headed by Tai Tzu Ying of the Chinese Taipei.
- Meanwhile, Spain's Carolina Marin remains the only non-Asian in the top 10 spots of the BWF women's rankings.

'Science Express' train flags off to create climate change awareness in India

- A 'Science Express' train was flagged off a seven-month journey that will cover 68 stations across the country, including Agartala and Lumding in the northeast, to spread awareness about climate change.
- Named 'Science Express Climate Action Special', with the collaborative efforts of ministries of Railways, Environment and Science and Technology, the 16-coach train will travel to Tripura and to the north bank of the Brahmaputra for the first time.

Corporation Bank bags 'National MSME Excellence Award 2017'

- Corporation Bank has been awarded once again 'National MSME Excellence Award 2017' organized by the Federation of Industry, Trade and Services (FITS).
- D V Subramanya Varma, General Manager, Corporation Bank received the award from Haribhai P Choudhary, Honourable Union

Minister of State, Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises in New Delhi

- Federation of Industry Trade and Services (FITS) is a national industry body working in the form of a bridge between the industry and the state/central governments.
- Corporation Bank has taken several initiatives recognizing the constructive role played by MSME Sector in the nation development like, online loan facility for MSME borrowers, online facility for revival and rehabilitation of MSME, campaign for growth with various concessions, collateral free loans up to Rupees two crore under Credit Guarantee Scheme of CGTMSE with 50 bps concession in interest rate is offered to such guarantee covered accounts, concessions in interest rate are also offered to women beneficiaries and rated MSME units and others.

SIB bags award for tech security practices

- South Indian Bank has been awarded with ISO 27001: 2013 certification for its Information Security Management System (ISMS).
- V.G. Mathew, MD and CEO of the bank received the certificate from Venkataram Arabolu, Managing Director, BSI Group India
- The certification process involved an extensive audit, which was conducted by British Standards Institution against the criteria set out by the ISO 27001:2013 standards on various domains of IT functions.
- The bank had already received ISO 9001 Quality Management certification for its Credit Department, Personnel Department and Data Centre.
- The certification demonstrates the bank's total commitment to benchmarking technology framework and processes with international standards, and forms part of

our long term vision for security best practices.

- Adhering to the internationally recognized ISMS standards adds yet another layer of security for Bank's customer data and assures customers of the quality of our service

Karnataka Bank launches National Pension System in Mangaluru

- Karnataka BankBSE 0.09 % has launched 'National Pension System' (NPS) at its corporate office in Mangaluru
- NPS was introduced by the Government of India with an intention to provide old age financial security by way of regular income in the form of pension.
- While earning, one can contribute to the NPS and start receiving pension after attaining the age of 60 years, to meet one's financial needs.
- Any individual between the age 18 years and 60 years can register his name with the bank's branch to contribute and to get the pension benefit under this scheme.
- With the flexibility and tax exemption feature, it is most suitable to the earning unorganised sector employees,
- The bank has introduced this scheme at select branches initially and plans to introduce it in a phased manner at all of its branches

UAE announces 100-year plan to finish building 'first city on Mars' by 2117

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will build the first city on the Red Planet as part of the 2117 Mars project in collaboration with specialised international organisations and scientific institutes.
- The Mars 2117 Project was announced by Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE

and Ruler of Dubai, and Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces

- The 100-year plan will involve scientific research programmes to nurture national cadres specialised in space sciences at universities in the UAE.
- In 2015, the UAE announced its Mars Probe mission, which will send the Arab world's first spacecraft to the Red Planet in a scientific exploration mission that will land on planet in 2021.

- The principal portion of the loan will be repaid through 'internal accruals' (earned through fee receipts, research earnings etc.,) of the institutions.
- The Government would service the interest portion through regular Plan assistance.
- All the centrally funded higher educational institutions would be eligible for joining as members of HEFA.
- For joining as members, the institution should agree to escrow a specific amount from their internal accruals to HEFA for a period of 10 years.

Canara Bank signs MoU with HRD Ministry to start higher education financing agency

- Canara Bank has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to operationalise the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA).
- In September 2016, the Union Cabinet had approved the establishment of HEFA to give a major push for the creation of high quality infrastructure/capital assets in premier educational institutions.
- HEFA has been jointly promoted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and Canara Bank with an authorised capital of Rs. 2,000 crore..
- HEFA has been formed as a special purpose vehicle.
- It would leverage the equity to raise up to Rs. 20,000 crore for funding projects for infrastructure and development of world class Labs in IITs/IIMs/NITs and such other institutions.
- HEFA would also mobilise CSR funds from PSUs/corporates, which would in turn be released for promoting research and innovation in these institutions on a grant basis.



Air Asia signs MoU with Odisha in connection with two-ways direct flights

- Thailand-based airliner Air Asia signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Odisha government in connection with beginning of two-ways direct flights from Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur to Odisha capital Bhubaneswar.
- The airline will begin its flight service from the Biju Patnaik International Airport by end of next month.
- Earlier last year, the Odisha government had allowed the Thai Air Asia to receive subsidy support of 1 lakh 70 thousand per round trip for starting air service operations from Bhubaneswar to Singapore/Bangkok/ Kuala Lumpur.
- Recently, the Odisha government had reduced Value Added Tax (VAT) on Aviation Turbine Fuel to zero per cent for direct international flights.
- Earlier in January this year, international cargo operations began from Bhubaneswar airport.

Veteran Hindi Scholar and Novelist Surendra Verma Selected for 2016 Vyas Samman

- Renowned Hindi litterateur and playwright Surendra Verma has been selected for 2016

Vyas Samman for his novel Kaatna Shami Ka Vriksha Padma Pankhuri Ki Dhar Se.

- This novel was published in the year 2010.
- Mr Verma would be presented a cash prize of Rs. 3.50 lakh a citation and a logo for the prestigious award instituted by K K Birla Foundation.
- Surendra Verma will be the 26th recipient of the honor.
- Surendra Verma was born on September 7, 1941 in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh.
- He is an M.A in linguistics.
- He started his career as a teacher and soon started writing stories. His first play was Surya ki antim kiran sesurya kipahli kiran tak (From the Sun's Last Ray to the Sun's First Ray).
- This play was premiered in Marathi by Amol Palekar in 1972.
- He had been associated with the National School of Drama for long and has published about fifteen titles of short stories, novels, satires and play.

- P Ramana Murthy will be Executive Director of Central Bank of India.
- He is GM of Allahabad Bank.
- Fareed Ahmed Khan, General Manager of Corporation Bank, will be ED in Punjab and Sind Bank. M K Bhattacharya and S Harishankar have been appointed EDs of Indian Bank and Allahabad Bank respectively.
- Bhattacharya and Harishankar are working as Chief General Managers of State Bank of Mysore and State Bank of Travancore respectively.
- The appointments are initially for a three-year period.

JLL named to FORTUNE's 2017 World's most admired companies list

- Reinforcing its reputation for excellence, JLL (NYSE: JLL) has again been named to FORTUNE magazine's World's Most Admired Companies list. The list is a major authority on corporate reputations compiled each year by FORTUNE and Korn Ferry Hay Group through a survey of top executives, directors and financial analysts.
- FORTUNE's list of World's Most Admired Companies determines the companies with the strongest reputations within and across industries.
- KornFerry Hay Group, a global consulting firm, has worked with FORTUNE each year since 1997 to select and rank the Most Admired Companies and identify why they are highly regarded.
- Nine key attributes are measured to compile the rankings, which include investment value, quality of management, innovation, products, social responsibility and ability to attract talent
- JLL is a leading professional services firm that specializes in real estate and investment management. A Fortune 500 company, JLL

Eight Executive Directors appointed in various banks

- Eight Executive Directors (EDs) have been appointed in various public sector banks on the recommendations of Banks Board Bureau.
- Neelam Damodharan and Atanu Kumar Das have been appointed as EDs in Bank of India. Damodharan is General Manager in Bank of Baroda and Das is GM in Vijaya Bank.
- K Swaminathan, General Manager in Indian Overseas Bank, has been appointed as ED in the same bank
- Ashok Kumar Pradhan will be .ED in United Bank of India. He is at present Chief General Manager with State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur.



helps real estate owners, occupiers and investors achieve their business ambitions.

Mastercard to provide payment processing solutions to Airtel Payments Bank

- Mastercard will provide payment processing solutions to Airtel Payments Bank.
- An online debit card has been launched to enable Airtel Payments Bank customers make digital payments at over 1 lakh online merchants.
- Shashi Arora, MD & CEO, Airtel Payments Bank, said: "Mastercard's globally proven expertise and technology solutions will enable us to provide innovative, secure and convenient online digital payments solutions to our customers.
- This partnership will contribute to our vision of serving customers with a differentiated banking model that provides them a simple and convenient form of merchant payments."



Cash credit limit for MSMEs raised to 30 per cent

- The government has increased the cash credit limit for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to 30 per cent of turnover from the existing 20 per cent to encourage such ventures conduct businesses digitally
- By taking up digital transaction, the balance sheet of companies would be "clean" and MSMEs would get loans from banks.
- Take your balance sheet. Banks and financial institutions will sanction loans up to 30 per cent of your turnover. That is a good move towards ease of doing business

Norman Isaac becomes first Indian to be FIBA's Technical Delegate

- Norman Isaac has become the first Indian ever to be promoted by the International

Basketball Federation (FIBA) as Technical Delegate (TD).

- The sport's worldwide governing body recently confirmed the appointment after Isaac, along with a select few aspirants from across the globe, successfully cleared a battery of tests at Doha, Qatar.
- As a TD, he will be assigned to any country except his own and will be responsible for conduct of an entire event, ranging from actual competition management to every related aspect from media arrangements to logistics.
- As a FIBA Commissioner, conferred with the title at Muscat, Oman in 2006, his earliest assignments were in 2009 for the FIBA Asia girls under-16 years tournament in Pune and the FIBA Asia women's championship at Chennai.
- In 2001, he became a FIBA Referee and officiated in the FIBA Asia Champions Cup in Kuala Lumpur in 2002 and the FIBA Asia championship at Singapore in 2004.
- In 2015, the BFI appointed him as its Chairman, Technical Commission.

Indian-origin Scotland Yard officer wins bravery award

- A heroic Indian-origin Scotland Yard officer has been honoured with a top bravery award in the UK for risking his own life to save a family trapped in a burning house, winning the vote of thousands of Londoners.
- Shand Panesar, along with colleague Craig Nicholson, won the Total Excellence in Policing Awards at the annual ceremony for rescuing a couple from a burning building.
- In September 2016, PC Nicholson and PC Panesar, arrived before the London Fire Brigade to a raging house fire in Hillingdon and quickly learnt that two people were trapped inside.

- Although the officers had no fire safety equipment or protective clothing they acted in the best traditions of the Met and charged into the flame engulfed house without any hesitation.

Tamil Nadu Governor appoints Edappadi K Palaniswami as chief minister

- Tamil Nadu Governor C Vidyasagar Rao appointed Edappadi K Palaniswami as chief minister. The Governor invited him to form the ministry at the earliest.
- The governor requested the chief minister-designate to seek the vote confidence of the assembly within 15 days.
- Palaniswami has claimed that he has the support of 124 legislators, while the O Pannerselvam camp had that of only 10.
- Palaniswami, the strongman of Salem district, was chosen as the legislature party leader on Tuesday, hours after Supreme Court upheld the Bengaluru special court verdict convicting AIADMK interim general secretary+ V K Sasikala in the disproportionate assets case.

RBI allows regional rural banks to grant gold loans up to Rs2 lakh

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday said that regional rural banks (RRBs) can grant gold loans up to Rs2 lakh with bullet repayment option against the current limit of Rs1 lakh.
- Under bullet repayment schedule, loan amount is paid at the end of maturity.
- The loans with a bullet repayment will have a maximum maturity of 12 months and the loan-to-value ratio should be 75% of the gold pledged.
- Crop loans sanctioned against the collateral security of gold or gold ornaments shall continue to be governed by the extant income recognition, asset classification and

provisioning norms for such loans

RBI to reimburse banks MDR charges effective 1 January

- The Reserve Bank will start reimbursing MDR charges to banks for payments made since January 1 through debit cards by citizens
- In December 2016, the government had decided to absorb the merchant discount rate (MDR) charges in respect of debit card transactions for making payments to it. The move was aimed to encourage people to use digital payments post demonetisation.
- In order to operationalise the (government's direction), the Reserve Bank will reimburse banks MDR on debit cards used for payment of tax and non-tax dues to the government of India with effect from January 1, 2017

Citi Bank launches instant chat service for customers

- Citi has launched instant chat services for customers logged in to Citibank Online (CBOL) in India. The real-time chat facility focuses on resolving queries instantly, in a safe environment, across cards, domestic and non-resident accounts, and loans, for clients as they transact online.
- The live chat functionality will transform the post login experience of our customers as they will be able to instantly connect with our service team while they bank on our secure site.
- The chat facility will address the customer's need for help or clarification while logged into CBOL
- CBOL also features a regular chat facility for generic query resolutions. This was introduced to support non-account centric queries, such as requests for product features, branch locations and log-in assistance, amongst others.



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

International Conference on NexGen Technologies for Mining and Fuel Industries- NxGnMiFu-2017 concluded

- International Conference on "NexGen Technologies for Mining and Fuel Industries" [NxGnMiFu-2017] concluded in New Delhi
- Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that this conference must look at the working conditions of the poorest of the poor/ the have-nots/ downtrodden and see how much scientific research can change and improve their lives.
- The conference focused mainly on issues related to Innovative Mining Technologies for Complex Geo-mining Conditions; Mine Safety, Monitoring and Risk Management; Clean Coal Initiatives; Coal to Liquid, Methanol and Urea; Harnessing Coal Bed Methane, Shale Gas and Underground Coal Gasification; Technological Developments in Oil and Gas Sectors and Alternate Clean Energy Initiatives.
- It aimed to deliberate and identify the R&D needs to innovate new techniques, technologies and applications for clean, safe, symbiotic sustenance of society, environment and industries in post-2020 era.

Tata Motors and Microsoft India collaborate to redefine the connected experience for automobile users

- Tata Motors and Microsoft India announced a strategic agreement to redefine connected and personalized driving experiences for Indian customers.
- Tata Motors will leverage Microsoft's connected vehicle technologies that bring together artificial intelligence (AI), advanced

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

- The first vehicle showcasing the vision for these enhanced driving experiences will be unveiled at the 87th Geneva International Motor Show on 7th March 2017. This will be via Tata Motors' unique user interface application and services suite utilizing Microsoft enabled functionality like advanced navigation, predictive maintenance, telematics and remote monitoring features.
- Using Microsoft technology will empower Tata Motors to provide connectivity features on mainstream, mass-market vehicles at affordable prices.
- Tata Motors will continuously develop and launch new connected services and applications that make it easier for people to stay connected to work, entertainment and social networks, with greater safety & security as well as services to maximize better use of newly found in-car free time.



AIIMS wins first prize for sanitation & hygiene under Kayakalp awards

- All India Institute of Medical Science, AIIMS of Delhi has won the first prize and a cash reward of 5 crore rupees for maintaining high standards of sanitation and hygiene under the Government's Kayakalp awards.
- AIIMS was followed by North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences, Shillong, which got a cash prize of 3 crore rupees. While Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, received the third prize of one crore rupees.

- Health Minister J P Nadda yesterday gave away the awards to the winners under various categories in New Delhi.
- Speaking on the occasion, Nadda said, the thrust of Kayakalp is to inculcate culture of cleanliness for gaining the trust and confidence of community in these facilities. The Kayakalp award scheme was launched in 2015.

Vikas Swarup appointed India's next envoy to Canada

- Official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, Vikas Swarup, has been appointed as India's next High Commissioner to Canada.
- Swarup has been serving as the spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs since April 2015. Prior to that, he was Joint Secretary incharge of the United Nation's Division of the Ministry of External Affairs.
- An officer of the 1986 batch of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Swarup has previously served in Turkey, the United States, Ethiopia, the United Kingdom, South Africa and Japan.
- He is best known as the author of the novel Q & A, adapted in film as Slumdog Millionaire, the winner of Best Film for the year 2009 at the Academy Awards, Golden Globe Awards and BAFTA Awards.



Kerala gives in-principle approval for new airport at Sabarimala

- The Kerala cabinet gave in-principle approval for setting up a greenfield airport at pilgrim centre Sabarimala. The government-run Kerala State Industrial Development Corp. (KSIDC) will conduct a study on the proposed airport
- In November, the union government had agreed to issue a no objection certificate (NOC) for an airstrip near Sabarimala. Part

of the Western Ghats, Sabarimala is known for a hill-top Ayyappa temple which attracts a 50 million plus devotees, cutting across religious lines, every year during the annual pilgrimage season between November and January.

- With this, the total count of airports in the state of just 33 million population will go up to five.
- It already has three international airports, mainly catering to the 2.5 million emigrants to Persian Gulf countries, and another one is being developed Kannur district.

Indian Panaroma Film Festival Begins in Port Blair

- The Indian Panorama Film Festival kicked off in Port Blair on February 15, 2017.
- The five day film festival has been organized by the Directorate of Information, Publicity & Tourism, Andaman & Nicobar Administration in association with the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and Directorate of Film Festivals/IFFI, New Delhi, Govt of India.
- The festival was inaugurated by the Chief Secretary, Andaman & Nicobar Administration, Shri Anindo Majumdar at DBRAIT Auditorium, Dollygunj, Port Blair.
- The inauguration was followed by screening of the film Bahubali (Telegu) directed by SS. Rajamauli.
- About 15 films of different languages and different genre will be screened at two different venues including PBMC Auditorium and ITF Ground during the festival.
- The event will conclude on February 19, 2017.

HDFC life launches 'Pragati', a trad plan for low income group

- HDFC life launched Pragati, a traditional life insurance plan that has been specifically designed to empower low income families.

- Pragati makes life insurance easily accessible to every person who wishes to financially secure his family, the private life insurer said in a release issued here.
- With Pragati, HDFC Life wants to offer the dual benefit of systematic savings (with guaranteed premium returns) and wholesome life protection, making it an ideal financial product for every Indian household.

Airbus signs MoU for setting up centre of excellence in Hyderabad

- Airbus signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for establishing a Centre of Excellence for aerospace skill development in Hyderabad, together with the Telangana government, National Skill Development Corporation India and AEROCAMPUS France.
- The Centre, which will come up at Begumpet Airport, will train candidates ranging from high school graduates to experienced aviation personnel on aircraft manufacturing, logistics, Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO), ground handling and special aviation processes.
- The Centre will offer short-term refresher modules as well as long-term certificate and diploma courses that will find acceptability within the industry, Airbus said in a release.
- Centre is expected to roll out short-term courses this year, adding, it planned to upgrade into a university over the next five years.
- The Telangana government will provide space for setting up the Centre and would arrange the initial seed fund for the project.
- The National Skill Development Corporation will channelise the candidates to the Centre.
- Together with AEROCAMPUS and Aviation and Aerospace Sector Skill Council (AASSC), it will also ensure that the programmes

comply with international standards and are certified

France's Jean-Pierre Lacroix named new UN peacekeeping chief

- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced the appointment of Jean-Pierre Lacroix of France to head UN peacekeeping for a year pending a review of the world body's functions and structure.
- The UN's political affairs chief, Jeffrey Feltman of the United States, will remain at this post, also for a year.
- The two positions of under-secretary-general are among the most high-profile at the United Nations.

Usain Bolt wins Laureus 'Sportsman of the Year' award

- World's "greatest" sprinter Usain Bolt pipped the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo and LeBron James to win the 'Sportsman of the Year' trophy for a record-equalling fourth time, while gymnast Simone Biles clinched the top honour in the women's category at the Laureus World Awards
- Bolt, who won this award in 2009, '10 and '13, walked away with the 'Oscar of Sports' for the fourth time, thereby joining tennis legends Roger Federer and Serena Williams, and surfer Kelly Slater as four-time Laureus award winner.
- Olympic gymnastics champion Biles notched up the 'Sportswoman of the Year' trophy, riding on her brilliant achievement at the Rio Games last year, where she finished with four yellow metals and a bronze.
- The most decorated Olympian of all-time, Michael Phelps bagged the 'Comeback of the Year' award after returning to the swimming pool and scooping five more gold medals.



- Formula One champion Nico Roseberg claimed the 'Breakthrough of the Year' award.

First Indian genomics beacon launched in UK

- Global Gene Corp and Global Alliance for Genomics and Health (GA4GH) launched the first-ever beacon for Indian genomics data, which is expected to help scientists develop more effective drug delivery systems.
- A beacon is an online web service that allows researchers to determine whether an institution has particular genomic data in its data set.
- The aim of the Indian beacon is to address the gap in shared Indian genomics data, which helps scientists better understand disease and develop more effective drug delivery systems and therapeutics.
- Genomics is the science that will define healthcare in our lifetime. Solving healthcare problems at scale is exceptionally important for India to ensure quality of life
- The Indian beacon joins those already on the Wellcome Genome Campus supplied by EMBL-EBI and the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in Hinxton, Cambridgeshire.
- Cambridge-based Global Gene Corp (GCC) is based at the Wellcome Genome Campus and is co-founded by alumni from the Indian Institute of Technology, Harvard and National University of Singapore with the mission to "democratise genomics".



US, Thailand Launched 2017 Cobra Gold Military Exercises

- The United States and Thailand kicked off the 2017 iteration of the annual Cobra Gold military exercises, Asia's largest multinational drill.
- In over 30 years, Cobra Gold, which began as a bilateral drill between the United States and Thailand – Washington's oldest ally in

Asia – has now grown into one of the world's largest multinational exercises, involving some 30 countries.

- Cobra Gold 2017, the 36th iteration of the military exercise, is officially taking place from February 14 to 24, according to a statement released by the U.S. embassy in Bangkok.
- The opening ceremony was held in Sattahip Royal Thai Marine Corps Base in Chonburi Province, while the closing ceremony will be held in Phu Lamyai Training area in Nakhon Ratchasima Province.
- This year's exercise will feature 29 countries either directly participating in or observing. As is customary, it will be comprised of three primary events: a staff exercise which includes a senior leader seminar; a field training exercise that includes a variety of training events to strengthen regional relationships and enhance interoperability; and humanitarian civic assistance projects in Thai communities.

India to join Moscow meet on Afghanistan

- India is among six nations participating in a conference on Afghanistan's future in Moscow two months after Russia hosted a similar conference with only China and Pakistan.
- After India and particularly Afghanistan objected to being cut out of the discussion, Moscow agreed to expand its ambit, announcing a six-nation conference of Russia, India, Iran, Pakistan, China and Afghanistan.
- To begin with, India is increasingly uncomfortable with Russia's overtures to Pakistan on defence issues. Significantly, Russia did not join the U.S., U.K. and France in sponsoring a resolution against Jaish chief Masood Azhar at the U.N. sanctions

committee last month, a resolution which China then put a hold on.

- Russia has been seen as favouring a softer line on the Taliban as a counter to the spread of Islamic State (IS) in Afghanistan; Russia and China have also been coordinating to demand the delisting of senior Taliban leaders designated as terrorists by the U.N. sanctions committee.

Mamata Banerjee declares Kalimpong as separate district of West Bengal

- A new district of Kalimpong was carved out of Darjeeling, which has seen separate statehood demands since 1980s, with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee making the formal announcement.
- Announcing a slew of development projects for the newly created district at a colourful ceremony, Banerjee said "a Rs 220 crore road link project will be taken up to connect Kalimpong with Sikkim via the old Silk Route."
- Rs 50 crore water supply project by the public health engineering department will be taken up soon to address Kalimpong's water scarcity problem.
- Darjeeling Hills has been witness to violent statehood movements since 1986 under the leadership of Subhas Ghising and after a few years' thaw, again under Bimal Gurung, the present chief executive of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration, in a bid to break away from West Bengal.

Madhya Pradesh govt to set up tourism board with CM as its head

- The state MP government on decided to set up a tourism board. The decision was reached at a meeting of the tourism cabinet in Pachmarhi.
- The chief minister will be the chairman of the board, the minister for tourism and chief

secretary will be vice-chairmen while principal secretaries of the departments of finance, forest, urban development, environment and culture will be the directors.

- The main work of the board would be implementation of the state's tourism policy, attract private sector participation, facilitate investors and extend benefits to them as is permissible under the tourism policy.
- The Board would also have to formulate new policies, monitor new tourism projects, select and increase land banks and organise fairs, food festivals, cultural programmes, cottage industry carnivals.

J&K govt launches e-Prison project

- The Jammu and Kashmir government launched the e-Prison project to enumerate jail inmates in the State, where numbers of detainees keep swelling during unrest.
- The information about jail inmates is currently being maintained manually. To avoid delays in processing the information and manage all the jails efficiently, the automation of prison department has been started.
- The government has already digitised records of 500 inmates. The project will digitise 25 district jails, two Central jails and one sub-jail in the State. The second phase of the project will focus on videoconferencing between jails and prison headquarters, e-court, tele-medication in jails.

ISRO sets space record with successful launch of Cartosat-2 and 103 other satellites

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) set a new record in space mission achievements after it successfully launched 104 satellites in one go from the Satish



Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh

- This was ISRO's first space mission for the year 2017, and the most complicated mission it has ever carried out.
- The PSLV-C37/Cartosat2 Series satellite mission included the primary satellite (Cartosat-2) and 101 international nano satellites.
- It also launched two of its own nano satellites, INS-1A and INS-1B.
- PSLV first launched the 714 kg Cartosat-2 Series satellite for earth observation, followed by the INS-1A and INS-1B, after it reached the polar Sun Synchronous Orbit.
- It then went on to inject 103 co-passenger satellites, together weighing about 664 kg, in pairs.
- ISRO scientists used the XL Variant – the most powerful rocket – earlier used in the ambitious Chandrayaan and during the Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM).

Nilesh Shivji Vikamsey appointed as ICAI president

- The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) elected Nilesh Shivji Vikamsey as president and Naveen N D Gupta as vice-president.
- They have been elected for the year 2017-18
- Vikamsey, who served as vice-president, has been a member of the ICAI since 1985.
- Gupta has been a chartered accountant for more than 20 years.
- A statutory body, the affairs of ICAI are managed by a council in accordance with the provisions of the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949 and the Chartered Accountants Regulations, 1988.
- The council has 32 elected members and eight are nominated by the Central government.

IDFC Asset Management Company launches fixed income fund

- IDFC Asset Management Company has launched an open-ended fixed income fund and hopes to mop-up revenue in the range of Rs 300 crore-500 crore from the scheme in the NFO period itself.
- The Credit Opportunities Fund opens for subscription on February 14 and closes on February 27.
- It will reopen for continuous sale and repurchase from March 6.
- The company hopes to mop-up Rs 300-500 crore during the NFO period of the Credit Opportunities Fund,
- The fund will also emphasise on collaterals/covenants where it believes it is required

Ravi Shankar accredited as High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Rwanda

- Shri Ravi Shankar (IFS: 1995), presently High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Uganda, has been concurrently accredited as the High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Rwanda, with residence in Kampala (Uganda).
- He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

Kush Bhagat awarded CM title by World Chess Federation

- Kush Bhagat, a second grade student from Hill Spring International School, was awarded the title of Candidate Master (CM) by World Chess Federation body, FIDE
- For his tremendous performance in UAE, Kush has been bestowed with this honour by FIDE
- The title comes after a range of admirable performances by him, over the span of last six months, beginning with his conquest of U-

7 Maharashtra State Championship 2016 title to becoming the World Schools Under 7 Blitz champion in Sochi (Russia), and finally his performance, with three gold medals at the first ever Western Youth Chess Championship 2016 at UAE

Jehan Daruvala wins New Zealand GP, finishes fifth in Toyota series

- Jehan Daruvala won the Toyota Racing Series' New Zealand Grand Prix at the Chris Amon Circuit in Manfeild, New Zealand, on Sunday to finish the 2017 championship on a high.
- Jehan, who started from pole, led through the race to the chequered flag in the main feature race, and the third of the weekend action.
- There are only two Grands Prix, outside of Formula 1.
- Macau has the distinction of hosting one, while the other happens to be the New Zealand Grand Prix. Jehan Daruvala now holds the distinction of being the only Indian driver to register a win at a Grand Prix, having won the New Zealand Grand Prix at the Chris Amon Circuit in Manfeild.
- Jehan will compete in the FIA F3 European Championship in 2017.

Tehmina Janjua appointed as the first woman foreign secretary of Pakistan

- Tehmina Janjua becomes the first women to be appointed as the new foreign secretary of Pakistan. She will be replacing Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry in the office.
- Tehmina Janjua will assume the post of Foreign Secretary in the first week of March 2017.
- She has rich experience of working in bilateral and multilateral domains both at Headquarters and Missions abroad

- anjua has a career of over 32 years and she is seasoned diplomat who holds a Master's degrees from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad and also from Columbia University
- She also served as Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during 2011.
- Janjua served as Ambassador of Pakistan to Italy from December 2011 to October 2015.
- At present she is serving as Ambassador and Permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in Geneva since October 2015.

World Bank Group to conduct training programmes for NBFCs

- International Finance Corporation (IFC), part of the World Bank Group, has teamed up with Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC) to conduct training programmes for Non Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs).
- The training programmes will be on 'movable asset financing' and 'commercial credit reporting'.
- For this purpose, two engagement letters have been signed between IFC and FIDC, a representative body for NBFCs, especially those engaged in asset financing.
- Jun Zhang, IFC India Country Head and Raman Aggarwal, Chairman of FIDC were the signatories to the engagement letters at an event held at IFC's office in the capital.
- These training programmes would be conducted at various centres across the country under the guidance of leading consultants from the World Bank Group.
- Such programmes are expected to enhance the awareness, expertise and professionalism of NBFCs, especially the large number of small and medium sized NBFCs catering to the credit needs in rural and semi-urban areas.



Sachin Tendulkar Adopts Donja Village In Maharashtra For Transformation

- Cricket great and Rajya Sabha MP Sachin Tendulkar has adopted the village of Donja in Maharashtra's Osmanabad district, under the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojna, sanctioning over Rs. 4 crore for the development of the village from his MPLAD fund.
- The amount will be spent on development of a new school building, a water Supply scheme that would provide potable water to each household, concrete roads and a sewage line attached to the same, a press release stated. Tendulkar had earlier adopted the vilage of Puttamraju Kandriga in Andhra Pradesh.
- Five special village level meetings have been held since the village was adopted by Tendulkar, under the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana with participation of women from the village.
- Over 400 of the 610 households in Donja village did not have toilets when the village was adopted by Tendulkar. Since then, over 231 toilets have been built and are being used.
- Oxigen Financial Services is helping improve the banking services at Donja. 12 retail outlets were trained and steps were taken to encourage them to set up micro cash-recycler ATMs.



- Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar felicitated the players for their performances and gave away cash prizes of Rs 1 crore, Rs 50 lakh and Rs 25 lakh to the top three teams.
- This is the highest prize money for any kabaddi event in the country.

Veteran journalist T V Parasuram died

- Veteran journalist T V Parasuram, a former correspondent of the Press Trust of India, died today in the US due to age-related illness
- The veteran journalist, who won a Harvard Niemen Fellowship in journalism, served as the correspondent for The Indian Express for two decades till his retirement at age 58.
- Parasuram then became the PTI's Washington correspondent till he quit journalism at age 82.
- He was a regular at the press conferences of US presidents during his over five-decade stay in America.
- Parasuram authored two books, 'A Medal for Kashmir' - a first hand account of the Indian Army's operations in 1947-48 in Jammu and Kashmir - and 'India's Jewish Heritage'.

Aero India starts in Bengaluru to focus on Make in India

- The 11th edition of the Aero India air show which starts in Bengaluru on Tuesday is expected to be one of the largest in recent years, with a focus on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Make in India initiative.
- Around 270 Indian and 279 foreign firms are slated to participate in the event where some major companies, including Airbus and Boeing Co, are expected to sign deals under the Make in India banner.
- The highlight of the show at the city's Yelahanka Air Force Station will be fighter

Haryana wins Rs 1 crore Kabaddi championship

- Hosts Haryana won the first edition of the three-day Pandit Deen Dayal Updhyay All India National Style Kabaddi championship held at Motilal Nehru School of Sports here.
- Haryana defeated the Railways team 33-27 to clinch the title.
- Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) beat Air India 45-37 to secure the third position.

jets that make up a large part of the 72 aircraft being showcased. Among these will be Rafale fighter jets made by French aircraft manufacturer Dassault Aviation SA.

- India bought 36 of these aircraft for an estimated \$8.9 billion last year in a deal that has been negotiated several times over the years.
- Rafale planes have been used by the French armed forces in combat operations for more than a decade. They entered service with the French Navy in 2004 and the Air Force in 2006.

- Indian Navy's survey vessel INS Sarvekshak has gone green by installing a solar power system on board.
- The system, equipped on the ship, works using sunlight and hence, is 100% reliable for power source that can be used for communication equipment, battery charging and general lightings onboard round the clock with battery outputs during the night.
- The system is "maintenance free" whereas the diesel generator requires regular maintenance

World Radio Day: 13 February 2017

- February 13 is World Radio Day, which celebrates the radio as a way of educating people, providing information, and promoting freedom of expression across cultures.
- Each year the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) celebrates World Radio Day by planning activities with broadcasters, organizations and communities around the world.
- Despite being over 100 years old, the radio is one of the most popular ways to exchange information, provide social interchange, and educate people all over the world. It has been used to help people, including youth, to engage in discussions on topics that affect them.
- It can save lives during natural or human-made disasters, and it gives journalists a platform to report facts and tell their stories.
- The first World Radio Day was officially celebrated in 2012.



Germaine de Randamie crowned 1st featherweight champ at UFC 208

- Germaine de Randamie defeated Holly Holm by unanimous decision in a clinch-filled bout at UFC 208 to become the first UFC women's featherweight champion.
- The 32-year-old de Randamie (7-3) dropped to her knees in celebration as the Barclays Center crowd booed the end of a lackluster bout
- De Randamie, a Dutch kickboxer who also fought in Strikeforce, said she needed surgery on one of her hands after the fight.
- Holm (10-3) has lost three straight bouts since she became the first fighter to defeat Ronda Rousey in December 2015.

Frank-Walter Steinmeier elected German President

- Germany's parliamentary assembly has elected Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a Social Democrat, as the country's president.
- The position of president in Germany is largely ceremonial, because the chancellor is the official head of government and has a higher profile on the world stage.
- Steinmeier previously served as vice chancellor and foreign minister under current Chancellor Angela Merkel.

INS Sarvekshak Becomes India's First Ship to be Installed with Solar Power System

- He was elected by the vast majority of the assembly, receiving 931 out of 1,253 votes.
- Germany is the union's largest economy and has played a major role in the region's refugee crisis.
- The Merkel government has implemented an open-door policy that has welcomed more than 1 million asylum-seekers over the past two years.

Sandeep Jajodia is new Assocham President

- Sandeep Jajodia has been elected President of the industry body Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham)
- Balkrishan Goenka, Chairman of Welspun Group, and Kiran Kumar Grandhi, Vice-Chairman of GMR Infrastructure, have taken over as senior vice-president and vice-president, respectively.
- ASSOCHAM is a not for profit organization, facilitating reach of India to all businesses around the globe, for wanting to do business with India.
- It has contributed significantly by playing a catalytic role in shaping up the Trade, Commerce and Industrial environment of the country.



- A Grammy Award or Grammy is awarded by the Recording Academy to recognize outstanding achievement in the mainly English-language music industry.
- The first Grammy Awards ceremony was held on May 4, 1959, to honor the musical accomplishments by performers for the year 1958.
- The four main category of award includes, Album of the Year, Record of the Year, Song of the Year and Best New Artist.

'La La Land' Wins Top Prize at BAFTA Awards in London

- Damien Chazelle's "La La Land" dominated the 70th British Academy Film Awards on Sunday night, claiming five prizes including best film, director, and leading actress for Emma Stone. The triumph maintained the musical's momentum through this year's awards season ahead of the Oscars on Feb. 26.
- The BAFTA Fellowship award was presented to the hollywood's legendary comedian and filmmaker Mel Brooks (90) by Duke of Cambridge Prince William.
- The BAFTA Fellowship is a lifetime achievement award presented by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) since 1971 in recognition of outstanding
- achievement in the art forms of the moving image.

Grammys Awards 2017

- The 2017 Grammy Awards handed out 84 awards to the music industry's best and brightest
- The major awards were handed out during the televised broadcast, but many were handed out before the big show began.
- The big winner of the night was Adele, who took home five Grammys, including Record of the Year and Song of the Year for "Hello," and, in a major upset, beat out Beyoncé for Album of the Year (25).
- Adele also won all three of the major awards in 2012 for her 2011 album 21.

Longest elevated bike path in world opens in China

- The longest elevated bike path in the world has been opened in a city in south-east China.
- The five-mile long, 16-foot wide bicycle-only pathway – dubbed "the winding viaduct" – has been built in the city of Xiamen.
- During an initial month-long trial period it will be open from 6.30am to 10.30pm,

covering the city's five major residential areas and three business centres.

- The route can carry 2,023 cyclists per hour, while 300 hire bikes are available for people who do not have bicycles.
- Large sections will be sheltered underneath an elevated motor vehicle expressway and 30,000 lights will illuminate the cycleway during the night.

Government to launch Indradhanush 2.0 for Recapitalization of PSBs

- Government plans to come out with 'Indradhanush 2.0', a comprehensive plan for recapitalisation of public sector lenders, with a view to make sure they remain solvent and fully comply with the global capital adequacy norms, Basel-III.
- 'Indradhanush 2.0' will be finalised after completion of the Asset Quality Review (AQR) by the Reserve Bank, which is likely to be completed by March-end.
- Post Asset Quality Review (AQR) exercise by the RBI to clean up the balance sheets of PSBs, the numbers are being re-looked at and a revised programme of capitalisation will be issued as part of 'Indradhanush 2.0'

National Career Services (NCS) and Jeevan Praman Facility for EPFO Pensioners Launched in Hyderabad Post Office

- The Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment Bandaru Dattatreya launched the National Career Service (NCS) for youths and Jeevan Praman facility to EPFO pensioners through Post Offices at DakSadan in Hyderabad on February 12, 2017.
- The Post Offices will serve as an Employment Registration Centres for Unemployed rural youth on behalf of the "National Career Service" Portal where youths can register themselves for employment in 1,55,000 post

offices established across the country for over 3000 occupations offered under 52 sectors in NCS

- It would build a bridge between the net connected urban areas and non connected rural areas and help the youth to avail facility to register for employment at their doorstep hassle-free and have access to a rich repository of career content.
- The centre aims to provide employment to five crore people over next five years.
- Besides, the EPFO pensioners can also submit their Digital Life Certificate (Jeevan Praman) through the Head Post Offices. This will also benefit the EPFO pensioners to avail the facility at their doorstep.

MEA co-hosted Gateway of India Geoeconomic Dialogue

Aimed at building synergy between business and foreign policy, the Ministry of External Affairs hosted co-host the second Gateway of India Geoeconomic Dialogue on February 13-14 in Mumbai.

At the inaugural dialogue of the event, themed 'Where Geopolitics meets Business', Minister of State for External Affairs M J Akbar participated in a discussion with his counterpart from Bangladesh, Shahriar Alam.

The Ministry of External Affairs is co-hosting the Second Gateway of India Geoeconomic Dialogue with Gateway House on 13-14 February in Mumbai.

This is India's premier geoeconomics conference focused on building synergies between business and foreign policy

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

- Loktak lake, the largest freshwater lake in the country, has now become home to first of its kind loktak floating elementary school. Situated about 50 km from Imphal, the school has been inaugurated at Langolsabi

Leikai of Champu Khangpok village in Manipur.

- The Loktak Lake is referred as the "lifeline of Manipur" as it is highly productive and many lives depend on the lake for endurance.
- The lake is also an Important Bird Area as it's a potential breeding site for waterfowl and is a staging site for migratory birds.
- Now the Loktak Lake has added a feather to its cap by supporting the first of its kind Floating Elementary School.
- The school was recently inaugurated at Langolsabi Leikai of Champu Khangpok village in Manipur. It aims to provide education to drop outs students, who were rendered homeless due to the recent evacuation of phumdis.

GNFC township becomes 100% cashless

- Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizers (GNFC) township, the state owned company's township at Bharuch, which has a population of around 5,000 and floating population of around 10,000 every day, has become 100% cashless and probably the first such township in India.
- It has facilities like a big shopping centre, restaurants, eateries, schools and colleges, hospital, stadium, guest house, etc. The GNFC township shall be launched by Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani
- The GNFC is the first integrated industrial township in the country to go 100% digital in all financial transactions.
- All the shops in the GNFC township, which include paan shops, laundries, vegetable shops, barber shops, provision stores, cycle repairing shops, flour mills, conduct their business only through cashless transactions using PoS machines, e-wallets like BHIM, UPI, SBI Buddy, etc. Even a paan is purchased cashless and a cup of tea is also available cashless only.



- Niti Ayog, government of India, has adopted the GNFC's 100% cashless township model for replication in other parts of the country.

Karnataka amends law to allow kambala

- Paving the way for the conduct of kambala, traditional buffalo race, the Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Monday passed the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Bill, 2017. The Bill seeks to exempt kambala and bullock-cart racing from the ambit of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960.
- Kambala is currently stayed by the High Court following a petition by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).
- Thousands in the coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, where kambala is widely held, had protested the ban.
- They argued that the annual kambala races in paddy fields were part of their tradition.
- The sport did not torture animals
- The movement gathered momentum after the jallikattu agitation in the neighbouring Tamil Nadu.
- Governor Vajubhai R. Vala is likely to refer the Bill to the President for his assent.

India beat Pakistan to win second straight T20 World Cup for Blind title

- Defending champions India defeated Pakistan by nine wickets in the final of the T20 World Cup for Blind to lift their second straight title
- Chasing 198, India sauntered to the target at the loss of just one wicket to score 200/1 in 17.4 overs at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.
- India and Pakistan entered the summit clash on the back of a terrific run in the league stage

- Chasing 198, India sauntered to the target at the loss of just one wicket to score 200/1
- Prakash Jayaramaiah top scored for India with an unbeaten 99
- Opener Prakash Jayaramaiah top scored for India with an unbeaten 99, laying a solid platform for the chase. With his opening partner and captain Ajay Kumar Reddy (43), he added 110 runs for the first wicket. Ketan Patel, who came in at no 3, was retired hurt for 26 but Jayaramaiah continued his assault on the Pakistan bowlers finishing with 15 fours in his 60-ball 99.

NBA and Take-Two team to launch eSports league

- NBA 2K eLeague, centered around Take-Two's "NBA 2K" franchise, will launch in 2018 and represents the gamemaker's first major push into the world of competitive gaming.
- Teams in the league will be operated by each of the NBA's 30 franchises and will follow a tournament format similar to the NBA — meaning a regular season, a bracketed playoff, then a championship match.
- Electronic Arts launched competitive gaming subsidiaries.
- EA tapped long-time gaming veteran Peter Moore (who previously served as COO of the company) to run the unit, while Activision brought in the former CEO of ESPN and the NFL Network to run its division.

National Women's Parliament begins in Andhra Pradesh

- The three-day National Women's Parliament, being organised by Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly with the theme of 'Empowering Women — Strengthening Democracy', began in the state capital region Amaravati.

- The vision of NWP is to enable and encourage social, political and economic empowerment of women in all strata of the society.
- One of the objectives of NWP is to generate new ideas, concepts, theories and ideologies for women empowerment.
- An 'International Woman Icon of the World' award and 12 best young achievers awards for women in different fields will be presented at the NWP.
- The NWP would facilitate interaction among women from all backgrounds and girl students to sensitise the society on issues like malnutrition, social security, sexual harassment, sanitation, oppression and other gender-based problems.
- One of the objectives of NWP is to make young girls realise their potential and make them aware of the canvas where they can leave their footprints.



IIT Kharagpur to set up India's first school on Quality and Reliability

- The Indian Institute of Technology is starting an inter-disciplinary school on Quality and Reliability (Q&R), a first of its kind in India, it said in a statement on Friday.
- The school in collaboration with other academic units in the Institute will offer academic courses, research and mission-mode programmes in the area of Quality and Reliability which would bring about social transformations. It shall also serve as a hub of Intellectual Property in Quality
- The faculty members as well as students will be from various disciplines, and apart from traditional Q&R areas, the school will have a holistic view on QR by including various application domains of the trinity of Process, Planet and People (3Ps) targeting Engineering systems, Human systems and natural systems.

- Dual Degree programme with B.Tech. in any discipline and M.Tech. in QRE will be launched in academic year 2018-19. Integration with MBA and Entrepreneurship programmes was on the cards.
- Additionally at least one course will be taught by an international expert in a year. The school will also offer PhD courses in all areas of Quality and Reliability.

India plans to host counter-radicalisation conference with ASEAN

- India plans to host a conference with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to share experiences and ideas on prevention of radicalisation.
- The event is likely to be held in October.
- The plan is to share India's experience and benefit from that of ASEAN countries, especially Malaysia. More countries could be invited as observers depending on the interest.
- The UAE is one such country — it has expertise in deradicalisation that was one of the key areas of discussions during the recent bilateral interactions
- The countries in the region from ASEAN to Gulf have agreed to coordinate efforts to counter radicalisation and misuse of religion by groups and countries for inciting hatred and terrorism to deal with growing IS threat.
- Malaysia and Indonesia are among the countries working on this aspect, and India wants to gain from their expertise

FSSAI sets up panel to finalise laws on food fortification

- Food regulator FSSAI has set up a scientific panel to frame final regulations on fortification of foods and prepare strategies to address malnutrition problem.
- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has already issued the draft

guidelines on fortification for five food items -- salt, milk, wheat flour, rice and edible oil -- to boost production and consumption of fortified foods.

- The draft rules were operationalised in October even as FSSAI sought comments from stakeholders before finalising the final regulations Fortification means deliberately adding or increasing the content of essential micro-nutrients in food items to improve quality.
- The panel has 11 experts and scientists -- Ambrish Mithal from Medanta; CS Pandav and R K Marwaha (Retd) from AIIMS; Anura Kurpad from St John's Medical College; Yogeshwar Shukla from CSIR - Indian Institute of Toxicology Research, HPS Sachdev from Sita Ram Bharatia Institute of Science and Research; KM Nair from NIN; P Ramachandran from Nutrition Foundation of India; Sumit Arora from NDRI; Sirimavo Nair from the MS University, Baroda, and Harsulkar from Bharati Vidyapeeth.
- Apart from framing standards, FSSAI has launched the Food Fortification Resource Centre (FFRC) to promote large-scale fortification of food across India.

Diego Maradona to get ambassador role with FIFA

- Diego Maradona is getting an ambassador's role with FIFA.
- The governing body wants to ensure the Argentina great "has a major role in FIFA's activities to promote the game across the globe," including with its Legends team.
- FIFA says the 56-year-old Maradona will be involved in "relevant development projects."
- Maradona announced his new role on Thursday, hailing FIFA as "clean and transparent" under president Gianni Infantino.



Dr Neelu Rohmetra, First Woman Indian Institute of Management Director

- Dr. Neelu Rohmetra of Jammu University has been appointed as the director of Indian Institute of Management Sirmour, Himachal Pradesh and she has become the first woman to helm an IIM in that capacity.
- Professor Neelu Rohmetra is currently the Rector of Kathua and Billawar Campuses of Jammu University Business School and is also the founder director of International Centre for Cross-Cultural Research and Human Resource Management (ICccR and HRM), University of Jammu.
- The government appointed 10 heads of IIMs which includes Dr. Neelu Rohmetra. The tenure of a new director will be for five years or until they turn 65 years of age.
- Dr. Neelu Rohmetra is specializing in Human Resource Development, Organisation Behaviour, Change Management and Cross-Cultural Management and has been working as Professor of Management for the last 12 years in the Jammu University Business School in which she joined as an Assistant Professor in Management Studies in 1989.

Narinder Chauhan appointed as Ambassador of India to the Republic of Philippines

- Narinder Chauhan, who is presently the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Serbia, has been appointed as the next Indian envoy to the Republic of the Philippines.
- High level visits and interactions between India and the Philippines have seen some intensification in the recent past, especially since the initiation of ASEAN-India Summit level partnership and establishment of East Asia Summit, of which India is a founding member

R Ashwin becomes fastest bowler to claim 250 Test wickets

- R Ashwin became the fastest bowler to claim 250 Test wickets, achieving the milestone in his 45th Test match.
- By doing so, the Indian all-rounder surpassed Dennis Lillee's record, where the former Australian right-arm fast had achieved the milestone in 48 matches.
- Ashwin reached his 250th wicket by dismissing Bangladesh skipper Mushfiqur Rahim in the one-off Test match Hyderabad.
- Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan managed to take 250 wickets in 51 Tests, Pakistan's Waqar Younis achieved the milestone against South Africa in his 51st match while India's Anil Kumble claimed his 250th wicket in his 55th Test match against New Zealand.

India successfully test-fires advanced interceptor missile

- In its effort to have a full fledged multi-layer Ballistic Missile Defence system, India on Sunday, successfully test-fired its indigenously developed supersonic interceptor missile, capable of destroying any incoming hostile ballistic missile, from a test range off Odisha coast.
- The test conducted to validate various parameters of the interceptor in flight mode has been successful
- The interceptor was engaged against a target which was a naval version of Prithvi missile launched from a ship anchored inside Bay of Bengal, taking up the trajectory of a hostile ballistic missile.

Intech DMLS launches India's first indigenously developed jet engines

- Intech DMLS Limited, a metal 3D printing provider and metal additive manufacturing establishment in aviation sector, has

launched the country's first indigenously developed jet engine series.

- Jet engines has been developed by a private establishment and augurs well for the industry in looking inwards for innovation in the high technology aviation sector,
- The company was established in 2012 and has its headquarters in Bengaluru specialises in metal 3D printing provider and metal additive manufacturing.
- With this India has become the first country in Asia and only the fourth country after the US, Europe and Israel to indigenously develop such an engine in the private space.
- The engine MJE 20 is indigenously designed and manufactured with a thrust of 20 Kgf. It is currently undergoing testing at our Bengaluru facility.
- Another Jet engine SJE-350 with a thrust of 350kgf, designed for strategic applications is currently being manufactured. The company also plans to expand into the Turbo Shaft/Fan category in the near future

- Tyagi has also worked in ministries of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Steel and Rural Development. He has held various posts in Himachal Pradesh government including in power, revenue, finance and information technology.
- Tyagi, for a short while, was also on the board of Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Sudarsan Pattnaik creates Guinness World Record for making tallest sand castle

- Famous sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik on Saturday created a Guinness World Record by building the world's tallest sand castle which is 48 feet and 8 inch (14.84 metre) at the Puri beach here.
- Sudarsan has broken the record of 45 feet and 10 inch sand castle which was created in USA, a Guinness World Records official said.
- After verifying all the criteria of the sand castle, the official of Guinness World Records Swapnil Dangarikar presented a certificate to Sudarsan for the achievement.
- Sudarsan and his 45 students took about 9 days to prepare this sculpture. The sand sculpture was built with theme of World Peace.



Ajay Tyagi to Succeed UK Sinha as SEBI Chairman

- According to a government notification on February 10, 2017, senior IAS officer Ajay Tyagi has been selected to take over as the next Chairman of Securities and Exchange Board of India(SEBI). He will replace incumbent Chief UK Sinha who retires on March 1, 2017.
- Tyagi, a 1984-batch IAS officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre is currently serving as an additional secretary (investments) in the Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance. Tyagi will be the 9th SEBI chairman.
- The 58-year-old Tyagi served as a Joint Secretary in Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change before joining Finance Ministry on November 1, 2014 as Additional Secretary.

GMR Hyderabad Airport bags CAPA award

- GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd, which operates Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, has won the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) Chairman's Order of Merit for its focus on environmental sustainability and becoming the first airport in Asia Pacific to become carbon neutral.
- GHIAL received the award during the CAPA 12 Annual India Aviation Summit in Mumbai earlier this week. CAPA India is a specialist aviation consulting and research practice in South Asia, with the region's largest team of

analysts and a portfolio of more than 125 advisory and research projects.

- Airports Council International (ACI) has certified Hyderabad International Airport with Level 3+ Neutrality under its Airport Carbon Accreditation programme.

Hindustan Motors sells Ambassador car brand to Peugeot

- Ambassador, the iconic Indian car brand that till less than a decade ago carried both the Prime Minister and the common man, is being sold to French carmaker Peugeot
- It is not clear if Peugeot will use the Ambassador brand for its cars in India. A questionnaire mailed to the French company remained unanswered.
- The Ambassador brand was introduced seven decades ago when Hindustan Motors launched the Morris Oxford series II (Landmaster) in a new avatar with minor changes.

Naval drill Aman-17 with 37 nations begins in Karachi

- The multinational Aman-17 naval exercise kicked off in Karachi on Friday with 37 countries taking part in the event.
- Aman-17 is the fifth such exercise which Pakistan has been holding every alternate year since 2007.
- Commander of the Pakistani naval fleet Vice Admiral Arifullah Hussaini inaugurated the exercise, which includes Australia, China, Indonesia, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Britain, the US, Japan and Russia at the Karachi dockyard.

Hunar Haat" starts in Delhi

- Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi inaugurated the second edition of "Hunar Haat" -- an exhibition to encourage, promote and provide national

and international market to master artisans and craftsmen of Minority communities from across the country.

- With the theme "Craft Aur Cuisine Ka Sangam", the second chapter of "Hunar Haat" is being organised from February 11 to 26 at State Emporia Complex, Baba Kharak Singh Marg, Connaught Place, New Delhi.
- On the occasion, Mr Naqvi said this "Hunar Haat" is unique in the sense that it has been showcasing crafts and traditional cuisines brought from different parts of the country. "Hunar Haat" is being organised through National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) under Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development (USTTAD) scheme of the Minority Affairs Ministry.

Govt launches Braille atlas to let the visually impaired study maps

- In a first, the Ministry of Science and Technology has come up with a comprehensive Braille atlas for nearly 50 lakh visually challenged people in the country, especially students.
- The atlas has 20 maps on different themes like physical, socio-economic, river system, crops pattern, natural vegetation, cultural, metropolitan areas, roads and railways, and crops.
- Developed in Hindi and English by the National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation (NATMO), Kolkata, an institute under the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Braille atlas has been made using indigenously developed silk-screen painting technology.
- The maps are well embossed with simple lines and point symbols to facilitate its users realise the location. The area coverage is

easily distinguishable in terms of shapes and textures.

- Each atlas costs nearly Rs 600.
- For its initiative, NATMO was awarded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in this year's Indian Science Congress held at Tirupati.
- NATMO has also prepared Braille maps for West Bengal and Meghalaya in Bengali and English respectively. They have also been asked by the governments of Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Gujarat to come up with state maps in English and their regional languages.
- The concept of Braille maps took root in the country in 1900s and the first such map was made in 1997.

Government Launches Mission XI Million To Promote Football Among School Children

- As a step in the direction of fulfilling PM Narendra Modi's vision of making football the sport of choice in India, Minister of State (I/C) for Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Vijay Goel launched the Mission XI Million.
- Mission XI Million is an ambitious program which is touted as being the biggest school sport outreach programme in the country. Mission XI Million, a unique initiative, is launched to encourage school children to play football.
- The game will help children inculcate healthy habits in their lives and pick important lessons in teamwork and sportsman spirit.
- As part of the programme, Government will motivate and incentivize school principals and sports teachers to promote football games in school on a regular basis



Virat Kohli becomes first batsman to score four double-centuries in four straight series

- Virat Kohli breaks another record as he becomes first to score four double tons in four consecutive Test series

- Kohli scored his fourth double century for India against Bangladesh in Hyderabad on Friday. All of these have come after June last year. That is just seven months! Four double centuries in just seven months and Kohli has done that effortlessly.
- He became the second captain to score four double centuries for his country. He also became the first player to score double tons in four consecutive Test series.

Official mascot of FIFA U-17 World Cup unveiled

- With just 238 days remaining for the start of the tournament, the official mascot of the FIFA U-17 World Cup India 2017, 'Kheleao' was unveiled at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium
- In a glittering ceremony attended by Sports Minister Vijay Goel, the chairman of the Local Organising Committee and AIFF president Praful Patel, the young and charismatic face of the FIFA U-17 World Cup, a clouded leopard called Kheleo, was introduced to hundreds of football fans.
- The clouded leopard is an endangered wild cat whose habitat extends from the Himalayan foothills to mainland Southeast Asia.
- Kheleo will participate in numerous activities in the run-up to the first-ever FIFA tournament to be hosted by India, which will be played from October 6 to 28 this year.

Nilambur teak to get geographical indication tag soon

- Nilambur teak will soon become the first forest resource from India to get GI (geographical indication) tag of World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- The Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) has initiated the steps for the registration of the Nilambur variety of Teak or Malabar Teak,

which is known for log dimensions and desired wood figure.

- A GI is a name or sign used on certain products, which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin.
- The GI tag ensures that none other than those registered as authorised users are allowed to use the popular product name
- At present 18 indigenous products from Kerala are in the GI list of India. They are Aranmula kannadi, Alleppey coir, Navara rice, Palakkadan matta Rice, Malabar pepper, Alleppey green cardamom, maddalam of Palakkad, Screw Pine craft, cocunut Shell crafts, Pokkali rice, Cannanore home furnishings, Kuthampully sari, Kasargod sari, Wayanadan rice, Vazhakkulam pineapple, Payyannur pavithra ring, Central Travancore jaggery and Chendamangalam dhoties.

Piyush Goyal launched TAMRA Portal and Mobile App

- Power, Coal and mining minister Piyush Goyal will launch TAMRA (Transparency, Auction Monitoring and Resource Augmentation) portal and Mobile Application
- The sole objective is to enhance transparency and accountability as a part of the Ease of Doing Business in the Mining sector.
- Ministers of mining and senior officers from 12 mineral rich States would also be connected through videoconferencing.
- TAMRA will be an interactive platform for all the stakeholders to compress the timelines for statutory and other clearances as it would help minimize the gestation period for commencing production.
- In case of delay in obtaining any clearances, TAMRA will send triggers to the concerned

authority so that the remedial steps can be taken immediately by those responsible.

- The ministry of mines will also receive triggers generated by TAMRA and will facilitate in expediting clearances. This portal also enables successful bidder to give suggestions/inputs.

MRI pioneer and Nobel laureate Sir Peter Mansfield dies

- A Nobel laureate who failed his school exams before going on to pioneer body scanning technology has died aged 83.
- Sir Peter Mansfield led a team in the 1970s that developed Magnetic Resonance Imaging, one of the most important breakthroughs in modern medicine.
- Sir Peter shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2003 with the inventor of the technique, US chemist Professor Paul Lauterbur.
- He is credited with further developing the technology, showing it can be mathematically analysed and interpreted, creating scans that take seconds rather than hours and generating much clearer images.

Nokia to acquire Finnish telecom software company Comptel for \$371 million

- Nokia is acquiring Finland-based telecommunications software company Comptel in a cash deal worth €347 million (\$371 million).
- Founded out of Helsinki in 1986, Comptel develops software for Operations Support Systems (OSS), which are basically systems used by telecom service providers to help manage and configure their networks, including managing faults.
- Nokia plans to combine Comptel's business with its own OSS offering, analytics, and cloud infrastructure to provide an "end-to-

end orchestration of complex NFV and SDN deployments

- Comptel is actually a public company, trading on the Helsinki Nasdaq OMX since 1999, and counts 800 employees in more than 30 countries.

Hemant Bhargava appointed LIC MD

- Hemant Bhargava was today appointed Managing Director of state-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India.
- He is at present LIC's Zonal Manager, Delhi.
- The Appointments Committee of Cabinet has approved Bhargava's appointment to the post till his superannuation, i.e., July 31, 2019, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry said.
- The top LIC management consists of the Chairman and three Managing Directors.
- UNO ropes in Satinder Sartaaj for campaign against trafficking
- Folk singer Satinder Sartaaj has been roped in by the United Nations Office on Drugs
- under its project against human trafficking called "Blue Heart Campaign".
- The 34-year-old artist has collaborated with other celebrated Indian musicians like AR Rahman and Sonu Nigam in this drive to spread awareness about the illegal practice through 'Music to Inspire' album.
- The album also includes songs by world famous artistes such as Ozark Henry, Karmin, Joss Stone, Jack Atlantis, Tisha Campbell, Steve London and Lee England.
- Talking about the initiative, Sartaaj explains the Blue Heart reflects upon the sad state of those who are trafficked and cold-hearted nature of the ones carrying out this trade.



Summit which is scheduled to begin in September,

- The summit will be held under the theme "BRICS: Stronger Partnership for a Brighter Future"
- It will also feature five key priorities such as deepening cooperation, strengthening global governance, carrying out people-to-people exchanges, making institutional improvements and building broader partnerships.
- The BRICS comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- The summit will take place in Xiamen which is located in east China's Fujian Province

India to pitch global services accord to WTO chief Azevedo

- India made a presentation to World Trade Organisation (WTO) Director General Roberto Azevedo and India Inc. on New Delhi's proposal for a global pact to boost services trade.
- The proposed Trade Facilitation in Services (TFS) Agreement at the WTO-level aims to ease norms including those relating to movement of foreign skilled workers/professionals across borders for short-term work.
- Among the objectives of the proposed pact, official sources said, is ensuring portability of social security contributions, as well as making sure fees or charges for immigration or visas are reasonable, transparent, and non-restrictive (or impairing the supply of services) in nature.
- It also aims to pave the way for a single window mechanism for foreign investment approvals.

China releases theme of BRICS Summit

- China has released the theme and the cooperation priorities of the 2017 BRICS

India, UK sign MoU to allow more flights to boost tourism, trade

- India and the United Kingdom signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to ease restrictions on the number of scheduled flights between the two countries
- Limits on flights from Indian cities, including Chennai and Kolkata, have been scrapped, allowing for a greater range of flights for passengers while providing a boost to trade and tourism for the UK and India
- The agreement also opened all destinations in the UK for Indian carriers for code share flights, and reciprocally the UK carriers can also operate code share flights to any international airport in India, through domestic code share arrangements.
- The agreement was formally signed by Minister of Civil Aviation P. Ashok Gajapathi Raju, on behalf of India and Lord Ahmad, Aviation Minister of UK, during a visit to India where he led a delegation of British companies for the 2017 CAPA India Aviation Summit.
- Union Minister of Chemicals & Fertilizers and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Ananthkumar inaugurated and presided over the orientation programme for the district conveners of National Yuva Cooperative Society (NYCS) here today, for launching of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJKs) in the country.
- The workshop was targeted to educate and channelize youth to synergize their efforts for taking ahead the mission to open 3000 PMBJKs by March 2017.
- Authenticity, Availability and Affordability (3As) must be emphasized while opening PMBJKs across the country
- PMBJKs will provide affordable quality medicine to all citizens, under PMBJP which is an initiative of the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers. Currently there are 777 PMBJKs and the target is to achieve 3000 kendras by March 2017



Govt to open 56 Post Office Passport Seva Kendra facilities

- Enthused by success of two pilot projects on utilising the head post offices as Passport Seva Kendra, the government has now decided to scale up this programme by opening 56 such facilities across the country.
- MEA and department of posts are working closely for the early commencement of passport-related services at such Kendras located in various states including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand and West Bengal
- The pilot project between the MEA and Department of Posts had started in Mysuru and Dahod (Gujarat), on January 25.

Shri Ananthkumar inaugurates Orientation Programme for launching of 1000 Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJKs)

AP identifies 90 projects under Sagarmala

- The Andhra Pradesh Government is drawing up plans to make the most of Sagarmala project, identifying 90 projects entailing investment of Rs 1,30,762 crores
- Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has constituted a 33-member committee to monitor the implementation of these projects. He himself will be the chairman of the committee which will conduct periodical reviews.
- Visakhapatnam Port Trust will be the nodal agency for the implementation of inland waterways projects. Two industrial corridors and five SEZs will be part of the project.
- The Chief Minister has instructed the officials to prepare action plans, port-wise as well as cluster-wise, for all these projects and submit them to the Union Government.

Aadhaar mandatory for availing subsidised foodgrains from PDS

- After cooking gas LPG, the government made Aadhaar mandatory for availing subsidised foodgrains from the ration shops with a view to better target Rs.1.4 lakh crore subsidy under the food security law.
- The government has given time to those not having the biometric-based unique identification number to apply for Aadhaar by June 30.
- The government issued a notification to this effect, but did stop short of saying that subsidised foodgrains will not be sold to anyone not having Aadhaar after June 30.
- The Department of Food and Consumer Affairs has issued a Notification under Aadhaar Act on February 8 which requires individual beneficiaries having ration cards under NFSA to furnish proof of possession of Aadhaar number or undergo Aadhaar authentication to receive subsidies under NFSA (i.e. subsidised food grains or cash Transfer of Food Subsidy under NFSA)
- Beneficiaries under NFSA who do not possess the Aadhaar number or are not yet enrolled for Aadhaar, but are desirous of availing subsidies under NFSA are required to make application for Aadhaar enrolment by June 30, 2017 and may visit any Aadhaar enrolment centre to get enrolled for Aadhaar,



RBI to set up panel on strengthening cyber security

- In a bid to strengthen cyber security system, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to set up an inter-disciplinary panel on cyber security to examine various threats and suggest measures to deal with it.
- While banks have taken steps to strengthen their defences, the diverse and ingenious nature of recent cyber-attacks necessitates

an ongoing review of the cyber security landscape and emerging threats. Towards this end, an inter-disciplinary Standing Committee on cyber security is being constituted

- The panel will review the threats inherent in the existing or emerging technology on an ongoing basis, it said.
- Besides, it will also study adoption of various security standards/protocols and also act as interface with stakeholders.
- There are around 75 crore debit cards operational in India, of which 19 crore are indigenously developed by RuPay while the rest are Visa- and Master Card-enabled
- Of the debit cards affected, about 26.5 lakh are on Visa and MasterCard platforms while 6,00,000 are on RuPay. The breach reportedly involved some 90 ATMs.
- Several public and private sector banks recalled or blocked over 32 lakh debit cards to safeguard customers from any financial fraud.

RBI to set up separate Enforcement Department

- The Reserve Bank of India will set up enforcement department to effectively monitor banks in case they violate regulations. The RBI has decided to establish a separate Enforcement Department which will start operations from April 1, 2017.
- As of now, each department of the RBI takes action against banks for violations of rules. RBI now proposes to have it centralised in one department
- This will help RBI follow-up and maintain a record on banks performance
- Enforcement department will deal with cases of non-compliance with regulations noticed either through the surveillance process or otherwise.
- With a view to developing a sound framework and process for enforcement

action, it has been decided to establish a separate Enforcement Department,

MoU signed between India and France in science and technology

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was apprised of the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of cooperation between Technology Development Board (TDB), Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and Bpifrance- which is a Public Investment Bank in France.
- The agreement will foster exchange of desirable practices and setting up of coordinated measures to further developmental exchange in the field of science, technology and innovation
- The MoU aims at carrying out activities related to exchange of best practices in the field of science and technology through TDP and Bpifrance. (ANI)

Cabinet approves 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan for covering 6 crore rural households

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (PMGDISHA) to make 6 crore rural households digitally literate. The outlay for this project is Rs.2,351.38 crore to usher in digital literacy in rural India by March, 2019.
- PMGDISHA is expected to be one of the largest digital literacy programmes in the world. Under the scheme, 25 lakh candidates will be trained in the FY 2016-17; 275 lakh in the FY 2017-18; and 300 lakh in the FY 2018-19. To ensure equitable geographical reach, each of the 250,000 Gram Panchayats would be expected to register an average of 200-300 candidates.

- Digitally literate persons would be able to operate computers/digital access devices (like tablets, smart phones, etc.), send and receive emails, browse internet, access Government Services, search for information, undertaking cashless transactions, etc. and hence use IT to actively participate in the process of nation building.
- The implementation of the Scheme would be carried out under the overall supervision of Ministry of Electronics and IT in active collaboration with States/UTs through their designated State Implementing Agencies, District e-Governance Society (DeGS), etc

MEA hosted Implementation and Assessment Group Meeting of GICNT

- The Ministry of External Affairs in coordination with the Department of Atomic Energy hosted the Implementation and Assessment Group Meeting of the Global Initiative to combat Nuclear Terrorism on February 8-10, 2017 at the Pravasi Bhartiya Kendra. Approximately 150 delegates from various GICNT partner countries and international organisations participated in this event.
- This event highlighted India's commitment to global nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
- It is a part of our overall engagement with the international community on nuclear security issues. It also highlights the continued priority we attach to nuclear security, our efforts to further strengthen the institutional frameworks, capacity building and enhance international cooperation.
- The possible use of weapons of mass destruction and related material by terrorists is no longer a theoretical concern.
- A breach of nuclear security may lead to unimaginable consequences



Jharkhand CM launches UJALA scheme

- Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das launched energy efficient fans and LED tube lights under the 'Unnat Jeevan by Affordable LEDs and Appliances for All' (UJALA) scheme in the state.
- Speaking on the occasion, Das said a total 85 lakh LED bulbs have been distributed.
- He said that when he took charge two years ago, 30 lakh households out of 68 lakh did not have electricity, and since then seven lakh households have got it.
- The state government set a goal to electrify the rest 23 lakh households by March, 2019, he was quoted in an official release.
- The UJALA scheme is being implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a JV under the administration of Ministry of Power, Government of India.
- The schemes will help the government manage peak demand and reduce power outage. We should all be proud that we are helping the environment by mitigating climate change through the adoption of energy efficient appliances
- EESL would provide free of cost replacement of LED bulbs and tube lights for all technical faults for three years, as well as free of cost replacement of energy efficient fans for all technical faults for 2.5 years.

in 17,250 fair price shops (FPS), much before the targeted date of March 31, is commendable

- The Gujarat government has partnered with common service centres, a special purpose vehicle of ministry of Electronics and IT by offering 30 digital services through the FPSs.
- Further, a farmer can get the soil health card and registration for centrally sponsored schemes.
- It is told that the state government (Gujarat) is also trying to make provision for monthly bus travel pass for students and payment of electricity bill through these shops.
- Besides, one can use the computer and internet facility at the FPS

Lok Sabha passes Wages Amendment Bill

- The Lok Sabha passed the Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill, 2017 which allows for digital payment of salaries or through cheque. The bill will now go to Rajya Sabha and following its passage in the upper House, the amendments will be notified.
- The move will enable employers to pay wages of less than Rs 18,000 a month by cheque or digitally to bank accounts, besides in cash, by doing away with the requirement of employees' written consent for the same.
- At present, wages can be given through cheque or transferred to a bank account only after a written authorisation from an employee. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 15, but it could not be taken up for discussion amid din over demonetisation.

Gujarat establishes cashless system for PDS

- Gujarat has become the first state in the country for establishing cashless system in its public distribution system (PDS) of food grains.
- The beneficiaries who are eligible for subsidised food grains under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) will now need to carry only Aadhaar cards for getting their food grains in Gujarat.
- The efforts of the state government for installing Aadhaar enabled payment system

Govt approves revenue insurance scheme for plantation crops

- The commerce ministry has approved the pilot Revenue Insurance Scheme for Plantation Crops for protecting the growers

from the risks such as yield loss, pest attacks and income decline caused by fall in prices.

- The Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) Scheme, 2003 was closed on September 30, 2013 and Revenue Insurance Scheme for Plantation Crops (RISPC) is an improved form of the PSF
- Department of Commerce has recently approved the pilot RISPC for protecting growers of plantation crops from the twin risks of yield loss due to adverse weather parameters, pest attacks etc and income loss caused by fall in international/domestic prices,

In a First, SC Issues Contempt Notice to Calcutta High Court Judge CS Karnan

- In the first move of its kind, the Supreme Court has issued a contempt notice to a sitting judge of the Calcutta High Court and taken away all his judicial and administrative powers.
- A seven judge bench of the apex court initiated contempt proceedings against Justice CS Karnan.
- Karnan wrote letters to the Prime Minister, Law Minister, Chief Justice of India, judges of SC and others levelling allegations of corruption against the Supreme Court and Madras High Court judges.
- This is a significant as it is for the first time that SC has issued a show cause notice to a sitting judge of a HC and asked him to remain present in person to defend charges against him.
- Justice Karnan is also directed to return all judicial and administrative files in his possession to Registrar General of Calcutta HC
- SC has given Karnan time till February 13 to reply to the notice and that's the next date of hearing in the case. The court has also asked it's registry to furnish copy of the



order to Justice Karnan during the course of the day.

- Attorney General of India Mukul Rohatgi said that action must be taken against the judge as the letters written by him to authorities bring disrepute to the judicial system. He called it "slandorous" and "disparaging" to the system of administration of justice.

HRD ministry forms sub-panel of CAGE to boost girls' education

- The Union HRD Ministry has constituted a sub-committee of Central Advisory Board of Education (CAGE) under Chairmanship of Telangana's Deputy Chief Minister to look into issues of girl's education.
- The terms of reference of the sub-committee would be to examine the reasons for low participation of girls in education, including the socio-economic factors with resultant gender bias, and suggest ways to reduce gender disparity so as to achieve better gender parity index
- The sub-committee, to be chaired by Telangana's Deputy Chief Minister and Education Minister Kadiyam Srihari, would also assess the current status of girls' enrolment across the country at primary, upper primary, secondary education and senior secondary levels.
- It will analyse girls' participation at all levels of school education across socio-economic groups of SC/ST, minorities and in rural-urban areas and reduce existing educational disparities among them.

Federal Bank Inks Pact with Commodity Online for Loans Against Warehouse Receipts

- Private sector lender Federal Bank Limited has partnered with Commodity Online, a leading online data and information portal for the distribution of loans against

warehouse receipts and collateral management services across the country.

- Commodity Online will launch an agri-commodity financing platform through its portal www.commodityonline.com.
- The partnership will enable Federal Bank to digitally provide financing for agri-commodities with collateral management across India.
- The farmers and traders with the help of the portal can track commodity markets and warehouses online as per their convenience and eventually get financing for their commodities quickly.

HDFC Bank, KMB go live with Bharat Bill Payment System

- Private sector lenders HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank are live with the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) that is aimed at easing utility and other repetitive bill payments for consumers.
- The BBPS is a centralised system created by the National Payments Corporation, involving banks and non-banks and allows agents to access bill payments services in an interoperable manner
- A customer can pay multiple bills from a single platform without the hassle of visiting multiple websites or issuing individual cheques, or also registering billers with her bank for standard instructions for debit
- BBPS introduced by NPCI is a seamless payment platform that offers speed and convenience to pay all types of bills
- The service will soon be made available for non-bank customers as well.
- The bank has introduced the service on its net banking page at present and plans to offer it on mobile banking next.
- At present, there are 124 billers whose payments can be made using the service



Bank of Baroda, IFFCO launch co-branded debit card for farmers

- In a novel initiative that would push digitalisation and cashless economy, Bank of Baroda (BOB) has tied up with IFFCO, a cooperative, to provide co-branded debit cards with inbuilt overdraft facilities to the farmers.
- In this regard, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between G.B.Panda, General Manager (government relationship) BOB and Yogendra Kumar, General Manager (Marketing) IFFCO.
- Under this MOU, two lakh co-branded debit cards will be issued to the farmers beginning with the state of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Subsequently more cards will be issued across rest of India.
- These co-branded debit cards will be exclusively used for the purchase of IFFCO products only.
- BOB has agreed to issue the co-branded debit cards to the farmers with an overdraft limit of Rs. 2,500 per cardholder.
- BOB will also provide 2500 PoS machines initially at the various locations across India recommended by IFFCO at mutually agreed terms and conditions.

Hyderabad surgeon Raghu Ram wins B C Roy award

- Dr P Raghu Ram, president of Association of Breast Surgeons of India, has won the prestigious Dr B C Roy national award for outstanding service in the field of socio medical relief for 2016.
- The announcement was made by Dr Jayshree Mehta, president, Medical Council of India, in a letter addressed to Ram, who is also director, KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases, and CEO, Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation.

- The award, the highest recognition for medical practitioners in India, would be conferred on Ram by President Pranab Mukherjee on July 1, observed as Doctors day, according to a KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre perss release.
- He is the youngest surgeon ever from the Telugu states (Telangana and Andhra Pradesh) to have been selected for this award, it claimed.
- The award recognises Dr Rams significant contribution towards improving the delivery of breast health care in India, and equally, creating the much needed awareness about importance of early detection of breast cancer in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh through a number of initiatives

Telangana launches India's first social innovation hub in Nizamabad

- The Telangana government has launched India's first social innovation centre -- The 'Kakatiya Hub For Social Innovation' in Nizamabad
- Telangana IT Secretary Jayesh Ranjan made this announcement at the one-day Development Dialogue, an international social entrepreneurship ecosystem conference hosted by Kakatiya Sandbox.
- Jayesh Ranjan said the 'Kakatiya Hub For Social Innovation' funded by the Telangana government and implemented through Kakatiya Sandbox will function like a rural incubator to encourage entrepreneurship at the grassroots level.
- The government will make sure that the rural incubator in Telangana will be run exactly in the same as any other high-end incubator like the T-Hub, the country's biggest, located in Hyderabad.
- Indian-American entrepreneur Raju Reddy, co-founder of Kakatiya Sandbox, Dr. 'Desh' Deshpande, founder of Deshpande



Foundation, Redbus founder Phanindra Sama, who is also the co-founder of Kakatiya Sandbox, welcomed the government's decision to implement the rural incubator in Nizamabad.

- The move is expected to create a model for promoting entrepreneurs in rural and semi-urban areas in the country.

India, Austria sign protocol amending tax treaty

- India and Austria agreed to amend their existing bilateral taxation treaty to prevent tax evasion as well as enable mutual assistance.
- The protocol will broaden the scope of the existing framework of exchange of tax related information which will help curb tax evasion and tax avoidance between the two countries and will also enable mutual assistance in collection of taxes, an official statement said.
- It was signed by Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Chairman on behalf of India and Embassy of Austria Charge d' Affaires Georg Zehetner on behalf of Austria.

International Conference & Exhibition on Terrestrial & Satellite Broadcasting held in New Delhi

- The 23rd edition of International Conference and Exhibition on Terrestrial & Satellite Broadcasting was held in New Delhi.
- The 3-day conference was organized by the Broadcast Engineering Society (India).
- The theme of the conference was Hybrid Technologies in Broadcasting – New Opportunities. In this EXPO, nearly 300 companies from 25 countries displayed their products directly or through their dealers and distributors in India.
- It also showcased products to promote the advancement and dissemination of knowledge and practices of broadcasting in

the field of Radio, Television and other media etc. in the Telecom Equipment and Products industry.

Israel passes controversial law on West Bank settlements

- Israel's parliament has passed a controversial law retroactively legalising almost 4,000 settler homes built on privately-owned Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank.
- Under the legislation, the Palestinian landowners will be given financial compensation or alternative land.
- The Palestinian president called the law "an aggression against our people".
- Israel's attorney-general has said it is unconstitutional and that he will not defend it in the Supreme Court.
- The legislation's passage comes amid an escalation in settlement activity since the inauguration of Donald Trump as US president.
- Emboldened by a new administration it sees as a more sympathetic, Israel's government has advanced plans for thousands of new settler homes.
- PNB Housing Finance limited signs MOU with CREDAI to train construction workers in West Bengal
- Addressing the need of pacing up constructions with skilled labour that would result in quicker delivery and hand overs, PNB Housing Finance Limited (PNBHFL) has signed an MOU with CREDAI West Bengal to train 1000 construction workers in Kolkata and nearby villages.
- CREDAI-Bengal would also be setting up permanent (off-site) skill development centres in Medinipur and Murshidabad - places with huge concentration of construction labour.

- 50% of the training cost is to be borne by the West Bengal State Government and PNBHFL, while the remaining 50% would be borne by the developer at the construction site from where workers would be trained.

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) signs four more unilateral Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs)

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance has entered into four more unilateral Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs)
- The four APAs signed pertain to the Manufacturing, Financial and Information Technology sectors of the economy. The international transactions covered in these agreements include Contract Manufacturing, IT Enabled Services and Software Development Services.
- With this, the total number of APAs entered into by the CBDT has reached 130. This includes 8 bilateral APAs and 122 Unilateral APAs. In the current financial year, a total of 66 APAs (5 bilateral APAs and 61 unilateral APAs) have already been entered into. The CBDT expects more APAs to be concluded and signed before the end of the current fiscal.
- The APA Scheme was introduced in the Income-tax Act in 2012 and the Rollback" provisions were introduced in 2014. The scheme endeavours to provide certainty to taxpayers in the domain of transfer pricing by specifying the methods of pricing and determining the prices of international transactions in advance. Since its inception, the APA scheme has evinced a lot of interest from taxpayers and that has resulted in more than 700 applications (both unilateral and bilateral) being filed so far in about five



years

Govt announces Arunachal Civil Service Awards

- Chief Minister Pema Khandu has introduced the 'Arunachal Civil Service Awards' for excellence in public administration.
- In a release, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) informed that this has been started to encourage good governance in the state and to recognize the extraordinary services rendered by the government employees in the state.
- "It aims not only to boost the morale of the state government employees by recognizing their hard work and innovative work done by them, but also is expected to bring in a productive work culture. The awards, which will acknowledge the outstanding and exemplary performance of civil servants, consists of a medal, a scroll, and cash award of Rs 1 lakh for an individual and Rs 5 lakhs for an organisation/ group/ team
- Nominations for the awards will be considered on the basis of implementation of innovative schemes or projects, showing innovation and adaptation to meet the stakeholders' requirement, building up perceptible system changes and institutions.
- It also aims to honour civil servants and government employees who make public service delivery system efficient, corruption free, including speedy and judicious execution of work. Extraordinary performance in emergent situations like floods, earthquakes etc shall also form the basis of being eligible for this award.

Delhi's Dalhousie Road is now Dara Shikoh Road

- New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has renamed Dalhousie Road as Dara Shikoh Road. Dara Shikoh was the elder brother of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. The road, named after Lord Dalhousie who served as

governor general of India from 1848-56, is located less than 2 km from Rashtrapati Bhawan.

- NDMC Chairman Naresh Kumar announced the change in name of the road, which comes five months after Race Course Road was renamed Lok Kalyan Marg. In 2015, the civic body had renamed Aurangzeb Road after former president APJ Abdul Kalam.
- Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of fifth Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, had promoted the peace and concord between the followers of Hinduism and Islam, and has interest in comparative religions, universal brotherhood, humanism and peace

Rajiv Singh takes over as acting CEO of Prasar Bharati

- Member (Finance) in Prasar Bharati Rajiv Singh took over as the acting CEO of the country's public service broadcaster.
- Singh has taken over as per a resolution of the Prasar Bharati Boards Resolution taken on January 14 in a meeting in Hyderabad.
- Suresh Panda, Member (Personnel), who was the acting CEO retired yesterday.
- The Prasar Bharati Board had passed a similar resolution in favour of Panda when Jawhar Sircar put in his papers.
- Article 30 of Prasar Bharati Act empowers the Board to take decisions in such contingencies.
- Prasar Bharati looks after the functioning of Doordarshan and All India Radio.

Russia banned from London World Athletics Championships

- Russia has been barred from international competition since November 2015 following a damaging report alleging that state-sponsored doping was rife in the country.
- The ban had already been extended in March and then June 2016, preventing



Russia's athletes from competing at the Rio Olympics.

- Russian athletes will be allowed to compete under a neutral flag in the world championships provided they can prove to the IAAF that they have been tested regularly outside Russia. Thirty-five athletes have already applied to the governing body of international athletics for approval.

Dubai Gets First Woman Commercial Pilot In Royal Family

- Shaikha Mozah Al Maktoum, one of the female members of Dubai's ruling family, is claimed to have become the first woman commercial pilot,
- In 2016, Etihad Airways announced that more than half the UAE nationals employed by the airline are women, including nearly 50 pilots.
- In recent years, an Emirati woman fighter pilot - Major Mariam Al Mansouri - made headlines around the world when she led an aerial raid against ISIS in Syria.
- A few members of the Al Maktoum family took to Instagram to congratulate the young achiever, expressing their pride and joy on her accomplishment.



China Becomes World's Largest Solar Energy Producer

- China has become the world's largest producer of solar energy, according to a new report from the country's energy administration. The most populous nation on Earth nearly doubled their capacity for solar power in 2016, but they still have a very low per-capita rate for solar power use.
- China's National Energy Administration announced over the weekend that their photovoltaic (PV) capacity reached an impressive 77.42 gigawatts. Germany, the

former global solar-power leader, produced 40.78 gigawatts in November 2016.

- China is not the only nation embracing renewable power. India announced on Monday that their PV capacity had reached 9 gigawatts, and they hope to replicate China's meteoric rise in alternative energy through the use of tariffs and subsidies. Saudi Arabia, in response to slumping oil prices, announced in January 2017 a \$30-50 billion investment in solar and wind power.

1st stable compound of chemically inactive helium confirmed

- Helium, considered to be a chemically inert and unreactive gas due to its extremely stable and closed-shell electronic configuration, has been confirmed to form a stable compound (Na₂He) with sodium under high pressure.
- These findings were so unexpected that it took more than two years to convince science reviewers and editors to publish their results, said the lead researcher.

Arunachal Pradesh implements 'e-Cabinet' system

- The Arunachal Pradesh government it has implemented a paperless system to cut down on the time taken to hold a cabinet meeting. The 'e-Cabinet' system uses a web-based software by which ministers can prepare for cabinet meetings, entirely without paper.
- The system is a multi-user secure solution that keeps information updated in real time. Using this system, the cabinet members can access the cabinet notes before the meeting. The entire business of the Cabinet can be conducted using the e-Cabinet solution.
- e-Cabinet is a powerful tool that the Arunachal Pradesh government plans to use to streamline its decision-making process

Delhi batsman becomes 1st to score 300 in T20s at any level

- Twenty-one-year-old Delhi batsman Mohit Ahlawat has become the first batsman to score a triple hundred in a T20 match at any level.
- Ahlawat, who has represented Delhi in Ranji Trophy, scored an unbeaten 300 off 72 balls in a local T20 tournament at Delhi's Lalita Park. Ahlawat smashed 39 sixes and 14 fours in his knock.
- The 21-year-old wicketkeeper batsman, playing for Maavi XI, scored the record 300 not out in a local T20 tournament - Friends Premier League, at Delhi's Lalita Park against Friend's XI.
- Mohit's unbeaten knock came off just 72 balls, which included 39 sixes and 14 fours. His effort led his side to 416 in 20 overs. Mohit's teammate Gaurav contributed 86 off 39 balls as Maavi XI won the match by 216 runs.



SC asks Centre to link all mobile numbers to Aadhaar within one year

- The Supreme Court on Monday directed Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led central government to register details of identity of every mobile user within a year.
- The apex court said that there are over 100 crore mobile subscribers while making it mandatory for all mobile subscribers, including those having pre-paid SIM cards, to have their phone number linked to Aadhaar without fail within one year.
- The court also directed the Centre to devise a way so that each person with a pre-paid sim would have to fill and deposit a form whenever he or she recharges.

Chief Minister Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana (CMSGUY) Launched in Assam

- Chief Minister Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana (CMSGUY) launched in Assam
- The Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched this scheme for the development of villages of the state Assam.
- Chief Minister Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana is a mega mission with a financial outlay of Rs. 30,000 crore will be implemented in all the villages in Assam in the next five years culminating in 2021-22.
- Through Chief Minister Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana (CMSGUY) it has been aimed at bringing in revolutionary changes by doubling the farm income in the State.
- This scheme is launched in a move to bring about paradigm shift towards holistic development of villages in Assam.
- Chief Minister Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana (CMSGUY) will be implemented through 'saturation model' by covering each revenue village through focused interventions in direct economic activities, logistic support including market linkages, and community support.
- Under the Chief Minister Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana (CMSGUY) five teams will be constituted in each block to work as a catalyst to implement different missions of the programme. These teams will prepare development plans for them to be implemented in each village.
- Under this scheme village knowledge centre will be set up in each village and by bringing in synergy between the scheme and MGNREGA play ground will be built in each village of Assam

Bank of Maharashtra ties up with Cigna TTK

- Public sector lender Bank of Maharashtra BSE 0.86 % has partnered with insurance company Cigna TTK Health to market the insurer's products in the bank's branches across the entire country.

- Under the agreement, the bank will offer the all of Cigna TTK's superior health insurance products to its 2 crore customers through its network of over 1,896 branches, its 14,000 bank employees across the country as well as through its digital platforms.
- Bank of Maharashtra's tie-up with Cigna TTK will bolster penetration of health insurance in the country, which is currently between 5-7%.
- Additionally, the World Health Organization's (WHO) Sustainable Development Goals 2030 include ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages, with a specific focus on India. The bancassurance tie-up will be a positive step towards this end
- Andhra Pradesh's first Smart Police Station, having look and feel of a corporate-style office, equipped with a "custody" room and under watch of CCTV network, is set to start functioning.
- Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated the State's first Smart Police Station at Nagarampalem in Guntur city in the capital region Amaravati.
- The facility, in fact, doesn't look like a typical police station, thanks to plush exterior and interiors that leave one with a feeling of having walked into a corporate- style office.
- There are no boundary walls to the Smart Police Station but the exterior has been beautifully landscaped while the facade is of glass.
- The fully air-conditioned station has a staff room, dormitory, mini control room, a reception chamber and individual enclosures for the Station House Officer and three Sub-Inspectors. Staff manning the station will not wear the usual khaki uniform and instead sport a navy blue trouser and a light blue shirt. While women Constables have a light blue sari for uniform, the lady receptionist will additionally sport a navy blue blazer. Interestingly, the station does not have a "lock-up" for detainees. Instead, a "custody" room with a double bed has been readied.
- The facility, built in two months at a cost of Rs 91 lakh, is one of the two model Smart Police Stations constructed in Guntur as a pilot project. Andhra Police administration has drawn up plans to build another 100 Smart Police Stations across the state.

National Testing Agency to Conduct Tests For Higher Education

- Union Human Resource Development Ministry will set up a department – National Testing Agency (NTA) to conduct examinations for higher and secondary education.
- The decision has been taken keeping in view that the Central Board of Secondary Education has been conducting examinations in which around one million students appear every month which is a very large number.
- its main purpose is to bring reforms in the education system.
- Mr Javadekar said initially examinations like IIT, NIT and even university exams will be conducted by the NTA. Later on the secondary school exams will also be handed over to NTA. Initially, the CBSE staff will be deployed in this department and but later on the specialised people will be hired in the NTA.



Andhra Pradesh gets its first smart police station

Railways to show green signal to a train in Andaman and Nicobar

- A 240-KM broad-gauge railway line connecting two major islands, with bridges and stations along the coast, will be part of an ambitious rail link connecting Port Blair

with Diglipur on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands — a first in the country that will bring the archipelago on the rail map.

- The Railway Ministry is set to approve the project, which will connect the Union Territory's capital city in the south with the largest town on the north Andaman island currently linked by a 350-km bus service that takes over 14 hours and a ship that takes around 24 hours.
- There is no air connectivity.
- The cost of the line will be Rs 2,413.68 crore with a negative rate of return on investment of -9.64 per cent.
- The Railways considers a line to be commercially viable if this figure is at least a positive of 12 per cent.
- But the ministry is set to approve this project owing to its "uniqueness and strategic importance

Huts, heliports, Open air theatre, walking trail, landscaping, solar lighting, solid waste management & public amenities etc.

- Tourism sector employs thousands of micro and small entrepreneurs especially from the hospitality sector.
- A boost in tourism promotes small entrepreneurs associated with sectors such as – hotels, lodges, handicraft, tourist guides etc.

Axis Bank ties up with Earthport

- India's third largest private bank, Axis Bank BSE 0.20 %, has tied up with Earthport Plc, a cross-border payment network, to enable faster outbound cross-border payments for its customers through Earthport's state-of-the-art global payments network.
- Axis Bank has become the first bank in India to connect with Earthport's global payments network, which spans over 60 countries.
- The Bank joins a growing number of major banks across the globe that can, through a single connection with Earthport, send payments seamlessly to almost any bank account in the world on behalf of their clients, while delivering a faster, more efficient and cost-effective service.
- This agreement also marks Earthport's entry into India, the world's fastest growing major economy in line with its strategy to become the preferred provider of cross-border payment services to major banks, financial institutions, ecommerce companies and other payment aggregators globally.

J&K tourism gets a push; Tripartite MoU signed between M/o of Tourism, M/s NPCC & NBCC and Govt of J&K

- A Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for implementation of Tourism projects in Jammu and Kashmir was signed among Ministry of Tourism, NPCC & NBCC and Government of J&K.
- The Ministry of Tourism under the new initiative - Development of Tourism in the State- New Projects has sanctioned two projects to NPCC and NBCC in the State of J&K for implementation in September 2017.
- The two projects sanctioned are - Integrated Development of Tourist facilities at Gulmarg – Baramulla – Kupwara – Leh to M/s NBCC for Rs. 96.92 Crore; Integrated Development of Tourist facilities at Mantalai – Sudhmahadev – Patnitop in Jammu & Kashmir to M/s NPCC for Rs. 97.82 Crore.
- Major components sanctioned under the projects are Yoga centre, wellness SPA, Log

Ujjivan begins operations as small finance bank; opens five pilot branches in Bengaluru

- Ujjivan Financial Services commenced operations as a small finance bank (SFB) with launch of five pilot branches of in Bengaluru.

- These five branches will provide full service offerings.
- In the next one month, the bank will comprehensively test its technology, channels, people and processes as part of its rollout
- It plans to extend these services across 457 branches in 24 states in a phased manner over the next few months.
- Ujjivan SFB would offer a no-minimum balance savings bank account with the full range of banking services and benefits using the latest technology to unserved and under-served customers.
- Customers of Ujjivan SFB will have unlimited access to ATM transactions on Ujjivan's ATM network and a total of six free transactions on other bank's ATM networks. It will also offer remittance services, enabling customers to transfer money within Ujjivan and other bank accounts in a very reasonable and affordable manner.

Uber launches taxi hiring service UberHIRE

- Global taxi-hailing platform Uber announced it has launched a new category UberHIRE that allows customers to hire a taxi for the day, to cover several destinations, and is targeting senior citizens, business travellers and tourists.
- Presently, UberHIRE works only on cash payments, a statement from Uber said.
- After a pilot run in Kochi, starting today, UberHIRE will go live in New Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Vizag and Nagpur, with more cities slated for launch in the weeks to come, it added.

Indian-origin British sculptor Anish Kapoor wins USD 1 million Israeli prize

- Well known Indian-origin British sculptor Anish Kapoor was named on Monday the

winner of a prestigious USD 1 million Genesis prize by Israel for his commitment to Jewish values.

- The prize committee, headed by Jewish Agency chairman Natan Sharansky, acknowledged Kapoor as "one of the most influential and innovative artists of his generation".
- Kapoor joins Itzhak Perlman, former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg, and actor-director Michael Douglas as recipients.

Table Tennis Nationals: Sharath Kamal, Madhurika Patkar Win Singles Titles

- Madhurika Patkar won the women's singles crown for the first time, while veteran A. Sharath Kamal bagged his seventh national crown in the 78th 11Even Sports Table Tennis Senior National Championships
- Sharath beat an equally weary Soumyajit Ghosh 4-2 and Madhurika downed six-time national champion Poulomi Ghatak 4-0 at the Manesar Sports Club.
- Sharath made a good beginning but Ghosh came back to take the next. The pattern continued until the fourth, but in the fifth, Sharath accelerated and increased the lead with considerable pace.
- In the women semi-finals, Poulomi disposed of sixth seed Pooja Sahasrabuddhe 4-0, while Madhurika stopped defending champion Manika Batra 4-2.

India to host FIBA Women's Asia Cup in July in Bengaluru

- India will host FIBA Women's Asia Cup basketball tournament in July, Basketball Federation of India announced.
- The continental flagship tournament for women will be held here from July 23 to 29.
- India has also been given another continental level tournament — the FIBA U-16 Women's Asian Championship — which

will be held from October 22 to 28 in Hyderabad.

- This will be the first time since 2009 that India will host a major FIBA (International Basketball Federation) event.
- In 2009, the BFI was allotted the same two Championships — the 1st FIBA Asia U-16 Championship for Girls in Pune and the 23rd FIBA Asia Championship for Women in Chennai.
- Fourteen teams will compete in both the FIBA Women's Asia Cup and the U-16 Women's Asian Championship, with eight teams in Division A (which include new Oceania teams Australia and New Zealand) and six in lower Division B.
- India is in Division B in both the Senior and U-16 events.

Sports Minister Vijay Goel lays foundation stone of Center of Excellence for Para Sports in Gujarat

- Sports Minister Vijay Goel laid the foundation stone of the Center of Excellence for Para Sports Gandhinagar, which will be the first ever training facility in the country dedicated to para athletes.
- The Center of Excellence is being set up at an estimated budget of over Rs 50 crores.
- It will have world class facilities where para athletes can train for various international competitions including Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games. It will also act as a classification center for para athletes.
- The Center will also hold seminars, educational programmes and workshops throughout the year with the help of International Paralympic Committee.
- The Center will have a fully air conditioned indoor hall, fully air conditioned elite hostel of 100 beds, 20 VIP accommodation for foreign guest which will also be air conditioned and open land for warm-up.

- The entire project will be constructed by CPWD in coordination with various experts and consultants having full accessibility as per the norms of IPC.

Google sells satellite imaging business Terra Bella to Planet Labs

- Alphabet Inc's Google would sell its satellite imaging business, Terra Bella, to Planet Labs, a San Francisco-based private satellite operator founded by former Nasa scientists.
- The financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.
- As part of the deal, Planet Labs will acquire the Terra Bella business including the SkySat constellation of satellites, Alphabet said.
- Google will enter into a multi-year contract to purchase Earth-imaging data from Planet Labs after the deal closes.
- Google had acquired Terra Bella, originally known as Skybox Imaging, for \$500 million in 2014.
- The deal will help Planet Labs broaden its available data and add new customers.
- Planet Labs is one of several startups aiming to harness technology allowing satellites to become smaller and less expensive, making it easier to deploy large networks of satellites at less risk and lower cost than previously.

Arun M. Kumar elected Chairman and CEO of KPMG in India

- KPMG in India has a new Chairman and Chief Executive Officer in Arun M. Kumar.
- Kumar, who was till recently a top official in the Obama administration, has been elected to head the professional services firm in India for a five-year term beginning February 5, said a KPMG announcement on Sunday.
- He succeeds Richard Rekhy, who led the firm as CEO for over four years.

- Kumar -- who was elected by the KPMG India Board and ratified by the India partners -- brings a wealth of international leadership experience to KPMG India, including his tenure in public service in the US over the last three years as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Global Markets and Director General of US and Foreign Commercial Service in the Obama Administration.
- He has spent the majority of his career with KPMG in the US, including serving on the KPMG US and KPMG Americas boards from 2008-2013.
- The England Test captain Alastair Cook was honored with the Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE) by Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace, London on February 4, 2017.
- CBE is one of the highest Order of honors among a series of top 5 British honors. It is rewarded for contributions made in the field of arts and sciences, work with charitable and welfare organizations, and public service outside the Civil Service.
- Alastair Cook played his debut test match at the age of 21 against India at Nagpur in 2006 and made his maiden century in the second innings.
- The 32-year-old also became the youngest batsman to score 10000 run in Test cricket in May 2016.

India Opens Coal-Mining Market for First Time in Four Decades

- India plans to allow non-state mining companies to mine and sell coal for the first time in more than four decades
- The nation's coal ministry will auction four mines to both state-run and private companies during the year starting April 1, Kumar told reporters in New Delhi. The winning bidders will have the freedom to sell the coal, a privilege currently limited to a handful of state-run companies.
- The step may allow miners an opportunity to benefit from one of the world's biggest coal markets, yet the offer has to be good enough to compensate for regulatory challenges, according to analysts. A broader implementation of the plan could threaten the monopoly of Coal India Ltd., which controls more than 80 percent of the nation's production.
- The government will have to offer mines with reserves of more than 1 billion metric tons to enable scale of operation and use of technology and allow investors complete pricing freedom

Alastair Cook gets top British honor from Prince Charles

Qatar Airways launches world's longest flight

- Qatar Airways launched the world's longest scheduled commercial service with its inaugural flight from Doha to Auckland.
- The Boeing 777 flight will take 16 hours and 20 minutes, pass over 10 time zones, five countries and travel 14,535 kilometres before reaching Auckland.
- This will make it the world's longest passenger service in terms of flying time, according to tracking website flightradar24.
- In March last year, Emirates airline launched what was then thought to be the world's longest non-stop scheduled commercial flight, with a service from Dubai to Auckland, spanning 14,200 kilometres.

President opens Rashtrapati Bhavan's annual 'Udyanotsav'

- President Pranab Mukherjee opened the annual 'Udyanotsav' of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The highlights of this year's 'Udyanotsav' include two new varieties of roses named

after the President Pranab Mukherjee and his late wife Suvra Mukherjee; Vertical Gardens and Air Purifying Plants which absorb toxins from polluted air.

- The two varieties of roses named 'President Pranab' and 'Suvra Mukherjee' were developed by Pranabir Kumar Maity and Ashok Kumar Maity of Pushpanjali Rose Nursery at Jakpur, West Bengal.
- The Indian Rose Federation issued a certificate after trials in January 2017 and the roses were subsequently planted in the Mughal Gardens.
- About 14,000 Tulip bulbs in seven different colors such as red, orange, pink, and purple have been planted in the Mughal Gardens. Several beds of roses, including both new and heritage varieties are the main attraction of the Long garden. Flower Carpets in various designs will be on display in the Central Lawns of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The dominant color scheme of this year's ornamental flowers is various shades of yellow, red and orange.
- A small cactus corner, as in previous years, forms part of the display. Exhibition Stalls will be set up near the Spiritual Garden displaying produce of fresh vegetables and fruits grown in the President's Estate Organic Farm.
- The Spiritual Garden will also showcase a Lotus pond with a cascading waterfall.

Govt forms panel to improve India's Haj policy

- The Centre has formed a six-member committee to give a report on ways to improve India's Haj policy and also look into issue of subsidy to the pilgrimage in light of 2012 Supreme Court order on gradually reducing and abolishing it by 2022.
- Former Consul General of India (CGI), Jeddah, Afzal Amanullah has been appointed

as convener of the high-level panel, Union minister of state for minority affairs (Independent charge) Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi told reporters in the Capital

- The panel will examine implications of various directions of the apex court with regard to the existing Haj policy, and suitable amendments in it.
- The committee will also review the effectiveness of Haj Committee of India's management of pilgrims' accommodation and air travel.
- It will also assess the aspects of transparency, consumer satisfaction and disclosure requirements for private tour operators to protect interest of the pilgrims with a view to make the policy of greater assistance to the pilgrims

Sanjeev Sanyal appointed principal economic adviser in Finance Ministry

- Government appointed noted economist Sanjeev Sanyal as Principal Economic Adviser in the Ministry of Finance.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Sanjeev Sanyal, former Global Strategist and Managing Director, Deutsche Bank, to the post of Principal Economic Adviser in the Department of Economic Affairs," an official statement said.
- He has been appointed in a pay scale of Rs 67,000-79,000 for a period of three years.
- In 2007, Sanyal was awarded the Eisenhower Fellowship for his work on urban issues and was also honoured by the Singapore government at the World Cities Summit 2014.
- Sanyal has authored several books including 'Land of the Seven Rivers: A Brief History of India's Geography', 'The Indian Renaissance: India's Rise After a Thousand Year's of

Decline' and 'The Incredible History of India's Geography'.

Bihar introduces third gender category in school exams

- For the first time since the Supreme Court recognised transgender people as a third gender in 2014, as many as 18 students in Bihar have been allowed to appear for the Board exams conducted by the Bihar School Examination Board (BSEB) under the third-gender category.
- The exams for Class 12 begin on February 14 and for Class 10 from March 1.
- According to board officials, 10 third-gender students will be taking the Class 12 exams and eight would be writing the Class 10 exams.
- So far, the BSEB did not allow students to take Board exams under the 'third gender' category because the examination form specified only two categories, male and female.
- Monika Das had to appear in the Board examination under the male category with the name of Gopal Kumar.
- She is a law graduate from Patna University and proudly claims to be the first third gender banker of the country.

Anand Kumar Gupta takes over as director commercial at NTPC

- Anand Kumar Gupta has taken over the charge as director commercial at NTPC
- As director commercial, he will be responsible for the activities relating to commercial, international and domestic business development and consultancy business of NTPC.
- He also headed business development department of NTPC and plant operations & maintenance at power stations.

Iran bars US wrestlers from Freestyle World Cup event

- Iran banned US wrestlers from participating in the Freestyle World Cup competition this month in response to President Donald Trump's executive order forbidding visas for Iranians
- The decision marks the first action taken by Iran in response to Trump's executive order banning visas for seven Muslim countries.
- Earlier this week, Iran said it would take retaliatory action.

Tata Motors unveils TAMO, its startup and sub-brand to develop futuristic vehicles

- Tata Motors has introduced TAMO, a sub-brand that will act as an incubator to develop new range of technology-heavy mobility solutions for the Indian and global markets, as part of its transformation journey
- TAMO, a start up established under the Tata Motors umbrella, will act as an incubating centre of innovation for developing new technologies, business models and partnerships to define future mobility solutions, according to top officials of Tata Motors.
- TAMO will help us to co-design India's automotive footprint by taking new technologies and mobility concepts as a new ecosystem to market
- TAMO will act as an open platform to network with global start-ups and leading technology companies to get access to trends, innovations and solutions for the design of exciting future products and services.
- As the automotive environment changes rapidly with disruptive technologies and customer behaviour, TAMO will transform the experience of interfacing and interacting with customers and the wider community.



- The new entity will provide a digital eco-system which will be leveraged by Tata Motors to support the mainstream business in the future. TAMO will have a small team of specialists who can imagine the future and they will be supported by personnel from Tata Motors to develop new passenger vehicles.
- The first product developed by TAMO will be showcased at the upcoming 87th Geneva International Motor Show to be held in March.

IDFC MD Vikram Limaye the new CEO, MD of NSE

- Leading stock exchange National Stock Exchange selected IDFC chief Vikram Limaye as its new CEO and Managing Director, two months after the sudden exit of Chitra Ramkrishna from the top post.
- NSE's board approved Limaye's name for the top position but a formal announcement would be made later as some formalities need to be completed from his side.
- The appointment would also need capital market regulator Sebi' approval.
- Incidentally, he was recently named in a four-member panel appointed by the Supreme Court for administering cricket body Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- Currently the Managing Director & CEO of IDFC, Limaye started his professional career with Arthur Andersen in Mumbai in 1987 and has also worked with Ernst & Young and Citibank.
- He has worked at Wall Street for eight years with Credit Suisse First Boston before returning to Mumbai in 2004.
- Limaye has contributed to various committees of government and industry associations on a range of topics surrounding infrastructure, economic policy, markets and trade.



- The appointment comes at a time when the exchange is preparing to launch its IPO estimated to be worth over Rs 10,000 crore. Besides, the bourse is facing regulatory issues over alleged preferential access to a few for co-location and algo trade facilities.

Top Indian diplomat re-appointed to UN Joint Inspection Unit

- Achamkulangare Gopinathan, a top Indian diplomat, has been re-appointed by the UN General Assembly to the Joint Inspection Unit, the only independent external oversight body of the UN system.
- Gopinathan, along with Sukai Prom-Jackson of Gambia, Jean Wesley Cazeau of Haiti and Nikolay Lozinskiy of Russia were appointed members of the Joint Inspection Unit for a five-year term beginning January 1, 2018.
- The Joint Inspection Unit is the only independent external oversight body of the United Nations system mandated to conduct evaluations, inspections and investigations system-wide.
- Gopinath's re-appointment follows his nomination by India and endorsement as the sole candidate of the Asia-Pacific Group.
- Gopinathan was first appointed to the UN body for a term from January 2013 to December 2017. At that election, he had secured 106 votes out of 183 votes and had defeated Ambassador Zhang Yan of China. He was serving as Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit.

World Cancer Day: 4 February

- A truly global event taking place every year on 4 February, World Cancer Day unites the world's population in the fight against cancer.
- It aims to save millions of preventable deaths each year by raising awareness and education about the disease, pressing

governments and individuals across the world to take action.

- Currently, 8.2 million people die from cancer worldwide every year, out of which, 4 million people die prematurely (aged 30 to 69 years)
- World Cancer Day is the ideal opportunity to spread the word and raise the profile of cancer in people's minds and in the world's media

Arun Jaitley introduces Demonetisation Bill in Lok Sabha

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Friday introduced a Bill on demonetisation in the Lok Sabha to formally make the banning of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes a law.
- The Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Bill, 2017, seeks to replace the ordinance on demonetisation promulgated by the government in December 2016.
- The Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Bill states holding, transfer and receiving of the recalled Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes will amount to a criminal offence punishable with a minimum fine of Rs 10,000.



India, Norway set up body to accelerate research for epidemics

- India and Norway have founded a Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) to accelerate life-saving research and development for epidemics
- An R&D blueprint for action to prevent epidemics- funding and coordination models for preparedness and response' and asked member countries, including India, to develop a research and development blueprint during epidemics.

- Accordingly, CEPI has been founded by governments of India (Department of Biotechnology, Indian Council of Medical Research and Department of Health) and Norway, the Wellcome Trust, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Economic Forum in collaboration with industry, other governments, foundations regulatory bodies, civil society and the WHO.
- The CEPI will prioritise list of diseases against which vaccines are most feasible to overcome barriers for development of vaccines

19th Bharat Rang Mahotsav begins in Delhi

- Offering a potpourri of plays from India as well as other countries, the 19th edition of National School of Drama's Bharat Rang Mahotsav began here this evening with much fanfare.
- The annual theatre extravaganza, slated to run through February 1-21, will see 14 foreign productions and participation of 12 countries.
- The audience will be able to feast their eyes on performances from England, Russia, Italy, Israel, Turkey, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Romania, Malasiya, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh, along with performances from folk artistes from around India.
- Theatre lovers will be able to book tickets online as well as offline.

Cancer research centre set up in Noida

- On the eve of World Cancer Day, a Centre of Integrative Oncology was inaugurated in Noida.
- Dr Ajit Sharan, the secretary of the ministry of AYUSH and Dr Saumya Swaminathan, the secretary of the

Department of Health Research at National Institute of Cancer Prevention Research (NICPR) inaugurated the facility.

- The first idea of a collaboration of AYUSH and NICPR was given by a team of scientists from the United States of America. This collaboration will definitely lead to the development of novel drugs for cancer prevention and management. There is also a strong need to interpret ayurveda in the language of modern medicine and treatment, which will lead to an increase in credibility and possibility of a joint research (in the field of medicine)

India and Italy Sign an MOU for Technical Cooperation in Rail Sector Especially on Safety Related Subjects

- Ministry of Railways and Ferrovie Dello Stato Italiane Group (FS Group) a Government Company of Italy managing the Italian railway sector have signed an MoU for technical cooperation in rail sector especially in the areas safety in train operations.
- The cooperation areas identified in this MoU includes safety audit of Indian Railways and measures required for enhancing safety in train operation, Assessment and certification of advanced technology based safety products and systems to Safety Integrity Level (SIL4), Training and competency development with focus of safety, Modern trends in Maintenance and diagnostic etc.
- The MoU comes in the backdrop of emphasis given by Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu Minister of Railways,

Govt. of India on safety in railway operation.

- He has directed Railway Board to collaborate with the international experts on this subject and identify the best practices in this field.
- Ferrovie Dello Stato Italiane Group (FS Group) is a fully owned company of the Italian Government working in the Railway Sector and is under Ministry of Treasure, Italy.
- The Group, with its technical and managerial railway expertise, widely recognized at international level, is one of the most advanced worldwide player in many field, such as design and realization of High Speed and Conventional Lines, Safety Systems, Certification, Training and Operation and Maintenance.

RTI Act comes into force in Sri Lanka

- The Right to Information (RTI) Act came into force in Sri Lanka, a piece of legislation aimed at restoring transparency and good governance in a country that has been plagued by corruption and misrule.
- The government had last week gazetted the categories of public authorities that fall within the purview of the RTI.
- TISL will be filing several public interest RTI requests with the relevant public authorities, seeking information like that pertaining to the assets and liabilities declarations of the President and the Prime Minister and a request for financial reports of political parties.
- The authorities are bound to respond to these requests as per the specified guidelines, within a maximum period of 28 days

RBI allows NRIs to invest in exchange-traded currency derivatives

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday allowed non-resident Indians (NRIs) to invest in exchange-traded currency derivatives (ETCD).
- With a view to enable additional hedging products for NRIs to hedge their investments in India, it has been decided to allow them access to the exchange-traded currency derivatives market to hedge the currency risk arising out of their investments in India
- Currently NRIs are permitted to hedge their rupee currency risk through over-the-counter (OTC) transactions with authorised dealer (AD) banks.
- Under the RBI guidelines, NRIs will be required to designate an AD category-1 bank to monitor and report their combined investments in OTC and ETCD segments.
- NRIs may take positions in the currency futures or exchange traded options market to hedge the currency risk on the market value of their permissible rupee investments in debt and equity and dividend due and balances held in NRE accounts.
- The exchange/clearing corporation will provide details of all transactions of the NRI to the designated bank.
- The designated bank will consolidate the positions of the NRI on the exchanges as well as the OTC derivative contracts booked with them and with other AD banks.
- The designated bank shall monitor the aggregate positions and ensure the existence of underlying rupee currency risk and bring transgressions, if any, to



the notice of RBI or Securities and Exchanges Board of India (Sebi).

LIQVD ASIA launches online exhibition portal-ExFirst.com

- LIQVD ASIA, a digital marketing agency, launched India's First Ever Online Exhibition gateway - ExFirst.com in collaboration with iKarmik.com.
- It will be an open platform where an exhibition from any industry can be conducted by any organization.
- To kick-start the initiative, the first exhibition will feature select designers and brands from the Fashion, Lifestyle and Luxury industry.
- It will be an upscale, online fashion exhibition providing a concise mix of carefully curated collections ranging from Bridal wear to casual wear.
- The collections will range from affordable hi-street (Rs. 5000 onwards) to exclusive high-end couture, costing a few lakhs.
- ExFirst.com boasts of star designers including the likes of Masaba Gupta, Rocky S, and Rohit Bal among others. Along with these stalwarts, the portal will also showcase a number of young and talented designers.

Ex Dy CAG among 3 whole-time members in IBBI

- Former Deputy CAG Suman Saxena and two others have been appointed as whole-time members in Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).
- Besides Saxena, Mukulita Vijaywargiya and Navrang Saini have also been appointed as the new members.
- Vijaywargiya, an officer of Indian Legal Service, is working as Additional

Secretary in Ministry of Law and Justice.

- Saini, who belongs to Indian Corporate Law Service, is Director General in Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- They have been appointed to the board for five years or till completion of 65 years of age, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry said.
- The board is mandated to regulate the functioning of insolvency professionals, insolvency professional agencies and information utilities under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.
- The code is meant for insolvency resolution of corporate persons, partnership firms and individuals in a time-bound manner.

India beat Pakistan to top pool in Asian Junior Squash

- Indian Squash Team outclassed Rival Pakistan 2-0 in the lost in the second round match of Pool A at the 18th Asian Junior Team Squash Championship 2017 in Hong-Kong on February 2, 2017.
- Earlier in the Day India beat Iran 3-0 while Pakistan beat Korea 3-0.
- In the first match Indian Senthilkumar Velaven beat Pakistan's Mehran Javed 3-1 and in the second round Abhay Singh outclassed Abbas Zeb 3-0 to clinch the tournament.

Rex Tillerson sworn-in as US secretary of state

- Former Exxon Mobil Chief Executive Rex Tillerson(64) has taken the oath of office as US secretary of state by Vice President Mike Pence in the presence of President Donald Trump in the White House's Oval Office.

- Rex's appointment is confirmed by the Senate after he secured 43 votes out of 56
- He is supported by Republican party but opposed by Democratic lawmakers in the Senate, who raked up his ties with Russia and President Vladimir Putin.

Pankaj Advani pockets the National Snooker Championship title

- Champion cueist Pankaj Advani won the Indian National Snooker Championship with a 6-0 win over Pandurangaiah of Railways in a one-sided final
- Apart from clinching his 29th national title overall, Advani broke several other records.
- He became the only Indian men's cueist to be the holder of all national billiards and snooker titles at the same time – Billiards, 6-red Snooker and 15-red Snooker.
- After marching into the finals of the snooker nationals with a 5-2 victory over Sundeep Gulati of New Delhi, Advani put on a flawless show of precision in the summit clash, leaving the spectators at the PYC Hindu Gymkhana mesmerised.
- The final top 8 standings of the National Snooker Championship: 1. Pankaj Advani 2. Pandurangaiah 3. Malkeet Singh 4. Sundeep Gulati 5. Laxman Rawat 6. A. Arvind Kumar 7. Dharmendra Lily 8. Anuj Uppal.

Amitabh Kant launches India Innovation Index A joint initiative of NITI Aayog, DIPP and CII

- To make India an innovation-driven economy, NITI Aayog, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) and

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) together launched a mega initiative "India Innovation Index" that will rank states on Innovations through country's first online innovation index portal that will capture data on innovation from all Indian states on innovation and regularly update it in real time.

- The India Innovation Index Framework will be structured based on the best practices followed in Global Innovation Index (GII) indicators and additionally by adding India-centric parameters those truly reflect the Indian innovation ecosystem.
- This initiative will be the point of reference for all international agencies to collect India's up to date data points for global indices and analytic.

31st Surajkund International Crafts Fair (Mela) 2017 begins in Faridabad

- 31st Surajkund Crafts Fair (Mela) is one of the most famous fairs, organized every year in Surajkund, Haryana, by Haryana Tourism Department to promote handicrafts items.
- Many talented artists come from India and across the World to showcase their handlooms, handicrafts, traditional handicraft items of their respective states.
- Among various famous festivals of Haryana Surajkund Mela is the most artistic one which is organized at Faridabad every year. The term Surajkund means "Lake of the Sun" which is an artificial lake constructed in the backdrop of the Aravalli hills.
- More than 20 countries from Europe, Africa and South Asia are participating in the fortnight-long mega event from February 1 to 15.
- Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Tunisia, Mongolia and South Africa will make their debut at the fair this year.

Neeti Mohan to collaborate with UN for women empowerment

- Noted singer Neeti Mohan has become the first Indian female singer to collaborate with UN for women empowerment
- She has joined the ranks of Ashton Kutcher, Nicholas Cage, Demi Moore, Ashley Judd, Gillian Anderson for United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund project titled "Music To Inspire – Artists United Against Human Trafficking".
- She has composed Udne De as a tribute to all the women and in support of equality for all as a part of this project.
- Over 60 renowned artists and dignitaries from around the world have collaborated with Rukus Avenue to participate in the "Music To Inspire – Artists UNited Against Human Trafficking" triple album that benefits the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, managed by the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

India to construct multi-ethnic tri-lingual school in Lanka

- India and Sri Lanka signed an agreement to construct a multi-ethnic tri-lingual school in a north central district of the island nation that would provide opportunities to Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim students to learn in a multi-cultural environment.
- The MoU was signed by India's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Secretary to the Ministry of Education Sunil Hettiarachchi.
- The secondary school located in President Maithripala Sirisena's home district Polonnaruwa will be constructed using a grant of SLR 300 million from the Indian Government.

- The project envisages construction of class rooms, laboratories and library, as well as procurement of furniture and other equipment.
- The project would also contribute to President Maithripala Sirisena's efforts to promote and strengthen reconciliation and unity in Sri Lanka

SAARC programming committee meeting concludes in Kathmandu

- The two-day meeting of SAARC Programming Committee concluded in Kathmandu. All eight members participated in the meeting.
- Secretary General of SAARC Arjun Bahadur Thapa highlighted the progress made by the Association since March 2016. The committee discussed various administrative and financial issues related to SAARC Secretariat and its Bodies.
- Besides senior officers of member states, Directors of the SAARC Regional Centres and Heads of SAARC Specialized Bodies also participated in the meeting.
- This was the first senior level meeting of Association since postponement of 19th SAARC Summit in November last year.
- The Summit was postponed after four nations Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh and India requested for it following escalation of tension between India and Pakistan.

Kuwait bans visa for 5 Muslim-majority countries, including Pakistan

- Kuwait has suspended the issuance of visas for nationals of Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.
- After US President Donald Trump's executive order banning seven Muslim-majority countries last Friday, the Kuwaiti government has told would-be migrants

from the five banned nations to not apply for visas, as it is worried about the possible migration of radical Islamic terrorists

- Kuwait was the only nation to prohibit the entry of Syrian nationals prior to Trump's executive action. Kuwait City previously issued a suspension of visas for all Syrians in 2011.

U.K. Parliament Clears Brexit Bill with 498 Votes

- Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May successfully held the first stage of passing the Bill in the Parliament on February 1, 2017 to pull Britain out of the European Union.
- British MPs approved passing the bill with 498 to 114 votes empowering May to start the process of pulling Britain out of the European Union.
- The Bill would now allow the government to trigger Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty which the Supreme Court ruled that she could not take that decision alone.
- The bill could complete the legislative process by March 7. Now the PM may progress to the next and more detailed legislative stage.

India signs Financing Agreement with World Bank for USD 201.50 Million

- Aiming to enhance quality and improve efficiency of the Engineering Education System, a Financing Agreement for IDA credit of USD 201.50 Million was signed with World Bank for the 'Third Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme' (TEQIP III)
- The Agreement was signed by Raj Kumar, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, on behalf of the Government of India and Junaid Kamal Ahmad, Country Director, World Bank (India) on behalf of World Bank.
- The objective of the agreement is to improve the Engineering Education sector in

Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, along with eight North Eastern States and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

- The project has been designed as a disbursement linked one to the effect that the loan will be handed over only on completion of certain fixed outcomes. The closing date of TEQIP III is March 31, 2022.

Godrej Properties elevates Pirojsha Godrej as Chairman, Adi Godrej to be Chairman Emeritus

- Godrej Properties BSE 0.01 %, the real estate development arm of Godrej Group, has made changes to its leadership team with Chairman Adi Godrej assuming the Chairman Emeritus position.
- Pirojsha Godrej, who is currently the Managing Director and CEO of the company, will be the Executive Chairman.
- Mohit Malhotra, currently an Executive Director at Godrej Properties, will be the new Managing Director and CEO.
- All the aforementioned changes will be effective from April 1st, 2017.
- Pirojsha Godrej, who joined Godrej Properties in 2004, has been the Managing Director and CEO of the realty developer since 2012.



Lakshya Sen reaches World No.1 in BWF junior ranking

- Young shuttler Lakshya Sen from Uttarakhand on achieved the World No. 1 ranking in the latest BWF World junior ranking.
- The 15-year-old prodigy, who won the bronze medal at Junior Asian Championships and clinched the All India Senior Ranking Tournament at Arunachal Pradesh last year, jumped one place to reach the numero uno status.
- Sen, who hails from Almora district in Uttarakhand, has been training under the

watchful eyes of 1980 All England champion Prakash Padukone at his Badminton Academy in Bangalore since he was 10.

- In the senior circuit, Olympic silver medallist P V Sindhu resumed her World No sixth position, while Saina Nehwal, who had clinched the season-opening Malaysia Masters Grand Prix Gold, was at the ninth spot in women's singles.
- In men's singles, Sameer Verma jumped 10 spots to be placed at 25th position riding on his maiden Grand Prix Gold title at Syed Modi Internationals, but K Srikanth slipped out of the top 20 after suffering a quarterfinal exit at Lucknow in the latest BWF World Ranking.

World Wetlands Day: 2 February

- World Wetlands Day is annually held on February 2 to celebrate how wetlands, which are lands saturated by water, help maintain biodiversity on Earth.
- Governments, community groups, and individuals around the world celebrate World Wetlands Day with special campaigns to promote the important value that the wetlands play in our lives. The day is promoted via social media, radio and TV broadcasts, and newspapers.
- Wetlands are found near the sea or inland and can be seasonal – they are water logged only during parts of the year, or perennial. They play a crucial role in the ecosystem

Rs 10,000 penalty for delay in filing Income Tax Returns

- Taxpayers who do not file their Income Tax Returns (ITRs) on time will have to shell out a penalty of upto Rs 10,000, but from the 2018-19 Assessment Year (AY).
- In order to ensure that return is filed within due date, it is proposed to insert a new section 234F in the Act (I-T Act) to provide

that a fee for delay in furnishing of return shall be levied for assessment year 2018-19 and onwards in a case where the return is not filed within the due dates specified for filing of return under sub-section (1) of section 139

- It specified two levels of penalty in this regard: A fee of five thousand rupees shall be payable, if the return is furnished after the due date but on or before December 31 of the assessment year and a fee of ten thousand rupees shall be payable in any other case
- However, for small taxpayers or where the total income does not exceed Rs five lakh, it is "proposed that the fee amount shall not exceed one thousand rupees.

INSEAD world's best B-School, ISB tops the list from India, says FT rankings

- INSEAD is the best B-school in the world for the second consecutive year in the Financial Times Global MBA Ranking of the best 100 programmes for 2017.
- Indian School of Business (ISB) has been ranked best from India.
- Other than ISB, Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad, IIM-Bangalore and IIM-Calcutta were the other top schools finding a mention in the best 100 programmes worldwide.
- While the ISB has jumped two places to the 27th rank, IIM-A has slipped five places to 29th position this year as against the year before.
- IIM-Bangalore has been ranked at 49th position—up from 62 last year. IIM-Calcutta is at 95th position.
- China Europe International Business School (CEIBS) from Sanghai is the top-ranked B-School from Asia with a rank of 11—up from 17 in 2016



Amit Mishra becomes India's highest wicket taker in T20s

- Amit Mishra, after picking up his 201st T20 wicket in the Bengaluru T20I, became India's highest wicket taker in T20 cricket, overtaking Ravichandran Ashwin's record of 200 wickets.
- Mishra achieved the milestone in his 170th T20 match after taking the wicket of England's Jason Roy. Notably, Dwayne Bravo holds the record for the most wickets in T20s with 367 scalps.

Clean Sweep for SpiceJet at Asia One Awards, Singapore

- It was a clean sweep for India's favourite airline -SpiceJet at the Asia One Awards, Singapore - as it walked away with top recognition in three prime categories.
- The airline which has been trending all through 2016 with multiple awards and accolades was adorned 'Asia's Greatest Brands - 2016' by the Asia One Board.
- The selection process was supervised by PricewaterhouseCoopers.
- The year 2016 witnessed SpiceJet standing invincibly tall on the operational charts by recording the highest passenger load factor of over 90%, every month, for 21 months in a row, since April 2015 - a feat unparalleled in India's aviation history and has also been registering industry leading performance on important metrics such as 'On Time Performance' and 'Flight Cancellations'.
- The company has been churning profits for seven consecutive quarters.
- 'World Travel Leaders Award' at the WTM London, 'Best Employee Engagement' at the 4th DMA, Best Transportation brand and Best Airline Brand in India by Brand Trust Report are some of the other industry marquee recognitions received by the airline.

Delhi govt to set up a 'Punjabi chair' at JNU

- Delhi Minister for Tourism, Culture and Languages Kapil Mishra Monday announced that the Delhi government has decided to set up a 'Punjabi chair' in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) to promote research into the Punjabi language.
- The government has been in touch with the university administration on the proposal for the last four to five years.
- Now, the decision has finally been taken to appoint a permanent Punjabi chair in JNU." Every year, a certain budget will be allocated to the chair by the government, he said, adding that the amount allocated would be about Rs 50 lakh.

Tokyo 2020 Olympics: Medals to be made from mobile phones

- Olympic and Paralympic medals for the Tokyo 2020 Games will be made from recycled mobile phones.
- The Japanese public will be asked to donate old phones and small appliances to gather two tonnes of gold, silver and bronze for the 5,000 medals.
- The project hopes to promote sustainability and reduce costs.
- A project that allows the people of Japan to take part in creating the medals is really good,
- Collection boxes will be placed in local offices and telecoms stores from April and will remain there until the metal required has been collected.
- Japan, which lacks its own mineral resources, is keen to take the theme of a sustainable future a step further.

5% tax reduction for firms with turnover of up to Rs. 50 crore

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his budget speech said income tax for small companies with annual turnover of up to Rs. 50 crore will be reduced to 25% from 30% earlier.
- Around 96% of the companies in India will benefit from the lower tax.
- Further, startups will have to pay tax on profits for three out of seven years.

Rishabh Pant becomes India's youngest T20I debutant

- Opener Rishabh Pant, who made his international debut in the T20I against England at Bengaluru on Wednesday, has become India's youngest T20I debutant. Rishabh, aged 19 years, 120 days, has gone past Ishant Sharma, who made his India T20I debut aged 19 years, 152 days.
- Rishabh was selected after scoring a triple century in the Ranji Trophy this season.

Foreign Investment Promotion Board scrapped to ease FDI

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley during Parliament Budget Session on Wednesday announced scrapping of Foreign Investment Promotion Board to ease the inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).
- The FIPB offered a single window clearance for applications on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India that are under the approval route.
- The sectors under automatic route did not require any prior approval from the FIPB and are subject to only sectoral laws.
- Jaitley also announced further reforms in FDI policy.

Online education platform SWAYAM will feature DTH integration

- Indian government has proposed to launch an online education platform SWAYAM by

leveraging information technology, finance minister Arun Jaitley said while presenting the union budget for the year 2017-18.

- This platform will comprise of at least 350 online courses and will enable "students to virtually attend the courses taught by the best faculty" as well as "access high quality reading resources, participate in discussion forums, take tests and earn academic grades
- Access to this platform will be further expanded by linking it to education-dedicated DTH channels
- Emphasis will be given on science education and flexibility in curriculum to promote creativity through local innovative content.

No Service Charge On Train Tickets Booked On IRCTC Website

- The booking of railway tickets online through the IRCTC website has just become cheaper. In the Union Budget 2017 presented today, finance minister Arun Jaitley said railways will no longer levy service charge on train tickets booked online through the IRCTC website.
- Earlier, a service tax of Rs. 20 had to be paid while booking Sleeper Class tickets and Rs. 40 for AC class tickets. "Service charges on e-tickets booked through IRCTC will be withdrawn. Cashless reservations have gone up from 58 per cent to 68 per cent
- The online booking of railway tickets has witnessed a sharp spurt after the government banned the notes of Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000 on November 8 and the cash crunch that followed.
- But as people switched to cashless transactions, there was a growing demand that the service charge be waived.
- This was the first time that the government broke with the 99-year-old tradition of a having separate railway budget, clubbing it

instead with the Union budget, which was presented in parliament today. In a budget that was described as "forward looking" by Railways minister Suresh Prabhu, government has provided Rs. 1.31 lakh crore for the capital expenditure of railways,

Yuzvendra Chahal second bowler after Ajantha Mendis to take six-wicket haul in T20 Internationals

- Young India leg - spinner Yuzvendra Chahal first became the first Indian bowler to record a five-wicket haul and then went on to write his name in history by finishing with figures of 6 for 25.
- Chahal is now only the second bowler after Sri Lankan mystery spinner Ajantha Mendis to snare six wickets in an innings in T20 Internationals.
- Mendis has in fact taken six wickets in an innings in T20Is twice.
- Chahal's timely wickets helped Virat Kohli win his third successive series against England. India had earlier defeated the visitors 4-1 in the Test series and 2-1 in the ODI series

PM Modi to be 'Guest of Honour' at St. Petersburg International Economic Forum

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in Russia, scheduled from June 1 to 3, as the 'Guest of Honour'.
- Official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, said, "This is to confirm that India has been invited as a Guest Country at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum which will be held in the city of St. Petersburg, Russia from June 1 to 3, 2017.
- "As a part of this, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will attend the Forum as Guest of Honour.

- The forum is an annual Russian business event for the economic sector that witnesses more than 4,000 people from over 60 different countries every year.
- The forum brings together the chief executives of major Russian and international companies, heads of state, political leaders, prime ministers, deputy prime ministers, departmental ministers, and governors.

Govt announces ban on cash transactions above Rs.3 lakh

- Budget speech, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Wednesday announced that cash transactions above Rs. 3 lakh will not be allowed.
- This comes after demonetisation and various other measures by the government to curb black money in the economy.
- Jaitley also said that India is mainly a tax non-compliant economy and it puts pressure on tax payers.



Income Tax Department (ITD) launches Operation Clean Money

- Income Tax Department (ITD) initiated Operation Clean Money.
- The initial phase of the operation involves e-verification of large cash deposits made during 9th November to 30th December 2016 period.
- Data analytics has been used for comparing the demonetisation data with information in ITD databases. In the first batch, around 18lakh persons have been identified in whose case, cash transactions do not appear to be in line with the tax payer's profile.
- ITD has enabled online verification of these transactions to reduce compliance cost for the taxpayers while optimising its resources.
- The information in respect of these cases is being made available in the e-filing window

of the PAN holder (after log in) at the portal <https://incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in>.

- The PAN holder can view the information using the link 'Cash Transactions 2016' under 'Compliance' section of the portal.
- The taxpayer will be able to submit online explanation without any need to visit the Income Tax office.

E-paathsala launches technology-backed services for higher education institutions in India

- E-paathsala, a Bangalore based startup, launched its first-of-its-kind, end to end integrated accreditation and ERP technology solution for managing colleges and universities with multiple accreditations for standards such as NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) and NBA (National Board of Accreditation) etc. The accreditation assists institutions to get access to more funding, improve the quality of education and get higher student enrolment ratio.
- Once an educational institution uses the ERP solution, they automatically get an accreditation report with gaps and recommendations on how to improve and get better grades for the accreditations.
- E-paathsala provides software and consultancy solutions to the institutions to help them improve their college management with an emphasis on how to improve their compliance with the accreditation standards.
- In addition, it also provides a full-fledged Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution to align the institution processes as per benchmark standards and improve efficiency of operation.

Union minister for textiles Smriti Irani inaugurates Meghalaya's first apparel centre

- Union minister for textiles Smriti Zubin Irani inaugurated the first-ever apparel and garment making centre in the state in the presence of Union MoS for home Kiren Rijiju and chief minister Mukul Sangma near Ampati in South West Garo Hills.
- The sprawling centre, covering an area of 45,000 square feet, was set up under the North East Region Textiles Promotion Scheme (NERTPS) at Hatisil near Ampati at an approximate cost of Rs 14.26 crore.
- There are 105 sewing machines each in the first two units and 70 in the third unit of the centre.

H1B visa reform bill introduced in US, minimum pay doubled to \$130,000

- A legislation has been introduced in the US House of Representatives which among other things calls for more than doubling the minimum salary of H-1B visa holders to \$130,000, making it difficult for firms to use the programme to replace American employees with foreign workers, including from India.
- The High-Skilled Integrity and Fairness Act of 2017 introduced by California Congressman Zoe Lofgren prioritises market based allocation of visas to those companies willing to pay 200% of a wage calculated by survey, eliminates the category of lowest pay, and raises the salary level at which H1B dependent employer are exempt from non displacement and recruitment attestation requirements to greater than \$130,000.
- This is more than double of the current H1B minimum wage of \$60,000 which was established in 1989 and since then has remained unchanged.
- It raises the salary level at which H1B dependent employer are exempt from attestation requirements to a new required wage level of 35 percentile points above the

median national annual wage for Computer and Mathematical Occupations published by the Department of Labour Occupational Employment Statistics (roughly \$132,000), which would be adjusted in the future without the need for new legislation, and eliminates the Master's Degree exemption for dependent employers.

Ireland just became the world's first country to stop investing in fossil fuels

- Ireland has voted to be the world's first country to fully divest public money from fossil fuels.
- The Irish Parliament passed the historic legislation in a 90 to 53 vote in favour of dropping coal, oil and gas investments from the 8bn (£6.8bn) Ireland Strategic Investment Fund, part of the Republic's National Treasury Management Agency
- Once enacted, the bill would force the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund to sell its investment in fossil fuel industries over the next five years.
- In 2015, Norway's sovereign pension fund divested from some fossil fuel companies, but not all.

Economic Survey 2017 tabled in Parliament: Key highlights

- Union finance minister Arun Jaitley tabled the Economic Survey 2016-17 in Parliament budget session.
- The survey projects the economy to grow in the range of 6.75% to 7.25% in the next fiscal year 2017-18 in the post-demonetisation year.
- The survey prepared by chief economic adviser in the finance ministry Arvind Subramanian said the adverse impact of demonetisation on GDP growth will be transitional.



- The Economic Survey 2016-17 advocates the concept of Universal Basic Income (UBI) as an alternative to the various social welfare schemes in an effort to reduce poverty. Gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2016-17 lowered down to 6.5%, from 7.6% in last fiscal.
- Expected economic growth is 6.75 to 7.5% in 2017-18.
- Fiscal windfall from Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, low oil prices.
- Growth of Farm sector to be at 4.1% in the current fiscal
- Fiscal gains from Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be realised later.
- Industrial Sector's estimated growth rate to be moderated to 5.2% in 2016-17 from 7.4% last fiscal.

Lakshmi Vilas Bank, Fisdom tie-up to launch robo-advisory platform

- Lakshmi Vilas Bank has tied up with Fisdom, a Bangalore-based fin-tech startup, to launch financial planning and wealth management services based on robo-advisory platform.
- The platform called Mission FINFIT will also include services like getting the KYC done, investing money in various platforms, viewing the account summary, withdrawing the invested money, etc.
- Going cash less and digital is the way to the future and hence the bank has introduced this online platform to our retail customers.
- It recently launched the mobile app which has been a huge success and with this collaboration with Fisdom, the bank will enhance its bouquet of banking products and services offered to its customer base.
- In this partnership, Fisdom will be the bank's product and service delivery partner
- Lakshmi Vilas Bank will offer Mission FINFIT to more than 30 lakh customers of the bank

across the country.

India Post Payments Bank starts pilot services

- India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) on kicked off its operations by rolling out pilot services in Raipur and Ranchi.
- The bank will offer an interest rate of 4.5% on deposits up to Rs. 25,000; 5% on deposits of Rs.25,000-50,000 and 5.5% on Rs. 50,000-1,00,000
- The paid up equity of the new bank is Rs.800 crore, of which the government has already infused Rs. 275 crore, he added.
- The idea is to have a branch in every district and make 3 lakh postmen come alive in payment bank function.
- 1,000 ATMs of India Post will be transferred to IPPB.
- The payments bank — the third one to get a permit after Airtel and Paytm and the first one promoted by the government — will not just conduct business but also serve people.
- India Post Payments Bank is the third entity to receive payments bank permit after Airtel and Paytm. Payments banks can accept deposits up to Rs. 1 lakh per account from individuals and small businesses.

UberMOTO launches service in Hyderabad

- Cab-hailing firm Uber has launched two-wheeler aggregation service UberMOTO in Hyderabad.
- The firm, which has signed an agreement with the Hyderabad Metro Rail Ltd recently, formally launched the services on Monday.
- Using the app, people can hire two-wheelers for short-distance commute at cheaper rates.
- The agreement was aimed at providing the last-mile connectivity from and to the upcoming Metro railway stations.
- Uber Founder and CEO Travis Kalanick came to Hyderabad last month to seal the deal.

- The new service would help solve the transportation and congestion problems to some extent in the twin cities.
- Driver partners of Uber had organised a protest early this month against the reduced incentives.
- They were also protesting against the shared services and UberMOTO, which, they felt, would hit their earnings.

National Entrepreneurship Awards 2016 presented by Home Minister Rajnath Singh

- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh presented the First National Entrepreneurship awards 2016 in New Delhi
- The awards have been presented in order to recognise the entrepreneurial spirit of India's youth and encourage more young Indians to become entrepreneurs.
- The Entrepreneurship Awards system has been created through a partnership between MSDE and a number of reputed institutions across the country including, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT - Delhi, Mumbai, Kanpur and Chennai), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai and XLRI, Jamshedpur. Every year, one such institution will play the role of the lead institution to anchor the awards. For 2016-2017, the lead institution is IIT, Delhi.



- The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is a specialised force constituted "for the purpose of specialist response to a threatening disaster situation or disaster" under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

IT Ministry urges tax sops for PC manufacturers

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has urged the Finance ministry to retain the differential excise duty regime and tax exemptions granted for the manufacture of mobile handsets and tablets, under the impending Goods and Services Tax regime, to prop up domestic manufacturing of electronic products.
- In its key recommendations for the Union Budget 2017-18, the Ministry has suggested that these exemptions be expanded to personal computers and servers, as per the Phased Manufacturing Roadmap it has worked out in consultation with the Centre's think tank NITI Aayog.
- The current duty dispensation is 12.5% countervailing duty (CVD) versus 1% excise duty (without input credit of excise duty paid on the goods).
- Differential duty makes imports of mobile handsets more expensive compared with making them locally, encouraging smartphone players to set up manufacturing units in India.

12th Raising Day Celebration of National Disaster Response Force

- The 12th Raising Day of National Disaster Response Force(NDRF) is celebrated on January 31, 2017 to commended the NDRF for its efforts during disaster response .
- Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh presented the Jeevan Raksha Padak awards and Distinguished Service Medals to the NDRF personnel on this occasion .
- He also released the NDRF pictorial book and souvenir to mark the occasion.

First in Banks: Banking History

- **First bank in India**- Bank of Hindustan (1770)
- **First Bank managed by Indians**- Oudh Commercial Bank
- **First Bank with Indian capital**- Punjab National Bank (Founder of the Bank is Lala Lajpat Rai)
- **First Foreign Bank in India** – HSBC
- **First bank to get ISO certificate** – Canara Bank
- **First Indian bank outside India** –Bank of India
- **First Bank to introduce ATM** – HSBC (1987, Mumbai)
- **First Bank to have joint stock public bank (Oldest)** – Allahabad Bank
- **First Universal bank** – ICICI (Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India)
- **First bank to introduce saving account** – Presidency Bank (1833)
- **First Bank to introduce Cheque system** – Bengal Bank (1833)
- **First bank to give internet banking facility** – ICICI
- **First bank to sell mutual funds** – State Bank of India
- **First bank to issue credit cards** - Central Bank of India
- **First Rural Regional Bank (Grameen Bank)** – Prathama Bank (sponsored by Syndicate Bank)
- **First bank to get 'in principle' banking license** – IDFC and Bandhan Bank
- **First Bank to introduce merchant banking in India** – Grindlays bank
- **First bank to introduce block chain technology** – ICICI
- **First bank to introduce voice biometric** – Citi Bank
- **First bank to introduce robot in banking service**- HDFC

Miscellaneous points:

- **Largest public sector bank in India** – State Bank of India
- **Largest private sector bank in India** – ICICI
- **Largest foreign bank in India** – Standard Chartered Bank
- **Bank with more branches in India** – State Bank of India

Present 5 Associates of SBI :

- Bank of Travancore
- Bank of Patiala
- Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur
- Bank of Hyderabad
- Bank of Mysuru

List of Important Agricultural Revolutions In India

The following table briefly highlights the important agricultural revolutions of India and the table is

followed by some very important key points that one must remember for the competitive exam.

Revolution

Product related

Person associated with

Protein Revolution	Higher Production (Technology driven 2 nd Green revolution).	Coined by PM Narendra Modi and FM Arun Jaitely.
Yellow Revolution	Oil seed Production (Especially Mustard and Sunflower).	Sam Pitroda
Black Revolution	Petroleum products.	
Blue Revolution	Fish Production	Dr. Arun Krishnan.
Brown Revolution	Leather / Cocoa / Non-Conventional Products.	
Golden Fiber Revolution.	Jute Production.	
Golden Revolution.	Fruits / Honey Production / Horticulture Development	Nirpakh Tutej.
Grey Revolution.	Fertilizers.	
Pink Revolution.	Onion Production / Pharmaceuticals / Prawn Production.	Durgesh Patel.
Evergreen Revolution.	Overall Production of Agriculture.	Started in 11 th 5 year Plan.
Silver Revolution.	Egg Production / Poultry Production	Indira Gandhi.
Silver Fiber Revolution.	Cotton.	
Red Revolution.	Meat Production / Tomato Production.	Vishal Tewari.
Round Revolution.	Potato.	
Green Revolution.	Food Grains.	Norman Borlong M.S. Swaminathan. William Goud (UK).
White Revolution (or, Operation Flood)	Milk Production.	Varghese Kurien.

Important Points to Remember

- Father of Green Revolution: - Norman Borlong (USA).
- Father of Indian Green Revolution: - M.S. Swaminathan.
- Green Revolution term coined by: - William S. Goud (UK).
- Father of White Revolution: - Varghese Kurien.
- Father of Silver Production: - Indira Gandhi.
- Father of Blue Revolution: - Dr. Arun Krishnan.
- Father of Golden Revolution: - Nirpakh Tutej.
- Father of Pink Revolution: - Durgesh Patel.
- Father of Induced Breeding: - Prof. Hiralal Chaudhari.
- Father of Red Revolution: - Vishal Tewari.

Bharat QR Code: A Push to Cashless Economy

Introduction

- India QR code, a flagship product promoted by the NAMO government is launched by the RBI on **February 20,2017**.
- The QR (quick response) code is going to be one of the key components by the government to boost digital payments at retail merchant points across the country facilitating electronic transactions in shops without the expensive card swipe machines.
- It is a product that is being developed by all four major card payment companies RUPAY card , VISA, MASTERCARD and AMERICAN EXPRESS.
- This is going to be the Standard QR code for mobile payments in india. VISA has been a pioneer in QR codes ,having developed and launched m Visa before over a year and a half, next player on the ground to launch this was Paytm which allows payments via QR code but is restricted to its members alone i.e. a closed loop system but India QR code will be interoperable allowing payments through multiple gateways. With the launch, the government hopes to replicate the success of QR code in Japan, china and many other countries , where it is the most popular mode of payment.
- Payments companies currently require to do complete KYC of a merchant before on-boarding him for acceptance.

OBJECTIVE:

The merchant outlets across the country use different QR codes provided by different payment networks. In order to standardize the QR codes across the country BHARAT QR code is introduced. It is convenient for those who would like to use mobile banking app rather than the credit or debit cards. BHARAT QR works with collaboration of the Payment networks- National Payments Corporation of India (RuPay), Visa and Master card. As of now 15 banks are a part of this payment platform and more are to join.

What is a QR code?

A QR Code is a 2D barcode that can store a lot of information, compared to a traditional barcode. These square-shaped barcodes have been around for more than two decades. It is only recently that QR Codes have entered into customer engagement activities. A QR code consists of black squares arranged in a square grid on a white background, which can be read by an imaging device such as a camera. First designed for the automotive industry in Japan. The QR code system was invented in 1994 by Denso Wave. Its purpose was to track vehicles during manufacturing.

How it will work?

- A merchant will display the QR code ,which can be scanned using a smart phone banking app linked to any of the four payments networks mentioned above and the money will be directly transferred by a buyer to the merchant account thus eliminating use of card

swipe machines . QR-code based payment is technologically the most advanced type of contactless payment.

- Banks will have to integrate the debit card details of the customer into the mobile application and also board maximum number of merchants to accept such payments.

Benefits for Merchants

- Merchants need to generate the QR code and place the QR code print at their outlet or cash counter. QR codes are black and white 2-D machine readable codes, which store information about merchant bank account. The customer has to scan the QR code using his respective banks app or the BHIM app. following are the benefit to the merchant for using this BHARAT QR code:
- Eliminate the use of PoS machine at the merchant outlet thereby reducing the investments and installation, maintenance cost in PoS machines.
- Banks charge transaction fees for using PoS machines which can be eliminated.
- Payments are transferred directly into merchants bank account through IMPS mode of transfer.
- Less dealing with swiping machine issues such as not able to read the card or server failures.
- No worry to lose sales due to improper working of machine.
- Linked to all banks (Unified payment).

Benefits to Customers

- No worry of Card loss
- No worry for Card expiry problems
- Less time consumed to make payments
- No need to flash the debit card for payment
- Easily scanning the QR code through your mobile phone will help you in transferring your money from one source to another. Unlike

digital wallets where payments are received from e-wallets, through QR code your payments will directly get received in your bank accounts.

- Linked with all banks

Other payment services with QR codes:

- There are lot of QR based payments introduced earlier. But each of these offers a unique and separate QR code for the merchants. Therefore the merchant has to maintain more than one QR code for enabling QR based transactions as each network has different QR code. Let us see some of the QR based payments which already existed.
- Visa operates with mVisa from a year and half ago.
- MasterCard operates by MasterPass QR
- DTH operator TataSky had partnered with Visa to allow and accept QR code-based payments from its subscribers
- MasterCard in partnership with Ratnakar Bank's Ongo payment wallet launched 'Masterpass QR service'
- E-wallet apps such as Paytm, Freecharge and Mobikwik, use QR codes.



How is it different?

But all these existing QR code based payment gateways are closed systems and inter operable with all banks. Hence, mVisa will only work for Visa card holders, while MasterPass will only work with MasterCard holders. For payments involving Paytm both parties need the app installed. However, with Bharat QR Code, which is a unified payment system all users of Visa, MasterCard, American Express and RuPay can make and accept payments.

TAKEAWAYS

- **RUPAY** card (by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) Dedicated it to

Indians on 8 May 2014 headed by M Balachandran, chairman)

- **VISA** (American multinational financial services company)-headed by Alfred F. Kelly.
- **MASTERCARD** (American multinational financial services company) headed by Ajaypal "Ajay" Singh Banga current president and CEO.

- **AMERICAN EXPRESS** (American multinational financial services company)- Kenneth Irvine Chenault
- **PAYTM**- Vijay Shekhar Sharma is the founder of Paytm.

Airtel Payment Bank And Its Effect On Market

What are Payment Banks?

We can define a Payment Bank in India as a type of bank which is a non-full service niche bank. A Bank which is licensed as a Payments Bank can only receive deposits and provide remittance. Lending activities are not permissible for these banks. So, Payment Banks can only issue ATM/debit cards, but can not issue credit cards as they are not empowered to carry out lending activities.

Introduction :

Airtel Payment Bank a joint venture between **BHARTI AIRTEL LTD & KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD**, said it will spend **Rs. 3000 Crore** to develop a **PAN INDIA** banking network & digital payments. The **80:20** joint venture aims to surpass conventional banking system with a virtue to serve multiple purposes under one roof. Mr. Sunil Bharti Mittal, The Chairman of Bharti Enterprises has remarked that Airtel Payments Bank aims to take digital banking services to the unbanked masses with their mobile phones in a quick and efficient manner. Especially youth relies on the home so this could be handy for managing their banking needs. Millions of Indians in rural areas will get their first formal banking experience with Airtel Payments Bank.

LOGO :

The Logo unveiled by APB signifies its identity. It is a modified form of Bharti Airtel telecom services. If you clearly observe it is actually the Indian rupee symbol has been inscribed in 'k' letter of word '**Bank**'. The '=' sign denotes **Equality**. A bank that gives equal access to everyone. (as declared officially by the Payment bank)

OPERATIONAL PHASE :

On the eve of Airtel Payments Bank launch, Finance Minister Mr Arun Jaitley has said "It is the currency, which has no names attached to it. Our Demonetisation efforts to the extent that digital payment must replace paper currency. APB would provide adequate reply to criticism that cashless economy is about use of credit cards"

Airtel Payment Bank rolled out Pilot Services in **Rajasthan** to test its systems & process ahead of full-scale, PAN-INDIA launch. It started the Pilot with Banking Points 10,000 **AIRTEL**

RETAIL OUTLETS (ARO), to achieve the feat of **250,000 ARO** across **29** states, **CUSTOMER:** which the company said more than the total number of ATMs in Country. Guidelines issued for payment banks are listed below

A Payments Bank has to keep 75% of their demand deposits in government bonds whose yield is low. A Payments Bank has to open 25% of its branches in unbanked, rural areas.

BENEFITS OF BEING AIRTEL PAYMENT CUSTOMER:

If you watch television, then you must be acknowledging the new commercial of AIRTEL PAYMENT BANK with punch line "Bank hai par alag hai". So why it is different, the features are listed below.

1). APB offers 7.25% interest compared to 3-4% offered by the conventional bank. This feature can fetch a number of customers especially of small sectors, for ex: customers with fewer savings, self-help groups, high-interest small business. high-interest rate, the bank also offers personal accidental insurance of Rs 1 Lakh with every saving account. No doubt, it would be a useful & versatile **BANKASSURANCE** Product.

3). In this digital era, every person in the world wants to be connected. To serve this purpose, APB offers talk time on saving the account. If a customer opens an account with a deposit of Rs 1000 then he/she will get 1000 minutes of free talktime on his/her Airtel Mobile Number. This talk time can be used for Airtel to Airtel calling all over India. This benefit is applicable on first time deposits only & comes with validity of **30 days**.

4). To take a step ahead **Demonetisation**, the Merchant partners will accept from Airtel Payment Bank customers over mobile phones. The Payment Bank will not charge any processing fee from Merchants & the facility would be a totally free for customers as well as merchants.

FROM THE DESK OF MD & CEO :

Mr. Shashi Arora, MD and CEO, Airtel Payments Bank was quoted saying "One of our big objectives is to create a merchant eco-system. Our aim is to on-board over **3 million** merchants by the end of this fiscal. We have kept the transaction fee at zero

for merchants. This is because we are replacing cash. The moment there is a charge of even **10 paise**, a merchant may get hesitant in using it. We want to ensure that even for smallest value transactions consumers as well as traders use the wallet".

RISKS INVOLVED :

Since Digital payments would be involved for hassle free transactions. These things should be taken care, which are listed below :

Increased risk of Money Laundering: The transfer of money into and out of a mobile wallet from or to a bank account is now possible. Cash-in from the bank account of an individual and cash-out to a different bank account of another individual can be used as a platform for laundering unaccounted money.

No Auto Log-off Facility: An individual usually opens the application on his/her mobile device for availing the services and closes the application, instead of logging out. If the mobile device is stolen or lost and a fraudster opens the application, he/she can misuse the remaining balance in the service providers wallet.

CONCLUSIONS :

Airtel Payment Bank definitely offers many schemes to woo customers. There is no doubt APB could become people's favourite bank. Now Paytm Payment Bank will also compete with APB.

But APB has to face many challenges in sustaining customer hold, since it does not offer lending & to enhance profit of company.

List of Satellites Launched by ISRO

List of Satellites Launched from PSLV

SATELLITE	YEAR	Launch vehicle	Purpose
IRNSS-1A	2013	PSLV-C22	1 st in Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS)
IRNSS-1B	2014	PSLV-C24	2 nd in Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System
IRNSS-1C	2014	PSLV-C26	3 rd in Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System
IRNSS-1D	2015	PSLV-C27	4 th Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System
Astrosat	2015	PSLV-C30	ASTROSAT is India's first dedicated space Observatory.
IRNSS-1E	2016	PSLV-C31	5 th in IRNSS
IRNSS-1F	2016	PSLV-C32	6 th in IRNSS
IRNSS-1G	2016	PSLV-C33	7 th and final in IRNSS
Cartosat-2c	June 2016	PSLV-C34	Earth observation/remote sensing satellite (already one launched in 2005)
SCATSAT-1	Sep 2016	PSLV-C35	Miniature satellite to provide weather forecasting, cyclone prediction, and tracking services to India
RESOURCESAT-2A	Dec 7 2016	PSLV-C36	a Remote Sensing satellite intended for resource monitoring
CARTOSAT-2D	15 Feb 2017	PSLV-C37	Highest number of satellites launched by a single launch vehicle (104 satellites)

List of Satellites Launched from GSLV

SATELLITE	YEAR	LAUNCH VEHICLE	PURPOSE
GSAT-1 ,D1	2001	GSLV M1	Developmental flight
GSLV Mk II D6	2015	GSAT-6	9 th GSLV flight and 5 TH developmental flight.
INSAT-3DR	September 2016	GSLV F05	First operational flight of GSLV Mk II.

Upcoming Satellite Launch: SAARC satellite - SAARC Satellite is a proposed communication-cum-meteorology satellite for the SAARC region. It was announced by the prime minister of India, Narendra Modi in August 2014. It was proposed for a launch

in December 2016 but it has been postponed to March 2017.

ISRO

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is the space research and exploration agency of government of India (GOI) headquartered at Bengaluru (Karnataka) aiming to develop and sharpen space research and technology for national development. ISRO was formed in 1969 displacing the Indian national committee for space research (INCOSPAR) established in 1962 with the combined efforts of first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his close aide scientist Vikram sarabhai ,regarded widely as the the Father of the Indian space programme.

What is a satellite?

- A satellite is an artificial body placed in orbit around the earth, they can be either natural or artificial serving different purposes like communication, navigation, weather, earth observation, military etc The example for natural satellite is Moon ,which keeps orbiting the Earth. Jupiter has 63 moons while Mercury and Venus have no moon.
- In 1957, Russia became the first country to launch an artificial satellite "SPUTNIK 1" rocketed by "SPUTNIK 8K71PS".

Points to be Noted

- Zr. APJ ABDUL KALAM (Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam) is known as the missile man of India for his work on the development of ballistic missile and launch vechile technology.
- ISRO comes under the authority of department of space of GOI and the PM, managing agencies and institutes.
- It has its own commercial wing named "ANTRIX" a marketing arm, its job is to

promote products, services and tech development.

- It was Dr.Vikram Sarabhai's continuous efforts which persuaded the Indian government to concentrate on space research work and make a place in the elite club of leading space agencies.

History of Satellites in India

- India launched its first satellite "ARYABHATA" in 1975 with the help of "KAPUSTIN YAR" Russian rocket launch site.
- In 1970s, the project SLV (satellite launch vehicle) headed by Dr.APJ Abdul kalam with ISRO to develop the technology for launching satellites was in initial stage and made its first launch in the year 1979 carrying "ROHINI" named satellite to the orbit. The launch vehicle throws the rocket carrying satellite into different orbits.
- Subsequently it has developed PSLV (Polar satellite launch vehicle) and GSLV (Geosynchronous satellite launch vehicle).
- The PSLV took its first flight in 1993 and is breaking records since then, with its latest successful flight on 15 february 2017,carved its name in the history by launching 104 satellites in polar orbit at one go in just a single rocket "PSLV C37" from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC),surpassing Russian record of 37 satellites in 2014.
- It carried 3 Indian satellites 1)CARTOSAT-2 series , India's weather observation satellite2)INS-1A and INS-1B (Indian national satellite) and other nations satellites including 96 from US alone.
- With this Indian satellites launched in space now stands at 46 and the total number of

customer satellites from abroad launched by India's workhorse launch vehicle PSLV has reached 180.

- It has launched various satellites for historic missions like Chandrayan-1, Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM), Space Capsule Recovery Experiment, Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System, etc.

Quick Facts

- **ISRO- headquarters-** Bengaluru (Karnataka)
- **Established in** 1969
- **Vikram Sarabhai** –father of Indian space programme
- **APJ Abdul Kalam**- the missile man of India
- **ANTRIX** – commercial wing of ISRO
- **First artificial satellite** launched by Russia in 1957 named 'SPUTANIK1"
- **First Indian satellite** (other countries launch site) "ARYABHATA" in 1975
- **First Indian satellite** (launch site in India) – "ROHINI" by SLV in 1979
- **NASA:** (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) ,US



- **CHANDRAYAN-1** was India's first lunar probe launched using PSLV-XL.
- **ASTROSATIS** India's first dedicated multi-wavelength space observatory. It was launched on a PSLV-XL on 28 September 2015
- **The Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM)**, also called Mangalyaan is a space probe orbiting Mars since 24 September 2014. It is India's first interplanetary mission] and ISRO has become the fourth space agency to reach Mars, after the Soviet space program, NASA, and the European Space Agency. PSLV C25 carried it to the space ,The total cost of the mission was approximately Rs. 450 Crore (US\$73 million) making it the least-expensive Mars mission to date
- The **NASA-ISRO** Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission is a joint project between NASA and ISRO to co-develop and launch a dual frequency synthetic aperture radar satellite to be launched in 2020.
- **ISRO Chairman** – AS kiran kumar

List of Appointments: January - February

Designation	Person
New Delhi Police Chief	Amulya Kumar Patnaik
President of Table Tennis Federation of India	Dushyant Chautala
New UN Secretary General	Antonio Guterres
44 th Chief Justice of India	Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar
CEO Prasar Bhaarti	Rajeev Singh
Bharti AXA CEO	Sanjeev Srinivasan
Chairman of UPSC	David R Syiemlieh
Chief of Army Staff	Bipin Rawat
Executive Director of RBI	Surekha Marandi
Indian-origin Deputy Assistant to The	Raj Shah

President of United States and Deputy
Communications and Research Director

New President of European Parliament Antonio Tajani

Distinguished Senior Fellow of Atlantic
Council Manish Tewari

UK's Ambassador to European Union Tim Barrow

New CBI Director(former Delhi Police
Commissioner) Alok Kumar Verma

Director of Central Intelligence Agency Mike Pompeo

New Secretary of Department of Food and
PDS Preeti Sudan

Nominated Chairman of BoD of Tata Power S Padmanabhan

Will head Islamic Military Alliance to Fight
Terrorism(Former Pakistan Chief) Raheel Sharif

New CEO of Flipkart Kalyan Krishnamurthy

SBI Pension Funds MD and CEO Kumar Sharadindu

New president of BMW Group India

Vikram Pawah

Mufti Tassaduq Hussain

J&K CM Mehbooba Mufti's brother inducted
in PDP

Chancellor of Nalanda University Dr. Vijay Bhatkar

US envoy to United Nations

Nikki Haley

Appointed by UN as India Goodwill
Ambassador for SDGs(Sustainable
Development Goals) Ashok Amritraj

President of Haiti

Jovenel Moise

First non parsi and new chairman of TCS N Chandrasekaran

New Governor of Tibet appointed by China Qi Zhala

Chairman of African Union Commission

Moussa Faki Mahamat

Karnataka Lokayukta P Vishwanath Shetty

Head of BCCI Administration Panel(Former
CAG) Vinod Rai

New Chairman of Snap Inc. after resigning Michael Lynton

from Sony Entertainment CEO post	
Assam Governor who got additional charge of Meghalaya	Banwarilal Purohit
Chairman of Eastern India Regional Council of The Institute of Company Secretaries of India(ICSI)	Siddhartha Murarka
Appointed member of FIFA Finance Committee	Praful Patel
Group President and COO of Baidu, leading Chinese ISP	Dr. Qi Lu
HR Head for Campgemini for india operations	Anil Jalali
IBM India chairman	Karan Bajwa
New National intelligence Director of US	Dan coats
Chairman of OERC(Odisha Electricity Regulatory mission)	UN Behera
Pakistan's first women foreign secretary to UN	Tehmina Janjua
US Secretary of State	Rex Tillerson
DGP of Karnataka	Rupak kumar Dutta
Chairman and CEO of KMPG	Arun M kumar
ED Director	Karnal Singh
President of Germany	Frank Walter Steinmeier
SEBI Chairman	Ajay Tyagi
New ASSOCHAM President	Sandeep Jajodia
First women IIM Director	Dr. Neelu Rohmetra
Ambassador of India to Philippines	Narinder Chauhan
LIC MD	Hemant Bhargava
Principle Economic Advisor in Finance Ministry	Sanjeev Sanyal
Director Commerical at NTPC	Anand Kumar Gupta
CEO and MD of NSE	Vikram Limaye
Top Indian reappointment to UN Joint Inspection Unit	Achamkulangare Gopinathan
Godrej Properties Chairman	Pirojsha Godrej
Chairman Emeritus position	Adi Godrej
Three whole time members in IBBI	Suman Saxena,Mukulita Vijaywargiya,

Banking Awareness Bites: January-February

Reserve Bank of India:

- Non Resident Indian and Indian Citizens staying abroad can exchange the demonetized currency notes till June 30, 2017.
- All banks should give 40% of their notes to rural branches to balance inadequate requirement.
- Forex Reserve rise by \$360 million dollar by \$687 million dollar to \$932 million dollar – Press report
- Limit for withdrawal of cash from ATM per day is Rs. 10,000.
- Rs.75 lakh penalty on Bombay Mercantile Co-operative Bank for violation KYC norms and anti-money laundering.
- Education loan will not be considered as Non-Performing Assets and three rounds of extension period ie. Each round not more than 6 months is given.
- Foreign Direct Investment(FDI) cannot be done in non-cooperative countries and territories identified by Financial Action Task Force.
- No cash withdrawal limits from ATM – effective from February 1, 2017.
- 1 billion to Nepal Rashtra Bank in 100 rupees' denomination.

State Bank of India:

- "SBI Exclusif" launched in Kochi by Venkataraman.

- \$50-million-dollar pact with State General Reserve Fund of Oman.
- Waiving of Merchant Discount Rate on debit card transactions up to Rs.20 lakhs up to December 31,2017.
- Coca-Cola tie up with SBI to enhance digital transaction.
- Lending rate cut down by 0.9%.
- Central SBI SELECT co-branded credit cards.

YES Bank:

- Tie up with Bajaj Electricals for Block Chain technology.
- YES FINTECH - Collaboration with Anthill and Let's Talk Payments

Government of India:

- Government of India allocates 3000 crores rupees to help 12 PSU.
- 5 rupees' discount on LPG cylinder for online payment.
- 16th Financial Stability and Development Council Meeting to eliminate shadow economy and tax evasion- New Delhi.
- Indian Standards on Hallmark gold jewellery - 14,18 and 22 carat hallmark by Bureau of Indian Standard.
- 54.90 crore prize for NITI Aayog lucky draw scheme winners is (3.42 lakh winners) given by National Payment Corporation of India.

GDP growth in India by various Organisations:

- Central Statistical Office, GDP lowers to 7.1% in 2016-17 to 7.6% in 2015-16.
- GDP growth of 8 %- NITI Aayog (Demonetization is not taken into account).
- UN Report- GDP grow by 7.7% in 2017.
- International Monetary Fund estimates the GDP rate of India as 6.6% for 2017-World Economic Outlook Report.
- GDP growth decreased to 7% from 7.6%-World Bank

RBI's Sixth Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy Review

Introduction:

The sixth bi-monthly policy resolution by the Monetary Policy Committee, RBI has decided to: Keep the REPO rate (Repurchase Agreement, the rate at which RBI lends to commercial banks) unchanged at 6.25 %, Reverse REPO (rate at which commercial banks park their funds with RBI) at 5.75 %, Marginal Standing Facility (MSF, the rate at which short term credit requirements of the commercial banks are satisfied via buying and selling of approved government securities) at 6.75 %. The decision of the MPC to keep the key rates unchanged was to keep up with the objective of containing CPI (Consumer Price Index) inflation at 5 % while maintaining growth and developmental aspirations.

Reasons for the Unchanged Monetary Policy stance:

- Modest rates of economic growth in Advanced Nations, modest growth rates clouded by recessionary pressures in emerging economies along with the uncertainty that surrounds the US macroeconomic policies as well as the protectionist sentiments aired by the new administration has its due bearing on the unchanged monetary policy status.
- High volatility associated with international financial markets, concerns and apprehensions associated with the Brexit, hardening of crude oil prices on the back of reduced production by OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries), firming up of commodity prices as well as expectations with regard to fiscal expansion in US as such contributed to the scaling up of US Dollar, perpetuating the neutral monetary policy stance.
- Though agricultural sector and core industries has registered quite an impressive growth performance, manufacturing and service sector has lost its pace of accentuated activity, along with worsening financing conditions and investment sentiments, scaling down the prospects for Industrial activity.
- Though retail inflation has decreased sharply on the back of a reduction in prices of vegetables, pulses, eggs, meat and fish, inflation excluding food and fuel remains at 4.9 % level, which attributes much to the scaling up of crude oil prices.
- Money market, though experienced a bit of shake up, consequent of demonetization necessitating RBI intervention in the form of liquidity absorption, it is in a turnaround mode via expansion of currency in circulation and issue of new bank notes. While exports registered positive dimensions, imports came down excluding petroleum, oil and lubricants.

Trade deficit also scaled down and it is expected that Current Account Deficit is expected to be below 1 % of GDP in 2016-17. FDI has been buoyant though there is an increase in portfolio outflows which owes much to uncertainty associated with US macroeconomic policy.

Outlook and future prospects for the economy:

Though the projected rate of head line inflation for the fourth quarter of 2016-17 was 5%, economy has experienced a decline in the same on the back of lowering of prices of vegetables, pulses etc. and it is anticipated that once the effects of demonetization wears off prices might rebound. Nevertheless it is expected that headline inflation might stay within the band of 4-5 % in the 2017 -18 fiscal. However the volatility associated with crude oil prices, exchange rates as well as effects of house rent

allowances based on the recommendations of Seventh Pay Commission might act as a potential game changer with regard to futuristic inflation trends. It is also expected that as the shocks of demonetization wears off, consumer demand, growth of cash incentive sectors such as retail trade, unorganized sector etc. might pick up. Similarly reduction in Marginal Cost based Lending Rate (MCLR- interest rate that reflects cost conditions of commercial banks with regard to obtaining funds from the market or RBI for lending purposes) is expected to accentuate investment and consumer demand along with budgeted infrastructural development in rural areas, as well as Capital expenditures, spiking up the projected rate of Gross Value Added for the economy from 6.9 % for 2016-17 to 7.4 % in 2017-18 highlighting a paradigm shift in monetary policy stance from being accommodative to neutral.

Highlights of Economic Survey: 2017

Introduction

The survey was prepared by Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian and Finance minister Arun Jaitley tabled the Economic survey 2016-2017 in the Parliament budget session. As per the economic survey reports, the growth rate is in the range of 6.75 per cent to 7.25 per cent in the fiscal year 2017-2018, in the post-demonetisation year. The survey has come up with an interesting concept called as Universal Basic Income as an alternate to various social welfare schemes in an effort to reduce the poverty. The survey clearly states that the adverse impact of demonetisation on GDP growth will be intermediate.

Growth Estimation:

- The GDP growth came down to 6.5 per cent compared to 7.6 per cent in the last fiscal year.
- The service sectors are estimated to grow at 8.9 per cent in 2016-2017.
- The current GDP growth rate for 2016-2017 is 7.1 per cent.
- Farm sector land had a good growth on account of good monsoon rains and it is estimated to be 4.15 per cent in 2016-2017 compared to 1.2 per cent in 2015-2016.
- Industrial sector growth rate pegged down to 5.2 per cent in 2016-2017 compared to 7.4 per cent in the previous year.

Taxes

- The survey clearly prescribes that there will be a cut in the individual income tax rates and real estate stamp duties.
- High Income earners will be enclosed in the Income Tax net thus, widening of the Income Tax net.
- Accountability and administration of Tax Department could be improved by reducing the chances or discretion.
- Cutting of Corporate taxes.
- The tax net will be widened from 5.5 per cent individuals to more than 20 per cent.

Fiscal deficit

- Oil prices were low in the previous year so there was a windfall in fiscal, but in 2017-2018 it would not be the same.
- Wage hikes to put pressure on fiscal deficit in 2017-2018.
- After implementation of GST there will be a fiscal gains but it will take more time to realise it.
- Fiscal responsibility Budget Management (FRBM) policies need to be changed so as to ensure a proper direction for the growth of "future India".

Inflation:

- CPI Inflation was around 4.5 to 5 per cent in 2016-2017.
- Oil prices are seen rising by one-sixth in 2017-2018 over the previous financial year 2016-2017 which will hamper our economic growth.

Current Account deficit:

- It is around 1-1.15 percent of GDP.

Monetary Policy:

- The interest rates are predicted to be low in 2017-2018 due to the demonetisation.

Banking sector:

- It was estimated that the capital requirement for banks would be around 1.8 trillion rupees by 2018-2019.
- Non-financial companies could be sold out by the government, so as to infuse capital into the banks.
- Bad loans are at pace in each and every bank, so economists suggest for setting up a Public Sector Asset Rehabilitation (PSAR) to take charge of large bad loans in banks.

Demonetisation:

- It will hamper our growth rate by 0.25-0.5 percent, but it will have long-term benefits.
- Agricultural products like milk, potatoes and onions will be affected by this method.
- The cash squeeze will be properly eliminated by April 2017, by removing demonetisation and adding it with remonetisation.

Currency:

- If capital inflows are weak, then the rupee depreciation will be allowed.
- Rupee value can be achieved through monetary relaxation.

Universal Basic Income:

- Poverty acts as a major disruption for our Country's growth, so to ensure that poverty gets reduced. The economic survey of 2016-2017 has advocated the concept of universal basic Income as an alternate to various social



welfare schemes. It would cost around 4 to 5 percent of GDP.

Way Forward:

- Our economy would expand by 7.5 per cent in year 2017-2018.
- GST and various other structural reforms should take the growth rate as 8-10 per cent.
- China's competitiveness is deteriorating due to lower wage costs in our states, so we are well positioned to take advantage of it.
- Increase in wage hikes will definitely add a pressure to fiscal deficit in 2017-2018.

Other Important Points:

- Labour migration rates in our country are rapidly increasing at a higher rate.
- Economic survey suggests for setting up a centralised Public Sector Asset Rehabilitation agency.
- Current account deficit is narrowed in first half of 2016-2017 to 0.3 per cent of GDP.
- Our country's trade GDP ratio is now greater than china.

Economic Survey: Everything You Must Know

What is it?

It is an annual document provided by Ministry of Finance. It is presented every year before presenting the union budget. The reason behind an economic survey is that the background knowledge will be furnished by the survey and then the Parliament can better appreciate the budget proposals. It provides an opportunity for the government to spell out its economic agenda. It summarizes all the major developmental programmes and the major policy initiatives of the government. This annual document will be presented in both the houses of the parliament during the budget session.

History:

Our country's first economic survey was presented in the financial year of 1950-1951. All the economic survey documents will be available in the Ministry of Finance website. We can find the economic

survey documents from 1957-1958 onwards. After independence of our nation, we introduced budget and economic survey in the parliament but at that time both the budget and economic survey documents were circulated on the same day. It was in the year 1964, the economic survey document got separated from the budget and it was circulated in advance, so that the context to the budget can be provided.

Difference between Budget and Economic Survey?

Budget or Economic Survey words are never been mentioned in the constitution of India. Instead, Article 112 clearly mentions it as "annual financial statement" which is to be laid by the President of India every year in the parliament. The annual financial statement is called as budget. Thus, it is clear that budget is a constitutional obligation for union government, whereas economic survey finds no mention in the constitution nor it is any statutory obligation. The budget is prepared by the

Ministry of Finance with utmost secrecy. Economic survey is a data which is already available in public but it is categorically arranged in a proper order and it is printed in one of the government presses.

Who prepares the Economic survey?

First draft of economic Survey will be prepared by Department of Economic Affairs in the Finance Ministry, under the guidance of Chief Economic Advisor.

Consultation from senior officers in Ministry.

Scrutinized by Finance Secretary.

Approval by Finance Minister.

Most of the data are provided by Central Statistical Office (CSO)

Finally, it is presented before one day of budget to provide clear context to the budget.

Is it Constitutional Duty?

As mentioned before that Economic Survey is not a constitutional duty, rather it is a convention followed by the government. As, most of the developed countries publish economic survey, so even we are also following the same path.

BANK
EXAMS

What does it contain?

It is a government document and contains statistical data and also it provides an opportunity for the Chief Economic Advisor to provide impartial, economic objective analysis.

Significance

Economic survey for citizens will bring all the citizens to economic policy by providing data and analysis in a comprehensive manner. Citizen awareness and participation are key to the economic decision making. This is the major reason, why the economic division conduct and Chief Economic Advisor do extensive research to circulate the survey.

Major reports:

The survey deals with an overview of the following issues:

- State of the Indian Economy.
- Challenges.
- Fiscal Policy.
- Role of markets.
- Balance of Payments and Trade.
- Industrial, Agriculture, and services sector.
- Infrastructure, Energy, and Communications.
- Climate Change and Human Development.

Conclusion:

Finally, we could say that economic survey is said to be the report card of the country which highlights the previous performances and the areas which need to be focussed. At, the same time economic survey comes up with the estimated GDP and inflation rate for next year. This document acts like an important source for various economists, policy makers, government agencies, researchers, media and all those who are interested in the development of our economy.