

GK Digest: April 2017

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BankExamsTodayEditorial

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Current Affairs

Ruchi Ghanashyam appointed Secretary (West) in MEA

- Senior diplomat Ruchi Ghanashyam was appointed as the Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs.
- She has been appointed in place of Sujata Mehta, who has recently taken over as a Member in Union Public Service Commission.
- The Appointments Committee of Cabinet has approved Ghanashyam's appointment to the post.
- As the Secretary (West), Ghanashyam will be responsible for looking after the country's

diplomatic affairs with the UK and other European nations.

- She is at present the High Commissioner of India to South Africa.
- Before that, she worked as the Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs

MEITY to promote digital transactions in place of NITI

- The government has shifted the responsibility of promoting digital transactions in the country to the Ministry of IT and Electronics (MEITY) from NITI Aayog.

- The central government has already changed the business transaction rules to enable MEITY to promote digital transactions, including digital payments
- The decision has been taken in view of the core competence of MEITY to promote digital means for various transactions.
- Government is of the opinion that NITI Aayog - which is a think-tank -- should focus on monitoring and suggesting ways to improve various government schemes rather than getting involved with implementation.
- The IT ministry is responsible for promotion of e-governance for empowering citizens as well as promoting inclusive and sustainable growth of electronics and IT in the country.
- It is also responsible for encouraging the growth of IT-enabled services industries. Earlier, the government had set up a committee under the chairmanship of NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant to push adoption of e-transactions amid the cash crunch faced by citizens due to the note ban.
- The term of office of chairperson, who is given the rank of Union Cabinet Minister, is three years from the date of assumption of charge.
- Sai was elected to the Madhya Pradesh legislative assembly in 1977, 1985 and 1998. He was also elected to the Chhattisgarh legislative assembly in 2000 and was the first leader of opposition in the House.
- The NCST is empowered to investigate and monitor matters relating to safeguards provided for STs under the Constitution.
- The Commission is also authorised to inquire into specific complaints relating to the rights and safeguards of STs and to participate and advise in the planning process relating to their socio-economic development.

India's Radhanagar beach in Andaman Islands features in top 10, ranks 8 in the world

- Radhanagar on the Havelock Island in the Andamans has featured among the top 10 in TripAdvisor's 'World's Travellers' Choice Award-Winning Beaches'.
- The Radhanagar beach has secured No 8 position in the world and first spot in Asia.
- TripAdvisor has honoured 343 beaches, including the top 25 in the world and local lists for Africa, Asia, Australia, Caribbean, Central America, Europe, South America, the South Pacific, the UK and the US Award.
- The Baia do Sancho Fernando de Noronha in Brazil topped the list followed by Grace Bay Providenciales in Turks and Caicos, Eagle Beach in Aruba, Playa Paraiso Cayo Largo in Cuba, Siesta Beach Siesta Key in the US, La

Nand Kumar Sai is new chairman of National Commission for Scheduled Tribes

- Senior tribal leader from Chhattisgarh and ex-parliamentarian Nand Kumar Sai has assumed charge as chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST).
- The 71-year-old Sai succeeds Rameshwar Oraon, whose tenure had ended on October 31 last year. Taking charge.
- Sai would work to protect the rights of the tribal people living in far-flung areas of the country.

Concha Beach in Spain and Playa Norte Isla Mujeres in Mexico. Elafonissi Beach in Greece secured No 9 position and Galapagos Beach in Ecuador was at No 10 in the list.

Country's first integrated heliport inaugurated in Delhi

- The country's first integrated heliport was inaugurated in the national capital with Civil Aviation Minister A Gajapathi Raju saying it is the first of its kind facility in South Asia.
- Built by state-owned Pawan Hans Ltd, the heliport consists of a terminal building, having a capacity of 150 passengers, four hangars with parking capacity for 16 helicopters and nine parking bays.
- The heliport also has a maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility for the upkeep of Pawan Hans fleet as well as for the third-party maintenance work.
- The commencement of services from the heliport is also expected to reduce congestion at the Delhi airport, which currently handles about 40-50 helicopter arrivals and departures on an average per day besides the large-scale fixed-wing operations.

Gopal Baglay appointed as new Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson

- Joint secretary Gopal Baglay was appointed the spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs
- Apart from spokesperson, Baglay would also occupy the post of joint secretary of external publicity.

- Baglay joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1992 and has served as the deputy high commissioner to Islamabad from 2011 to 2014. Since 2015, he acted as joint secretary dealing with Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran in the foreign ministry.
- He has also served as joint secretary (States) from October 2014 to December 2015, and was tasked with creation of a separate department in the ministry to facilitate international outreach of the Indian states.

National Science Day: 28 February

- National Science Day is celebrated in India on 28 February each year to mark the discovery of the Raman effect by Indian physicist Sir Chandrashekhara Venkata Raman on 28 February 1928.
- For his discovery, Sri C.V. Raman was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930.
- National science day is celebrated as one of the main science festivals in India every year during which students of the schools and colleges demonstrate various science projects and national and state science institutions demonstrate their latest researches.

American Express launches 'Buyer Initiated Payments' to eliminate cheque, draft payments

- Global leader in payment solutions American Express announced the launch of Buyer Initiated Payments (BIP), an electronic payment platform linked to corporate card that reduces processing costs and offers extended payment terms compared to traditional invoice payments.

- BIP enables companies to increase the Days Payable Outstanding (DPO) while still paying vendors on time.
- This web-based tool linked to Corporate Card fits and works within existing processes and includes reconciliation reporting that simplifies tracking vendor payments.
- BIP also helps organizations and their vendors to participate in the trading cycle digitally thus avoiding payments through cheques and drafts.
- BIP will help both corporate and vendors to streamline their payments process and move towards the vision of a digital economy
- BIP also ensures that vendors receive and track their payment as per the agreed terms. Traditionally, the exchange of goods and services between organizations and vendors, involved a tedious task of completing financial enquiries and a period of minimum 60 days to clear payments

Sanjiv Singh appointed Indian Oil Corporation chairman

- Sanjiv Singh was appointed chairman of the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), the country's largest commercial enterprise.
- The Appointments Committee of Cabinet approved his appointment to the post for a period of five years, an order issued by the personnel ministry said.
- Singh is at present the director of Refineries at the IOCL. He was selected for the top job after government headhunters Public Enterprise Selection Board (PESB) interviewed eight candidates.

- He will be assuming the charge on or after 1 June

World Bank to provide \$63 mn loan for 'Tejaswini' project

- The World Bank will provide USD 63 million loan to India to empower 6.8 lakh adolescent girls in Jharkhand under the 'Tejaswini' project.
- A Financing Agreement for International Development Association (IDA) credit of USD 63 million (equivalent) for the "Tejaswini: Socio-Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project" was signed between the bank and the government.
- The project seeks to empower the adolescent girls with basic life skills and thereafter provide further opportunities to acquire market driven skill training or completion of secondary education, depending on the inclination of the beneficiary
- The project will be delivered in 17 districts of Jharkhand. It has three main component -- expanding social, educational and economic opportunities; intensive service delivery; and state capacity-building and implementation support.
- The closing date for the project is June 30, 2021.

Rangaswamy Becomes First Woman to Be Honored BCCI Lifetime Achievement Award

- Former Indian women's cricketer Shantha Rangaswamy has become the first female cricketer to be nominated for the BCCI Lifetime Achievement Award.

- Rangaswamy will receive the award at the BCCI Annual Awards 2016-17 on March 8.
- Rangaswamy was the first Indian women's cricket team captain and the first woman cricketer to win the Arjuna Award.

and Madhya Pradesh with about 3,062 route kms of broad gauge comprising predominately, double line- electrified sections defining the sides and diagonals of the golden quadrilateral.

RBI sets up panel to review cyber threats

- The Reserve Bank on Tuesday announced setting up of the inter-disciplinary standing committee on cyber security to review the threats inherent in the existing and emerging technology.
- The 11-member committee will also study adoption of various security standards and protocols, interface with stakeholders and suggest appropriate policy interventions to strengthen cyber security and resilience
- The committee headed by Meena Hemchandra, executive director, RBI, can co-opt more experts and also operate through a framework of sub-committees to examine specific issues

M C Chauhan appointed GM of North Central Railway

- M C Chauhan was appointed as General Manager of North Central Railway, Allahabad.
- Chauhan, an officer of Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers (IRSEE), is at present GM of Metro Railway.
- The working of railways is divided into zones. Three crucial divisions of Agra, Allahabad and Jhansi are under the NCR zone.
- Rightly referred to as heartbeat of Indian Railways, North Central Railway span over parts of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan

LPG prices raised by Rs 86, steepest hike in India's history

- The price of non-subsidised cooking gas (LPG) was hiked by a steep Rs 86 per cylinder
- Non-subsidised LPG, bought by those who have either given up their subsidies or exhausted the quota of 12 bottles of 14.2-kg in a year at below market price, will now cost Rs 737.50.
- It was priced at Rs 651.50 per 14.2-kg cylinder till yesterday, according to state-owned oil companies.
- This hike, steepest in India's history, comes on the back of Rs 66.5 per cylinder increase which was brought into effect from February 1.

HDFC Bank, others resume levy on cash transactions

- Some banks, including HDFC Bank, have begun charging a minimum amount of Rs 150 per transaction for cash deposits and withdrawals beyond four free transactions in a month.
- The new charges would apply to savings as well as salary accounts effective from today
- The bank would also cap the third party cash transactions at Rs 25,000 per day, while cash handling charges would be withdrawn effective today, the circular added.

- In case of several banks, including ICICI Bank and Axis Bank, these charges came into effect early in January and are same as they were before the demonetisation move announced on 8 November, while there is an increase in such fees in case of some others, including HDFC Bank
- For the basic no-frills accounts, maximum four cash withdrawals would continue to remain free and there would be no fees for cash deposits.
- For non-home branches, ICICI Bank would not charge anything for first cash withdrawal of a calendar month and Rs 5 per thousand rupees thereafter subject to a minimum of Rs 150.
- Union minister Narender Singh Tomar Launched the 'Swachh Shakti Saptah' in Haryana, "Swachhta" (cleanliness) has become a movement which now needs to made a mass movement.
- Owing to the priority given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 'Swachhta' has become a movement in the country and now it needs to made a mass movement with significant contribution of women
- Women sarpanches, Anganwadi workers, ANMs, ASHA workers and members of women self-help groups of all six districts of Gurugram division participated in the programme.
- An exhibition was also organised at the venue to educate women participants about benefits of cashless transactions.
- An Aadhaar Enrolment machine was placed in one of the stalls for women who were still not enrolled,

R Subramania Kumar to hold addl charge of MD & CEO of IOB

- R Subramania Kumar was today given additional charge of the post of Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Indian Overseas Bank for three more months.
- Kumar is at present Executive Director in the IOB. He was in November last year given additional charge of the post of MD and CEO of the bank for three months.
- The Appointments Committee of Cabinet has approved the proposal of Department of Financial Services for extending the additional charge of the post of MD and CEO, IOB for a period of another three months, an order issued by personnel

'Swachh Shakti Saptah' launched in Haryana

World Civil Defence Day: March 1

- World Civil Defence Day, created by decision of the ICDO General Assembly in 1990, is celebrated every year on the 1st of March.
- This Day commemorates the entry into force of the ICDO Constitution as an intergovernmental organisation in 1972 and has two main purposes:
 - that of bringing to the attention of the world public the vital importance of Civil Protection and of raising awareness of the preparedness for, and prevention and self-protection measures in the event of accidents or disasters;

- that of paying tribute to the efforts, sacrifices and accomplishments of all the national services responsible for the fight against disasters.

Lipstick Under My Burkha Wins Award at Glasgow Film Fest

- Indian filmmaker Alankrita Shrivastava's Lipstick Under My Burkha, which has been denied a certificate by the country's movie censor board, has bagged the Audience Award at the Glasgow Film Festival 2017
- Scottish actor David Tennant presented Shrivastava with the award, which was voted for by the festival's audience
- The Prakash Jha production, starring Konkona Sen Sharma and Ratna Pathak Shah, chronicles the secret lives of four women of different ages in a small town in India as they search for different kinds of freedom.

Reliance General Insurance, Catholic Syrian Bank tie up

- Reliance General Insurance (RGI), a part of Reliance Capital, has entered into a bancassurance tie-up with Catholic Syrian Bank.
- With this tie-up, RGI will offer its general insurance products to Catholic Syrian Bank's 1.5 million customer base spread across its 430 branches in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.
- The strategic partnership with Reliance General Insurance will make it extremely easy for our customers to access a comprehensive

selection of customised general insurance solutions at affordable rates.

- The corporate alliance will enable Catholic Syrian Bank serve our customers banking and insurance needs under one roof

Kohli, Ashwin win top BCCI awards

- Virat Kohli will become the first player to receive the Polly Umrigar Award - given to the International Cricketer of the Year - for the third time, at the BCCI Annual Awards in Bangalore on March 8. Kohli first received the award in 2011-12 and in 2014-15.
- R Ashwin, the No. 1 ranked bowler and allrounder by the ICC in Tests, will become the first player to receive the Dilip Sardesai Award twice.
- Ashwin first won the award, instituted to honour the best performance in the bilateral series between India and West Indies, after he was named the Man of the Series in the three-Test series in 2011.
- Last year, Ashwin was again named the Man of the Series in the four-Test series in West Indies after he struck two centuries and finished with 17 wickets, including two five-wicket hauls.

Kripa Shankar Bishnoi appointed international match referee

- Former India wrestler Kripa Shankar Bishnoi has been appointed an international match referee by United World Wrestling (UWW), the sport's global governing body.
- Bishnoi was selected by the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) for the annual

training course for match referees conducted by the UWW.

- The former national champion, who has won the Arjuna Award, underwent the course in Germany last year and has cleared the test which was held in Dortmund
- Bishnoi is the first international match referee from his native Madhya Pradesh.
- The 40-year-old had trained Bollywood star Aamir Khan and other actors for their roles in the wrestling-based film 'Dangal'.

J.S. Deepak is India's WTO ambassador

- Telecom Secretary J.S. Deepak has been appointed as country's permanent representative to World Trade Organization (WTO).
- Mr. Deepak will take over his new assignment from June 1, 2017 and till then he will be Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Department of Commerce in the Ministry of Commerce and Industries with immediate effect.
- Earlier, as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce, Mr. Deepak, a 1982-batch IAS of UP cadre, handled WTO and other international agencies.

ISSF Shooting World Cup: Jitu Rai wins gold in 50m free pistol, Amanpreet silver

- Jitu Rai and Amanpreet Singh win gold and silver, respectively in men's 50m free pistol at the ISSF Shooting World Cup. It was India's first gold in the competition. Jitu's winning score of 230.1 was a world record, while Amanpreet shot 226.9 to win silver. The

bronze went to Vahid Golkhandan of Iran, who shot 208.0.

- The 29-year-old marksman, who made an eighthplace finish in the men's 10m air pistol final at the Rio Olympics, was languishing towards the bottom of the table in the initial stages of the final before he made a late surge to come into medal contention.
- Jitu posted a final score of 216.7, which include poor shots such as just a score of 8.8 on his second attempt, to make a third-place finish on podium.

Thiruvananthapuram beats Delhi, Mumbai, ranks No 1 in urban governance

- Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, has again topped the list of top Indian cities equipped to manage urbanisation, according to an evaluation of 21 major cities across 18 states by Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy.
- Thiruvananthapuram, which had ranked number 1 in 2015 as well, has maintained its position,
- The national capital dropped two places to rank 9. Similarly, Mumbai's rank slipped from 4 to 2 and Bengaluru's came down to 16 from 12.
- Irrespective of 2016 ranking, the cities in India have continued to score low over the last four editions of ASICS. This indicates that progress on fixing City-Systems has been slow.
- Janaagraha recommends changes in planning laws to address the issues challenging the efficient planning of the cities.

- The Indian cities quality of laws, policies and institutions significantly to improve service delivery and thereby, deliver a high quality of life to citizens.

Assam to host river festival 'Namami Brahmaputra'

- Assam will host its first river festival- Namami Brahmaputra at the riverfront of Brahmaputra in Guwahati from 31 March to 4 April 2017. The decision was announced by Assam's Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal himself.
- The state's government has invited India's President Pranab Mukherjee, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ambassadors of all the countries and all Chief Ministers and Chief Secretaries to participate in the mega event.
- The five-day festival aims to promote the state's economy, culture, art, tourism, skill industry, investment option, trade, commerce and heritage. Namami Brahmaputra, which means "Obeisance to the Brahmaputra", will showcase the grandeur of the river and the land it flows through.
- It will be spread across 21 districts of Assam.

Malaysia to cancel visa-free entry for North Koreans

- Malaysia will cancel visa-free entry for North Koreans entering the country starting next week as diplomatic ties between the two countries fray further following the murder of Kim Jong-nam at the Kuala Lumpur airport.
- North Koreans will be required to obtain a visa as of March 6 before entering Malaysia for national security reasons

- Malaysia is one of the few countries that North Koreans could visit without a visa. A reciprocal arrangement made Malaysians the only foreigners given visa-free entry to the secretive, nuclear-armed state.

Swadheen Kshatriya sworn in as Maharashtra's Chief Commissioner of RTS

- Former Chief Secretary of Maharashtra Swadheen Kshatriya was sworn-in as the state's first Right to Services (RTS) Chief Commissioner. Lokayukta Justice (ret'd) M L Tahiliani administered the oath of office to Kshatriya at Sahyadri state guest house in Mumbai.
- State Chief Information Commissioner Ratnakar Gaikwad, former CIC Suresh Joshi and some of the state's top bureaucrats were present on the occasion.
- Kshatriya's tenure will be of five years. He retired as Chief Secretary of Maharashtra.
- Senior IAS officer Sumit Mullick has been appointed as the new Chief Secretary of Maharashtra

DMRC enters Limca Book of Records

- The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has entered the Limca Book of World Records for erecting 200 U-shaped girders, the maximum to be launched on any metro corridor in the country within a month.
- Girders bear the load of the metro tracks and help speed up construction work. The feat had significantly expedited the progress of construction on the corridor. A total of 2002 such girders, structures that support small

beams, were erected for the 30-km-long Noida –Greater Noida corridor which will have 21 stations.

Facts About DMRC

- **Number of stations:** 160, including 6 Airport Express stations
- **Chief executive:** Mangu Singh, MD
- **Headquarters Metro Bhawan,** Barakhamba Road, New Delhi
- Delhi Metro is the **world's 12th largest metro system** in terms of both length and number of stations
- The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation has been **certified by the United Nations as the first metro rail** and rail-based system in the world to get "**carbon credits for reducing greenhouse gas emissions**" and helping in reducing pollution levels in the city by 630,000 tonnes every year

INHS ASVINI Mumbai Adjudged best service Hospital in the AFMS

- The Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar presented the Raksha Mantris Trophy and Citation for the best Service Hospital in the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) for the year 2016 to INHS Asvini, Mumbai
- The Command Hospital (Southern Command), Pune and Command Hospital (Northern Command) Udampur were jointly adjudged the second best Service Hospitals. The Defence Minister gave away the trophies and citations to the Commandant, Command Hospital (Southern Command) Pune, Maj

General R Grewal and Commandant, Command Hospital (Northern Command) Udampur, Maj General N Naithani.

Facts About Raksha Mantri Trophy

- **The Raksha Mantri Trophy** was instituted in 1989 to identify and acknowledge excellence in patient care and hospital management among Command and equivalent hospitals of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

Facts About INHS Asvini

- It is the first of amongst all the Naval hospitals
- Started functioning in **1756** as King's Seamen Hospital for in- patients.
- In 1860 the Octagonal building No. 3 (Hawa Mahal) was constructed as the Main Ward of Bombay Marine Hospital
- On **18 September 1951** that Military Hospital, Colaba was commissioned into the Navy and christened as INHS Asvini.

Swachhta Pakhwada being observed by the Ministry of Women & Child Development throughout the country

- The Ministry of Women & Child Development is observing the Swachhta Pakhwada from 1st March 2017 to 15th March 2017, to raise awareness about Swachh Bharat Abhiyan among women and children.
- The Swachhta Pakhwada is observed by various Ministries of Government of India to achieve the goal of universal sanitation, hygiene and 'open defecation free' India by 2019.

- As a part of nationwide activities, the Ministry has written to all the states to observe the Swachhta Pakhwada through the wide network of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) across the country
- Senior officials will be leading visits to childcare institutions and creches and will hold sessions on proper cleaning of toys, health and hygiene, food habits and safety.
- Visits will also be made to One Stop Centres, Swadhar Grehs and Ujjawala Homes to check the cleanliness of premises and conduct sessions on life skill education for adolescents and film screenings, slogan writing and pledge on Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Facts About Ministry of Women & Child Development Formed: 30 January 2006

- **Jurisdiction:** India
- **Headquarters:** Shastri Bhawan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi
- **Cabinet minister:** Maneka Gandhi
- **Minister of state:** Krishna Raj

Senior IAS officer T Jacob Appointed as Secretary UPSC

- Senior IAS officer T Jacob was appointed as Secretary, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
- He will hold the rank of an Additional Secretary in the Government of India. Vandita Sharma, member (Finance), Atomic Energy/Earth Commission, has been appointed as Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser in

the Department of Space in place of A Vijay Anand, who had retired.

- Nutan Guha Biswas, currently serving as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Women and Child Development, has been appointed as Chairperson, Inland Waterways of India in the rank of a Secretary.

Facts About T Jacob

- 1984 batch **Tamil Nadu cadre officer,**
- Served as Additional Secretary in the Department of Personnel and Training

Facts About UPSC

- Union Public Service Commission
- **Formation:** 1 October 1926
- **Headquarters:** Dholpur House, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi
- **Chairman:** David R. Syiemlieh

Kerala tops in GST registrations

- Kerala has achieved the maximum number of registrations under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime with at least 60 per cent of an estimated 2.5 lakh traders migrating to the new platform.
- Its record becomes even more significant considering the fact that these registrations are complete in all respects, including the crucial provision of digital signatures
- Commercial Taxes Department has extended until March 15 the time for GST registrations for those who have not been able to do it until now.
- Proprietorship businesses may use the facility for E-sign using the Aadhaar number to register

without digital signatures. This facility is available on the GST portal (www.gst.gov.in).

- The department has also set up help numbers 0471-155300 (BSNL) and 0471-2115098 (all other networks) for clarifying their doubts with respect to registrations.

Facts About GST

- Goods and Service Tax
- **Chairman of GST Council:** Arun Jaitley.
- It is comprehensive indirect tax on manufacture, sale and consumption of goods and services throughout India, to replace taxes levied by the central and state governments.

Barack Obama Named Recipient of JFK Profile in Courage Award

- Former President Barack Obama was named the 2017 winner of the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award for carrying on his fellow Democrat's legacy.
- Caroline Kennedy and her son, Jack Schlossberg, will present Obama with the award May 7 at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston.

Facts About JFK Profile in Courage Award

- It is a private award given to recognize displays of courage similar to those **John F. Kennedy** described in his book Profiles in Courage.
- The winners of the award are selected by a bi-partisan committee named by the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, which includes members of the Kennedy family and other prominent Americans.

- It is generally awarded each year around the time of Kennedy's birthday (May 29) at a ceremony at the Kennedy Library in Boston.

HDFC Life ties-up with ET Money to launch data-led policy

- HDFC Life today announced the launch of an exclusive data-led group term insurance plan in partnership with ET Money, the Times Internet backed financial services app.
- This is the country's first term insurance plan based on the spend pattern of the users
- This financial planning management app brings insurance at the finger-tips of the discerning new-age generation,
- Offered as an ET Money benefit, the group term life insurance plan can be availed exclusively by 1 million users of the ET MONEY app.
- One can get a group term life insurance coverage that ranges anywhere from Rs
- 25-50 lakh and it will be based on spend pattern of the user, the statement added.

Facts About HDFC

- **Founded:** 2000
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, India
- **CEO:** Amitabh Chaudhry,
- **CFO:** Ms. Vibha Padalkar

Sudhin Mathur appointed Motorola India Managing Director

- Sudhin Mathur has been named Managing Director of Motorola Mobility India and has

been inducted as a full-time director on the company's Board.

- He will also continue to serve in the role of Executive Director for Lenovo MBG India. Mathur replaces Amit Boni, who was serving as General Manager for Motorola India. In October 2016, Boni transitioned to the global strategy team within the company
- Mathur has been running the operations for Lenovo MBG in India since its inception here four years ago and has been instrumental in leading the seamless integration of Motorola and Lenovo mobile businesses

Facts About Motorola

- American multinational telecommunications company
- **Headquarters:** Schaumburg, Illinois, United States
- **Founded:** 25 September 1928, Chicago, Illinois, United States
- **Parent organization:** Lenovo
- **Founders:** Joseph Galvin, Paul Galvin

Bakri Hassan Saleh sworn in as Sudan's first PM

- A former army general and top aide to President Omar al-Bashir was sworn in as Sudan's first prime minister since the post was scrapped in a 1989 Islamist-backed coup.
- Bakri Hassan Saleh, a military officer involved in the bloodless coup that brought Bashir to power three decades ago, was named prime minister by the executive bureau of the president's National Congress Party (NCP).

- Saleh, 68, who will also retain his current post of Sudan's first vice president, was sworn in at a presidential palace in Khartoum.
- Bashir had led the 1989 coup against then-prime minister Sadiq al-Mahdi with the help of Islamist leader Hassan al-Turabi.

Facts About Sudan

- **Republic of the Sudan**, is a country in Northern Africa
- **Capital:** Khartoum
- **Currency:** Sudanese pound
- **President:** Omar al-Bashir

P K Purwar appointed MTNL CMDP

- K Purwar was appointed Chairman and Managing Director of state-run telecom major Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL).
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment to the post for five years
- Purwar is currently working as Director (Finance) in MTNL, which has been without a full-time CMD since May 31, 2014, following superannuation of A K Garg.
- Purwar held the additional charge of the post of MTNL CMD between June 2014 and June 2015. In June last year, he was again given this additional charge.

Facts About MTNL

- Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **CEO:** Pravin Kumar Purwar (2014–)
- **Founded:** 1 April 1986

JNU bags 'Visitor's Award' for best university

- Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has bagged the annual 'Visitor's Award' for the best varsity in the country.
- The winners of Visitor's Award for 'Innovation' and 'Research' will receive a citation and cash award of Rs one lakh. The awards will be presented during a function as part of the 'Festival of Innovations
- JNU Vice Chancellor Jagadesh Kumar will receive the award including a citation and a trophy from President Pranab Mukherjee at an event at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on March 6.

Facts About JNU

- **Established:** 1969
- **Chancellor:** K. Kasturirangan
- **Vice-Chancellor:** Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar

'Numbers Do Lie' by former cricketer Akash Chopra released

- Cricketer-turned-commentator Aakash Chopra released his latest book 'Numbers Do Lie' at an event in Delhi
- Present at the launch was former India captain and champion all-rounder Kapil Dev, who gave his two bits on the book and also enthralled the gathering with anecdotes and stories from his playing days.
- The book shares 61 stories about cricketers from across the ages, based on the findings of Impact Index, an analytics system for cricket devised by Jaideep Varma.
- The book has been authored by Aakash in collaboration with the team from Impact

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President Pranab Mukharjee honours helicopter unit

- The Hon'ble President of India and Supreme Commander of Indian Armed Forces, Shri Pranab Mukherjee awarded the Prestigious President's Standard and Colours to 125 Helicopter Squadron and Mechanical Training Institute (MTI) respectively, during a grand ceremonial parade held at Air Force Station Tambaram.
- The Commanding Officer of 125 Helicopter Squadron Group Captain VD Badoni and Commanding Officer of MTI Group Captain A Arunachaleswaran received the President's Standard and Colours respectively.
- The ceremonial parade was commanded by Group Captain A Arunachaleswaran. The President also released First Day Covers of 125 Helicopter Squadron and Mechanical Training Institute at the function.
- There was a spectacular display of precision and daredevilry by the Air Warriors drill team. Fly past consisting of Mi-35 and Mi-17 Helicopters, Pilatus and Kiran trainer aircraft was synchronized with significant events of the parade.
- The grand ceremony concluded with a breathtaking air show demonstrated by Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team (SKAT), which won the admiration of one and all.

Airtel, Millicom ink pact to merge in Ghana

- Bharti Airtel and Millicom International Cellular have entered into an agreement to

merge their respective units in Ghana to create the second-largest mobile carrier in the African country.

- Under the terms of the agreement, "Airtel and Millicom will have equal ownership and governance rights in the combined entity,
- The Airtel-Millicom combined entity will replace Vodafone to become a strong No 2 operator with nearly 10 million customers (including 5.6 million data users) in the fiercely competitive Ghana mobile turf, behind South Africa's MTN, the market leader.
- The combined revenue of the merged entity will be at nearly \$300 million.
- Ghana, with a population of around 30 million, is a relatively big market in Africa and among Airtel's top markets after Nigeria. AirtelBSE - 0.22 % Ghana contributes 6-7% to Bharti's overall Africa revenue, which stood at \$919 million in the fiscal third quarter to December.

Assam Makes Sanskrit Compulsory Subject Upto Class 8

- The Assam government led by Sarbananda Sonowal decided to make Sanskrit along with computer education, a permanent subject in the state schools.
- Teachers will also be appointed for this purpose.
- Assam Information Technology Minister Keshab Mahanta said in the state assembly that government is also planning to connect each panchayat of the state with Internet facility by the end of next financial year.
- To increase computer literacy, the government has taken a cabinet decision yesterday that all

schools will have computer education and Sanskrit as permanent subjects.

- Accordingly, teachers will also be appointed
- Teachers will be appointed in high schools under Swachh Bharat Mission and they will be made responsible in maintaining cleanliness in schools in Assam state.

Mamata Banerjee grants official status to two tribal languages

- Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee granted official status to the Kurukh language spoken by Oraon and Kisan tribes, and the Rajbanshi-Kamtapuri language spoken by the Koch Rajbanshi community, to mark International Mother Language Day
- The Oraon tribe in West Bengal speaks Kurukh, which was declared an endangered language by UNESCO, and there is no written script for Rajbanshi-Kamtapuri.
- From now on, these two languages will be officially recognised
- the state government has set up a committee, headed by Indologist Narsingha Prasad Bhaduri, which would help create a written form for Rajbanshi-Kamtapuri.

WCCB Conducts Operation Thunderbird & Operation Save Kurma to Combat Wildlife Crime

- The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) under the Ministry of Environment and Forests coordinated nationwide 'Operation Thunder Bird' from January 30 to February 19, 2017 to combat illegal trade of wildlife animals in the country.

- The operation was undertaken in coordination with International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).
- Besides,
- WCCB also convened a turtle specific operation code-named as 'Operation Save Kurma' from December 15, 2016 to January 30, 2017.
- The operation brought about an awareness among the enforcement agencies to focus on the existing trade routes and major trade hubs in the country so as to deal with the menace of wildlife crime.

INS Viraat, Indian Navy's Grand Old Lady, to retire today after 30-year service

- INS Viraat, Indian Navy's flagship aircraft carrier, will retire from service. The aircraft carrier which holds the Guinness Record for the oldest carrier in service was inducted into the Indian Navy on May 12, 1987.
- The ship, famously known as the 'Grand Old Lady', was with the British Royal Navy since 1959 before the Indian government bought it for Rs 6.5 crore in 1987.

About INS Virat

- The motto of INS Viraat was 'Jalamev Yasya, Balmev Tasya' (meaning - One Who Controls the Sea is All Powerful)
- NS Vikramaditya is the only serving aircraft carrier of the Indian Navy and the second one, named Vikrant, is under construction at Cochin Shipyard Ltd.
- It housed the fighters 'White Tigers'

Vijayawada, Tirupati airports renamed

- The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet approved proposals to rename the Vijayawada Airport and the Tirupati Airport.
- Vijayawada Airport in Gannavaram has been renamed as 'Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao-Amaravati Airport' after the legendary actor and founder of the ruling Telugu Desam Party, and the new capital of Andhra Pradesh.
- The Tirupati Airport has been renamed as 'Sri Venkateswara Airport' after Lord Venkateswara of the temple town.

Andhra Pradesh

- Founded: 1 October 1953
- Capitals: Hyderabad, Amaravati
- Governor E. S. L. Narasimhan
- Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu (TDP)

Facebook launches SheLeadsTech

- Social networking site Facebook on Wednesday launched a new initiative, SheLeadsTech, to support women-founded or co-founded startups
- It will also be expanding its SheMeansBusiness program that supports women-led small businesses. SheLeadsTech will give women-founded or co-founded start-ups access to a year-long program that provides tools, mentorship and resources.
- The announcement which came ahead of Women's Day aim to bring women on board India's digital revolution in a bigger way.
- India is among the largest user base for Facebook and its affiliate WhatsApp. The country contributes 168 million users to Facebook's 1.86 billion global users, and 200

million to WhatsApp's 1.2 billion monthly active users.

Facebook

- Founded: February 2004,
- Headquarters: Menlo Park, California, United States
- Founders: Dustin Moskovitz, Mark Zuckerberg, Andrew McCollum, Eduardo Saverin, Chris Hughes

Tirtha Darshan scheme announced by Haryana govt

- A Tirtha Darshan scheme, under which senior citizens of the state will be able to go on pilgrimage within the country on government expenses, was announced in the Haryana Assembly.
- Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar informed the house about the scheme prepared state government, during ongoing budget session of Haryana Vidhan Sabha here.
- Under the scheme, the government would bear the entire cost of the tour of senior citizens belonging to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. The scheme is reserved for domiciles of Haryana
- In case of a couple, the expenses of the spouse belonging to BPL family would also be borne by the government. They would also be able to take along an assistant. In case of senior citizens of non-BPL families, the government would bear only 70 per cent of the cost.

- The senior citizens would be selected for the pilgrimage on the basis of draw of lots. There are more than 400 destinations which can be visited under the scheme.

Haryana

- Statehood 1 November 1966
- Capital Chandigarh
- Largest city Faridabad
- Governor Kaptan Singh Solanki
- Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar (BJP)

Baichung Bhutia removed as AIFF advisor

- Out of favour with the All India Football Federation (AIFF) due to differences in opinion, former India captain Baichung Bhutia is no longer advisor to both the AIFF and President Praful Patel.
- Bhutia was roped in as advisor two years back and has since then been instrumental in bringing India coach Stephen Constantine back and also extending his contract till February 2018.
- Bhutia, it was also learnt, wanted Colm Toal to take over as the India U-17 World Cup team coach after Nicolai Adam was shown the door. But the AIFF decided to pencil in Portuguese Luis Norton de Matos instead.

M P Veerendra Kumar presented Moortidevi award

- Eminent Malayalam author and journalist M P Veerendra Kumar was today presented the

30th Moortidevi award by Bharatiya Jnanpith organisation

- Kumar was chosen for the prestigious award for his Malayalam travelogue Hymavathabhoovil, which dwells upon ancient trails of Indian culture, myth, literature and people strewn in the plains, valleys and mountains of India
- The book also highlights environmental concerns over "fragile mountain ecosystem" and calls for action over lack of water resources and waste disposal systems.
- Kumar, who earlier won the Sahitya Akademi award for the same book, is also the Kerala state unit President of Janata Dal (United).
- Kumar is Chairman and Managing Director of the Malayalam daily Mathrubhumi and a Rajya Sabha MP.
- He has served thrice as the chairman of the Press Trust of India (PTI) and is currently a director in the news agency.

Moortidevi award

- The Moortidevi Award is an annual literary award in India presented by the Bharatiya Jnanpith organization for a work which emphasizes Indian philosophy and culture.

Centre launches survey on Gangetic dolphins

- The Centre has launched the first ever across-the-river survey in the Ganga to determine the population of aquatic life, including that of the endangered Gangetic dolphin.
- The survey will create a baseline scientific data for the government to take suitable measures to improve quality of the river water, the

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has said.

- The first leg of the census was launched on March 1 from Narora in Uttar Pradesh to Bijnor (covering distance of nearly 165 km) to establish the number of the national aquatic animal.
- Counting in the Allahabad to Varanasi stretch (close to 250 km in length) is expected to be launched this week.
- The authority is conducting the survey through Wildlife Institute of India (WII), under the Namami Gange programme.

Sri Lanka wins 'Most Popular Tourism Destination Award'

- Sri Lanka won the "Most Popular Tourism Destination Award" at the Guangzhou International Travel Fair (GITF) in China
- The island nation won the prestigious award for the second consecutive year which is a testament to its growing popularity among Chinese travel enthusiasts, Xinhua news agency cited the statement as saying.
- China has been Sri Lanka's second largest source market for tourism since 2014.
- The volume of visitors to this event has been increasing annually and this has enabled Sri Lanka to gain greater exposure and visibility for its unique destination brand

Sri Lanka

- **Capitals:** Colombo, Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte
- **President:** Maithripala Sirisena
- **Prime minister:** Ranil Wickremesinghe

- **Currency:** Sri Lankan rupee
- **Official languages:** Sinhala, Tamil, English

Rihanna named Humanitarian of Year

- The popular singer Rihanna has been named the 2017 Harvard University Humanitarian of the Year, and will come to campus to accept the Peter J. Gomes Humanitarian Award at a ceremony
- Rihanna has charitably built a state-of-the-art center for oncology and nuclear medicine to diagnose and treat breast cancer at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Bridgetown, Barbados
- The Harvard Foundation recognizes prominent public-spirited leaders each year in honor of the late Rev. Professor Peter J. Gomes.

Harvard Humanitarian Award

- Each year, the Harvard Foundation of Harvard University presents the Humanitarian Award to an individual whose works and deeds have served to improve the quality of our lives and have inspired us to greater heights.
- This award is given in the name of the Rev. Professor Peter J. Gomes, Plummer Professor and Minister in Harvard's Memorial Church, and is authorized by the Dean of Harvard College and the President of Harvard University.

SBI to impose penalty for not maintaining minimum account balance from April 1

- State Bank of India, India's largest bank, has decided to resume the charge on savings

account holders for failing to maintain the monthly average balance in their accounts.

- The bank had done away with the minimum balance criteria for savings bank accounts a few years back in a bid to lure new customers. Sources said the service charges for non-maintenance of monthly average balance (MAB) will be revised with effect from April 1, 2017.
- Monthly average balance that customers will have to maintain in their savings bank accounts in SBI branches in metropolitan areas is Rs 5,000.
- In case the shortfall in the monthly average balance is below 50 per cent, then a charge of Rs 50 plus service tax will be levied.
- Similarly, in urban areas SBI customers will be required to maintain a monthly average balance of Rs 3000.
- If the shortfall in MAB is less than 50 per cent, then a charge of Rs 40 plus service tax will be levied.
- In semi-urban areas, customers will have to maintain a monthly average balance of Rs 2000, while in rural areas, maintaining an MAB of Rs 1000 will be a must.

SBI

- **Chairperson:** Arundhati Bhattacharya
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai
- **Founded:** 1 July 1955
- **Motto:** The Banker to Every Indian
- **Subsidiaries:** SBI Cards, State Bank of Hyderabad, more
- **Managing directors:** Shri B.Sriram

- **Tagline:** With you all the way ,Pure banking nothing else,The nation's bank on us

Dharamshala is second capital of Himachal Pradesh

- Himachal Pradesh state cabinet on Thursday approved Dharamshala, situated in the snow-capped Dhauladhar range, as the second capital of the hill state
- HP state cabinet has approved Dharamshala as 2nd capital of state.
- On January 19, HP CM Virbhadra Singh had proposed Dharamshala as state's winter capital.
- Dharamshala lies in Kangra district, some 250km from the state capital Shimla.

Himachal Pradesh

- **Capital:** Shimla
- **Chief minister:** Virbhadra Singh
- **Language:** Hindi

SERB Fellowship Award To Lalji Singh

- Lalji Singh, former Director, the center for cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) has been selected for the award of SERB Fellowship.
- It is given by the science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) which is a statutory body of the Government of India.
- The Award supports research of scientists who are active and performing even after superannuation.

Andy Murray beats Fernando Verdasco to win first Dubai Championships title

- Britain's Andy Murray saw off Spaniard Fernando Verdasco in straight sets to win the Dubai Championships for the first time.
- The world number one dropped his first two service games but recovered to win 6-3 6-2 in one hour and 14 minutes.
- It is Murray's first tournament win of 2017 and the 45th of his career, which will see him extend his lead over Novak Djokovic at the top of the rankings.

Dubai Championships title

- Founded 1993; 24 years ago
- Location: Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- **Champions of 2017**
- Men's singles : Andy Murray
- Women's singles: Elina Svitolina
- Men's doubles : Jean-Julien Rojer Horia Tecău
- Women's doubles: Ekaterina Makarova Elena Vesnina

Pak diplomat Sial assumed office as new Sec Gen of SAARC

- Pakistan's seasoned diplomat Amjad Hussain B Sial today assumed office as the new Secretary General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).
- He has succeeded Nepal's Arjun Bahadur Thapa, who was appointed the Secretary-General in 2014.
- Sial's nomination was made by Pakistan at the SAARC Council of Ministers in Pokhara, Nepal, in March 2016 and was endorsed by all member states.
- He is a seasoned diplomat from Pakistan Foreign Service with over 33 years of career in the diplomatic field.

SAARC

- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)
- **Establishment:** 8 December 1985
- **Headquarters:** Kathmandu
- **Member states:** Afghanistan Bangladesh Bhutan India Maldives Nepal Pakistan
- **Directors:** Mr. Maihan Saeedi

HDFC Life brings country's first life insurance Chatbot with Haptik

- HDFC Life, one of India's leading private life insurance companies, announced the launch of India's first life insurance chatbot in collaboration with Haptik, India's largest chatbot platform.
- The chatbot will act as a financial guide to help users choose the most suitable life insurance plans and solutions.
- This chatbot aims to assist the customers with insurance advice - ranging from Health to Tax Planning & Retirement, based on a simple 60-second quiz which enables it to compute their Insurance Quotient.
- Calculated using different parameters under each insurance category, the Insurance Quotient is an indicative score for each individual, based on which, HDFC Life can recommend the best-suited insurance plans for the user.
- The chatbot not only works as a personal financial advisor but also brings to the forefront the universal need for life insurance.

- The chatbot will be live for only two weeks from the date of its launch on the Haptik app, which is available on both iOS and Android.

What is Chatbot?

- A chatbot (also known as a talkbot, chatterbot, Bot, chatterbox, Artificial Conversational Entity) is a computer program which conducts a conversation via auditory or textual methods. Such programs are often designed to convincingly simulate how a human would behave as a conversational partner, thereby passing the Turing test.
- Chatterbots are typically used in dialog systems for various practical purposes including customer service or information acquisition.
- The term "ChatterBot" was originally coined by Michael Mauldin (creator of the first Verbot, Julia) in 1994 to describe these conversational programs.
- There are two main types of chatbots, one functions based on a set of rules, and the other more advanced version uses artificial intelligence.
- The chatbots based on rules, tend to be limited in functionality, and are as smart as they are programmed to be. On the other end, a chatbot that uses artificial intelligence, understands language, not just commands, and continuously gets smarter as it learns from conversations it has with people.

HDFC Life

Founded: 2000

Headquarters: Mumbai, India

MD & CEO: Amitabh Chaudhry &

ED & CFO: Vibha Padalkar,

Hyderabad airport ranks 1st in world in airport service quality

- GMR's Hyderabad International Airport has secured first position in the world in the prestigious Airports Council International (ACI)-Airport Service Quality (ASQ) survey in the 5-15 million passengers per annum (MPPA) category for the year 2016.
 - The survey shows that Hyderabad Airport has steadily improved its score from 4.4 in 2009 to 4.9 in 2016 (measured on scale of 1 to 5)
 - Hyderabad Airport, running in to its 9th year of operations, is designed to cater to 12MPPA. It has witnessed a growth of more than 20% in the last year with a passenger throughput of close to 15MPPA in calendar year 2016.
 - As the industry's most comprehensive passenger service benchmarking tool, the ACI ASQ survey has reliably captured passengers' immediate appraisal from check-in through departure at the gate at more than 300 airports worldwide
 - The ASQ award ceremony will be held at the 27th ACI Africa/World Annual General Assembly, Conference & Exhibition in Port Louis, Mauritius from 16-18 October
- Airports Council International (ACI) is the only global trade representative of the world's airport authorities. Established in 1991, ACI represents airports' interests with governments and international organizations, develops standards, policies and recommended practices for airports, and it provides information and training opportunities to raise the standards around the world.
 - It aims to provide the public a safe, secure, efficient and an environmentally responsible air transport system.
 - It is governed by the ACI Governing Board. ACI World is located in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. ACI works on a daily basis with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and is a member of the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG).

First smart tribal village inaugurated in Jammu & Kashmir

- Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Food, Civil Supplies, and Consumer Affairs Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali inaugurated the first smart tribal model village 'Hubbi' in Rajouri district of the state. The Rural Development Department has introduced smart classes in schools, better roads, electricity, and water facility in the village.

Smart Tribal Village scheme

- Launched in: November 2016
- Launched by: Minister for CA&PD and Tribal Affairs Choudhary Zulfkar Ali
- In the first phase, Hubbi and Targain villages of district Rajouri would be taken up for

What is ACI?

holistic development under convergence plan.

National Conference on Jal Kranti held in Delhi

- Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti inaugurated a national conference on Jal Kranti Abhiyan in New Delhi. About 700 participants representing various stakeholder groups such as farmers, panchayat members, NGOs and students will attend the day-long conference.
- Ministry of Water Resources and River Development had launched Jal Kranti Abhiyan on June, 2015 to consolidate water conservation and management in the country through a holistic and integrated approach involving all stakeholders.
- One of the main objectives of the Abhiyan is strengthening grass root involvement of all stakeholders including panchayati raj institutions and local bodies for participatory irrigation management.

Jal Kranti Abhiyan

- It was launched on 5th June, 2015 across the country
- Jal Kranti Abhiyan is being celebrated during the year 2015-16 to consolidate water conservation and management in the country through a holistic and integrated approach involving all stakeholders, making it a mass movement.

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan wins best actress award for Sarbjit at international film festival

- Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's film Sarbjit has given her yet another reason to celebrate. The

actor who played the character of Sarbjit Singh's sister Dalbir Kaur, has won the Best Actress award at the International Film Festival and Awards of Australia (IFFAA).

- Sarbjit The Film, directed by Omung Kumar, was the biopic on Sarbjit Singh, an Indian farmer who was convicted of terrorism and spying in Pakistan and was sentenced to death. He was attacked by inmates at a prison in Lahore in April 2013 and died a few days later.

IISc makes it to top 10 global universities ranking

- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore has become the first Indian educational institution to make it to the top 10 of a global ranking for universities.
- IISc has been ranked eighth in the Times Higher Education or THE Rankings, 2017 in the "best small universities" category, joining the elite list that includes California Institute of Technology (Caltech) from the US, Ecole Normale Supérieure from France and Pohang University of Science and Technology, South Korea.
- Small universities are those with a student strength of less than 5,000.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings

- It was founded in 2004 by the UK-based Times Higher Education (THE) magazine.
- It provides the definitive list of the world's best universities, evaluated across teaching, research, international outlook, reputation and more.

IISc,

- It is a public university for scientific research and higher education, was established in 1909 with active support from Jamsetji Tata and Sir Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, the Maharaja of Mysore.
- In 2015-16, it became the first Indian institute to be ranked among the top 100 in THE World University Rankings for engineering and technology at 99th position.

Indo-Nepal joint Military exercise 'Surya Kiran-X' begins

- A joint military exercise 'Surya Kiran-Xi' between India and Nepal began in Pithoragarh area of Uttarakhand.
- This is a battalion level joint exercise between the two armies.
- The two-week long exercise is aimed at training of both the troops in the area of various counter insurgency operations over a prolonged period.
- It will also focus on other important aspects such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations and environmental conservation.
- Both the armies will mutually benefit from the varied experiences gained during the exercise.
- The Surya Kiran series of exercises are being conducted biannually, alternatively in India and Nepal.

PM Modi releases postage stamp on 100 years of Yogoda Satsang Math

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi released a commemorative postage stamp on

the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Yogoda Satsanga Society of India.

- He said India's spirituality is its strength, and it is unfortunate that some people link even spirituality with religion, whereas the two are very different.

Yogoda Satsanga Society of India (YSS)

- It was founded in 1917 by Paramahansa Yogananda, whose Autobiography of a Yogi has introduced millions of truth seekers all over the world to yoga and meditation, and whose universal Kriya Yoga teachings provide methods for achieving spiritually harmonious lives and enable us to contribute to a more compassionate and peaceful world.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and the United Nations Entity of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)

- The Union cabinet on Monday approved India's accession to the Customs Convention on International Transport of Goods under cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention).
- The convention is an international transit system under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to facilitate seamless movement of goods within and among the parties to the Convention.
- The move will remove the need for inspection of goods at intermediate borders and physical escorts en route shall be eliminated due to reciprocal recognition of customs controls.
- The movement of goods under the TIR can be allowed by checking only the seals and the external conditions of the container, reducing

border delays, transport and transaction costs. This will result in increased competitiveness and growth for the trade and transport sectors.

What is UN Women?

- In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. In doing so, UN Member States took an historic step in accelerating the Organization's goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women
- It supports inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.
- To help Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.
- It leads and coordinates the UN system's work on gender equality as well as promote accountability, including through regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

Trademark Rules, 2017 Notified: Forms Reduced From 74 To 8, Fee Increased

- The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) on Monday notified the Trademark Rules, 2017. The Rules bring about two major developments- they slash the number of trademark application forms from

74 to 8, and hike the fee for trademark application

Features of the revamped Rules are as follows:

- Number of Trade Mark (TM) Forms have been reduced from 74 to 8.
- Based on stakeholders feedback, the fees for Individuals, Start-ups and Small Enterprises have been reduced from that proposed in the draft Rules – i.e. only Rs 4,500 as against Rs 8,000 for e-filing of TM applications proposed at the draft stage.
- Number of adjournments in opposition proceedings has been restricted to a maximum of two by each party, which will help dispose off matters in time.
- To promote e-filing of TM applications, the fee for online filing has been kept at 10% lower than that for physical filing.
- The provisions relating to expedited processing of an application for registration of a trade mark have been extended right upto registration stage (hitherto, it was only upto examination stage).
- Over all fees have been rationalized by reducing the number of entries in Schedule I from 88 to just 23.
- Modalities for service of documents from applicants to the Registry and vice-versa through electronic means have been introduced to expedite the process; e-mail has been made an essential part of address for service to be provided by the applicant or any party to the proceedings so that the office communication may be sent through email.
- Hearing through video conferencing has been introduced.

- Procedures relating to registration as Registered User of trademarks have also been simplified.
- Modalities for determination of well-known trademarks have been laid out for the first time.

Environment Minister launches Web Portal for obtaining CRZ Clearances

- The Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Anil Madhav Dave, launched the web portal for obtaining Coastal Regulation Zone clearances,
- The Minister termed the launch of the portal as a good example of 'Ease of Doing Business'.
- The Portal is a web-based system for obtaining clearances required from the Ministry under the "Coastal Regulation Zone" (CRZ) by the Project proponents.
- The system will enable the Project proponents and the concerned State/Union Territory bodies like the State Coastal Zone Management Authorities (SCZMAs) and Municipal/Town Planning agencies in tracking the status of their proposals. The system is based on web architecture, similar to the existing systems in place for according environmental and forest clearances.
- The Portal is a very user-friendly initiative, which enables submission of applications for CRZ clearance in a single-window interface and facilitates quick flow of information related to CRZ clearances.

- The portal allocates a unique identity for each proposal for all future references. It is accessible from any computer with internet facility.

The objectives of the web portal

- To enhancing efficiency, transparency and accountability in the process of CRZ clearances;
- To enhance responsiveness through workflows and availability of real-time information on the status of CRZ clearance proposals;
- To ease of business and convenience of citizens in accessing information and services; standardised procedures and processes across Central and State levels

What is "Ease of Doing Business Index"?

The ease of doing business index is an index created by the World Bank Group.[1] Higher rankings (a low numerical value) indicate better, usually simpler, regulations for businesses and stronger protections of property rights. Empirical research funded by the World Bank to justify their work show that the economic growth impact of improving these regulations is strong

Karur Vysya Bank launches 3 technology services

To keep pace with technology across the globe, Karur Vysya Bank (KVB) today launched three technology services for the benefit of customers. **FASTag**: was launched in association with Indian Highways Management Company, a subsidiary of National Highway Authority of India, wherein pre

loaded tags affixed to vehicles help them move on without having to join queues at toll plazas and handing cash for payment.

It can be pre-loaded with amounts and the toll amount will automatically be debited by the toll plazas through sensors, he said. The tags can be reloaded as and when required and tags are valid at all toll plazas throughout the country

United Payments Interface (UPI): is a mobile app that helps customers to transfer funds inter-bank, 24 X 7 through their smartphones, he said. A single mobile application can access different bank accounts without the customer having to share his bank details or having to remember user IDs and passwords, he said. The transfer is effected through the Immediate Payment Service platform of NPCI (National Payment Corporation of India).

Supported by the security of two factor authentication, payment requests can be initiated by the beneficiary or scheduled by the remitter, he said adding that the KVB UPI can be downloaded from Android Play Store.

Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS), a facility offered through NPCI where in customers can make utility bill payments like electricity, water, gas, DTH and telecom services through a single utility, instead of accessing multiple sites.

Karur Vysya Bank

- It was set up **M. A. Venkatarama Chettiar** and Athi Krishna Chettiar.
- It is one of the **largest old generation private banks** in India
- **Founded:** 25 July 1916
- **Headquarters:** Karur, Tamil Nadu, India
- **Chairman:** B.Swaminathan

India-Oman armies exercise, Al Nagah-II, began

- A 14-day joint training exercise of the armies of India and Oman began at Bakloh in Himachal Pradesh.
- The exercise, Al Nagah-II, drew contingents comprised of platoon strength troops from both the armies
- The second edition of the exercise is in continuation of a series of joint exercises between the Indian Army and the Royal Army of Oman.
- The first edition was held at Muscat in 2015.

Aim

- The aim of the joint exercise is to acquaint both forces with each other's operating procedures in the backdrop of counter insurgency and counter terrorism environment as also to enhance the existing military relationship between" the two armies

SBI launches 'Work from Home' facility for employees

- Country's largest lender State Bank of India launched a new facility to enable its employees to work from home.
- The Board of the bank has recently approved the 'Work from Home' policy to enable its employees to work while at home using mobile devices to address any urgent requirement they may have, that prevents their travelling to work.
- The lender will be using mobile computing technologies and shall have continuous control over all the enabled devices centrally

to manage and secure the data and applications on the mobile devices.

- The use of technology and services shall be monitored through carefully designed MIS and dashboard to enable improvements and refinements

SBI

- **Founded:** 2 June 1806; Bank of Calcutta
- **27 January 1921:** Imperial Bank of India
- **1 July 1955:** State Bank of India
- **2 June 1956:** Nationalization
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- **Chairperson:** Arundhati Bhattacharya

Chandigarh hosted 'Destination North East' 2017

- Chandigarh hosted a three-day long 'Destination North East' 2017 event, aimed at showcasing North East as a potential destination for investment.
- The event was organised by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), government of India and an industry body PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- The event saw around table discussions and exhibition stalls showcasing various features of the North East Region in order to attract investments in tourism, skill development, food processing, handlooms and handicrafts, rural livelihoods, entrepreneurship and microfinance, horticulture and floriculture, medicinal & aromatic plants, organic farming and bamboo development,

Objective of Destination North East, 2017

Its objective is to showcase North East as a potential destination for investment and highlight the rich cultural heritage, traditions and customs of the region.

"3 H" Mission

3 H' Mission, that is Horticulture, Handicraft and Handlooms, is the focus of Destination North East 2017.

PM Modi to Inaugurate India's Longest Cable Bridge in Gujarat

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Gujarat for a two-day visit.
- During his stay in Gujarat, the PM inaugurated a four-lane bridge over the river Narmada in Bharuch.
- The 1.4-kilometre 'extradosed' cable-stayed bridge is reportedly the longest in the country.
- It is expected to ease traffic woes on the Ahmedabad-Mumbai National Highway, considered to be one of the busiest in India.

Europe launched fifth Sentinel Earth observation satellite

- Europe launched the fifth of its Sentinel Earth observation satellites on Monday as part of its multi-billion-euro Copernicus program to provide speedy images of land, oceans and waterways.
- The Sentinel-2B satellite, part of a system of satellites that is to monitor Earth, blasted off on board a Vega rocket from Europe's spaceport in French Guiana

- It will join its twin Sentinel-2A, which has been in orbit since 2015, to take high-resolution, color and infrared images for a wide array of environmental initiatives, including crop forecasting and monitoring natural disasters.
- The two satellites will orbit 488 miles (786 km) above Earth, on opposite sides of the planet.
- Together, they will be able to cover all of Earth's land surfaces, large islands, inland and coastal waterways every five days, providing more up-to-date images and at higher resolution than have been available.

Karnataka CM launches 'Pratibimba' to project achievements

- Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah launched a comprehensive web-based platform showcasing the government's performance and achievements to the citizens.
- Developed as the Chief Minister's dash board, 'Pratibimba,' which means reflection, will serve as a tool to improve efficiency in governance and allow citizens to track government's progress.
- 'Pratibimba' is a reflection of the growth story and development of the state, and the dash board will reflect the works of all the departments across flagship schemes, key programmes and projects undertaken in the state.
- The dash board is available both in English and Kannada. Karnataka is the second state in the country after Andhra Pradesh to have such a dash board

- It will help people across the state and the country to get a detailed information regarding the steps taken by us in fulfilling our promise of transparent, responsible and people friendly government

Ashwin, Jadeja jointly on top in ICC Test rankings

- The Indian duo of Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja on Wednesday became the first set of spinners to be jointly ranked number one in the ICC Test rankings for bowlers.
- Jadeja has caught up with Ashwin in the rankings after the second Test against Australia in Bengaluru which India won by 75 runs on the fourth day
- Jadeja's seven wickets in the match, which included a crucial six for 63 in the first innings, have helped him move up one rank to reach the top position for the first time in his career,
- In the rankings for Test batsmen, Australia captain Steve Smith has maintained his reign at the top for 77 Tests
- India's win in the second Test assured them the No.1 spot in the ICC Test Team Rankings on the April 1 cut-off date and a cash prize of \$1million. The fight is now for the second, third and fourth places.

ICC

- **Motto:** Great Sport Great Spirit
- **Formation:** 15 June 1909; 107 years ago
- **Headquarters:** Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- **Chairman:** Shashank Manohar
- **President:** Zaheer Abbas
- **CEO:** David Richardson

IDFC Bank launches Aadhaar Pay

- IDFC Bank launched the biometric-based Aadhaar Pay payment system
- Aadhaar Pay service is for merchants which will enable them to receive Aadhaar-enabled payments bypassing credit and debit cards, pin and password. The biometric reader is currently available for Rs 2,000.
- With the introduction of first of its kind, the bank targets to bring around 50,000-75,000 merchants onboard by 2019 and total touching 1,00,000 merchants in three year
- As per the report, the bank has been launched after three-months of trial involving 1500 merchants across 16 states.

Working of the app

For merchant

- Download the Aadhaar Pay app on their phones
- Link the app to Aadhaar biometric reader
- Once this app is linked, merchant will be able to start transacting with customers.

For a customers

- Select the bank on the touchscreen
- Enter your Aadhaar national ID number
- Scan fingerprints on the device to get the confirmation

IDFC Bank

- **Founded:** October, 2015
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

- **Managing Director & CEO:** Dr. Rajiv B. Lall
- **Independent Director:** Veena Mankar
- **Tagline:** Banking Hatke

Women Safety app 'Ammavin Aran' launched by AIADMK

- The AIADMK IT Wing has launched the first-of-its-kind women safety application in Tamil Nadu. The app is called 'Ammavin Aran' meaning 'mother's fortress'.
- The app was launched as a part of Women's Day celebration.
- The app was launched as a tribute to Jayalalithaa

Features of the app

- The app will give the user details about the nearest police station and hospital along with map details and phone number.
- There is an in-built whistle, which can manipulate the phone speaker to create a loud noise when pressed by anyone in distress.
- Also, the app carries an in-built call recorder and and 'Tips' icon to provide life saving information.

Know More About Tamil Nadu

- Its capital and largest city is Chennai
- It is the eleventh largest state in India.
- The bordering states are Kerala to the west, Karnataka to the north west and Andhra Pradesh to the north.
- To the east is the Bay of Bengal and the state encircles the union territory of Puducherry.

Aadhaar made mandatory for a host of farm sector schemes

- For better targeting of central subsidies, the government has made Aadhaar mandatory for a host of schemes under the agriculture ministry, from soil health card and horticulture development to the Prime Minister's flagship crop insurance scheme launched last year.
- According to the notification, farmers without an Aadhaar number have to apply for it by end of March and till that time they can avail services under by furnishing a proof of their application.

What is Aadhaar?

Aadhaar is a 12-digit unique identification number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) after collecting biometric data of residents. Its for availing subsidies got legislative backing in March last year after the Aadhaar Bill was passed by Lok Sabha.

Largest Flag Inaugurated On India's Tallest Post At Attari Border

- A 360-foot high (110 metres) flag post, the country's tallest, was inaugurated at the Indo-Pak Attari Border, just a stone's throw from Pakistan.
 - Punjab Minister Anil Joshi inaugurated the country's largest flag on the tallest flag post - measuring 110 metres in length, 24 metres in width and 55 tons in weight.
 - Built at an approximate cost of Rs. 3.50 crore, the post was a project of the Amritsar Improvement Trust Authority of the Punjab Government.
- The flag post, installed at the border, became an attraction for thousands of tourists who had reached there to watch the Beating Retreat Ceremony during the sunset.
 - At present, the tallest flag mast is in Ranchi, which is 300-foot high.
 - Amritsar city already has a 170-foot tall flag in the local Ranjit Avenue Public Park.

IBM Researchers Store Data on World's Smallest Magnet -- a Single Atom

- IBM announced it has created the world's smallest magnet using a single atom – and stored one bit of data on it. Currently, hard disk drives use about 100,000 atoms to store a single bit.
- The ability to read and write one bit on one atom creates new possibilities for developing significantly smaller and denser storage devices, that could someday, for example, enable storing the entire iTunes library of 35 million songs on a device the size of a credit card.
- The ability to read and write one bit on one atom may lead to developing significantly smaller and denser storage devices in future that can store the entire iTunes library of 35 million songs on a device.
- Scientists used a scanning tunneling microscope (STM) to build and measure isolated single-atom bits using the holmium atoms. An electrical current was used to write and read binary data (1s and 0s) on the atom.
- The invention can allow people and businesses to store 1,000 times more information in the same space and one day make data centers,

computers and personal devices radically smaller and more powerful.

Key Facts About IBM

International Business Machines Corporation:
American multinational technology company
Founded June 16, 1911
Founder Charles Ranlett Flint
Headquarters Armonk, New York, U.S.

Odisha govt launches 181 helpline for distressed women

- Chief minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated a 24X7 toll free helpline number 181 for distressed women on the occasion on International Women's Day
- The helpline will facilitate quick response of various services including lodging police complaint to provide medical, legal and counselling to women victims.
- The Centre had launched the 181 helpline number in 2013 after the brutal gang-rape of Nirbhaya in December 2012 and asked all states to start the helpline.
- Besides, 1091 helpline number by the police and 10920 helpline number by the State Commission for Women are also there.

Key Facts About Odisha

- Statehood: 26 January 1950
- Capital: Bhubaneswar
- Largest city: Bhubaneswar
- Governor: S.C. Jamir
- Chief Minister: Naveen Patnaik

Cuevas wins third straight Brazil Open title

- Uruguay's Pablo Cuevas has won his third straight Brazil Open tennis title by defeating Albert Ramos-Vinolas of Spain 6-7 (7-3), 6-4, 6-4 in a rain-affected final.
- It was Cuevas' sixth ATP singles title, all of which have been on clay.
- The Brasil Open is a tennis tournament held annually in São Paulo, Brazil. A part of the ATP World Tour 250 series, it is one of the main events in the Brazilian tennis calendar.
- Pablo Gabriel Cuevas Urroz (born January 1, 1986)[1] is an Argentine-born Uruguayan professional tennis player.
- Cuevas won the 2008 French Open men's doubles title with Luis Horna.
- He has won 5 singles titles and is currently in his career-high singles ranking of World No. 19. Cuevas' career-high doubles ranking is World no. 14, which he achieved in April 2009.

Himachal Pradesh launches mobile App 'Mera Hunar'

- Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh launched mobile App and website 'Mera Hunar HP', a first of its kind in the country.

Benefits of Mera Hunar App

- 'Mera Hunar' is a web based platform where the skilled, semi-skilled persons can apply for various jobs as per their convenience like plumber, carpenter, mechanic, security guards, drivers, tourists guides, etc online. The platform is available both in English and Hindi.
- This platform will directly connect the prospective employers with the job seekers as the application, will contain the address and

the phone numbers of those looking for jobs and other details as well.

- This will benefit those looking for daily jobs within their area.
- This would further supplement the Skill development scheme of the state government and would be of great help to those passing out fresh from Industrial Training Institutes.

Actress Viola Davis named Harvard Artist of the Year

- Viola Davis, the popular actress, producer, director, activist, businesswoman, and philanthropist, has been named the 2017 Artist of the Year.
- She was awarded the Harvard Foundation's arts medal at a ceremony during the 32nd annual Cultural Rhythms Festival in Memorial Hall's Sanders Theatre.
- She recently received the Critics' Choice, Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild, and British Academy of Films and Television Arts awards, as well as an Academy Award nomination for her portrayal of Rose Maxson in the film adaptation of August Wilson's play 'Fences

Ford Foundation appoints Pradeep Nair as regional director for India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka

- The Ford Foundation appointed Pradeep Nair as regional director for India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- As regional director, Nair will guide the foundation's operations out of New Delhi. He will assume his new position at the end of March, succeeding David Hulse.

- As India country director of the US-based Institute for Sustainable Communities, Nair established the organisation's India office and was helped build strong relationships with the Indian government, the private sector and NGO communities across Asia.
- Nair holds an MBA in finance from Karnataka University, an engineering degree in electronics from Bharathiar University and has also studied filmmaking

Key Facts About Ford Foundation

- The Ford Foundation is a New York headquartered, globally oriented private foundation with the mission of advancing human welfare.
- Created in 1936 by Edsel Ford and Henry Ford
- President: Darren Walker
- Headquarters: New York City, New York, United States
- Founded: 15 January 1936
- Chief investment officer: Eric Doppstadt
- COO: John W. Bernstein

Air India's all-female crew makes history with round-the-world flight

- Air India says it has become the first airline to fly around the world with an all-female crew
- Air India scripted history by flying an all-women crew flight around the world
- The Boeing 777 flew from New Delhi to San Francisco, traveling over the Pacific Ocean. The crew completed a mandatory rest period before flying over the Atlantic back to New Delhi, completing the round-the-world trip.
- Every member of staff -- from the flight's captains to the cabin crew, check-in and

ground handling staff -- were women. Even the engineers, who certified the aircraft, and air traffic controllers, who cleared its departure and arrival, were women

Key Facts About Air India:

- Air India is the flag carrier airline of India and the third-largest airline in India in terms of passengers carried, after IndiGo and Jet Airways.Wikipedia
- The airline was founded by J. R. D. Tata as Tata Airlines in 1932
- CEO: Ashwani Lohani
- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Parent organization: Air India Limited
- Founded 15 October 1932 (as Tata Airlines)
- Commenced operations 29 July 1946

Hawaii becomes first state to sue over Trump's revised travel ban

- Hawaii has become the first state to file a lawsuit against Donald Trump's revised travel ban, saying the order will harm its Muslim population, tourism and foreign students.
- Attorneys for the state filed the lawsuit against the US government on Wednesday in the federal court in Honolulu. The state had sued over Trump's initial travel ban, but that lawsuit was put on hold while other cases played out across the country.
- Trump's new executive order, signed on Monday, bars new visas for people from six Muslim-majority countries and replaces an initial order issued on 27 January, which was chaotically rolled out and subsequently halted by a federal court following a barrage of legal

challenges from states and advocate groups across the country.

- The new order sought to alleviate some of these complaints by offering exemptions to lawful permanent US residents and current visa holders from the six countries – Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Iran, Syria and Libya – as well as staggering the timeframe of implementation.
- Hawaii argues in an amended complaint that the new order remains incompatible with freedom of religion protections in both the state and federal constitutions, will harm the state's economy and educational institutions, and would prevent Hawaiians with family members in the six targeted countries from reuniting.
- Judge Derrick Watson granted the state permission to refile the amended motion for a new restraining order on Trump's second ban.
- The government has been instructed to file a response to the motion by 13 March, with a date in court set for 15 March at 9.30am Hawaiian time, just hours before the second executive order will come into full force.

Cairo: Mega cultural festival 'India by the Nile' opens with Crafts Mela

- The mega cultural festival 'India by the Nile' got off to a colourful start at the foot of the Pyramids with a Crafts Mela, showcasing joint handicraft exhibition of India and Egypt
- The Embassy of India in Cairo, in collaboration with Teamwork Arts, presented 'Crafts Mela' as part of the IBN 2017 cultural festival.

- The festival, which is a celebration of Indian music, dance, theatre, visual arts, food and wellbeing, is the largest foreign festival in Egypt showcasing 70 events across the country.
- It is organised by the Embassy of India in partnership with the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India; Export Promotion Council For Handicrafts (India), the Ministry of Social Solidarity (Egypt) and the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI).
- Three days of the exhibition have been dedicated to joint handicraft of both the countries to "relive and recreate" the ancient civilisational ties.

Konkani author Mahabaleshwar Sail gets Saraswati Samman

- Eminent Konkani writer Mahabaleshwar Sail has been honoured with the Saraswati Samman 2016 for his novel Hawthorn. The award comprises a cash prize of Rs 15 lakh and a citation.
- The 74-year-old writer's novel was shortlisted from 22 regional language books.
- Best known for his work, 'Paltadcho Munis', which inspired a film by the same name, Sail is a renowned bi-lingual writer based in Goa.
- He has four Marathi dramas and seven Konkani novels to his credit. He has also written short stories and a novel in Marathi.
- Published in 2009, 'Hawthorn' is a work of fiction presenting the cultural map of the traditional potter community of Goa.

Key Facts About Saraswati Samman

- The Saraswati Samman is an annual award for outstanding prose or poetry literary works in any 22 Indian language listed in Schedule VIII of the Constitution of India.
- It is named after an Indian goddess of learning and is considered to be among the highest literary awards in India.
- The Saraswati Samman was instituted in 1991 by the K. K. Birla Foundation. It consists of Rs 15 lakh, a citation and a plaque

National Safety Week: 4-10 March

- 46th National Safety Day/National Safety Week Campaign commenced on 4th March 2017 and concluded on 10th March 2017.
- The idea of commemorating the Foundation Day of the National Safety Council, 4th March; and the first National Safety Day (NSD) Campaign was launched in 1972 and has since been organised every year. The Campaign now entering its 46th year, Started for a single day on 4th March as NSD, the Campaign has now been spread over a week from 4-11 March.
- The Campaign is aimed at renewing the commitment of employees and the general public to work safely throughout the year. The ultimate objective of the Campaign is to ensure integration of OSH in work culture and lifestyle.

Theme of the year

Keep Each Other Safe

Iran Successfully Test-Fires Hormuz-2 Ballistic Missile

- The commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps announced that the Iranian military successfully test-fired a Hormuz-2 ballistic missile this week.
- The missile destroyed a floating target at a distance of approximately 155 miles
- Hormuz-2 is a naval strike ballistic missile intended to hit moving targets at sea with high precision, and has a range of nearly 300 kilometres (186 miles), Press TV reported. The missile is similar in appearance to the anti-ship Khalij-e-Fars (Persian Gulf) ballistic missile.

Missiles Tested by Iran this week

- S-300 surface-to-air missile defence system
- Fateh-110 short-range ballistic missiles
- Khorramshahr medium-range ballistic missile

Punjab Agriculture University develops Bt cotton variety with reusable seeds

- Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) has developed the first genetically modified (Bt) cotton seeds that can be reused, resulting in saving of input cost to farmers.
- The new cotton variety is among few others identified by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for cultivation in North region.
- The three Bt cotton varieties include PAU Bt 1, F1861 and RS 2013.
- PAU Bt 1 and F 1861 were developed by PAU, whereas, RS 2013 was developed at Rajasthan Agricultural University (RAU), Bikaner. While the PAU Bt 1 was completely developed at Punjab Agricultural University, the F 1861 and RS 2013 varieties were converted to Bt version

by Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur.

- Cotton is the only genetically-modified seed legally allowed in India. Punjab alone needs around 20-25 lakh packets of Bt cotton seed for the sowing of the crop which roughly amounts to around Rs 225 crores.

What is Bt cotton?

- Bt cotton is a genetically modified organism (GMO) cotton variety, which produces an insecticide to bollworm.
- Bt cotton has been genetically modified by the insertion of one or more genes from a common soil bacterium, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt). These genes encode for the production of insecticidal proteins, and thus, genetically transformed plants produce one or more toxins as they grow.

Government releases draft rules for wallet companies

- In a bid to make transactions through e-wallets safer and strengthen the grievance redressal mechanism for consumers, the government has released a set of guidelines for wallet firms.
- The draft Information Technology (Security of Prepaid Payment Instruments) Rules 2017 which have been released for public consultation by the ministry of electronics and IT cover an entire spectrum such as protecting consumer information, especially financial data.

Information Technology (Security of Prepaid Payment Instruments) Rules 2017

- The Rules mandate that each Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPI) company or wallet firm will have a privacy policy posted on its website. It will also have to appoint a chief grievance officer, the contact details of whom will have to be prominently displayed on the website.
- The grievance officer will have to "act upon" any complaint within 36 hours and "close" it in a month's time.
- The draft also mandate that companies have enough safeguards in place to avoid any hacking attacks and if there is one, it is to be swiftly reported to the government agencies
- Every e-PPI issuer shall have in place and publish on its website and mobile applications the privacy policy and the terms and conditions for use of the payment systems operated by it in simple language, capable of being understood by a reasonable person
- The personal information of the customers will be treated under Section 72A of the Information Technology Act, and the financial data of the customer shall be deemed to be sensitive personal data under the "Information Technology (Reasonable Security Practices and Procedures and Sensitive.

President of India inaugurated the 12th CII-Exim bank conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership

- The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated the 12th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership in New Delhi.
- The first CII- EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership was held in the year

2005. The initiative was launched by CII in partnership with EXIM Bank of India and with the support of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. Over the last eleven editions, it has emerged as the pioneer event in building partnerships and enhancing the economic engagement between the two regions

Objective of the conclave

- To discuss cooperation in Trade, Regional Integration & Infrastructure Development, Finance & Consultancy, Mining & Minerals, Agriculture & Agro-Processing, Power & Alternative Energy, Healthcare, Small & Medium Enterprises, Human Capital Development and People-to-People Contacts.

NBFC cash loan against gold restricted to Rs 25,000

- Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) cannot lend more than Rs 25,000 in cash against gold, as stated by RBI.
- The earlier provision for NBFC was that high-value loans against the gold of Rs 1 lakh and above must only be disbursed by cheque. RBI reduced the amount to Rs 25,000 from the earlier Rs 1 lakh in line with the provisions of the Income Tax Act.

What is NBFC?

- Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 engaged in the business of loans and advances, acquisition of shares/stocks/bonds/debentures/securities

issued by Government or local authority or other marketable securities of a like nature, leasing, hire-purchase, insurance business, chit business but does not include any institution whose principal business is that of agriculture activity, industrial activity, purchase or sale of any goods (other than securities) or providing any services and sale/purchase/construction of immovable property.

- A non-banking institution which is a company and has a principal business of receiving deposits under any scheme or arrangement in one lump sum or in instalments by way of contributions or in any other manner is also a non-banking financial company (Residuary non-banking company).
- NBFC cannot accept demand deposits;
- NBFCs do not form part of the payment and settlement system and cannot issue cheques drawn on itself;
- Deposit insurance facility of Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is not available to depositors of NBFCs, unlike in the case of banks.

Maternity Leave Raised To 26 Weeks

- Women working in the organised sector will now be entitled to paid maternity leave of 26 weeks, up from 12 weeks, as Parliament today passed a bill in this regard that will benefit about 1.8 million women.
- The new law will apply to all establishments employing 10 or more people and the entitlement will be for only up to first two children. For the third child, the entitlement will be for only 12 weeks.

- The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, protects the employment of women during the time of her maternity and entitles her full paid absence from work, to take care of her child.
- Among other things, the bill provides for 12 weeks of maternity leave to a woman who legally adopts a child below three months of age and a commissioning mother (defined as a biological mother) who uses her egg to have a surrogate child.
- The amendments would ensure that full maternal care is provided during the full bloom period and will encourage more women to join the workforce in the organised sector, he added.
- The central government has already amended its service rules and is providing 26 weeks maternity leaves to its employees.

ICC appoint Sachin Tendulkar as official ambassador of women's World Cup 2017

- Indian cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar was announced as the official ambassador of Women's Cricket World Cup 2017 by the International Cricket Council (ICC)
- The women's World Cup this year starts on June 24 in England and Wales with eight top cricketing countries locking horns to grab the coveted trophy. The 21-day tournament having 28 matches will be played at five different venues with the final at Lord's.
- Sachin Tendulkar is perhaps the biggest icon of the game. The ICC could not have got anyone bigger to promote the women's game and therefore it is a very wise decision to appoint Sachin as the brand ambassador.

ICC

- Motto: Great Sports Great Spirit
- Formation: 15 June 1909
- Headquarters: Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- Chairman: Shashank Manohar
- President: Zaheer Abbas
- CEO David Richardson

BP Kanungo appointed RBI Deputy Governor

- BP Kanungo was on Friday appointed Deputy Governor in Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for three years.
- The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has approved his appointment to the post with effect from the date of taking over the charge on or after April 3
- He has been appointed in place of R Gandhi.
- Kanungo was in March last year appointed as Executive Director in the central bank.
- The ACC has also named Dilip S Shanghvi as Member, Western Local Board of RBI.
- The appointment of Shanghvi, the promoter of Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, to the post is for a period of four years.

The Appointments Committee of Cabinet

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) decides appointments to several top posts under the Government of India. The committee is composed of the Prime Minister of India (who is the Chairman), the Minister of Home Affairs.
- The following four are the more important cabinet committees:

- The Political Affairs Committee deals with all policy matters pertaining to domestic and foreign affairs.
- The Economic Affairs Committee directs and coordinates the governmental activities in the economic sphere.
- Appointment Committee decides all higher level appointments in the Cabinet Secretariat, Public enterprises, Banks and Financial Institutions.
- Parliamentary Affairs Committee looks after the progress of government business in the Parliament.

Narendra Kumar takes over as Chairman Central Water Commission

- Shri Narendra Kumar, an officer of Central Water Engineering Service (1979 batch) has assumed the charge of Chairman, Central Water Commission (CWC).

Areas Served by Narendra Kumar

- He has served in various capacities in CWC as Assistant Director in Design Organisation
- He has also served as Senior Joint Commissioner in Command Area Development wing of Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation from 2002 to 2005.
- From 2009 to 2011, he served as Chief Engineer, Brahmaputra and Barak Basin, Shillong.
- He was also member of Experts Committee for Scientific Assessment of flood prone area in India and Standing Committee for Morphological studies of Indian rivers.

- He took over as Member (River Management) of Central Water Commission in October 2014.

Mission of Central Water Commission

- To promote sustainable and integrated development and management of India's water resources by using state of the art technology and competency and by coordinating all stakeholders.

'International Vision Zero Conference' on Occupational, Safety and Health

- The international conference on the VISION ZERO and its relevance to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), is being organized from 15th to 17th, March 2017 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi by Directorate General Factory Advice and Labour Institutes (DGFASLI), Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment and German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV), Germany in association with International Social Security Association (ISSA).
- An exhibition on OSH is also being organized during the conference from 15th to 17th March, 2017 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.
- The exhibition will provide the most efficient platform to support technological communication and business trade. The exhibition segments will show-case personal protective equipment (PPEs), health at work, high-risk prevention, environmental protection at work, etc.

Aim:

- To focus on the Occupational Safety and Health issues and challenges in the Manufacturing, Construction and Mining

sector.

Kiren Rijiju launches MySSB APP

- Union Minister of State for Home Affairs of India. launched a mobile application "MySSB" in New Delhi
- Nearly three months after BSF constable Tej Bahadur accused his force of serving poor quality of food and his seniors of siphoning ration money meant for soldiers, nearly all Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) have developed their own application to address soldiers' grievances.
- The application will have soldiers' financial accounts, designations, and grievances. The stress is on making the application interactive

SSB

- Sashastra Seema Bal or SSB, in English the Armed Border Force (rarely translated into English in Indian usage), is one of India's Central Armed Police Forces. It is currently under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India. Prior to 2001, the force was known as the Special Service Bureau (SSB)
- Headquarters New Delhi
- Minister responsible Rajnath Singh, Union Home Minister
- Agency executive Archana Ramasundram IPS, Director-General,

Limits on cash withdrawal from savings bank account removed

- All restrictions on cash withdrawal from savings bank account have been removed

from today as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had announced about it last month. Earlier, it had removed cash withdrawal limits from ATMs from February 1.

- Last month, the RBI had issued a notification saying that the withdrawal limit of cash from savings bank accounts will be relaxed to Rs. 50,000 from February 20 and there would be no restrictions from March 13.
- The Central Bank had put curbs on cash withdrawals and set a withdrawal limit from the ATMs and from bank accounts after the announcement the decision to demonetise old Rs. 500 and 1,000 currency notes on November 8 last year.

The Reserve Bank of India

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is India's central banking institution, which controls the monetary policy of the Indian rupee.
- It commenced its operations on **1 April 1935** during the British Rule in accordance with the provisions of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- Following India's independence on 15 August 1947, the RBI was **nationalised on 1 January 1949**.
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra
- **Governor:** Urjit Patel

SSP Chawrasia becomes second Indian to defend Indian Open title

- SSP Chawrasia has become only the second Indian golfer to successfully defend the Hero Indian Open title.
- He clinched a seven-stroke win at the redesigned DLF Golf and Country Club. This

was his sixth win on the Asian Tour and overall sixth international victory.

- Chawrasia pocketed a winner's cheque of 291,660 USD.
- Chawrasia is the third player to win back-to-back Indian Open. The other two golfers who did so earlier are Jyoti Randhawa who won in 2006 and 2007 and Japan's Kenji Hosoishi who won in 1967 and 1968.

Hero Indian Open title.

The Indian Open, known as the Hero Indian Open is a golf tournament on the Asian Tour that is currently held at the Delhi Golf Club. It became a European Tour co-sanctioned event in 2015.

Shiv Shankar Prasad Chawrasia

- Shiv Shankar Prasad Chawrasia (born 15 May 1978), also known as "Chipputtisia" and "Chow" is an Indian professional golfer. After he turned professional in 1997, he has gone on to win eight titles on the Indian Tour, including two wins at the Indian Open.
- At the end of the 2014 season he asked the Asian Tour to change the spelling of his last name, previously Chowrasia, to Chawrasia, which is the spelling that is on his passport.
- In February 2008, he won the inaugural Indian Masters, which was a part of the 2008 European Tour.
- In February 2011, Chawrasia won his second European Tour event winning the 2011 Avantha Masters in New Delhi.

Bangladesh declares March 25 as 'Genocide Day'

- Bangladesh's unanimously adopted a resolution declaring March 25 as Genocide

Day, in remembrance of the atrocities carried out by the Pakistani Army on the night of March 25, 1971.

- The Pakistan Army swooped on unarmed civilians on the night of March 25, 1971, to crush the Bengali rebellion following refusal by the military leadership to accept the election results of 1970 in which the Awami League got thumping majority. 'Operation Searchlight' began in the first hours of March 25 in Dhaka.

Operation Searchlight

- Operation Searchlight was a planned military operation carried out by the Pakistan Army to curb the Bengali nationalist movement in the erstwhile East Pakistan in March 1971 which the Pakistani state justified on the basis of anti-Bihari violence by Bengalis in early March.

Arunachal Govt launches new scheme Adarsh Gram Yojana

- The Government of Arunachal Pradesh has launched a new scheme - Adarsh Gram Yojana - with a view to reach to the poor people in rural areas.
- The programme has been launched in line with the basic philosophy of the Prime Minister - Sabka Saath Sabka Vikaas.

Arunachal Pradesh

Established: 20 February 1987

Capital: Itanagar

Governor: Padmanabha Acharya

Chief Minister: Pema Khandu

Lee Chong Wei clinches fourth All England Open Badminton Championships title

- Lee Chong Wei won his fourth All England Open Badminton Championships crown
- He defeated Shi Yuqi of China.
- He won his maiden Superseries final in Paris in October.

Dato' Lee Chong Wei

- Dato' Lee Chong Wei is a Malaysian professional badminton player.
- As a singles player, Lee was ranked first worldwide for 199 consecutive weeks from 21 August 2008 to 14 June 2012.
- He is the fourth Malaysian player after Rashid Sidek, Roslin Hashim and Wong Choong Hann to achieve such a ranking (since official rankings were first kept in the 1980s)
- He is the only Malaysian shuttler to hold the number one ranking for more than a year.
- Lee is triple silver medalist at the Olympic Games, and the sixth Malaysian to win an Olympic medal.

All England Open Badminton Championships title

- The All England Open Badminton Championships is the world's oldest badminton tournament, held annually in England.
- With the introduction of the BWF's latest grading system, it was given Superseries status in 2007, upgraded to Superseries Premier status in 2011

HSBC appoints AIA boss Mark Tucker as new chairman

- HSBC has appointed Mark Tucker, the chief executive of Asian insurer AIA, as group chairman.

- Mr Tucker will take over on 1 October, succeeding Douglas Flint who has been in the role since 2010.
- The appointment breaks an HSBC tradition of appointing insiders to the chairmanship.
- One of his first jobs will be to find a replacement for Stuart Gulliver, the chief executive of HSBC, who plans to step down next year.
- Mr Tucker has been chief executive of AIA for seven years, during which he oversaw the insurer's expansion in Asia.
- Before AIA, he was the chief executive of insurance giant Prudential, and brings to HSBC his experience at the top of a UK financial giant as well as his Asian exposure.

HSBC

- HSBC Holdings PLC is a British multinational banking and financial services holding company headquartered in London, United Kingdom.
- It is the world's seventh-largest bank by total assets with total assets of US\$2.374 trillion (as of December 2016).
- It was established in its present form in London in 1991 by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited to act as a new group holding company
- First established on 3 March 1865 in Hong Kong as The Hongkong and Shanghai Bank) First incorporated on 14 August 1866 as The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation) 25 March 1991 as HSBC Holdings plc, as parent holding company to the entity in Hong Kong now as a subsidiary
- **Founder:** Thomas Sutherland

- **Headquarters:** HSBC Tower, London

OnePlus ropes in Amitabh Bachchan as its new brand ambassador

- Chinese smartphone maker OnePlus has roped in Bollywood veteran Amitabh Bachchan as its new brand ambassador for India.
- According to the OnePlus team, Bachchan has been considered since he better represents 'OnePlus' motto 'Never Settle'.
- OnePlus 3T is rated as the best smartphone as compared to other brands based on consumer ratings on Amazon India.
- With this, Amitabh Bachchan has now joined the first-ever "OnePlus Star" which is a select group of distinguished OnePlus users.

NTPC installs India's largest Floating Solar PV Plant in Kerala

- NTPC started power generation from India's largest floating solar power plant at Kayamkulam in Kerala, on Friday.
- The 100 kWp floating solar generation plant, largest of its kind in India, was indigenously developed as a part of 'Make In India' initiative, at Rajiv Gandhi Combined Cycle Power Plant (RGCCPP) in Kerala's Kayamkulam district
- Solar panels mounted on floating boards that hold them in place saves land usage and has been found to be efficient than the ones installed on land.
- These floating platform were indigenously developed by NTPC Energy Technology Research Alliance, the R&D arm of NTPC Ltd, in collaboration with Central Institute of

Plastic Engineering & Technology (CIPET), Chennai and a patent has been applied for.

NTPC Ltd

- NTPC Ltd. formerly known as National Thermal Power Corporation Limited, is an Indian Public Sector Undertaking, engaged in the business of generation of electricity and allied activities.
- **Founded:** 1975
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi, India

Footwear Design And Development Institute Bill, 2017 Introduced In The Lok Sabha

- Commerce & Industry Minister Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the Footwear Design and Development Institute (FDDI) Bill, 2017 in the Lok Sabha.
- The Bill intends to declare the FDDI as an Institution of National Importance (INI).
- It further seeks to facilitate and promote teaching, training and research in all disciplines relating to design and development of Footwear and leather products and to enable FDDI to emerge as Centre of Excellence meeting international standards

Purpose of the bill

- It proposes to establish the FDDI as a body corporate, unlike the present structure wherein the institute is centrally-funded for meeting its capital expenditure.
- The institute would consist of a Governing Council, with a Chairperson who shall be an eminent academician, scientist or industrialist from the leather sector, to be nominated by the Central Government.

- The Central Government has further been vested with the power to remove the Chairperson or other members, and to reconstitute the Cou...

About FDDI

- The FDDI was established by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India in the year 1986.
- It has pan-India presence with campuses at Noida, Kolkata, Chennai, Fursatganj (UP), Rohtak, Chhindwara and Jodhpur.

Arun Jaitley gets charge of defence ministry after Manohar Parrikar resigns

- Finance minister Arun Jaitley was given the additional charge of the defence ministry after Manohar Parrikar resigned to take on the new role of Goa chief minister.
- the President has directed that Arun Jaitley, cabinet minister, shall be assigned the charge of the Ministry of Defence, in addition to his existing portfolios,
- This is the second time that Jaitley is holding the additional portfolio of Defence Ministry during the present NDA government.
- He was incharge of the ministry earlier from May 26 to November 9 in 2014.

Ministry of Defence

- The Ministry of Defence is charged with co-ordinating and supervising all agencies and functions of the government relating directly to national security and the Indian armed forces.
- The Ministry has the **largest budget among the federal departments** of India and currently

maintains **sixth in military expenditure** among countries of the world.

- The **President of India is the Supreme Commander** of the Armed Forces of the country.
- The Ministry of Defence provides policy framework and resources to the Armed Forces to discharge their responsibility in the context of the defence of the country.
- The Armed Forces (including Indian Army, Indian Air Force, Indian Navy) and Indian Coast Guard under the Defence Ministry are primarily responsible for ensuring the territorial integrity of the nation.

Krishi Unnati Mela begins in New Delhi

- National Agricultural Fair "Krishi Unnati Mela 2017" is being organised during March 15-17, 2017 at IARI, PUSA New Delhi by ICAR-DARE, IARI supported by Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India.
- Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) is the Project Management Partner for the fair.
- Major attraction of the mela would be digitisation in agriculture, organic farming, agribusiness models, precision farming, skill building and entrepreneurship development
- Live demo of water use efficient technologies, recycling of waste water for agriculture and on-spot soil and water testing will also be held
- The technical sessions on various themes are planned to educate farmers on various agricultural technologies and government schemes for agricultural development.

Commonwealth Day -March 13, 2017

- Commonwealth Day is celebrated annually across the Commonwealth of Nations on the second Monday in March(March 13, 2017)
- The objective of this day is to **come together and celebrate its values and diversity**.
- The theme of 2017 is :**A peace-building Commonwealth"**
- It is marked by a multi-faith service in Westminster Abbey, normally attended by Queen Elizabeth II as Head of the Commonwealth along with the Commonwealth Secretary-General and Commonwealth High Commissioners in London.
- **Commonwealth Nation:**
- **Headquarters:** Marlborough House, London
- **Head:** Queen Elizabeth II

Reliance Commercial Finance appoints Devang Mody as CEO

- Reliance Commercial Finance, a subsidiary of Reliance Capital announced the appointment of Devang Mody as chief executive officer.
- Prior to this, Mody served as president of consumer business at Bajaj Finance.
- The consumer finance business of Bajaj Finance, under his leadership, witnessed a sharp growth to its current size spanning over 300 towns, with market leadership positions across various business lines.
- The company, over the last eight years, has helped create success stories for over 1.3 lakh SMEs across the country covering various industries, and disbursed loans of over Rs 50,000 crore to them.

Who is Devang Mody?

- Mody, aged 44, has over 20 years of experience in the financial sector.
- He started his career with Mahajan & Aibara, and then moved on to EY, followed by a stint at GE Money Financial Services where he was VP - Strategic Initiatives, before moving to Bajaj Finance.
- Reliance Commercial Finance is amongst the leading small and medium enterprise (SMEs) lenders in the non-banking finance space with assets under management of Rs 16,191 crore as of December 31, 2016.

Union government launches Mission Fingerling to achieve Blue Revolution

- Recognizing the potential and possibilities in the fisheries sector, Government of India has envisaged a program named "Blue Revolution" to unlock the country's latent potential through an integrated approach.
- The Blue Revolution, in its scope and reach, focuses on creating an enabling environment for an integrated and holistic development and management of fisheries for the socio economic development of the fishers and fish farmers.
- Thrust areas have been identified for enhancing fisheries production from 10.79 mmt (2014-15) to 15 mmt in 2020-21.

Aim of the mission

- Greater emphasis will be on infrastructure with an equally strong focus on management and conservation of the resources through technology transfer to increase in the income of the fishers and fish farmers.

- Productivity enhancement shall also be achieved through employing the best global innovations and integration of various production oriented activities such as: **Production of quality fish seeds, Cost effective feed and adoption of technology etc.**

Key Highlights

- The Department has identified 20 States based on their potential and other relevant factors to strengthen the Fish Seed infrastructure in the country.
- This program with a total expenditure of about Rs. 52000 lakh will facilitate the establishment of hatcheries and Fingerling rearing pond to ensure the fish production of 426 crores fish fingerling, 25.50 crores Post Larvae of shrimp and crab in the country.
- This will converge in the production of 20 lakh tonnes of fish annually and will benefit about 4 million families.
- The implementation of this program will supplement the requirement of stocking materials in the country up to a large extent, which is a much-needed input to achieve the enhanced fish production.

Hyderabad best Indian city in living standards: Mercer

- Hyderabad for the third year in a row has emerged as the best city in terms of living standards among Indian cities, while Vienna has been ranked at the top globally in a list by consultancy firm Mercer.
- The National Capital for the second straight year hit the lowest score among Indian cities

for living standards, as per the Mercer's Quality of Living rankings 2017.

- Both **Hyderabad** and **Pune** ranked higher for **quality of living** than the country's traditional business centres Mumbai and New Delhi, which have been ranked at 154 and 161, respectively, by the report.
- **New Delhi** scored well on account of its **airport facility, availability of international schools and low probability of natural disasters**, these positives were offset by a variety of negatives including a 'notorious' crime rate, air pollution and water availability
- Globally, **Vienna remained at the top** for overall quality of living for the eighth year running, with the rest of the top-ten list mostly filled by European cities.
- European cities in the top ten list are: Zurich (2) Munich (4), Dusseldorf (6), Frankfurt (7), Geneva (8), Copenhagen (9) and Basel -- a newcomer -- at 10th place.
- The only **non-European cities** in the top ten are **Auckland** (3) and **Vancouver** (5).
- The highest ranking cities in Asia and Latin America are Singapore (25) and Montevideo (79), respectively
- **Singapore topped the city infrastructure ranking**, followed by Frankfurt and Munich both in 2nd place, while on the other hand Baghdad (230) and Port au Prince (231) ranked at the bottom for city infrastructure.

What is Mercer?

- Mercer is the **world's largest human resources consulting firm**.
- Mercer is a subsidiary of global professional services firm Marsh & McLennan.

- **Founded:** 1945
- **Headquarters:** New York City, United States
- **Chairman and CEO:** Julio Portalatin

Upcoming Rewa solar plant to receive loan from World Bank

- The World Bank has agreed to provide loan to develop internal transmission arrangements of the upcoming Rewa Ultra Mega Solar (RUMS) project in Madhya Pradesh.
- It will provide 25 per cent of the loan amount under its Clean Technology Fund (CTF), where the money will be provided at an interest rate of only 0.25 per cent.
- This would be the first solar power project of the country to receive a loan under CTF (Clean Technology Fund)
- The installation of this solar power project would save Rs 14,000 crore for the state. Besides, the project would also provide power to Delhi Metro Rail Corporation.

World Bank

- The World Bank (WB) is an **international financial institution** that provides loans to developing countries for capital programs.
- It comprises two institutions: the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development** (IBRD), and the **International Development Association** (IDA).
- The World Bank is a component of the World Bank Group, which is part of the United Nations system.
- The World Bank's stated official goal is the reduction of poverty.
- **Motto:** Working for a World Free of Poverty
- **Formation:** July 1944

- **Headquarters:** Washington, D.C., U.S.
- **President:** Jim Yong Kim,

IndusInd Bank to buy IL&FS Securities Services

- Private sector lender IndusInd Bank will buy IL&FS Securities Services Ltd (ISSL), a subsidiary of Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) Ltd, in an all-cash deal.
- IL&FS Securities Services, incorporated in July 2006, is a capital markets intermediary for professional clearing, depository and custodial services.
- ISSL services both retail and institutional clients including over 1,000 brokers, FPIs (foreign portfolio investors) and FIIs (foreign institutional investors).
- The bank did not reveal the value of the acquisition.
- This acquisition brings scale to this business, complements our current product offerings and fits nicely into our strategy of creating differentiated businesses with domain expertise

IndusInd Bank

- IndusInd Bank Limited is a Mumbai based Indian new generation bank **established in 1994**.
- Indusind Bank is the **first among the new-generation private banks** in India.
- **Founder:** Srichand P. Hinduja
- **CEO:** Romesh Sobti
- **Tagline:** We Make You Feel Richer

World's first fluorescent frog discovered in South America

- The world's first fluorescent frog has been discovered near Santa Fe in **Argentina**.
- Scientists at the Bernardino Rivadavia Natural Sciences Museum in Buenos Aires made the discovery by accident while studying the pigment of polka-dot tree frogs, a species common across the continent.
- Rare '**cave squeaker**' frog seen in Zimbabwe for first time in 55 years
- In normal light the frog appears to have a dull, mottled brownish-green skin with red dots, but under UV light it glows a bright fluorescent green.
- Fluorescence – the ability to absorb light at short wavelengths and re-emit it at longer wavelengths – is uncommon in creatures that live on land.
- The translucent frog was found to use a combination of lymph and glandular emissions to fluoresce.
- The discovery opens up the possibility that other amphibians may be able to fluoresce, particularly those with translucent skin similar to that of the tree frog.

Cabinet approves revised pact with Bangladesh to set up Border Haats

- The Union cabinet approved revised MoU between India and Bangladesh for establishing Border Haats.
- The Union cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its approval to the revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Mode of Operation (MoO) between

India and Bangladesh for establishing Border Haats on India-Bangladesh border.

- The Revised MoU and Mode of Operation will provide a legal framework for establishment and operationalisation of additional border haats

Importance of Border Haats

- Border Haats aim at promoting the well-being of the people dwelling in remote areas across the borders of two countries by promoting traditional system of marketing the local produce through local markets.
- These measures help improve economic well-being of marginalised sections of society
- Currently, four border haats are operational, two each in Meghalaya and Tripura.
- These were established and operationalised under the MoU and Mode of Operation of Border Haats signed between Bangladesh and India on 23 October 2010. Subsequently, an Addendum to Mode of operation of Border Haats was also signed on 15 May 2012.

Telangana launched Rs. 605-crore 'KCR Kit' scheme for pregnant women, new born

- Focussing on women welfare and new born, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has come out with an innovative scheme – KCR Kit.
- The scheme is designed to address complications during the time of pregnancy and aimed at reducing infant mortality rate and encourage institutional deliveries.
- The KCR Kit consists of 16 essential things needed for a new-born and will be useful for up to three months.

- The kit comes packed with soaps useful for mother and child, baby oil, baby bed, mosquito net, dresses, sarees, hand bag, towels and napkins, powder, diapers, shampoo and toys for the kid.
- The government proposes to earmark Rs. 605 crore for the scheme.
- The State has initiated a number of measures for the welfare of women and children. In order to provide nutritious food to pregnant and lactating women and infants under Arogya Lakshmi, eggs, milk and nutritious food will be made available through the Anganwadis.
- For easy digestion, 'Sanna Biyyam' (fine rice) will be supplied through these Anganwadis.
- The scheme is modelled around the 'Amma Kit' distributed for babies and mothers in Tamil Nadu.

Babul Supriyo named vice-president of FIFA U-17 World Cup LOC

- Union Minister Babul Supriyo has been appointed vice-president of the FIFA U-17 World Cup organizing committee.
- The showpiece event, to be hosted by India for the first time, will be played from October 6 to 28.
- The draw of the tournament will be held on July 7.
- A FIFA team is scheduled to visit India from March 21 to 27 for the final inspection of the facilities in the six cities which will host matches of the U-17 World Cup.
- The 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup will be the 17th edition of the FIFA U-17 World Cup, the

biennial international men's youth football championship contested by the U17 national teams of the member associations of FIFA.

- The tournament will be hosted by India between 6 and 28 October 2017. This will be the first FIFA tournament hosted by the country.

The FIFA U-17 World Cup

- The FIFA U-17 World Cup, founded as the FIFA U-16 World Championship, later changed to its current name in 2007, is the world championship of association football for male players under the age of 17 organized by Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).
- The FIFA U-17 World Championship is a competition that was inspired by the Lion City Cup that was created by the Football Association of Singapore in 1977.
- The Lion City Cup is the first under-16 football tournament in the world.

Tata Steel, Wipro in world's most ethical companies' list

- Two Indian companies, Tata Steel and Wipro have been named in the list of world's most ethical companies by American think tank Ethisphere Institute.
- Ethisphere honours those companies who recognise their role in society to influence and drive positive change in the business community and societies around the world.

- In 2017, there were 124 honorees spanning five continents, 19 countries and 52 industry sectors.
- Wipro is one of the two information technology companies named in the list, the other being Xerox Corporation.
- Meanwhile, Tata Steel is also one of the two companies named in the metals, minerals & mining space. US-based Schnitzer Steel Industries Inc is the other company in this segment.
- Ford Motor Company has been named one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the eighth straight year.

Tata Steel Limited

- Tata Steel Limited (formerly Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited (TISCO)) is an Indian multinational steel-making company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India, and a subsidiary of the Tata Group
- Chairman: Natarajan Chandrasekaran
- Managing Director: T. V. Narendran

Wipro Limited

- Wipro Limited (Western India Palm Refined Oils Limited or more recently, Western India Products Limited) is an Indian Information Technology Services corporation headquartered in Bangalore, India
- Founded: 29 December 1945
- Founder Mohamed Hasham Premji
- Headquarters Bangalore, Karnataka, India
- Chairman: Azim Premji
- CEO: Abidali Neemuchwala

Govt launches new scheme TIES for developing export linked infrastructure

- The government has launched a new scheme — TIES — for developing export linked infrastructure in states with a view to promote outbound shipments.
- Launched by Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES) seeks to bridge the infrastructure gap and provide forward and backward linkages to units engaged in trade activities.
- An inter-ministerial empowered committee for sanctioning and monitoring of the project was set up for the scheme. It will be headed by the commerce secretary Rita Teotia
- The TIES would focus on projects like customs checkpoints, last mile connectivity, border haats and integrated check posts.
- The idea of this scheme is to address those gaps in infrastructure which are not addressed by any other scheme. It will help to ensure smoother movement of export cargo and also ensure quality standards and certification

Salient Features

- Under the scheme, priority would be given to the projects involving significant contribution by the implementing agency and bank financing for achieving financial closure.
- The other salient features of the scheme includes promotion of leveraging of funds from other sources including bank financing; no recurring costs of the land to be included; and operating & maintenance costs to be met through pay and use charges.

- The central and state agencies, including Export Promotion Councils, Commodities Boards, SEZ authorities and apex trade bodies recognised under the EXIM policy of government; are eligible for financial support under this scheme.

World Consumer Rights Day: 15 March 2017

- World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) was started in 1983 and is an awareness day which is observed on March 15.
- It is celebrated annually to instigate action among citizens for the international consumer movement.
- Everyone is a consumer, and World Consumer Rights Day gives a platform for all to voice any difficulties they face.
- It ensures that their rights are respected and protected over injustice done in the market.
- **2017 theme 'Empowering Consumers in The Digital Age'**

US Senate confirms Indian-American Seema Verma for top health care post

- The US Senate has confirmed Indian-American Seema Verma for a top health care position in the Trump administration and she was set to play a key role in the government's bid to "repeal and replace" Obamacare.
- Ms Verma, who has been described by the White House as the "unquestionably qualified" first generation Indian-American, was confirmed by the Senate by a vote of 55-43.
- She is likely to play a key role in the health care reform of US President Donald Trump,

who has made it a priority to repeal and replace the affordable healthcare of his predecessor Barack Obama.

- The second Indian-American in the Trump Administration to be confirmed by the Senate, Ms Verma would head the USD 1 trillion Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services that provides health services to 130 million people.
- A health policy consultant, she is known as the architect of health care reforms in several states, including Indiana.

ICICI Bank, SBI, StanChart top bank frauds list: RBI

- ICICI Bank topped the list of banks that witnessed most number of frauds during April-December period of 2016 with state-owned SBI taking the second spot, RBI data said.
- During the first nine months of the current fiscal, as many as 455 fraud cases involving Rs 1 lakh and above were detected in ICICI Bank, closely followed by SBI (429), Standard Chartered (244) and HDFC Bank (237).
- The other banks which reported large number of frauds to the apex bank during the period include Axis Bank (189), Bank of Baroda (176) and Citibank (150).
- However, in value terms, frauds involving Rs 2,236.81 crore were reported in SBI, followed by Punjab National Bank (Rs 2,250.34 crore) and Axis Bank (Rs 1,998.49 crore).
- In the case of SBI, 64 employees were involved in fraud cases, while it was 49 for HDFC Bank and 35 for Axis Bank.

Central Bank won Official language policy award

- Central Bank of India has been awarded first prize in the implementation of Official Language Policy in the western region for the year 2015-2016.
- Sudhir Pathak, Chief Manager, Central Bank of India, received the trophy and certificate from Kalyan Singh, Governor of Rajasthan, at the Official Language Conference of Central and Western Regions in Udaipur recently. Central Bank of India, a government-owned bank, is one of the oldest and largest commercial banks in India.

Central Bank of India

- Founded 21 December 1911; 105 years ago
- Headquarters Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
- Chairman & Managing Director: Shri. Rajeev Rishi,

State Bank of India signs MoU with CREDAI

- State Bank of India and real estate developers' body CREDAI have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to jointly conduct various initiatives towards development of the realty sector.
- The MoU will be in force for a period of 3 years.
- Each of them will leverage their individual strengths and collaborate in areas to promote housing for all, which will be beneficial to the sector.
- SBI will be a national partner for all CREDAI activities and both will jointly work together for various marketing activities like conclaves, seminars, exhibitions, campaigns and CSR activities as well.

- The MoU is meant to mobilise the credibility of our members and the reach of the largest bank in India to cater to both home loans and construction finance requirements of the real estate sector.
- The availability of finance at lower rates would help fulfil CREDAI's objective of making housing more affordable.

Confederation of Real Estate Developers

- **Established in 1999**, CREDAI is the apex body representing 11,500 private Real Estate developers spread across 23 state level chapters and 168 cities in India.
- CREDAI is a **not-for-profit company** registered under Section 25 of Companies Act, 1956.
- In order to inspire confidence in the industry, CREDAI has adopted a **Voluntary Code of Conduct ensuring highest ethical standards** among its members. To predominantly safeguard consumer interest, CREDAI insists on setting up of Consumer Redressal Forums through all its City Level associations.
- CREDAI is the preferred CSR arm of its members with Skill Development, Education Scholarships and Swachh Bharat as thematic areas.

Following Amma's Lead, Karnataka Marks Rs 100 Cr for Namma Canteen

- Unveiling one of the flagship schemes in the 2017–18 Karnataka budget, CM Siddaramaiah announced the setting up of Namma Canteens in the state capital Bengaluru, along the lines of the Amma canteens introduced by late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa.
- The Chief Minister announced that 198 such canteens will serve breakfast and lunch for Rs 5, and Rs 10, respectively.
- The budget proposal has earmarked Rs 100 crore for the project, Siddaramaiah said during his Budget address on Thursday.
- In other districts, subsidised food will be made available at Saviruchi Sanchari (mobile) canteens, which will be run by Self-Help Groups
- The Amma Unavagams, or Amma Canteens, are subsidised food outlets first set up in 2011 by the Jayalalithaa-led government in Chennai. They were later expanded to other parts of the state, with the state government opening 360 such outlets in June 2014.
- The Namma Canteen has been one of the populist measures that Karnataka has been contemplating for some time now, and has received the formal seal of approval this budget

IISc, IIT-B among THE's top 50 Asian universities list

- The Times Higher Education's Asia University Rankings 2017 released listed Bengaluru's **Indian Institute of Science at 27**
- Indian Institute of Technology Bombay is at number 42
- Chennai's Veltech University is at number 43.
- With 33 universities in top-300 (up from 16 last year), India more than doubled its representation, becoming the third most-represented nation on the chart for the first

time.

HDFC bank launches 3-minutes digital loan against securities service

- HDFC Bank launched digital Loan against Securities (LAS) allowing customers to avail loans in less than 3 minutes.
- The service will also be available to customers with no credit history.
- The bank, which will offer **10.5 percent interest rate** on the product, will soon expand the offering to other securities such as mutual funds, bonds and insurance policies.
- Customers can avail a minimum loan of Rs **1 lakh and maximum loan up to Rs 20 lakh** under this facility.
- Banks normally disburse 50 per cent of the value of pledged shares as loan.
- The bank has collaborated with NSDL to seamlessly deliver this product.

HDFC Bank

- HDFC Bank (Housing Development Finance Corporation) is an Indian banking and financial services company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It has 90,421 employees and has a presence in Bahrain, Hong Kong and Dubai.
- HDFC Bank is India's second-largest private sector lender by assets
- In 1994 HDFC Bank was incorporated, with its registered office in Mumbai, India. Its first corporate office and a full service branch at Sandoz House, Worli was inaugurated by the then Union Finance Minister, Manmohan Singh

India joins WHO call to end TB by 2030 in South East Asian

- India among other countries in the South East Asian Region, which bear half of the global tuberculosis burden, today signed a 'call for action' and pledged to scale up measures to end the disease by 2030.
- India reports 2.8 million new TB cases annually and nearly half a million deaths due to the disease.
- Health ministers from countries in WHO South-East Asia Region, which bear half the global TB burden and WHO signed a '**Call for Action**' for ending TB, pledging to scale-up efforts and implement adequately funded, innovative, multi-sectoral and comprehensive measures to achieve the global target to end the disease by 2030,
- Six of the region's countries -- **Bangladesh, DPR Korea, India, Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand** -- are among the 30 high TB burden nations globally.
- The global targets seek to reduce TB mortality by 90 per cent and incidence by 80 per cent by 2030.
- The initiative also stresses on increasing government and partner budgetary allocations to enable national TB plans to be fully funded.
- WHO's South-East Asia Region comprises Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

World Health Organization

- The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health.
 - It was established on 7 April 1948, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The WHO is a member of the United Nations Development Group.
 - The WHO is responsible for the World Health Report, a leading international publication on health, the worldwide World Health Survey, and
 - World Health Day is observed on **7 April** of every year).
 - The head of WHO is **Margaret Chan**
- 58-year-old Bibhu Prasad Kanungo, a native of this village has made the people of Balia village here proud after he assumed the charge of deputy governor of RBI recently.
 - Bibhu passed HSC from a high school in Bhubaneswar and studied Intermediate Science from 1973 to 1975 in Kendrapara college
 - In 1979, he joined the Oriental Bank of Commerce as a probationary officer. Later in 1980, he joined Reserve Bank as an officer after passing Grade-B examination.
 - During his stint as a senior officer of the Reserve Bank of India, he worked in Bhubaneswar, Bhopal, Patna, Mumbai, New Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata and other places in the country

Michael Clarke's launches his autobiography 'My Story'

- Former Australian captain Michael Clarke has launched his autobiography titled "My Story" at Kolkata.
- Former Indian Captain and president of Cricket Association of Bengal, Sourav Ganguly was also present on the occasion.
- In the book, he elaborates the famous Monkeygate case and also the death of his teammate Phil Hughes.

Boy from sleepy hamlet, Bibhu Prasad Kanungo, becomes deputy governor of RBI

- Residents of a sleepy hamlet in a remote corner of coastal Kendrapara district in Odisha are elated as their son-of-the-soil ascended to a top-position in the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Reserve Bank of India

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is India's central banking institution, which controls the monetary policy of the Indian rupee.
- It commenced its operations on 1 April 1935
- RBI was nationalised on 1 January 1949.
- It is a member bank of the Asian Clearing Union.
- The general superintendence and direction of the RBI is entrusted with the 21-member Central Board of Directors: the Governor, **4 Deputy Governors, 2 Finance Ministry representatives, 10 government-nominated directors** to represent important elements of India's economy, and **4 directors to represent local boards** headquartered at Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and New Delhi.

- Each of these local boards consists of 5 members who represent regional interests, the interests of co-operative and indigenous banks.

Indian-American teen wins top science award worth USD 250,000

- An Indian-American teen has won the top award, worth USD 250,000, in the oldest and most prestigious science and math competition in the US, for her research on preventing death of neurons due to brain injuries or neurodegenerative diseases.
- **Indrani Das**, a 17-year-old resident of New Jersey, and four other Indian-origin students were among the top ten finalists to be honoured at the **annual Regeneron Science Talent Search Awards Gala** for their research projects demonstrating exceptional scientific and mathematical ability.
- In a laboratory model, Das showed that exosomes isolated from astrocytes transfected with microRNA-124a both improved astrocyte uptake of glutamate and increased neuron survival.
- **Arjun Ramani**, an 18-year-old student from Indiana won the third place honours worth USD 150,000 for blending the mathematical field of graph theory with computer programming to answer questions about networks.
- **Archana Verma**, 17, from New York, received a USD 90,000 award for her study of the molecular orbital energy dynamics of dyes, which may someday result in windows that produce solar energy.

- **Prathik Naidu**, 18, from Virginia, received a USD 70,000 award for his creation of a new machine learning software to study 3D interactions of the human genome in cancer.
- **Vrinda Madan**, 17, from Florida, received a USD 50,000 award for her study of 24 potential compounds for the treatment of malaria, in which she found two potential candidates that appear to target the disease-causing organism in a novel way and may warrant further study.

India ranks 148 in representation of women in government, Europe at top

- India ranks 148 globally in terms of representation of women in executive government and parliament, according to a report published by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women. The data published in the report Women in Politics 2017 Map showed that women make up only 11.8 per cent (64 MPs) of the 542-member Lok Sabha and 11 per cent (27) of the 245-member Rajya Sabha.
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- Regionally, women's representation in the Americas made the most significant gains,

according to the report, rising from 22.45 per cent in 2015 to 25 per cent.

- In Europe, the total percentage stood at 22.5 per cent.
- The report was launched on the sidelines of the 61st Commission on the Status of Women.
- A total of 227 countries were analysed in the survey.

UN Women

- The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, also known as UN Women, is a United Nations entity working for the empowerment of women.
- **Headquarters:** New York City, United States
- **Head:** Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

- The Inter-Parliamentary Union is a global inter-parliamentary institution established in 1889 by Frédéric Passy (France) and William Randal Cremer (United Kingdom).
- It was the first permanent forum for political multilateral negotiations.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **President:** Saber Hossain Chowdhury
- **Secretary General:** Martin Chungong
- **Mission:** To promote democracy and inter-parliamentary dialogue

Mallikarjun Kharge Set to Become Next PAC Chairman

- The Congress's floor leader in Lok Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge is all set to become the next chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).
- Kharge will succeed his party colleague K V Thomas, who will complete his third term as

Chairman of Public Accounts Committee on April 30.

- The Congress leadership had yesterday written to the Lok Sabha Speaker recommending Kharge's name for the PAC chairmanship.
- The chair of the PAC is given to an MP of the main Opposition party.
- The PAC post will make him entitled to a Cabinet rank and an office at the Parliament House

Public Accounts Committee

- The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is a committee of selected members of Parliament, constituted by the Parliament of India, for the auditing of the revenue and the expenditure of the Government of India.
- The PAC is formed every year with a strength of not more than 22 members of which 15 are from Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Parliament, and 7 from Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Parliament.
- The term of office of the members is one year. The Chairman is appointed by the Speaker of Lok Sabha.

ESAF Small Finance Bank launched

- SAF Small Finance Bank, Kerala's first private sector in micro financing, was launched by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan
- The bank, promoted by ESAF Microfinance and Investments (P) Ltd plans to open 85 branches in the first year, of which RBI approval has been obtained for opening 15 branches on the inaugural day.
- Bank also launched ATM cum Debit cards, website and digital banking channels.

- ESAF, which has own fund of over Rs 300 crore, recently raised another Rs 330 crore through the issue of commercial papers. The bank is targeting a business of Rs 20,000 crores by 2020

ESAF Microfinance

- Evangelical Social Action Forum, better known as ESAF Microfinance, is a non-banking finance company-Microfinance Institution (NBFC-MFI), licensed by the Reserve Bank of India and
- It is headquartered in Thrissur City of Kerala.

Lenovo appoints Subhankar Roy Chowdhury as head HR for Asia Pacific

- Lenovo has announced the appointment of Subhankar Roy Chowdhury to head its human resources team in Asia Pacific.
- He was previously the company's executive director and global head for HR Strategy, M&A and HR Analytics.
- In his new role, he will work on transformation and people strategy in Asia Pacific with focus on building leadership, cultural transformation and developing talent resources.
- Prior to this role, Subhankar and his team led the development of the company's corporate HR strategy, integrating multiple business groups' HR strategies, building HR Analytics function to support HR strategy, and consulting support on HR in M&A programmes.
- Subhankar succeeds Andrew Dahms, who departs at the end of March

Australia research centre enters into agreement with Indian Railways

- A Railway research centre in Australia has entered into an agreement with the Indian Railways to support future research and technology development related to critical infrastructure in India.
- Representatives from Monash University Institute of Railway Technology (IRT) and Indian Ministry of Railways corporation DFCCIL (Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited) signed an agreement.
- IRT with partners - Balaji Railroad Systems Ltd (BARSYL), leading railway consultants in India, PwC, and Indian Institute of Bombay (IITB) were selected as the preferred supplier from a competitive global selection process.
- They will provide guidance on the establishment of a new applied research and development institute in India known as SRESTHA (Special Railway Establishment for Strategic Technology & Holistic Advancement).
- SRESTHA will be locally engaged, but have a global reach with the aim to become a world leader in the advancement of rail.

First Airbus training centre in Asia to come up near Delhi's IGI Airport

- Union Minister of Civil Aviation Ashok Gajapathi Raju performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the first ever Airbus India Training Centre in Asia.

- Airbus will be setting up a greenfield training facility in Aerocity, close to Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport.
- This training facility is being set up to cater to the growing demand of skilled people in the domestic aviation space.
- It is expected to be operational by the end of 2018.

Characteristics of the centre

- The centre would be constructed over an area of around 7,000 square metres. Once complete, the facility will have two A320 full flight simulators, which could be increased to six, as and when the need arises.
- Initially, the centre was expected to train 800 pilots and 200 service and maintenance engineers. At present, Airbus has more than 250 aircraft in service in India and state carrier Indian Airlines has placed order for 550 more aircraft.

Airbus

- Airbus is a division of the multinational Airbus Group SE that manufactures civil aircraft.
- **Founder:** Roger Béteille, Felix Kracht, Henri Ziegler, Franz Josef Strauss
- **Headquarters:** Blagnac, France
- **President:** Fabrice Brégier
- **Chief Executive Officer:** Tom Williams

MIT Pune, IBM unveil robot 'Chintu' to assist senior citizens

- The students of Maharashtra Institute of Technology (MIT) Pune and technology giant IBM have developed a robot, Chintu, which

would assist senior citizens in their everyday tasks.

- Chintu, under 2ft tall robot, was developed after MIT Pune received a grant of Rs 10 lakh last year from IBM.
- It is powered by the US-based company's cognitive assistant, IBM Watson. Chintu can move his hands and read books to an audience.
- Chintu will assist senior citizens in conducting everyday tasks such as reading the newspaper/book and generate reminders on their daily medication

Sanjauli police post becomes first in India to be linked with CCTNS

- Sanjauli police station has become the first police post in the country to be linked with Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), a nationwide online tracking system.
- The system will facilitate people in lodging online/offline complaints, police verification of job applicants, tenants, character verification and migrant labourer registration.
- People, specially senior citizens, differently abled and women, in far-flung areas of the state can lodge First Information Reports (FIRs) through the nearest police post.
- He added that in future, all police posts in Himachal Pradesh would be linked with CCTNS.

CCTNS

- The Crime and Criminal Tracking Networks and Systems, abbreviated to CCTNS, is a project under Indian government for creating

a comprehensive and integrated system for effective policing through e-Governance.

- The system includes nationwide online tracking system by integrating more than 14,000 police stations across the country.
- The project is implemented by National Crime Records Bureau

India, Brazil conclude social security agreement

- India and Brazil initialled the finalised text of the Social Security Agreement taking forward the spirit of the Goa Declaration at the 8th BRICS Summit, outcomes of the meetings of BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers held on 9 June 2016 in Geneva and on 27-28 September 2016 in New Delhi.
- The SSA between India and Brazil once in force (by early 2018) will also be the first such agreement between the BRICS countries.

Highlights of the agreement

- Detached workers of the two countries are exempted from making social security contributions in either countries so long as they were making such contributions in their respective countries.
- The text establishes the rights and obligations of nationals of both countries and provides for equal treatment of the nationals of both countries and unrestricted payment of pensions even in the case of residence in the other contracting state
- It will favorably impact the profitability and competitive position of Indian and Brazilian companies with foreign operations in either countries by reducing their cost of doing business abroad.

- The SSA will also help promote more investment flows between the two countries.

Whanganui river granted same legal rights as human being

- In a world-first a New Zealand river has been granted the same legal rights as a human being.
- The local Māori tribe of Whanganui in the North Island has fought for the recognition of their river – the third-largest in New Zealand – as an ancestor for 140 years.
- The new status of the river means if someone abused or harmed it the law now sees no differentiation between harming the tribe or harming the river because they are one and the same.
- Two guardians will be appointed to act on behalf of the Whanganui river, one from the crown and one from the Whanganui iwi.

RBI Gets Government Approval To Print Rs. 10 Plastic Notes

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been authorised to conduct field trials for printing plastic notes of Rs. 10 denomination.
- The Reserve Bank for long has been planning to launch plastic currency note after field trials. In February 2014, the BJP government had informed the Parliament that one billion plastic notes of Rs. 10 denomination will be introduced in a field trial in five cities.
- Plastic notes are difficult to imitate and have an average life span of about five years. Also, plastic currency notes are cleaner than paper

ones. Such notes were first introduced in Australia to safeguard against counterfeiting.

- The government had decided to conduct field trials at five locations of the country with plastic banknotes, which are expected to last longer than current cotton substrate-based banknotes. Kochi, Mysore, Jaipur, Shimla and Bhubaneswar are the five cities where the plastic notes would be introduced in a field trial.

A sangam of litterateurs in Panchkula

- Writers, poets, thinkers, litterateurs of Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu and Sanskrit from Haryana and several other states of the country have converged on Panchkula for the three-day Haryana Sahitya Sangam at the Indradhanush Auditorium
- Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated the event, organised jointly by all seven academies of the state, Swarna Jayanti Celebrations Authority and the Information and Public Relations Department.
- The event includes an exhibition of books, published by the Haryana Sahitya Akademi, Haryana Sanskrit Academy, Haryana Punjabi Academy, Haryana Urdu Academy, Haryana Granth Academy, Haryana Kala Parishad and the Haryana Itihaas Avam Sanskriti Academy.
- Khattar unveiled the mascot "Laddo" of the Haryana Sahitya Sangam.

11 Indian women win 'Women Icons' award in Singapore

- Eleven Indian women are among the 25 Asian ladies who have won the 'Women Icons' award

in Singapore for dedicating their lives to social work.

- Women empowerment and childcare remains on the minds of these women, who came from a number of fields for the award organised by Business Excellence & Research Group Pte Ltd and supported by Nanyang Technological University of Singapore.
- Among the award winners last night was Vandana Sharma, who served for a decade in the Indian Armed Forces, broke several stereotypes around 'Women in Uniform' and ventured into the corporate world.
- Keeping with her 'Women Empowerment' campaign is Revathi Siddharthe Roy, who holds a Masters in Economics degree but drove taxi for 10 months in Mumbai to support her family after her husband died in 2007.
- Roy now runs a training school, Zaffiro Learning, for women to learn to ride two-wheelers and serve as "last mile" delivery person for e-commerce companies.
- Joining in the awards was Dr Srimathy Kesan, who motivates children into Aerospace and Aeronautics subjects at her Chennai-based company, Space Kidz India.
- Kesan draws children to science with the aim of building a pool of scientists in the coming year, saying India's pool of scientists was depleting as more and more students were opting for engineering or medical studies.
- Other winners were: Dr Aparna Hegde of ARMMAN, Deepshikha Kumar of SpeakIn, Kanika Gupta Shori of Square Global, Minal D'Rozario of Ideosphere, Mini Dwivedi Gopinathan of PlayStreet Specially Abled Educare Trust, Saloni Mardia Kothari of Mtlxex

Online, Sonia Kulkarni of Ketchum Sampark PR, and Swati Nathani of Team Pumpkin.

spare parts and components under the 'Make in India' initiative.

India, Russia sign long-term support pact on Sukhoi Su-30MKI

- India and Russia signed two long-term support agreements for the Sukhoi Su-30MKI combat aircraft fleet, which is the mainstay of the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- Pacts were also signed for maintenance and life-cycle support for other Russian-origin platforms, such as Mi-17 helicopters, MiG-29K aircraft, INS Vikramaditya and T-90 tanks.
- The agreements were signed by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) with United Aircraft Corporation and United Engine Corporation.

Highlights of the pact

- The pacts provides for an upgraded schedule for delivery of spares from Russia for these jets, local manufacturing of parts and a proposed logistics hub for the fighter jets in Bengaluru by HAL.
- The Su-30MKI was designed and developed by Russia's Irkut Corporation, specifically for India.
- The licensed production of the aircraft takes place at HAL's facility in Nashik, Maharashtra.
- The objective of having long-term supply agreements between the Russian OEMs and Indian Armed Forces or platform manufacturers is to ensure licensed production and to firm up modalities for Indian companies to manufacture some of the

Sun Pharma's Dilip Shanghvi appointed as member on RBI's western board

- Sun Pharmaceuticals managing director Dilip Shanghvi has been appointed by the central government as a member on the western area local board of Reserve Bank of India.
- The appointment is for four years with effect from March 11, 2017, the central bank said on its website.
- Shanghvi joins Enam Group chairman Vallabh Bhanshali on the western board. Last month the RBI appointed Prasanna Mohanty on the RBI's southern local board, Vallabh Bhanshali on the western local board and Sunil Mitra on the eastern local board also for four years.

Ex-Gujarat BJP MLA set to head Safai Karamcharis Commission

- A former BJP legislator from Gujarat is set to take over as the new Chairperson of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK), which has been headless for about a year.
- The government has cleared the names of Manhar Valjibhai Zala as the Chairperson, and Manju Diler from Uttar Pradesh and Dilip Kallu Haathived from Maharashtra as members of the NCSK
- Zala and the two members are likely to take charge on March 16, an official source said.
- The Election Commission had barred the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment,

which is the nodal ministry of the body, from announcing the names of the new chairperson and members till the polling process was over in five states.

- The NCSK, established in 1994 to promote and safeguard the interests and rights of safai karamcharis and those engaged in manual scavenging, has a sanctioned strength of four members and a chairperson.
- The government had extended the tenure of the Commission for another three years from April 1, 2016.

Amitabh Bachchan launches ABC of Breast Health, a Breast cancer app in 12 languages

- Mr. Amitabh Bachchan launched the World's FIRST mobile App on 'ABC of Breast Health' at an event organised by Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation
- Both iOS & Android versions of the App which are available in Apple & Google Play Store for FREE download, aims to empower the nation about every aspect of Breast cancer & Benign non-cancer Breast health issues in 12 Languages(English, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya & Assamese)
- There is a specific section on 'Myths & Facts' that aims to demystify the common misconceptions relating to various Breast health issues, which would be sent on a daily basis to those who download the App.
- In addition, the App gives unrestricted access to all issues of PINK CONNEXION – South Asia's First quarterly Breast health Newsletter published by Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer

Foundation and a couple of Breast cancer awareness films made by the Foundation.

Punjab to reserve 33 per cent government jobs for women

- The congress government in Punjab led by Amarinder Singh decided to provide 33 per cent reservation for women in all government jobs.
- This was among many decisions that the state cabinet took in its first meeting.
- the reservation would also apply to contractual appointments of women in government jobs.
- the representation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban local bodies would go up from 33 per cent to 50 per cent.
- The government decided to do away with the "VIP culture" by removing red, amber and blue beacons from official vehicles of all state ministers, MLAs, bureaucrats and political appointees, and scrap the practice of laying of foundation stones while inaugurating public projects.

Other decisions

- The Cabinet decided to set up a Special Task Force in the CM's Office
- The Cabinet decided to provide one house to every freedom fighter and allocate 300 units of free electricity every month
- Freedom fighters will also be provided one out-of-turn tubewell connection and would be exempted from toll tax
- On the contentious SYL issue, the Cabinet decided that the government will take up the

matter of sharing of water in the courts and at the administrative level on priority basis.

- A new transport policy will be introduced in the next meeting to put an end to monopoly on private buses cartel

Indian-American Computer Scientist Anshumali Shrivastava Wins NSF CAREER Award

- An Indian-American computer scientist, Anshumali Shrivastava has won National Science Foundation (NSF)'s prestigious CAREER award for his research on redesigning current machine-learning processes.
- He is an Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science at William Marsh Rice University, commonly referred to as Rice University or Rice which is a private research university located in Houston, Texas.
- Anshumali Shrivastava was one of the recipients of the CAREER awards given to about 400 scholars each year across all disciplines to support the research and educational development of young scholars likely to become leaders in their fields.
- Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER) awards support the research and educational development of young scholars likely to become leaders in their fields.
- The five-year grants, which are among the most competitive awarded by the NSF, are given to some 400 scholars each year across all disciplines.

National Science Foundation CAREER awards

- The National Science Foundation CAREER awards are the National Science Foundation's most prestigious awards in support of junior

faculty who exemplify the role of teacher-scholars through research, education and the integration of education and research within the context of the mission of their organisations.

- NSF CAREER awards support promising and talented researchers in building a foundation for a lifetime of leadership in integrating education and research. NSF encourages submission of CAREER proposals from junior faculty members at all CAREER-eligible organizations.

Solar Energy Scheme for Small Powerloom Units Approved

- The Government has approved a new scheme to provide financial assistance or capital subsidy to small powerloom units, for installation of Solar Photo Voltaic (SPV) plant, in order to alleviate the problem of power cut and shortages faced by decentralized powerloom units in India.

Under the Solar Energy Scheme, the plants have two options:

- On-Grid Solar Power Plant where power cut/shortage is negligible and power tariff is high.
- Off-Grid Solar Power Plant in areas where there is power shortage & on-grid power is not continuously available.
- The Scheme will come into force with effect from 1 April, 2017.

First fully India-made train flagged off at Dadar station

- The much-awaited made-in-India rake, Medha, is on tracks of the Western Railway.
- Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu, via videoconferencing, flagged off the maiden run of the train from Dadar to Borivali, at Lokmanya Tilak Terminus.
- The 12-coach train on the fast track halted at Bandra and Andheri stations.
- Medha has been manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai, which has installed LED lighting to reduce energy consumption.
- This will save energy by approximately 30-35% as compared to the existing rakes. This rake has in-built systems to minimise breakdowns during the travel
- There is a GPS-based information system to indicate the stations.
- This rake also has a facility that would help motormen communicate with a guard in case of emergencies.

Integral Coach Factory

- Integral Coach Factory (ICF) is the only manufacturer of rail coaches located in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.
- It was established in 1952, is owned and operated by the Indian Railways.
- The coach factory primarily manufactures cars for Indian Railways but also exports railway coaches to other countries.
- A Regional Railway Museum is situated in the factory premises. It has a collection of nascent models of trains and models endemic to the Indian Railways.
- About 59.1 million units of electricity had been generated through the windmills installed by

ICF in Tirunelveli district in 2011 which met 80 percent of the plant's electrical energy requirements

ICRISAT and ICAR join hands for crop improvement

- In a bid to benefit small farmers in India and globally, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) would work together on crop improvement and agronomy programmes for grain legumes and dryland cereals.
- ICAR and ICRISAT, recently signed an agreement in New Delhi, in which climate smart crops, smart food and digitalisation of breeding database were identified as some of the core areas of research.
- The focus is on integrating systems modelling tools for upscaling climate resilient agriculture, developing genetic and genomic resources of finger millet and enhancing genetic gains for priority traits.

ICRISAT

- The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is an international organisation which conducts agricultural research for rural development, headquartered in Patancheru (Hyderabad, Telangana, India)
- It was founded in 1972 by a consortium of organisations convened by the Ford and the Rockefeller foundations. Its charter was signed by the FAO and the UNDP.
- The current Director General is Dr. David Bergvinson. The current chair of the Board is Prof Chandra Madramootoo.

ICAR

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is an autonomous body responsible for co-ordinating agricultural education and research in India.
- It was established on 16 July 1929
- The President of ICAR is Radha Mohan Singh

Shahid Afridi appointed ambassador of Blind Cricket World Cup

- Former Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi has been appointed as the ambassador for the fifth edition of the Blind Cricket World Cup.
- The announcement was made by the Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC)
- fifth edition of the tournament, to be played in ODI format, will be hosted by PBCC in the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan in January 2018.
- Pakistan Blind Cricket Council is to host the upcoming world cup in United Arab Emirates starting in January 2018.
- Four out of the nine members of World Blind Cricket Ltd have agreed to play the final match in Lahore

BCCI's new constitution ousts Mumbai Cricket Association as full member

- Mumbai, 41-time Ranji Trophy champions, will no longer be considered a Full Member association in accordance with the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) new constitution.

- The Committee of Administrators (CoA), appointed by the Supreme Court to carry out the reforms suggested by the Justice Lodha Committee, finalised the new constitution.
- The new constitution stipulates that only 30 associations will function as controlling bodies for domestic cricket in their respective states.
- These 30 bodies will be Full Members and receive voting rights. This was implemented to follow the one-state-one-vote rule, which is a Lodha Panel recommendation.
- Administrators should only serve nine-year terms, some suggested the possibility of serving 18 years in cricket administration — nine years in state associations and nine years in BCCI.

ICICI Bank launches Mera iMobile banking app for rural customers

- ICICI Bank has launched a mobile banking app for rural customers that allow them to access banking services as well as information on agricultural services. Anyone including non-ICICI Bank customers can download and use the app which is available in eleven Indian languages.

Features of the app

- 'Mera iMobile' allows users in rural areas to avail as many as 135 services on their mobile phone. The list of services include 'Kisan Credit Card', 'Gold Loan', 'Farm Equipment Loan' and loans to self-help groups (SHGs).
- The app also enables them to undertake an array of frequently used banking services from their smartphone, without using mobile internet services.

- The app offers agriculture-related information like crop-wise mandi prices of nearly 230 crop varieties across 460 mandis.
- It also displays taluka-wise weather update for close to 3,700 talukas and over 300 districts in the country.
- The app is available in Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali, Odia, Assamese and Punjabi. It also offers UPI services in multiple Indian languages.

India ranks a low 122 among world's happiest countries

- India ranked a lowly 122 on a list of the world's happiest countries, dropping four slots from last year and coming behind China, Pakistan and Nepal.
- Norway ranks as the happiest country in the world, according to The World Happiness Report 2017
- India comes in on the 122nd spot, down from 118 in the 2013-2015 report, which maps happiness on the parameters of GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity and perceptions of corruption.
- The World Happiness Report continues to draw global attention around the need to create sound policy for what matters most to people — their well-being
- Iceland, Switzerland, Singapore and Australia rounded out the top five most-healthy countries in the index.
- This year the report gives special attention to the social foundations of happiness, including

happiness at workplace.

Five Indians in WEF's 2017 young global leaders list

- Five Indians, including Paytm Founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma and Shruti Shibulal of The Tamara Hospitality, have made it to the World Economic Forum's 100 Young Global Leaders list.
- The other individuals who represented India in the list include Ambarish Mitra Founder and CEO Blippar,
- Hindol Sengupta Editor-at large Fortune India and Rwitwika Bhattacharya - Agarwal Founder and CEO Swaniti Initiative.
- Each year, the World Economic Forum (WEF) selects 100 young leaders, under the age of 40, who are tackling the world's most complex challenges with innovative approaches.
- The Class of 2017 features two of the world's top scientists on genome editing: Luhan Yang, chief scientist at eGenesis Biosciences, and Feng Zhang, a core member of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard.
- From the public sector, the list features Aja Brown the youngest mayor to be elected in Compton, California.
- Among those representing the private sector is Katie Hill, an innovator who leads Apple's ambitious new clean energy programme, converting the company's manufacturing worldwide to renewable energy. DRR BAL

World Economic Forum (WEF)

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) is a Swiss nonprofit foundation, based in Cologny,

Geneva. Recognized by the Swiss authorities as an international body.

- Its mission is cited as "committed to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas".
- The forum was founded in 1971 by Klaus Schwab, a German-born business professor at the University of Geneva.

Federer Wins Fifth Indian Wells Crown

- Roger Federer won a record-tying fifth BNP Paribas Open crown as he defeated Stan Wawrinka 6-4, 7-5 in an all-Swiss final at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden.
- Victory in Indian Wells marks Federer's 90th tour-level crown and his 25th ATP World Tour Masters 1000 title. At 35 years old, he is the oldest Masters 1000 champion since a 34-year-old Andre Agassi won the 2004 Cincinnati title.
- Federer has played seven finals in the desert, previously lifting the trophy in 2004-'06 and 2012, while also finishing runner-up in 2014-15.
- It is the second time this year Wawrinka has fallen to Federer, having suffered a heartbreaking five-set loss in the Australian Open semifinals in January.

Government swaps chief executives of IDBI Bank, Indian Bank

- In an unprecedented move, the Centre has swapped the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of state-owned Indian Bank and IDBI Bank.

- Mahesh Kumar Jain, who was Managing Director & CEO at Indian Bank, has been appointed as Managing Director & CEO of IDBI Bank, which is now in some financial trouble and faced with several legacy issues.
- Jain was named Indian Bank chief in November 2015. Kishore Piraji Kharat, who was appointed as IDBI Bank CEO in August 2015, has now been appointed as Managing Director and CEO of Indian Bank.
- Jain will assume charge of IDBI Bank at a challenging time when the bank's morale is down following the recent arrest of some of its top officials. Also, the huge Rs. 2,255 crore loss in December quarter has also made things difficult for this PSB.
- This was also seen in the matter of Government conditionally infusing capital in certain select banks.

Ganga and Yamuna rivers are living entities: Uttarakhand HC

- It is the first time a court has recognized a non-human as a living entity in India.
- The recognition came while the court was hearing a 2014 public interest litigation (PIL).
- The bench comprising Justices Rajiv Sharma and Alok Singh also held that if the state government failed to fulfil its responsibility regarding the rivers, then the central government should step in.
- The court also directed the central government to constitute the Ganga Management Board within eight weeks to look into the issue of cleaning and maintaining the river.

- Recognizing the rivers as a living entity grants them new found legal identity and all rights laid out in the Constitution of India.
- The two rivers thus have the right to be legally protected and not be harmed/destroyed
- The court's recognition of the rivers comes just days after New Zealand according a living entity status to its third largest river, Whanganui

Cheteshwar Pujara becomes first Indian to face 500 balls in Test innings

- India's most consistent middle-order batsman Cheteshwar Pujara stormed his way into record books after playing a marathon innings against Australia on fourth day of the third Test match
- Pujara became the first Indian batsman to face 500 balls in a Test innings by surpassing Rahul Dravid's previous best of 495 balls.
- Before Pujara, Dravid had played a marathon knock of 270 against Pakistan in Rawalpindi in 2004 and took 495 balls. But Pujara surpassed Dravid
- Pujara joined the elite league by becoming second Indian batsman to slam two double hundreds against Australia. Sachin Tendulkar and VVS Laxman are the other two Indian batsmen to have scored a double ton against Australia

Private township becomes first to go cashless

- Essar's Nand Niketan at Hazira has become India's first private sector township to go

cashless, using mobile wallet for performing digital transactions.

- A Mumbai-based I-T company was roped in to provide smartphone-based application for mobile wallets. So far, around 8,000 prepaid cards have been issued in the Nand Niketan township to the employees, merchants and shop owners operating within its precincts. An average of Rs 2 lakh worth of digital transactions are being executed every day.

Idea merges with Vodafone to create India's largest, world's 2nd largest telecom company

- India's telecom industry will soon ring in a new order. Vodafone India and the Kumar Mangalam Birla-owned Idea Cellular are to merge to create the country's biggest phone company by subscribers, dislodging Bharti Airtel which has been at the top for 15 years.
- The new Rs 1.55 lakh crore entity will also be the world No. 2 after China Mobile.
- The deal will see Aditya Birla Group, the promoters of Idea, gradually raising its stake in the combined entity while Vodafone Group will reduce its own, with the aim of both holding equal stakes over a period of time.

Strategy

- As a first step, AB Group will acquire 4.9 per cent from Vodafone for Rs 3,874 crore, or Rs 108 a share, to take its stake to 26 per cent, with Vodafone holding 45.1 per cent.
- Further, the company will have the right to buy another 9.5 per cent (at Rs 130 a share or the prevailing market price, depending on the time

of purchase) in the combined entity over four years from the British telecom firm.

Governing Entity

- Kumar Mangalam Birla will be the chairman of the new entity. Vodafone will name the chief financial officer while the two companies will jointly name the CEO and operations head before the closure of merger, expected within 24 months.

International Cricket Council name Ankur Khanna as new Chief Financial Officer

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced the appointment of Ankur Khanna as its Chief Financial Officer (CFO).
- Khanna will join the ICC at the end of March leaving Air Asia India where he has held the post of CFO for the last one year.
- Prior to Air Asia India, Khanna worked in senior roles at Air France / KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and ITC, an associate company of British American Tobacco.

The International Cricket Council (ICC)

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) is the international governing body of cricket. It was founded as the Imperial Cricket Conference in 1909 by representatives from England, Australia and South Africa, renamed the International Cricket Conference in 1965, and took up its current name in 1989.
- Headquarters: Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- President: Zaheer Abbas
- CEO: David Richardson

2 Indians in Forbes list of US' richest under-40 entrepreneurs

- Two Indian-origin men have figured in Forbes magazine's second annual list of wealthiest entrepreneurs under the age of 40, which is topped by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.
- Biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy has been ranked 24th on 'America's Richest Entrepreneurs Under 40 2016' list with a networth of \$600 million, and Instacart co-founder Apoorva Mehta, stands at the 31st spot with a \$360-million networth.
- Vivek Ramaswamy has been ranked 24th on 'America's Richest Entrepreneurs Under 40 2016' list with a networth of \$600 million
- Instacart co-founder Apoorva Mehta, stands at the 31st spot with a \$360-million networth.

Cabinet approves SBI merger with Bharatiya Mahila Bank

- The Union Cabinet has approved the merger of Bharatiya Mahila Bank (BMB) with State Bank of India.
- BMB's total business of Rs 2,000 crore and its 103 branches will be merged with the country's largest bank
- The approval comes after last month's Cabinet approval for the merger of SBI's five associate banks with the larger entity, which will be effective from April 1.
- At present, SBI has an exposure of more than Rs 46,000 crore to women customers.
- In the three years since the BMB was established in 2013, it has extended loans of Rs 192 crore to women borrowers.

- Along with the merger of the five associate banks with SBI, this merger constitutes an important step towards strengthening the Indian banking sector through consolidation of public sector banks.

Bharatiya Mahila Bank

- Bharatiya Mahila Bank (BMB) is an Indian financial services banking company based in Mumbai, India. Former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh inaugurated the system on 19 November 2013 on the occasion of the 96th birth anniversary of former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
- Key people: S. M. Swathi (ED)
- Owner: Government of India

Karthik stars as Tamil Nadu lifts Vijay Hazare Trophy

- Tamil Nadu regained the Vijay Hazare trophy after beating Bengal by 37 runs in the final of the 2017 edition.
- With this win, they become the only team to win the tournament five times (one of them was shared with Uttar Pradesh in 2004-05).
- Tamil Nadu put managed to score 217 in spite of an early batting collapse. Dinesh Karthik, who was the leading run-scorer of the tournament, scored a match-winning 118.
- Bengal were dismissed for 180.

The Vijay Hazare Trophy

- The Vijay Hazare Trophy, also known as the Ranji One Day Trophy, was started in 2002–03 as a limited-overs cricket domestic

competition involving state teams from the Ranji Trophy plates. It is named after the famous Indian cricketer Vijay Hazare.

- Tamil Nadu have won the trophy 5 times.

Yes Bank partners with Payjo for artificial intelligence solutions

- Private sector lender Yes Bank BSE -1.51 % has partnered with Payjo, an artificial intelligence banking platform based out of Silicon Valley, California to adopt its intelligence products.
- The YES Pay Bot will be the first AI-driven Bot for a wallet and will complement the already trusted and popular YES Pay wallet service with over half-a-million users.
- Yes Bank is launching its wallet services through a chat-based financial assistant in partnership with Payjo on Facebook Messenger. This will soon be available on other popular social media channels like Skype, Slack and WhatsApp. With widespread use of instant messaging, YES Pay will be an effortless way to recharge mobile and DTH services, send-request money and pay utility bills.
- The AI-powered YES Pay Bot not only carries out financial transactions over a friendly chat but also answers banking queries and requests in a conversant manner.
- The technology enables the bot to give quick, personalized responses and real-time insights on transactions.
- Further, it works harmoniously across multiple channels like web, mobile and IVR.
- Over time, AI-powered Bots become more astute and can act as personalised banking

assistants which can forecast customer requirements and provide a personalised panoramic view of spending trends.

Vidya Pillai pots silver in Women World Snooker

- India's Vidya Pillai produced a spirited performance before settling for silver in the World Women Snooker Championship in Singapore
- Vidya cleared all league matches and later knocked out former European Champion, Tatjana Vasiljeva of Latvia 4-1 (last 16), Katrina Wan of Hong Kong 4-1 (quarterfinal) and Rebecca Grenger of England 5-1
- Hong Kong's Ng On Yee, clinched the gold medal

Canadian wins \$1m Global Teacher Prize for work with Inuit students

- A Canadian who teaches at a school in a fly-in-only village in the Arctic has won a \$1m (£800,000) Global Teacher Prize at a ceremony in Dubai.
- Maggie MacDonnell, praised for "changing the lives of her students and transforming her community", was among 10 finalists chosen from 20,000 nominations and applications from 179 countries.
- She has taught for the past six years in the Inuit village of Salluit, Québec, in the Canadian Arctic, which has a high rate of suicide, according to her biography provided by the award organisers.
- MacDonnell has created a life-skills programme specifically for girls in a region where teenage pregnancies are common,

alongside high levels of sexual abuse, according to her biography.

- Many teachers leave their posts midway through the academic year due to stress and the harsh conditions endured by the indigenous community.
- The Nobel-style award was set up three years ago by the Dubai-based Varkey Foundation. The prize is paid in instalments and requires the winner to remain a teacher for at least five years.

Varkey Foundation

- The Varkey Foundation has partnered with a variety of major global organizations including UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Clinton Global Initiative.
- In 2013 it launched the Global Education and Skills Forum, an annual education summit dedicated to addressing the world's educational needs.
- After analyzing the public status of teachers worldwide, in 2014 it launched the annual Global Teacher Prize, a \$1 million award to an outstanding pioneering teacher who has had a widespread impact.

Madhabi Puri Buch appointed as SEBI whole time member

- The government on Tuesday announced Madhabi Puri Buch as new whole time member of Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).
- This appointment also marks a departure from the regular practise of hiring Sebi board members, who typically were men coming from the public sector.

- This is the first time that a woman and a person from private sector has been chosen for a key post with the market regulator.
- Buch, who is currently serving at the New Development Bank in Shanghai has been appointed for a period of three years, the department of personnel and training (DoPT)
- Under the corporate governance standards issued in 2015, Sebi had mandated one woman to be a part of the board of a listed company
- Till now, the highest post occupied by women at the market regulator was the position of executive director.
- So far, members and chairman at Sebi were mainly appointed from public sector, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Indian Administrative Services (IAS).

Securities and Exchange Board of India

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is the regulator for the securities market in India. It was established in the year 1988 and given statutory powers on 30 January 1992 through the SEBI Act, 1992
- It was formed on 12 April 1988
- Ajay Tyagi was appointed chairman on 10 January 2017 replacing U K Sinha
- The SEBI is managed by its members, which consists of following:
- The chairman who is nominated by Union Government of India.
- Two members, i.e., Officers from Union Finance Ministry.
- One member from the Reserve Bank of India.

- The remaining five members are nominated by Union Government of India, out of them at least three shall be whole-time members.

Bill Gates tops Forbes richest list again, Mukesh Ambani leads India's 101 billionaire club

- India is home to world's fourth highest number of billionaires with Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani leading the club of more than 100 super-rich Indians, according to a new list released by Forbes magazine.
- The Forbes list of the World's Billionaires 2017 consists of 2,043 of the richest people in the world who have a combined net worth of USD 7.67 trillion, a record 18 per cent increase over the past year.
- The list has been topped by Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates for the fourth year in a row. He has been the richest person in the world for 18 out of the past 23 years.
- Mukesh Ambani Tops Forbes' India Rich List of 101 Billionaires
- Next on the list of Indian billionaires is ArcelorMittal chairman and CEO Lakshmi Mittal on the 56th spot with a net worth of USD 16.4 billion.
- The list includes only four women billionaires from India, led by Savitri Jindal and her family at the 303rd position, with a net worth of USD 5.2 billion.
- The other Indians on the list are Azim Premji, Wipro (72) Gautam Adani, Adani Group (250) NR Narayana Murthy, Infosys (1161) Vivek Chand Burman, Dabur (1290) Nandan Nilekani, Infosys (1290) Rana Kapoor, Yes Bank

(1795)

ISRO commissions two major facilities at VSSC

- ISRO commissioned two major facilities-- a Hypersonic Wind Tunnel and Shock Tunnel-- at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre here as part of its continuous and concerted efforts to minimise cost of access to space.

Role of the facilities

- Commissioning of such facilities would provide adequate data for design and development of current and future space transportation systems in the country
- symbolises the country's capability in establishing such world class facilities wherein technology from outside is restricted or not available.
- The one meter Hypersonic Wind Tunnel and one meter Shock Tunnel have been established with a wide spectrum of simulation capabilities in terms of Mach number, Reynolds number and re-entry velocities,
- These facilities, indigenously designed, developed and 'Made in India' with the support of Indian industries, are the third largest in terms of size and simulation capability in the world
- The facilities were dedicated in the memory of Satish Dhawan, a pioneer in the field and named as the Satish Dhawan Wind tunnel Complex.

Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre

- The Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre is a major space research centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), focusing on

rocket and space vehicles for India's satellite programme.

- It is located in Thiruvananthapuram,
- It was formed on November 21, 1963;

Maj. Rohit Suri awarded Kirti Chakra

- The military investiture ceremony held in the Durbar Hall of the Rashtrapati Bhavan
- While the second highest peacetime gallantry award 'Kirti Chakra' went to a young officer, Major Rohit Suri, who was part of the surgical strikes last year, the seniormost Lieutenant General Eastern Army Commander Praveen Bakshi, who was side stepped in the appointment of the Army Chief, was awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, the highest Distinguished Service Medal.
- Another member of the surgical strikes team Nb Sub Vijay Kumar was conferred the Shaurya Chakra
- The Kirti Chakra** is an Indian military decoration awarded for valour, courageous action or self-sacrifice away from the field of battle.
- It may be awarded to civilians as well as military personnel

International Day of Forests: 21 March

- This global celebration of forests provides a platform to raise awareness of the importance of all types of woodlands and trees, and celebrate the ways in which they sustain and protect us.
- This year we highlight the importance of wood energy in improving people's lives, powering

sustainable development and mitigating climate change.

- 2017 Theme: Forests and energy

BIRAC Celebrates Its 5th Foundation Day on 20th – 21st March, 2017

- The Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC); a Public Sector Undertaking of Department of Biotechnology (DBT) is completing 5 years and will be celebrating its 5th Foundation Day on 20th – 21st March, 2017.
- The Theme of the Foundation Day is “BIRAC@5: Impacting the Biotech Ecosystem”.
- During these 5 years, BIRAC’s efforts have been focused on enhancing the innovation research capacities within the biotech industries, and encouraging young entrepreneurs to take their innovation ideas towards scale-up and commercialization, so as to meet the country’s challenge for Affordable Product Development for masses without undermining the quality.
- The Foundation Day will be followed by the Grand Challenges India Meeting 2017 being organized by the BIRAC – PMU of DBT – BMGF and Wellcome Trust.
- BIRAC was incorporated on 20th March, 2012 as a non-profit Public Sector Enterprise under the aegis of Department of Biotechnology (DBT). BIRAC completed 5 years of establishment in March, 2017.

World Poetry Day: 21 March

- Held every year on 21 March, World Poetry Day celebrates one of humanity’s most treasured forms of cultural and linguistic expression and identity. Practiced throughout history – in every culture and on every continent – poetry speaks to our common humanity and our shared values, transforming the simplest of poems into a powerful catalyst for dialogue and peace.
- UNESCO first adopted 21 March as World Poetry Day during its 30th General Conference in Paris in 1999, with the aim of supporting linguistic diversity through poetic expression and increasing the opportunity for endangered languages to be heard.

ICMR head named to UN group on antimicrobial resistance

- Indian Council of Medical Research director Soumya Swaminathan has been named to a high-level group set up by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to provide expertise on and coordinate the global fight against antimicrobial resistance.
- Swaminathan, 57, has been named to the ad hoc Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, which will be co-chaired by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and World Health Organisation Director-General Margaret Chan.
- Swaminathan is also Secretary, Department of Health Research in India’s Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- Last September, UN Member States adopted the Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance that

contained a request for the UN Secretary-General to establish such a body.

Salman Khan tops Forbes India Celebrity rich list

- Bollywood superstar Salman Khan has unseated his actor Shah Rukh Khan to become the top earning celebrity of 2016 in the Forbes India Celebrity 100 List with an estimated income of Rs. 270.33 crore.
- The other leading names in the list include skipper Virat Kohli, actor Akshay Kumar and M S Dhoni chronologically.
- However, the 50-year-old Salman is ranked at No 2 in terms of fame, which is topped by ace cricketer Kohli.
- In the fifth rich 100 celeb list released by Forbes India, the ranking is based on two parameters: estimates of entertainment-related earnings and estimates of fame during the period October 2015 to September 2016.
- SRK at No 2, has reportedly earned Rs. 221.75 crore and also comes at No 3 in terms of fame. He lost his perch at the top in what was a mixed year for him both in terms of box office success and brands endorsed.
- When it comes to fame ranking, Test cricket captain Virat Kohli is the most popular celebrity and this has improved his earnings rank to No 3 with a reported Rs. 134.44 crore earnings. In 2015, Kohli was ranked No 7.

Bhagat Singh's death anniversary: 23 March

- The 23rd of March will mark the 86th martyrdom day of Bhagat Singh, one of the

most revered figures of the anti-colonial movement.

- On this day, Indians pay homage to three martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country. Freedom fighter Bhagat Singh who was hanged along with his comrades Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru for revolting against a British colonel are remembered on this day and homages are paid to the freedom fighters for the contribution to the freedom struggle of India.
- The Border Security Force is also planning to put on display the pistol used by the freedom fighter Singh to kill British officer John Saunders in 1928, at its new arms museum in Indore.

4 Indian cities among cheapest globally: Economist Intelligence Unit

- Four Indian cities are among the cheapest to live in globally, while Singapore has been ranked as the most expensive for the fourth consecutive year, as per a report by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- Bangalore (3rd place), Chennai (6th), Mumbai (7th) and New Delhi (10th) have been ranked by EIU among the 10 cheapest cities in the world.
- Almaty has been ranked as the cheapest city in the world followed by Lagos. Karachi was placed 4th, Algiers (5th), Kiev (8th) and Bucharest (9th) rank.
- The EIU's Worldwide Cost of Living 2017 report -- a ranking of the world's major cities -- said Asia is home to some of the world's most

expensive cities and also to many of the world's cheapest cities.

- Singapore retained its title as the world's most expensive city for the fourth consecutive year, while Hong Kong remained second, closely followed by Zurich at the 3rd place.
- Others in the 10 most expensive list include Tokyo at the 4th position, Osaka (5th), Seoul (6th), Geneva (7th), Paris (8th), New York (9th) and Copenhagen at 10th place.
- New York is the only North American city among the 10 most expensive cities, although Los Angeles remains highly ranked, in 11th place.

Rajya Sabha Passes Bill to Ensure Rights of HIV/AIDS Patients

- A crucial bill to ensure equal rights to people afflicted by HIV and AIDS in getting treatment, admission in educational institutions and jobs, was passed by the Rajya Sabha
- The bill was introduced in the upper house of Parliament in 2014 and then referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee which gave its report in 2015.

Features of the bill

- The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (Prevention) and Control) Bill, 2014, moved by Health Minister JP Nadda, was passed in the Upper House by a voice vote.
- During the debate on the measure, many members suggested amending the Section 14(1) of the bill, to remove the phrase "as far as possible" for providing medical treatment

to the Centre and the states to those infected with HIV and AIDS.

- While making the rules, it is ensured that nobody is denied treatment and we are committed to providing medical treatment to all those living with HIV or AIDS.
- The measures to be taken by the central or state governments under Sector 13 shall include measures for providing as far as possible, anti-retroviral therapy and opportunistic management to people living with HIV or AIDS.
- Government is giving special attention to this issue and the number of such cases has come down drastically.
- There is a penalty to the tune of Rs 1 lakh for breach of confidentiality of the patient's detail. The bill says it's important for high-risk groups to access services such as treatment of sexually transmitted infections, HIV testing, condoms, clean needles and syringes to prevent HVI transmission to the general public.

ABB India bags The India Smart Grid Foundation (ISGF) innovation award. award for restoring 1,035 MW Sharavathi plant in Karnataka

- ASEA Brown Boveri (ABB) India has restored and modernised the critical 1,035 MW Sharavathi hydropower plant in Karnataka that accounts for 25 per cent of Karnataka Power Corporation's generation.
- The Sharavathi project with seamless integration of complete plant data, is an example of ABB's future-ready technologies enabling the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) and aligns with the government's push for

24x7 reliable power for all with focus on smart power infrastructure and digitalisation.

- Karnataka Power Corporation Ltd. (KPCL), the state-owned electric utility in-charge of Sharavathi, expected the renovation of its second largest generating station to take two years.
- Working round the clock, the ABB team, with support from KPCL management, helped restore the entire plant – comprising 10 units - in just six months.
- The restoration and modernisation will help lower overall costs generally associated with higher capex and maintenance costs for individual systems such as advanced alarm management and remote communication with the state power grid and KPCL headquarters.
- For restoring the crucial power infrastructure, the ABB has bagged the The India Smart Grid Foundation (ISGF) innovation award.
- The award is a testimony to our customer focus and speed, complementing ABB's next level automation platform with timely delivery and execution,

PepsiCo's Gatorade India appoints PV Sindhu as brand ambassador

- PepsiCo's sports drink brand Gatorade has roped in Indian shuttler PV Sindhu as its brand ambassador. The move is as part of the global beverage major's commitment towards dialling up the communication on the benefits of its healthier food and beverage offerings to consumers.

- Sindhu is the first Indian brand ambassador of the brand, and she joins the likes of Ussain Bolt and Lionel Messi.
- As part of the deal, Gatorade will be unveiling a new campaign featuring Sindhu in a digital film that shows the brand's close partnership with the athlete.
- In 2016, Sindhu became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic silver medal and currently ranks amongst the top 10 players in the world.

Sarbananda Sonowal launches initiative to make Majuli carbon neutral

- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today launched initiative to develop Majuli, the world's largest river island, as the country's first carbon neutral district and a biodiversity heritage site.
- Majuli is facing existential crisis and therefore initiatives like designating carbon neutral district and biodiversity heritage site are needs of the hour to preserve its rich heritage and legacy
- Sonowal also launched through remote a registry in Majuli which would record and analyse the climate impact of all proposed projects in the state's newest district.
- He said the Sustainable Actions for Climate Resilient Development (SaCReD) Initiative would ensure that infrastructure in Majuli had less carbon.
- The chief minister also launched "Forests are Lives" campaign to underline the importance of Assam's rich forest and biodiversity and

urged all to take a pledge to conserve its biodiversity to make the state pollution free.

What is Majoli?

- Mājuli or Majoli is the biggest river island in the world in the Brahmaputra River, Assam, India and also 1st island district of the country
- Majuli has shrunk as the river surrounding it has grown. However it is recognised by Guinness Book of World Records as World's Largest River Island.
- The island is formed by the Brahmaputra river in the south and the Kherkutia Xuti, an anabranch of the Brahmaputra, joined by the Subansiri River in the north. Mājuli island is accessible by ferries from the city of Jorhat.

Kuldip Nayar journalism awards: First winner Ravish Kumar

- For his contributions in the world of journalism, eminent TV journalist Ravish Kumar on Sunday was honoured with the first Kuldip Nayar journalism award.
- He was conferred with an award plaque along with a cash amount of Rs 1 lakh.
- In the event organised by the Gandhi Peace Foundation at the India International Centre, veteran journalist Kuldip Nayar was present to bestow the award named after him.
- Accepting the award conferred on him, journalist Ravish Kumar said that in today's age there is time to explore possibilities. He said that there are journalists who are constantly looking to fulfil the potential present in them.

- The Kuldip Nayar journalism award was set up to honour those working in vernacular media and will be awarded every year from now on.

Who is Kuldip Nayar?

- Kuldip Nayar (born 14 August 1923) is a veteran Indian journalist, syndicated columnist, human right activist, author and ex-High commissioner of India to United kingdom noted for his long career as a left-wing political commentator. He was also nominated as a Member of the upper house of the Indian Parliament in 1997.

Russia's VTB bank to shut India office

- Russian bank VTB has decided to close its only office in India to cut costs but will continue to work in India
- The decision to shut the branch in India was taken as part of a strategy of VTB Group aimed at optimising costs.
- The bank will continue to work on the Indian market, expanding our cooperation with local partners
- While closing its office in New Delhi, VTB added that it saw commodities and investment banking as priority areas for the bank in India.
- VTB is also planning to cut costs in Europe by slimming down its operations to focus on Frankfurt.

Samsung Pay launched in India

- Samsung today launched a new digital payments service in the country, called Samsung Pay, that hopes to bring debit

cards, credit cards and wallets under one umbrella.

- Samsung Pay, a service that users of Samsung S7 Edge, S7, S6 Edge Plus, A series 2016 and 2017, and Note 5 users will get via a service update, will be available on Visa, Mastercard and Rupay payment cards. ICICI, HDFC, Standard Chartered, SBI, Axis bank cards will be supported, along with Paytm and Amex cards. UPI and CitiBank card support is also expected to become available soon.
- The Samsung Pay service is also supported on Samsung Gear S3.
- Nearly 90% of all POS machines in India work on magnetic technology for payments with cards. The Samsung Pay service uses a similar technology. The service creates a magnetic field between the POS machine and the phone to replicate a card transaction.
- The Samsung Pay app also offers promotions from banks on reward points. It shows offers from Paytm as well. The app also comes with built-in customer support.

Govt proposes to lower cash transaction limit to Rs 2 lakh

- The government today proposed to lower the cash transaction limit to Rs 2 lakh, from Rs 3 lakh announced in the Budget, as it introduced 40 amendments to the Finance Bill in an unprecedented move.
- As the Finance Bill was taken up for consideration in the Lok Sabha, the opposition parties including TMC, BJD and RSP protested against the introduction of these many

amendments, saying it was being done as a "back-door entry".

- Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, however, overruled the objections raised by the opposition parties, saying the 'incidental provisions' involved in the amendments constitute a 'Money Bill' and therefore can be considered as part of the Finance Bill.
- The proposed amendments to the Finance Bill include a provision to cap legal cash transactions at Rs 2 lakh. While presenting the Budget on February 1, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had proposed to make any cash transaction beyond Rs 3 lakh as illegal with effect from April this year.
- A penalty of equal amount would be levied in case of any violation of the provision, Revenue Secretary Hasmukh Adhia tweeted after the amendment was moved.

Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav in north eastern states to show oneness of culture

- Dance, music, drama, puppetry, and handicrafts showcasing the spectacular diversity of India, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Gujarat to Bengal through folk, tribal and classical art forms in all its dimensions will be the focus of the fifth Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav being organized in the northeast from 23 to 31 March 2017.
- An Exhibition on Buddhist art and tradition is also being organized at Parade Ground of Tawang on the occasion of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav to showcase the splendour and magnificence of the cultural sphere. Craftsmen

from all over the country will display and sell handicrafts to the general public.

- Chefs of traditional delicacies from different regions of the country will treat the visitors to an unparalleled culinary experience. Day-long performances of traditional performers of fringe-folk arts like 'Behroopiyas', 'Baazigars', 'Kacchi Ghori', etc. will take place in the Parade Ground from 23 March to 25 March 2017.
- The essential thrust of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav (RSM) is to present the rich diversity and uniqueness of Indian culture and to promote the cultural inter-linkages amongst the states to strengthen National integration and also to bid the artists of other parts of the country with the people of North East in a single thread of culture.
- The Mahotsav was envisioned to preserve, promote and popularize the heritage and cultural diversity of Indian culture and reconnect the new generation with Indian culture.

Shri Upendra Tripathy Appointed as Full Time Interim Director General of ISA

- Shri Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Power, Coal, New and Renewable Energy and Mines, Government of India and Ms. Sgolene Royal, Minister for Environment, Energy and Marine Affairs Government of France jointly decided to appoint Mr. Upendra Tripathy, as the Interim Director General (IDG) of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) on a full time basis.

- Mr. Upendra Tripathy was the Former Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy from 1st April, 2014 until 31st October 2016. Mr. Tripathy is an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Karnataka Cadre.
- He has worked with local, provincial and union governments in India for the last 36 years.

Background on International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) was launched on 30th November, 2015 as a coalition of the solar resource rich countries jointly by Shri. Narendra Modi, Honble Prime Minister of India and Mr. Francois Hollande, Honble President of France in the presence of Mr. Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations on the first day of the Paris Climate Conference or CoP21. I
- SAs mission and vision is to provide a dedicated platform for cooperation among solar resource rich countries where the global community including bilateral and multilateral organizations, corporates, industry, and stakeholders can make a positive contribution to assist and help achieve the common goals of increasing use of the solar energy in meeting energy needs of prospective ISA member countries in a safe, convenient, affordable, equitable and sustainable manner.

ICC Test Rankings: Ravindra Jadeja No.1 bowler, Cheteshwar Pujara No.2 batsman

- Ravindra Jadeja gained seven points to become the sole world number one bowler in the ICC's Test rankings. He held the top spot

jointly with Ravichandran Ashwin, who lost 37 points after a dismal performance in India's drawn Test against Australia in Ranchi.

- Jadeja, who took nine wickets in the third Test of the ongoing four-match series against Australia, is also the highest wicket-taker in the series with 21 scalps.
- He grabbed five for 124 and four for 52 in in Ranchi, to gain seven points after starting joint-first with Ashwin at 892 points.
- Jadeja has also closed in on a major landmark as his tally of 899 rating points puts him on the brink of becoming only the second India bowler after Ashwin to touch the 900-point mark. Ashwin, who had a highest rating of 904 points, has slipped 37 points behind Jadeja to 862 points after finishing with two wickets in Ranchi.
- Meanwhile, top-ranked Steve Smith has reached a career-high rating of 941 points after scores of 178 not out and 21.

World Water Day: 22 March

- World Water Day, held every March 22, is taking place around the world on Wednesday, aiming at attracting attention to the water crisis with this year's theme: "Why Waste Water."
- The day was originally launched in 1993 by the U.N.
- To coincide with the 2017 date, reports have been published warning of severe water scarcity in parts of Africa and Iran.
- As drought conditions are reported throughout East Africa, World Water Day feels

more timely than ever.

World Meteorological Day: 23 March

- Each year, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), its members and the worldwide meteorological community around the world celebrate World Meteorological Day on 23rd March around a chosen theme.
- The theme for this year's World Meteorological Day is 'understanding clouds', which highlights the enormous importance of clouds for weather climate and water.

World TB Day, 24 March 2017

- World Tuberculosis Day is celebrated every year by the people all across the world at international level on 24th of March.
- It is celebrated to raise the common public awareness about the epidemic disease of tuberculosis as well as get their efforts in order to totally eradicate this disease.
- As around 1.7 million of the people are dying of this disease every year.
- 24th of March has been established to commemorate the tuberculosis day by all at one place in order to get some solution to eradicate it from the world.
- Tuberculosis was first discovered by the Dr. Robert Koch in the year 1882 and amazingly announced by him to the small group of scientists at "the University of Berlin's Institute of Hygiene" about the cause of tuberculosis means the TB bacillus.

The theme of the World TB Day celebration of the year 2017 is **"Unite to End TB"**.

India's longest highway tunnel to be inaugurated on April 2

- India's longest highway tunnel at Chenani Nashri, between Udhampur and Ramban in Jammu & Kashmir is all set to be inaugurated by prime minister Narendra Modi on April 2.

Salient Features

- The tunnel is the longest highway tunnel in India boasting of features like Integrated Traffic Control System (ITCS), Video Surveillance System and FM Rebroadcast System, among others and will reduce travel time by approximately two hours, apart from promising fuel savings to the tune of 27 lakh per day.
- The tunnel has multiple economic gains as connectivity in the remote area can help transform the life of this neglected region in the hills.

Yves Meyer, Wavelet Expert, Wins Abel Prize

- The French mathematician Yves Meyer, a self-described "nomad" who has made deep contributions to the many subfields through which he has roamed over the past half-century, received the 2017 Abel Prize
- Meyer's "work on wavelets has been transformative in the area of signal processing
- His Calderón-Zygmund work had suggested to him a way of developing the first "orthonormal basis" of wavelets: a system consisting of

translated and dilated versions of a "mother wavelet".

- Meyer, 77, has also contributed to the mathematics of quasicrystals, number theory and the study of the Navier-Stokes equations.

Abel Prize

- The Abel Prize is a Norwegian prize awarded annually by the Government of Norway to one or more outstanding mathematicians.
- Named after Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel (1802–29) and modelled after the Nobel Prizes the award was established in 2001 by the Government of Norway.

First joint cycle expedition of India-Bangladesh Army flagged off from Agartala

- In a bid to cement mutual bonhomie, a joint cycling expedition of Indian Army and Bangladesh Army, first of its type, was recently flagged off from the Agartala military station.
- India and Bangladesh share a very close linkage as far as history, culture and geography are concern. Both the armies have been interacting with each other at various platforms at the senior level, senior level and training field.
- This is one of the noble initiatives taken by the Indian and Bangladesh army and shall revive all the old memories of the war of liberation of 1971 as well as learning from the best practices at the junior and younger level between both the armies. This is the first of its kind and I am sure that it is the stepping stone for many such activities in future which both the armies will undertake

- The expedition teams comprising of 19 soldiers each including officers, JCOs and OR will cover approx 532 km in 11 days.

India ranks 131 on Human Development Index

- India came down by one slot and was ranked 131st among 188 countries on Human Development Index (HDI) 2016 released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- India fell under the "medium human development category" and its HDI, at 0.624, was behind Sri Lanka and the Maldives in South Asia.
- Sri Lanka and the Maldives were ranked 73 and 105 respectively and figure in the "high human development" section.
- The top three countries in HDI were Norway (0.949), Australia (0.939) and Switzerland (0.939).

What is Human Development Index?

- Devised and launched in 1990, HDI is a statistic which ranks countries into four tiers of human development on the basis of indicators like life expectancy, education and per capita income.
- A higher lifespan, higher level of education and higher GDP per capita results in a country scoring higher HDI.
- The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic of life expectancy, education, and per capita income indicators, which are used to rank countries into four tiers of human development.

Bengaluru gets India's first vertical garden

- Emulating China and Italy's vertical forests, Bengaluru got its first vertical garden, which it hopes will help in curbing pollution and in beautifying the city.
- SayTrees, an NGO, installed the first vertical garden in the city on one of the pillars of the Hosur Road flyover
- The garden boasts of around 3500 saplings of more than 10 species
- An automated drip irrigation system has been installed that will water these saplings every day
- Every side has a creative design which makes the area look like a work of art

Ankur Mittal clinches double trap gold at ISSF World Cup

- Ankur Mittal clinched the gold medal at the ISSF Shotgun World Cup in the double trap event, pipping Australian rival James Willet in the final in a world record equalling effort.
- Mittal had settled for a silver at the recent International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup in New Delhi, where Willet had won the gold.
- Mittal ended with 75 points out of possible 80 in the six-man final to win India's first medal in the competition while Willet managed 73.
- The 2017 ISSF World Cup is the annual edition of the ISSF World Cup in the Olympic shooting events, governed by the International Shooting Sport Federation.

South Indian Bank introduces Aadhar-based payment app

- To promote cashless digital transactions, South Indian Bank has introduced Aadhar-based payment in its UPI mobile application- SIB M-Pay.
- Unified Payment Interface enables all bank account holders to send and receive money from their Smartphone without entering the bank account information.
- Even non-customers of South Indian Bank can link any of their bank account in this mobile application. Currently, the fund transfer is possible only if the Virtual Address (UPI ID) of the beneficiary is known to the user.
- With the latest addition in SIB M-Pay, the fund transfers can be done by just entering the Aadhar number of the beneficiary.
- The amount will be credited directly to the beneficiary's Aadhar linked bank account. SIB M-Pay app is currently available in Android Playstore.
- Aadhar based payment in South Indian Bank's SIB M-Pay will be a major step in offering simple and efficient payment methods, as the country moves towards a 'Cashless Society' and Aadhar ID plays a key role in Digital India initiatives

Ed Sheeran to Receive Songwriters Hall of Fame's 2017 Hal David Starlight Award

- Ed Sheeran, he of pop superstardom and songwriter/performer of the juggernaut that is "Shape of You," has been named the recipient of the Songwriters Hall of Fame's 2017 Hal David Starlight Award, which will be presented at the 48th Annual Induction and Awards Dinner on June 15 in New York.

Others to be honoured

- **Pitbull:** First-ever recipient of the Global Ambassador Award.
- **2017 SHOF inductees:** Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds, Berry Gordy, Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, Robert Lamm & James Pankow p/k/a "Chicago," Max Martin and Shawn "Jay Z" Carter

Hal David Starlight Award

- The Hal David Starlight Award was created in 2004 in honor of Songwriters Hall Chairman Emeritus Hal David as a way of honoring gifted young songwriters making a significant impact in the music industry with original compositions.

India win 8 medals in Para Athletics Grand Prix

- Indian Para Athletes bagged eight medals, including three gold, in the 9th Fazza International IPC Athletics Grand Prix in Dubai.
- With 3 gold, 1 silver and 4 bronze medals till the second day of competitions, India are currently at the seventh spot out of 48 participating countries.
- **Sundar Singh Gurjar** was the star among the Indians as he won a gold each in men's Javelin Throw F-46 and Discus Throw F-46 competitions.
- The third Indian gold was bagged by **Narender Ranbir** in men's Javelin Throw F-44 with an effort of 47.75m

The other Indian medal winners

- Anandan Gunasekaran: silver
- Ramkaran Singh: bronze
- Surjit Singh: bronze

- Rohit: bronze
- Pramod K Yadav: bronze

Home ministry issues directive for compliance with Flag Code of India

- After e-commerce site Amazon was barred from selling products with the Indian Flag on them in January, the Union ministry of home affairs (MHA) on Wednesday issued a fresh directive "to ensure strict compliance of the provisions contained in the Flag Code of India, 2002."
- The home ministry also directed that mass awareness programmes be carried out in order to propagate the importance of the national flag.
- The ministry had recorded several cases where norms pertaining to the flag and the safety of the environment had been flouted.
- Any show of disrespect to the flag would invite a jail term of "up to three years, a fine, or both" under Section 2 of The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971

Flag Code of India

- The Flag Code of India is a set of laws, practices and conventions that apply to the display of the national flag. Flag Code of India, 2002, has been divided into three parts.
- **Part I of the code** contains a general description of the national flag.
- **Part II of the code** is devoted to the display of the national flag by members of public, private organizations, educational institutions, etc.
- **Part III of the code** relates to display of the national flag by Central and state

governments and their organizations and agencies.

- The Flag Code of India, 2002, took effect from January 26, 2002 and superseded the "Flag Code-India" as it existed earlier.

The World's Largest "Artificial Sun" Is Powering up in Germany

- Synlight is the largest collection of film projector spotlights ever assembled in one room, and scientists in Germany are turning them all on at once in the pursuit of efficient and renewable energy.
- This experiment involving the world's "largest artificial sun" is taking place in Jülich, a town located 30 kilometers (19 miles) west of Cologne, and it was designed by scientists from the German Aerospace Center (DLR).
- The device features 149 industrial-grade film projector spotlights, and each one boasts roughly 4,000 times the wattage of the average light bulb.
- When this artificial sun is turned on, it generates light that's 10,000 times as intense as natural sunlight on Earth.
- Swiveling the lamps and concentrating them on one spot can produce temperatures of around 3,500 degrees Celsius (6,332 degrees Fahrenheit), which is three times as hot as the heat generated by a blast furnace.
- In the future, the facility may be used to test the durability of space travel parts when blasted by solar radiation, so not only could Synlight help us deal with our energy crisis here on Earth, it could help us explore worlds far beyond our own, too.

AP tops in Aadhaar seeding of Jan Dhan Accounts

- Post demonetisation of specified bank notes on November 8, 2016, more accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) have been seeded with Aadhaar numbers.
- Of the 25.51 crore PMJDY accounts on November 9, around 53.65 per cent were seeded with Aadhaar numbers. Four months hence, the number of PMJDY accounts has gone up to 28.01 crore, and the share of Aadhaar-seeded accounts has risen to 63.61 per cent.
- As on March 15, Andhra Pradesh had linked 87.73 per cent of its Jan-Dhan accounts with Aadhaar numbers. This was followed by Tripura at 87.08 per cent and Telangana 83.56 per cent.
- The share of Aadhaar-seeded accounts remained above 53 per cent in States with more than one crore PMJDY accounts.
- Maharashtra had linked 80 per cent of its 1.86 crore PMJDY accounts with Aadhaar numbers by March 15. Odisha was able to seed 53.90 per cent of its 1.11 crore accounts.
- The seeding remained below the 10 per cent range in Assam (1.3 per cent) and Meghalaya (2.08 per cent).
- Of the 1.1 crore PMJDY accounts in Assam, around 1.49 lakh were seeded by March 15.
- Aadhaar seeding remained below 50 per cent in Arunachal Pradesh (34.12 per cent), Jammu and Kashmir (25.16 per cent), Manipur (47.38 per cent) and Nagaland (40.94 per cent).
- Uttar Pradesh, which saw the number of PMJDY accounts grow from 3.76 crore (as on

November 9) to 4.35 crore (by March 15), also saw the seeding of the accounts rise from 43.20 per cent to 57.50 per cent

RBI appoints T S Anantharaman as part-time chairman of Catholic Syrian Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India has accorded its approval for appointment of TS Anantharaman as part-time chairman of Catholic Syrian Bank.
- Anantharaman has been holding the position of Non-Executive Director of the bank since August 28, 2009. Anantharaman is a chartered accountant with wide and varied experience in practice, industry, teaching, consulting and service.
- His experience includes seven years with the United Nations in a number of countries.
- At present, he is investment consultant and director in a number of companies and institutions.

Catholic Syrian Bank

- The Catholic Syrian Bank Limited (CSB) is an Indian private sector bank with its **headquarters at Thrissur, Kerala**, India. It is one of the oldest banks in India.
- CSB was founded on **26 November 1920**
- It opened for business on January 1st, 1921 with an authorised capital of Rs.5 lakhs and a paid up capital of Rs. 45270/-
- **Managing Director & CEO:** CVR Rajendran
- **Chief Financial Officer:** PV Antony

Tata Capital launches app for personal loans

- In a bid to woo the mobile-savvy youth, financial services company Tata Capital

launched a mobile app to offer personal loans up to Rs 15 lakh.

- The app, called myLoan, is a social profile-based personal loan mobile application. It will make a real-time assessment of the borrower's loan application through an algorithm, using a mix of digital, social and financial data.

Salient Features of App

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- It will make a real-time assessment of the borrower's loan application through an algorithm, using a mix of digital, social and financial data.

Tata Capital Limited

- Tata Capital Limited was established in 2007 with the sole aim of providing focused and transparent financial solutions to help people realize their dreams.

Shri Singh launch Coffee Table Book titled "50 Years – The Great Indian Milk Revolution"

- Radha Mohan Singh, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, on 23 March 2017, launched a Coffee Table Book titled "50 Years – The Great Indian Milk Revolution."
- The book was launched to commemorate National Dairy Development Board's (NDDDB) Golden Jubilee year.

- The book summarizes NDDDB's remarkable 50-year journey and the value it has created for millions of dairy farmers in India.
- The book also underlines the NDDDB's belief that cooperative principles are as relevant in the present time as they were in the past. It also highlights the Board's efforts towards bringing about socio-economic change in rural India.

National Dairy Development Board

- The National Dairy Development Board was set up by an Act of Parliament of India.
- It is an institution of national importance.
- It was founded by Dr. Verghese Kurien.
- The NDDDB was created in 1965.
- Its main office is located in Anand, Gujarat.
- Its subsidiaries include IDMC Limited-Anand, Mother Dairy, Delhi, NDDDB Dairy Services, Delhi and Indian Immunologicals Ltd, Hyderabad.

Six Indian-Americans among Ellis Island Medal of Honour

- PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi, author Fareed Zakaria are amongst six Indian-Americans nominated for the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honour 2017 - the highest civilian award in the US for immigrants.
- Among 88 named recipients, the four other Indian-Americans are Harman International Industries chairman CEO Dinesh Paliwal, Dr Annapoorna S Kini, Yashvant Patel, Mohan H Patel, as well as Pakistani-American Dr Adil Haider.
- Nooyi has been the CEO at PepsiCo since 2006 and chairman since 2007.

- Zakaria is the host of CNN's "Fareed Zakaria GPS" as well as a columnist for The Washington Post.

Ellis Island Medal of Honour

- The Ellis Island Medal of Honour founded by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organisations (NECO) are given annually to individuals whose accomplishments in their field and service to the country are cause for celebration
- Since its inception in 1986, the medal has been officially recognised by both Houses of Congress as one of the nation's most prestigious awards.

Petroleum Minister launches MoPNG e Seva

- Minister of State (I/C) for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launched MoP&NG e-Seva, a dedicated grievances redressal platform on Social Media for all queries and grievances relating to Oil and Gas Sector.
- The MOPNG e-Seva is an integrated grievances redressal platform across social media for all Oil & Gas related service issues.
- This portal will be a single point interface for all customers to reach out to the government for addressing their feedback or grievances related to Oil & Gas Sector on social media.
- MOPNG e-Seva will also deliver 24 x 7 support for consumers.
- The e-Seva portal will serve as a single point for queries on Twitter and Facebook to begin with; and other social media platforms in due course. A team of Nodal Officers from Oil Companies and Allied Services have been

formed to address issues on real-time basis.

India ranks 87th on energy architecture performance: WEF

- India has marginally improved its position to 87th place on a global energy architecture performance index, but ranks among the worst for pollution
- **Switzerland topped the annual list** released by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF) and was followed by Norway, Sweden, Denmark and France in the top five. India's rank improved three places from 90th last year.
- According to the findings, the world's biggest energy consumers struggle to take leading positions on the index as they grapple with inherent challenges of their large, complex energy systems and are outperformed by more nimble economies.
- **Bahrain is ranked the lowest at 127th.**
- The report, developed in collaboration with Accenture Strategy and launched today at the European Commission, ranked 127 countries based on their ability to provide energy across three dimensions of the energy triangle.
- It has 18 indicators defined across the three sides of the energy triangle -- economic growth and development, environmental sustainability, and energy access and security.

World Economic Forum

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) is a Swiss non-profit foundation, based in Cologny, Geneva
- its mission is cited as "committed to improving the state of the world by engaging business,

political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas

- The forum was founded in 1971 by Klaus Schwab, a German-born business professor at the University of Geneva
- First named the "European Management Forum", it changed its name to the World Economic Forum in 1987

Conference on 'Make in India' held in Houston

- First-ever conference was held here bringing together various constituencies that have an interest in India and discussing the latest developments and the best practices of doing business in India.
- The two-day Houston India Conference was hosted by Asia Society Texas Center
- **The theme of the Conference is 'Make in India -The Inside Story'.**
- Texas has a vibrant Indian-American population that has contributed immensely to the understanding between our two countries across business, academia, the sciences
- Houston India Conference is designed to bring together the various constituencies that have an interest in India, and discuss with them the latest developments and the best practices of doing business in India.
- The central focus of the conference is to provide a collaboration platform and share today's India story with the audience in Texas who are interested in investing in India, by the people who are playing an important role in shaping up the modern

Make in India

- Make in India is an initiative launched by the Government of India to encourage multi-national, as well as national companies to manufacture their products in India.
- It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 25 September 2014. India emerged, after initiation of the programme in 2015, as the top destination globally for foreign direct investment (FDI), surpassing the United States of America as well as the People's Republic of China. In 2015, India received US\$63 billion in FDI

Karnataka bank launches new platinum debit card

- Karnataka bank has launched a novel card product '**MoneyPlant™ Rupay**' international platinum debit card as part of its efforts to provide more privileges to its premium customers.
- The card could be used for domestic as well as international cash withdrawals and purchase transactions, a bank press release here said.
- The card has superior features and privileges like enhanced **withdrawal limit of Rs 75,000** and **purchase (POS/ e-commerce) limit of Rs two lakh per day**, personal accident insurance coverage of Rs two lakh, two free lounge access per quarter across more than 30 airports in India and 300 plus airports worldwide, fuel surcharge waiver and other merchant offers, it said.
- The card, bundled with a host of special features, would be offered to customers as part of bank's digital banking initiative

Indian navy successfully test fires surface-to-air missile from aircraft carrier

- India's navy announced Friday it successfully fired its first surface-to-air missile from its aircraft carrier INS **Vikramaditya**.
- The test firing, conducted in the Arabian Sea on Wednesday, was part of the Operational Readiness Inspection program and marks a major milestone in the country's defense capabilities. The missile was fired at a live low-flying, high-speed target, officials said.
- "The target was successfully engaged and destroyed,
- INS Vikramaditya is the country's sole aircraft carrier and was retrofitted with a Barak missile system.
- The Kiev-class vessel was built in 1987 and served the Soviet navy and was originally named Baku. It was later renamed Admiral Gorshkov under the Russian navy.
- The Indian navy purchased the vessel in 2004

BSF gets first woman field officer in Tanushree Pareek

- The Border Security Force on Saturday received its first woman field officer after a convocation ceremony conducted in the BSF academy at Tekanpur in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior Tanushree Pareek, a resident of Rajasthan, led the passing-out parade at the BSF Academy as the first woman field officer.
- She was also felicitated at the ceremony.
- Congratulating the BSF, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh said, "I am happy that BSF has got its first woman field officer and hope that

many more women will join her in securing our borders."

- Pareek started training last year in a 52-week Assistant Commandant training programme with the 40th batch of the BSF academy.

Four startups from T-Hub bags global awards

- Four startups from T-Hub, one of the largest start-up ecosystem builders in India, have bagged global awards
- **Hug Innovations**, Loop Reality, AuthBase and Kheyti have received prestigious awards and recognitions in competitions held exclusively to identify emerging start-ups in the country
- T-Hub, which has over 2,000 start-ups in its database, claims to be emerging as the first choice of top Indian startups.
- Hug Innovations is the the maker of the gesture-control Hug Smartwatch capable of flying drones, navigating smart television, and controlling virtual reality-based applications through hand gestures.
- **Loop Reality** is a disruptive technology firm, whose first product LoopFit is an immersive multiplayer VR fitness solution
- **AuthBase** provides frameworks for developers to secure their applications and use Deep Learning to detect and mitigate hack and bot attacks real-time.

Indian firms, MNCs get HYSEA awards

- The 25th Annual Hyderabad Software Exporters Association (HYSEA) Awards brought IT multinationals, medium enterprises and startups of the city on one platform.

- The day-long summit and awards was held on Thursday with the theme "Design Intelligence".
- Around 75 Startups exhibited their products or services at the event which was attended by more than 1000 people from the IT and ITeS industry.
- **Virinchi Technologies was awarded the Best Indian IT SME Company.** Virtusa (India) and GE (India) Exports bagged the Best Indian IT Services Company in Rs. 100 to Rs.500 crore category and CA Technologies Pvt. Ltd in Best MNC IT Software Company category.
- **Microsoft got adjudged as the top MNC IT exporter** and Google won the fastest growing IT company award. Infosys, Tech Mahindra and Tata Consultancy Services bagged top IT Exporters Award.
- CSR Awards were presented to Honeywell Technology Solutions, Wells Fargo Enterprise Global Services and CPersistent Systems.

Paytm to become member of ASCI

- Paytm set to become a member of the self-regulatory voluntary organisation Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)
- The move is significant because advertising violations by e-commerce companies, which are big spenders on television, print and digital media, have been on the rise in recent years.
- ASCI members include key advertisers from various sectors, such as fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), media, auto and telecom.
- Paytm had stated in one of its advertisements in November, that it was offering a "flat 50 per cent cashback", which was found to be

misleading because the cashback was limited to Rs 150 only.

- By opting to be a member, companies submit themselves to the ASCI Advertising Code, conveying the message that they wish to be responsible advertisers. Any violation, upheld by ASCI, puts the onus on the member to abide by the regulator's decision.
- This implies quick modifications to advertisements, which, if not done, could attract stringent action, especially in the case of television ads.

Paytm:

- The name is an acronym for "**Pay Through Mobile.**"
- In 2015, Paytm became the first Indian company to receive funding from Chinese eCommerce company Alibaba
- It was founded in 2010
- Its founder is Basim Sharma and CEO is Vijay Shekhar Sharma

Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)

- Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) is a self-regulatory voluntary organization of the advertising industry in India. It is a non-Government body.
- ASCI founded in 1985
- The aim of ASCI is to maintain and enhance the public's confidence in advertising.
- Its headquarter is located in Mumbai.
- Its chairman is Narendra Ambwani.

CNBC-TV18's India Business Leader Awards to honour the best in Indian businesses

- India's most well-known business personalities congregated at CNBC-TV18's India Business Leader Awards (IBLA) 2016-17 in New Delhi
- The 12th edition of the awards felicitated visionary leaders who have made a stellar difference in their respective spheres, creating that much-desired edge above their peers.
- The business leaders who were felicitated at a IBLA's awards ceremony are:
- State Bank of India chairman **Arundhati Bhattacharya: Outstanding Business Leader for the Year**
- Infosys' managing director and CEO **Vishal Sikka: CNBC Asia's India Business Leader of the Year**
- Maruti Suzuki chairman **RC Bhargava** and former Reserve Bank of India governor **Bimal Jalan: Hall of Fame**
- Indian gymnast **Dipa Karmakar: Award for Outstanding Contribution to Brand India.**
- IBLA winners are selected through a three-phase methodology conducted by the CNBC-TV18 editorial panel and research team, through a process based on a combination of criteria including financial performance, leadership, creativity, innovation and social responsibility.

Archaeologists Find World's Largest Capstone in Telangana

- The archaeology department of Telangana has discovered the world's largest capstone after excavating an ancient human burial site in Siddipet district
- The ancient human burial site excavated by Telangana Archaeology in Narmeta village in

Nangunuru mandal has led to a stunning discovery of the world's largest capstone

- The efforts to lift this massive capstone was coordinated by S S Rangacharyulu, archaeology consultant and K Padmanabha, assistant director (museums), as this mission required great precision and caution
- A large crane lifted this huge capstone at the excavation site in Narmeta village on March 21, they said adding, "the capstone of the menhir burial reportedly weighs about 40 tonnes".

Raghu Rai conferred with Lifetime Achievement award

- Photojournalist Raghu Rai was conferred with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the information and broadcasting (I&B) ministry for "his remarkable contribution to the field."
- The ministry felicitated a total 13 photographers. Among the winners were K.K. Mustafah, Atul Choubey, Dipayan Bhar and Ravinder Kumar.
- Best known for his book Raghu Rai's India: Reflections in Colour and Reflections in Black and White
- Rai has 18 titles in his kitty including Raghu Rai's Delhi, The Sikhs and Calcutta. He has won acclaim for his series on Great Masters of Indian classical music, Satyajit Ray and Mother Teresa.
- Rai was awarded Photographer of the Year award by the US in 1992.

National Photography Awards

National Photography Awards is an annual event organized by the ministry to "promote art,

technique of photography and to encourage professional and amateur photographers from all corners of the country."

India's Motherson Sumi buys Finland's PKC Group for \$619 million

- Indian auto parts maker Motherson Sumi Systems Ltd (MSSL) had completed the buyout of Finland's PKC Group for 571 million euros (\$619.4 million).
- Motherson is now the controlling shareholder of PKC Group, holding 93.75 percent of PKC's outstanding shares and stock options.
- There is a great synergy between MSSL & PKC and a complementary geographical presence to serve the customers in all regions
- Shares of Motherson, which have gained 12 percent since the deal was made public on Jan. 20, were trading slightly higher.

West Bengal beat Goa to lift record 32nd Santosh Trophy

- West Bengal on Sunday lifted the Santosh Trophy for the 32nd time after Manvir Singh struck in the 119th minute for a 1-0 win over Goa, extending their domination in the premier domestic football tournament.
- Goa, who had host the tournament thrice, lost to West Bengal in the semifinal in 1972 and the final in 1996, while winning against Kerala in 1990.ended a six-year wait having last won the title in 2011. Goa last won it in 2009.
- **The Santosh Trophy** is an association football knock-out competition contested by the regional state associations and government

institutions under the All India Football Federation (AIFF),

- It was founded in 1941

Business Standard Annual Awards: Celebrating excellence

- The Business Standard Annual Awards for Corporate Excellence was held in Mumbai.
- Eicher Motors Managing Director (MD) **Siddhartha Lal** won the CEO of the Year award.
- **The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** received the Innovative Organisation of the Year award for achieving significant milestones in 2016 in the domains of vehicle, satellite, applications and space exploration
- **Madhav Chavan**, co-founder, Pratham Foundation, winner of the Social Enterprise of the Year award
- **Sanjit 'Bunker' Roy** of Barefoot College won the Social Entrepreneur of the Year award

Miami Open: Rafael Nadal wins in 1000th match

- Rafael Nadal celebrated his 1,000th tour level match with a come-from-behind victory over German veteran Philipp Kohlschreiber to reach the fourth round of the Miami Open
- He joins a small group of 11 players headed by Jimmy Connors (1,535) to have played at least 1,000 matches.
- Rafael "Rafa" Nadal Parera is a Spanish professional tennis player. He is widely regarded as the greatest clay-court player in history.

- Owing to his dominance and success on the surface, he has been titled "**The King of Clay**".
- Nadal has won 14 Grand Slam singles titles, the 2008 Olympic gold medal in singles, 28 titles in **ATP World Tour Masters 1000 events and 17 ATP World Tour 500 tournaments**.
- He was also a member of the winning Spain Davis Cup team in 2004, 2008, 2009, and 2011. In 2010, he became the seventh player in history and youngest of four in the Open Era to achieve the Career Grand Slam at age 24.

ISRO sends 4 teams to Antarctica

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has joined the 36th scientific mission to Antarctica, organised by the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR).
- This year, four teams from ISRO—one team from Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad and one team each from the National Remote Sensing Centre, Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, Dehradun and the Space Physics Laboratory (SPL), Thiruvananthapuram—are participating.
- Climate change is the thrust area of the 36th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica (36-ISEA).
- The main objective of this expedition is to install stakes on ice for Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) measurements around Bharati and Maitri to validate glacier surface velocity derived from satellite data to estimate thickness of snow over land and sea ice using Ground Penetrating Radars (GPR's) and also to verify conditions of snow over sea and land ice

India wins 73 medals in 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games including 37 golds

- India's special athletes gave an impressive performance and won 73 medals in the recently concluded 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games held in Austria.
- This year's edition witnessed 2,600 athletes from over 105 countries competing with each other and the Special Olympics Bharat (SOB) team won 37 golds, 10 silver and 26 bronze medals. This year's Olympics included even disciplines including Alpine Skiing, Snow Boarding, Snow Shoeing, Figure Skating, Speed Skating, Floor Hockey, Floor Ball (and Unified floor Ball).
- India dominated in three team events – Floor Hockey (male), Unified Floorball and Traditional Floorball bagging 30 medals in total which was the highest tally in a single day.
- Special women team won 16 bronze medals.
- Gold Medal in The Unified Floorball (Male) in which India defeated Nigeria.
- Floor Hockey team defeated Lithuania 7-2.
- India also won 10 medals in Alpine skiing including 3 gold, 3 silver and 4 bronze medals.
- The snowboarding team also came out all guns blazing bagging 8 medals that included 4 gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze medals. 5 more medals came in Snow Shoeing and 4 medals were won in Speed and figure skating.
- In the process, Himachal's Megha became the first Indian to win a gold medal in the games

R Ashwin breaks Dale Steyn's record of most wickets in a Test season

- R Ashwin has set another record of the most wickets (79) in a Test season. Ashwin eclipsed Dale Steyn's tally of 78 which was set in 2007/08.
- Other bowlers who feature in the elite list are Ravindra Jadeja with 67* wickets in ongoing season, Glenn McGrath with 66 wickets in the 1998/99 season and Anil Kumble with 64 wickets in the 2004/05 season.
- He became the fastest to reach 250 wickets going past Dennis Lillee and Dale Steyn, who had reached this milestone in their 48th and 49th Test match, respectively.
- Currently, Ashwin is the fifth highest wicket taker for India in Tests. The 30-year-old spinner from Tamil Nadu, also completed 200 wickets in home Tests in his 30th Test and is among the quickest to do so.
- As of now Ashwin's current Test bowling strike-rate of 52 is the best by a Test spinner (min 50 wkts) in the last 100 years.

GJEPC Hosted International Diamond Conference 2017

- The Gem and Jewelry Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) hosted the International Diamond Conference in Mumbai.
- It gathered leading miners, diamantaires, retailers, bankers and analysts from across the globe on a single platform to discuss issues faced by the global diamond industry, such as supply and demand, marketing and financing, and will cover all aspects of the diamond pipeline including mining, midstream,

marketing & retail, international finance, valuation with KP and diamond certification.

- The theme of this conference was "**Mines to Market 2017**"

GJEPC

- Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) is an organisation set up by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (India) with aim to promote the Indian gem and jewellery industry and its products.
- It was established in 1966 and now represents almost 6,000 exporters in the sector.
- It has its headquarters in Mumbai and regional Offices in New Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Surat and Jaipur.

ESIC launched Mobile Clinic Services in AP, Telangana

- The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) launched Mobile Clinic Services for the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
- Union minister of state for labour and employment Bandaru Dattatreya, launched the ESIC Mobile Clinic Services by flagging off 'Jan Suraksha Vans/Ambulances
- It is for the first time in the country that the ESIC Mobile Clinic Services are launched in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and the mobile clinics will be expanded and launched across the country by all ESI hospitals

Features of the services

- Each mobile clinic will have a vehicle with a doctor, pharmacist, attendant, driver and the necessary equipment and medicines, he said.

- The vehicle will visit two locations in a day for three hours each and do basic investigations. Each location will be covered twice in a week,

Employees' State Insurance Corporation

- Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), established by ESI Act, is an autonomous corporation under Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India. As it is a legal entity,
- It was founded on 25 February 1952

World Theatre Day 27 March 2017

- Since 1962, World Theatre Day has been celebrated by theatre professionals, theatre organisations, theatre universities and theatre lovers all over the world on March 27.
- This year, Malta is also joining the global celebrations under the banner of Viva t-Teatru, with a programme of events by Teatru Malta and Arts Council Malta.
- World Theatre Day was initiated in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute (ITI). It is celebrated annually on the 27th March by ITI Centres and the international theatre community.
- Various national and international theatre events are organized to mark this occasion.

Filmmaker Gurinder Chadha gets Sikh Jewel Award

- Indian-origin British director Gurinder Chadha has been honoured with the Sikh Jewel Award for 2017 for her immense contribution to British cinema.

- Chadha, whose films include Bhaji on the Beach, Bend It Like Beckham and Bride and Prejudice, received the award from UK Defence Secretary Michael Fallon at the Vaisakhi Dinner organised by the British Sikh Association
- Chadha's latest film, "Viceroy's House" tells the true story of the final five months of British rule in India and coincides with the

Sebastian Vettel beats Lewis Hamilton to win Australian Grand Prix

- Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel beat Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes in a straight fight as Formula 1's new era started at the Australian Grand Prix.
- Vettel's first win since the Singapore GP in September 2015 was final proof Mercedes' domination is over after the introduction of faster cars.
- In a repeat of last year's race, Hamilton started on pole position but again had to settle for second, 10 seconds behind the winner, with his new Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas completing the podium line-up.
- Vettel said: "Unbelievable. It is a fantastic grand prix, it was quite mad in a positive way with the people running on the track going wild with the Ferrari flags."
- A disappointed Hamilton admitted he had struggled with his tyres.

HDFC's Aditya Puri is one of the world's 30 best CEOs, according to US magazine

- HDFC Bank Managing Director Aditya Puri's name has featured in the list of world's 30

best CEOs, published by American financial magazine Barron's.

- According to the magazine, a 2014 trip to Silicon Valley made Puri a digital evangelist. In hallmark style, the banker swiftly set out to remake India's second-largest private-sector bank into the digital spot for anything money-related.
- Puri holds 23rd position
- Facebook's CEO Mark Zuckerberg who is listed on the 30th spot.

Top Five

1. Mary Barra of General Motors
2. Gary Dickerson of Applied Materials
3. Stephen Hemsley
4. Jensen Huang
5. Microsoft's CEO Satya Nadella and Amazon's CEO Jeffrey Bezos

Dr Randeep Guleria is new director of AIIMS-Delhi

- The country's premier medical institute, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here, got a new director today with the appointment of Dr Randeep...
- He has been appointed for five years from the date of assumption of charge or till attaining the age of 65 until further orders
- His predecessor Dr M C Mishra retired from the post of AIIMS director in January after serving for over three years.
- Dr Guleria has worked as a personal physician to former prime minister Atal Bihari

Vajpayee and has also treated Union ministers like Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley.

- **Guleria is the first Indian to get a Doctorate of Medicine (DM) in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine.**

Purva Barve, Varun Kapur bag international titles at Li Ning-Israel Open

- Shuttlers Purva Barve and Varun Kapur handed India double delight by winning their respective age group sections in the Li Ning-Israel Open 2017.
- The tournament was held at the Sports Hall, Rishon LeZion in Israel.
- Ranked No. 70 in the world, Purva, the fourth-seed in the Under-19 Women's Singles, proved to be a runaway winner against the world No. 61 and third-seeded Lela Minadze (Russia) and signed off registering a 21-6, 21-4 scoreline in 18 minutes.
- For the 16-year-old Pune-born lass, the title was her first junior title in an international competition
- Meanwhile, in the Under-15 Boys Singles, top-seeded Varun emerged undefeated in the league cum knockout format in the 'Youth' segment.
- In the final, Varun steamrolled England's Toby Dillingham 21-10, 21-2 to bag his second International title in as many participated. Earlier, in December 2016 Varun had bagged the Under-15 crown at the Cyprus International Open

CBEC to be renamed CBIC under GST regime

- The apex policy making body for indirect taxes, CBEC is being rechristened as the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC) in the run up to the Goods and Services Tax regime to be rolled out from July 1.
- The Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC) is being renamed as the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC), after getting legislative approval
- CBIC would supervise the work of all its field formations and directorates and assist the government in policy making in relation to GST, continuing central excise levy and customs functions
- The existing formations of central excise and service tax under the CBEC have been re-organised to implement and enforce the provisions of the proposed GST Laws,
- Indirect tax reform GST is expected to curb tax evasion, make commodities cheaper and add up to 2 per cent to India's GDP growth. GST will subsume excise, service tax, VAT and other local levies.
- The CBIC will have 21 zones, 101 GST Tax payer Services Commissionerates comprising 15 sub-Commissionerates, 768 Divisions, 3,969 Ranges, 49 Audit Commissionerates and 50 Appeals Commissionerates.

Central Board of Excise and Custom

- The Central Board of Excise and Custom is the nodal national agency responsible for administering Customs, Central Excise, Service Tax & Narcotics in India.
- The Customs & Central Excise department was established in the year 1855 by the then British Governor General of India, to

administer customs laws in India and collection of import duties/land revenue.

- It is one of the oldest government departments of India.

Oil Ministry brings Shazia Ilmi on EIL's board

- State-run Engineers India Ltd on said that Shazia Ilmi Malik has been appointed as additional director (non-official part-time independent).
- Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has approved the appointment of Ilmi from March 27, 2017 to January 30, 2020 or till further order
- Her inter-se relationship between the directors of Engineers India Ltd is NIL.
- Earlier, Ilmi was appointed as a brand ambassador for the Prime Minister's Swachh Bharat Mission programme. She is also a member of the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal

Engineers India Limited (EIL)

- Engineers India Limited (EIL) is a Navratna public-sector undertaking of the Government of India under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- It was set up in 1965 to provide engineering and related technical services for petroleum refineries and other industrial projects.
- The current Chairman and Managing Director of the company is Sanjay Gupta.

Siddhartha Upadhyay appointed on governing body of Sports Authority of India

- Society for Transformation, Inclusion, and Recognition through Sports (STAIRS) announced that Mr. Siddhartha Upadhyay, its founder and secretary general has been appointed to the governing body of Sports Authority of India.
- Sports entrepreneur and philanthropist Siddhartha Upadhyay is leading the change in sports at grassroots levels through STAIRS, a not-for-profit organization working towards sports, education, health and skill development of children across India.
- Mr. Siddhartha Upadhyay is a recipient of prestigious Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar, from the President of India.
- As the founder and secretary general of STAIRS, he also represents the organization in Steering Committee for FIFA U-17 World Cup, BRICS U-17 Tournament, Mission XI Million Programme and a programme of Subroto Mukherjee Sports Education Society, formed by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (Govt of India).

About STAIRS

- STAIRS is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation (NGO) which aims to empower the underprivileged youth of India through sports. It was started in 2000 by Siddhartha Upadhyay, a national-level sportsman, brand consultant, philanthropist and social entrepreneur, with Reebok as a partner.
- STAIRS is currently the largest organization that ensures youth development through sports.

The Sports Authority of India (SAI)

- The Sports Authority of India (SAI) is an apex National Sports body set up in 1984 by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India for broad-basing and bringing excellence in sports across India

After BHIM, government to launch Aadhaar Pay

- The government is gearing up to roll out Aadhaar Pay, a digital payment platform for merchants, with 20 banks expected to go live at the launch on April 14.
- While the government launched BHIM as a payment application for peer-to-peer transactions post demonetisation, Aadhaar Pay is meant for merchants to receive digital payments from customers over the counter through Aadhaar authentication.
- Following the popularity of BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money), the government plans to name the merchant payment scheme BHIM-Aadhaar Pay and has requested banks to rename their applications accordingly
- The government has requested all public sector banks to go live with Aadhaar Pay and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the implementing agency for Aadhaar Enabled Payments Systems, has extended help to the banks to ensure smooth onboarding.

AAI wins India Pride Award for infrastructure development

- Airports Authority of India won Dainik Bhaskar's India Pride Awards - 2016 -17 for "Excellence in Infrastructure Development" in the category of Public Sector Undertaking - Central.

- The award was given to AAI Chairman Guruprasad Mohapatra by Union Minister of Communications Manoj Sinha at a ceremony in New Delhi.
- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari was also present on the occasion.
- The Airports Authority of India is working tirelessly towards India's sustainable growth and renowned for providing state-of-the-art infrastructure, passenger facilities and air navigation services at all the airports across the nation

Justice Mukul Mudgal to head BARC India's disciplinary council

- Television viewership ratings agency Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) on Tuesday appointed Mukul Mudgal, former chief justice of the Punjab and Haryana high court, as head of its independent disciplinary committee—BARC India Disciplinary Council (BDC).
- The six-member council has been set up by BARC to investigate and address complaints pertaining to viewership malpractices and tampering of BARC India's measurement system.
- Sujeet Jain, group general counsel and company secretary at Viacom18; C.V.L. Srinivas, chief executive officer, South Asia, at media agency GroupM, and Pankaj Phadnis, associate vice president, corporate legal at Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) as members who will represent broadcast stakeholder bodies Indian Broadcasting

Foundation (IBF), Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI) and The Indian Society of Advertisers (ISA),

- Other members of the committee include D. Shivanandan, former Mumbai police commissioner and Maharashtra DGP, and Paritosh Joshi, independent technical expert.
- Additionally, BARC India has set up a vigilance team to probe viewership malpractices' complaints and investigate irregular viewership data recorded from BARC India panel households (houses where BARC has installed metres to map viewership).

Vikram Kirloskar appointed CII SR, Chairman

- Trade body Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) today said the Vice-Chairman of auto-major Toyota Kirloskar Motor, Vikram Kirloskar, has been appointed as its Chairman, Southern Region, for the period 2017-18.
- Similarly, the Joint Managing Director of T V Sundaram Iyengar and Sons Pvt Ltd., Madurai, R Dinesh, was elected as Deputy Chairman
- Prior to taking up the new role, Kirloskar served CII in various capacities, including Member, National Council and also Chairman, Global Innovation and Technology Alliance.
- In 2016-17, he was appointed as Deputy Chairman, CII, Southern Region.
- Dinesh has been an active member of CII and currently is Chairman of the CII Institute of Logistics Advisory Council.
- He was also Chairman, CII Tamil Nadu Council in 2012-13,

Suresh Prabhu to launch new Indian Railways VIKALP scheme for wait-listed passenger

- Indian Railways is all set to launch an alternative train accommodation scheme 'Vikalp' from April 1. Under this scheme, the wait-listed passengers will get an option of selecting alternative train on the same route.
- Part from providing an alternative accommodation, Railways is also looking to ensure optimum utilisation of available accommodation through this scheme.
- Last year, in November, it was launched as the pilot project for six months on the Delhi-Lucknow and Delhi- Jammu sectors.
- Vikalp aims to beat the festive rush when availability of berths does not match the surging demand.

Features of Vikalp

- Flexibility to cancel tickets
- No refund is allowed after the chart is prepared.
- Heavy cuts will be levied as cancellation fee from fully confirmed tickets.
- If one opts for Vikalp, while getting a waitlisted ticket in an ordinary/express train, chances are that one might get accommodation on Rajdhani or Shatabadi Express with no extra charges.
- 50 per cent will be levied as cancellation charge on the cancellation of tickets between 12 and four hours prior to departure.
- Chances of cancelling an alternative option will be less,
- Nation-wide the availability of the berths in trains is just 12 per cent and around 46 crore

berths are in circulations collectively from every sector.

- Fully Waiting list passengers, who opted for Vikalp should check their PNR after charting.
- No extra charges shall be levied from passengers nor any refund will be provided for the difference of fare.

Cheil bagged a record 14 awards at ADFEST 2017

- Advertising agency network Cheil bagged a record 14 awards at ADFEST 2017 that concluded in Pattaya, Thailand
- Cheil India's 'Spread the Joy' campaign for Samsung won a Gold in the Media category. The campaign converted Samsung showrooms into on-the-spot adoption centers by utilizing Samsung Joy Plus televisions to help increase adoption rates of homeless dogs.
- In the Film Craft and Film category, Cheil India bagged a Silver and Bronze for the Samsung Service film.
- Samsung India launched a nationwide television and digital campaign showcasing its initiative to take customer service to the doorstep in the hinterland.
- The campaign film, conceptualized by Cheil India, was unveiled across 50 television channels, supported by print and digital.
- The campaign film went viral and touched 100 million views in just seven weeks.

Vijaya Bank inks MoU with Piaggio Vehicles

- Vijaya Bank on Monday entered into an MoU with Piaggio Vehicles for providing financial support for the purchase of vehicles under

Small Road Transport Operators (SRTO) scheme in Bengaluru.

- Vijaya Bank Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Dr Kishore Sansi flagged off the first batch of vehicles under the MoU in the presence of Executive Directors B S Rama Rao, Y Nageswara Rao, and Piaggio Vehicles Vice-President Praveen Nagpal and others.

Government approves Shekatkar Committee recommendations to reform military

- The Union Defence Ministry has approved most of the proposals of a committee of experts, headed by Lt. Gen. D.B. Shekatkar (Retd) to bring host of reforms in the military and improve financial management.
- Around 90 recommendations have been of the committee were approved. Most of these recommendations are measures to increase coordination among the three Services and cut down flab in Army to make it lean and agile.

Some recommendations of Committee

- Roll-on defence budget must have enough capital expenditure available for modernisation. It must be against the present practice of surrendering unspent capital budget at the end of each financial year.
- It must be conducted of non-combat organisations under the Defence Ministry. It must include those dealing with defence estates and accounts, Director- General of Quality Assurance, Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and National Cadet

Corps (NCC). Downsizing or rationalisation of manpower: It will lead to significant savings.

- It must be established for training middle-level officers. Reduce deployment of active-duty soldiers in avoidable postings: They will be replaced by retired officers and jawans in the running of NCC.
- Transfer of NCC out of the Defence Ministry to the HRD Ministry: NCC can be run by re-employed or on-contract ex-service personnel.

'Home of the Brave' chronicles Rashtriya Rifles saga

- "Home of the Brave", which traces the early history of the Rashtriya Rifles counter-insurgency force in Jammu and Kashmir has been released here by the Indian Army chief, General Bipin Rawat.
- Authored by defence and security analyst Nitin A. Gokhale and Brig S.K. Chatterji (retd), "Home of the Brave" also reflects upon the role of the Rashtriya Rifles in strengthening the professionalism of the Indian Army and military ethics and values throughout its rank and file.
- Home of the Brave will serve as an authentic record of achievements of the RR for all the Army units and Army training institutions. For defence policy planners, research scholars and military historians, this book provides factual and well chronicled information
- The Rashtriya Rifles has won many laurels in the operations. In addition to fulfilling its primary mandate of securing the Nation, the Force has also conducted several softer measures to win hearts and minds of the

people -- a critical and valuable practice that the Indian Army has embraced.

Anupam Kher to receive Kala Ratan Award

- Veteran actor Anupam Kher will be honoured with the Kala Ratan Award by Vice President Hamid Ansari.
- Anupam Kher was honoured with the Padma Shri in 2004 and the Padma Bhushan in 2016 for his contribution in the field of cinema and arts.
- The actor who has worked mainly in Hindi films has also appeared in acclaimed international films like Bend It Like Beckham, Bride and Prejudice, The Mistress Of Spices, Ang Lee's Lust, Caution, and David O. Russell's 2013 Oscar-winning Silver Linings Playbook.

Parliament Passes Mental Health Bill Decriminalising Suicide

- The Mental Healthcare Bill 2016, that provides for mental healthcare and services for persons with mental illness, and also decriminalises suicide, secured parliamentary approval on Monday with the Lok Sabha's assent to the legislation.
- The bill, passed by the Rajya Sabha in August 2016, ensures every person shall have a right to access mental health care and treatment from mental health services run or funded by the appropriate government. It also assures free treatment for such persons if they are homeless or poor, even if they do not possess a Below Poverty Line card.
- One of the clauses in the bill decriminalises suicide, stating that a person who attempts

suicide should be presumed to have severe stress, and shall not be punished.

- As per the bill, it will be government's duty to provide care, treatment and rehabilitation to a person, having severe stress and who attempted to commit suicide, to reduce the risk of recurrence of any attempt.
- The bill also provides that a person with mental illness will have the right to make an advance directive that states how he/she wants to be treated for the illness and nominate a representative

Syndicate Bank opens 40 'Ananya' branches

- Syndicate Bank on Monday digitally inaugurated 40 'Ananya' transformed branches.
- Project Ananya is a two-year large-scale transformation project undertaken by the bank to provide customers with 'best in class' services while improving and modernising the whole bank
- The bank also launched its first micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) hub in Bengaluru.
- The hub is expected to cater to more than 150 branches across the Bengaluru region, and aims to reduce the turnaround time of the loan-sanctioning process.
- The bank embarked upon project Ananya in February 2016, and is operating under four pillars of transformation — business process re-engineering, digital channels, sales and customer relationship management, and HR transformation.

- Business process re-engineering initiatives include branch transformation aimed at customer service and modernisation.

KVB bags 'best small bank' award

- Karur Vysya Bank has been adjudged the 'Best Small Bank for 2016' (balance sheet size of less than Rs.1-lakh crore).
- K Venkataraman, Managing Director, KVB, received the award from Sudhir Munguntivar, Minister of Finance and Planning, Government of Maharashtra, at a function in Mumbai.
- This is the eighth award won by KVB in the current fiscal.

ICICI Bank partners Truecaller for UPI-based payment

- ICICI Bank has announced a partnership with mobile app firm Truecaller for a new UPI-based mobile payment service.
- Called Truecaller Pay, it will allow users of the app to instantly create a UPI id, send money to any UPI id or a mobile number registered with the BHIM app.
- The partnership makes the Truecaller-ICICI Bank platform among India's largest mobile payment platform with 150 million customers of the app gaining access to UPI-based payments.

Features of Trucaller Pay

- It will enable users to recharge their mobile number from within the Truecaller app itself.
- Any user of Truecaller app, including non-ICICI Bank customers, can link their account of any

bank to create a UPI id and instantly make payments in a safe and secure manner

- All transactions of Truecaller Pay, powered by ICICI Bank, follow two-factor authentication as per RBI guidelines for secure transfer of money.
- All sensitive data relating to account details, card details information of users as well as transfer of monies will be securely handled and stored in the state-of-the-art servers of ICICI Bank in line with NPCI and RBI guidelines.

C Palanivelu received the prestigious Dr. B. C. Roy Award

- Gastroenterology and laparoscopic surgeon Dr C Palanivelu received the prestigious Dr. B. C. Roy Award from the Indian President, Pranab Mukherjee, under the 'Eminent Medical Person' category
- The chairman of GEM Hospital, he is the fourth doctor from South India to win the award for the second time. He had received the award in 2005 under specialty development category for laparoscopic surgery.
- He was the first to introduce laparoscopic surgery in South India in 2001 and instrumental for developing it into a specialty including minimal access surgery. The award is also a recognition to keyhole surgery and it's benefits to society.
- Keyhole surgery has benefited farm labourers and factory workers in Coimbatore, who want fast recovery so as they can return to work
- The surgical method has been adopted as standard in Korea and Japan too.

Iskon's Govardhan Eco Village Gets Water Award

- The Govardhan Eco Village of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) at Wada taluka has received an award instituted by Water Digest, a news portal on water management.
- The Govardhan eco village received the award last week in the "Best Water NGO-Water Education" category.
- To commemorate the 'World Water Day 2017', Water Digest, in association with UNESCO, Ministry of Water Resources & ASSOCHAM, had recently announced the 11th Water Digest Water Awards which are given annually to organisations, industry members and NGOs.
- The award was presented to Vrajendra Nandan Prachu, ISKCON India Communications Head.

Water Digest Awards

- Water Digest Awards are India's most illustrious platforms to honor and appreciate outstanding and exceptional environmental initiatives and achievements. The awards were conceived with a vision to awaken the Eco-consciousness in Indian industries and the society.
- The village illustrates 'Simple Living and High Thinking' a principle which is so succinct, yet profound, and formed the basis of life in the bygone age of wisdom

Sunaina Singh Appointed Vice Chancellor of Nalanda University

- President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed Sunaina Singh, currently head of the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU) in

Hyderabad, as the new vice chancellor of Nalanda University.

- As per rules, the president has to choose the vice-chancellor from a group of at least three names forwarded by the university's governing board.
- 135 names were screened, while six applicants were called for interviews. Out of the three names forwarded to the president, her name was at the top.
- Earlier on January 27, President Mukherjee appointed computer scientist and former IIT Delhi board chairman, Vijay Bhatkar – who is also the president of the RSS-affiliated Vijnana Bharati – as the university's chancellor.

Nalanda University

- Nalanda University is a flagship initiative formed under India's Act East policy, which was first proposed at the East Asia Summit in 2007.
- It was envisioned as a project to evoke India's historical and cultural linkages with South East Asia and beyond.
- Nalanda University (also known as Nalanda International University) is located in Rajgir, near Nalanda, Bihar, India.
- The University began its first academic session on September 1, 2014 with 15 students including five women. Initially set up with temporary facilities in Rajgir, a modern campus is expected to be finished by 2020.

OPPO wins Indian cricket team sponsorship rights for five years

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced that mobile manufacturing

company Oppo Mobiles India Private Limited will be the new team sponsor of the Indian cricket team from April 1, 2017 for a period of five years.

- The team sponsorship rights include the the title of official team sponsor and the right to display a commercial logo in the kits of the India men's, women's, A and Under-19 teams.
- Six companies, Star India included, had picked up the tender document, but only two appeared at the bidding table - Oppo and VIVO, both of which are Chinese companies.

Bhubaneswar to host men's Hockey World Cup 2018

- The International Hockey Federation and Government of Odisha on Monday officially confirmed that the Men's Hockey World League Final 2017 and Men's Hockey World Cup 2018 will be held in
- Bhubaneswar
- The Kalinga Stadium will host the two of hockey's biggest events, where World League and World Cup champions will be crowned. The venue successfully hosted the 2014 Men's Hockey Champions Trophy. It is also home to the current Hockey India League champions, the Kalinga Lancers.
- It was also confirmed that the state of Odisha will be title sponsor of both events.

India take million-dollar prize for finishing No. 1

- India have finished at the top of the ICC Test rankings for the second successive year after beating Australia 2-1 in the four-Test series. As a result of being No. 1 by the cut-off date of

April 1, India will be presented with a cash award of \$1 million by the ICC.

- The ICC also announced that India offspinner R Ashwin will be awarded the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for being the ICC Cricketer of the Year for 2016.
- Ashwin, who was also named ICC Test Cricketer of the Year for 2016, took 48 wickets and scored 336 runs in the eight Tests he played during the period under consideration - September 14, 2015 to September 20, 2016.
- **The Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy** is a cricket trophy awarded annually by the International Cricket Council to its chosen world player of the year. It was first awarded in 2004 to Rahul Dravid.

India becomes net exporter of power for the first time: Government

- India has become a net exporter of electricity for the first time
- Upcoming cross-border transmission lines with neighbouring countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar will increase sales.
- New transmission lines with Bangladesh and Myanmar helped India sell more
- Known for its crippling power cuts, India has been investing heavily on generation infrastructure over the past few years. A massive surge in the local supply of raw materials like coal in the past two years has also helped power companies boost output.

Sima Kamil becomes first woman to lead a major Pakistani bank

- United Bank Limited (UBL), one of the Pakistan's largest banks, announced Monday that it had appointed Sima Kamil as the new president and chief executive officer (CEO) of the bank, to replace outgoing CEO Wajahat Hussain.
- Kamil, who will initially serve as deputy CEO at UBL, is slated to take over the top slot after May 31, when Hussain departs from the company.
- Kamil had previously been leading Habib Bank Ltd's (HBL) Branch Banking since 2011 and oversaw a large expansion of HBL's branch network.
- She dealt with HBL's retail, consumer, small and medium enterprises, and rural banking initiatives, as well as the bank's wealth management division as head of the HBL Asset Management Company Ltd.

Vanita Gupta appointed president of Leadership Conference

- Indian-American Vanita Gupta, who headed civil rights division in the Department of Justice in the Obama Administration, has been appointed as president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, becoming the first woman to head the prestigious organisation.
- Known for her fearless advocacy of all human beings, 41-year-old Gupta will replace Wade Henderson who is stepping down after more than two decades.
- Gupta, who will also lead its sister organisation The Leadership Conference

Education Fund, will begin her new role on June 1

- Gupta served as Deputy Legal Director and the Director of the Center for Justice at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).
- She joined the ACLU in 2006 as a staff attorney, where she subsequently secured a landmark settlement on behalf of immigrant children from around the world detained in a privately-run prison in Texas that ultimately led to the end of "family detention" at the facility.

Indian-origin UK minister to be awarded Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award

- Priti Patel, the UK Government's Secretary of State for International Development and first ever UK-India diaspora Champion, has been awarded India's highest honour for members of the Indian diaspora. The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award was granted to Patel by the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, for her exceptional contribution to national and international politics, her role in strengthening UK-India relations, and for supporting the Indian diaspora in the UK.
- The award was presented to Patel by the Indian High Commissioner to the UK, Mr Y K Sinha, at a special ceremony at India House in London
- Patel was elected to represent the Witham parliamentary constituency in 2010 and re-elected with an increased majority in 2015.
- In 2013, the then Prime Minister David Cameron appointed her as the first ever UK-India diaspora champion and she has

accompanied him on official visits to India and helped facilitate the visit from Prime Minister Modi to the UK.

- Patel has also served in Government as Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury 2014-15), Minister of State for Employment (2015-16), and as Secretary of State for International Development (2016 to present).
- In January 2017 it was announced by the Indian Government that Patel would be awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman.
- She is the first female Indian origin MP to hold a Cabinet position in the UK government.

SBI to offer 'zero annual fee' credit cards to accounts with Rs 20,000

- State Bank of India has said that it will offer credit cards to every account holder who has a balance of Rs 20,000-25,000, without going into credit history.
- This is the first major joint collaboration between Arundhati Bhattacharya-led SBI and SBI Card after the bank hiked its stake in the joint venture to 74% by buying out part of its partner GE Capital's stake for Rs 1,168 crore.
- GE Capital will sell its remaining stake to a private equity investor in coming days.
- In an attempt to encourage adoption of credit cards and facilitate expansion in the reach of digital payments, SBI Card "Unnati" will be offered free, at zero annual fee, for four years.

I&B Minister M Venkaiah Naidu launches Online Film Certification System of CBFC

- Minister for Information and Broadcasting, M Venkaiah Naidu has said that the Online Film

Certification System of CBFC would facilitate the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of Ease of Doing Business and Digital India.

- The new online certification system would be an important step in making the CBFC Office paper less and would enable effective monitoring & real time progress tracking for both CBFC Officials and the applicant (Producers).

The Salient features of the online film certification system

- Status of each application would be visible online in the dashboard of the producer/concerned CBFC official.
- In case of short films/promos/trailers less than 10 minutes the producer need not visit the Office/Theatre. They can merely submit their creations online.
- For films longer than 10 minutes, the applicant will only have to show the film at the Examining theatre and will not have to visit the CBFC Offices at all except to collect their certificates.
- The producer/applicant would be informed by SMS/e-mail of the status of their application and any action needed, beginning from the receipt of application to the certificate collection.
- Elimination of middle men would mitigate chances of any corruption and would also avoid allegations of jumping the queue or rigging up of Examination committees.
- The implementation of QR code would eliminate chances of fraudulent certificates.
- The system envisages a robust MIS system for performance tracking and efficient reporting.

- The system has inbuilt alerts depending on the pendency of the application to ensure that time limits prescribed by the Rules are not violated.

Ex-South Carolina Governor to Head UN Food Agency

- Former South Carolina Gov. David Beasley was appointed Wednesday to head the U.N. World Food Program, the largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide as it assists some 80 million people in around 80 countries every year.
- Beasley is a supporter of President Donald Trump who was recommended for the job by U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley. The ambassador left her own job as South Carolina governor to take her U.N. post.
- Beasley will succeed Ertharin Cousin, an American lawyer and former U.S. ambassador

Axis Bank ties up with Wells Fargo for US remittances

- *Axis Bank has tied up with Wells Fargo, the third largest American bank by assets, to offer real time remittances from the Indian diaspora to their relatives back home.*
- *Under the arrangement between the two banks, any member of the Indian diaspora with an account with the Wells Fargo will be able to transfer money to their relatives back home and there will be no transaction fee applicable to the money transfers from USA.*
- *But the relative or the beneficiary in India will need to have an account with Axis Bank.*

- *The beneficiary will get a competitive price for a real time transfer. From April 8, we will be waiving transaction fees for Axis Bank customers*
- *The tie-up is the first of its kind with a US banking entity and will offer multiple channels of remittance to our customers*
- *Wells Fargo has similar tie-ups with ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank*

Wells Fargo

- *Wells Fargo & Company is an American international banking and financial services holding company headquartered in San Francisco, California*
- *In July 2015, Wells Fargo became the world's largest bank by market capitalization*
- *In 1852, Henry Wells and William G. Fargo (Mayor of Buffalo, NY from 1862 to 1863 and again from 1864 to 1865), the two founders of American Express, formed Wells Fargo & Company to provide express and banking services to California.*

SBI Card launched a unique credit card 'SBI Card Unnati'

- *SBI Card launched a unique credit card 'SBI Card Unnati' targeted at all SBI customers, including Jan Dhan account-holders across the country.*
- *Tailored for new users of credit cards — those who do not have a credit history — 'Unnati' would have no annual fees for the initial four years and will be offered through the 20,000-plus SBI branches.*
- *Any SBI customer with a balance of at least ₹25,000 in his/her savings account with the bank would be eligible for the Unnati credit*

card without the need for any credit score or credit history

- The idea is to spread credit inclusion among the masses. This would enable those who do not have a credit history to build one so that they could avail themselves of other loan products in the future
- SBI Card Unnati has option like Flexipay, wherein users can convert their transactions into easy monthly installments.
- Make any purchase for Rs 2,500 or more using their SBI Card Unnati, and log in with your username and password to sbicard.com within 30 days of purchase to convert it into Flexipay

Montenegro set to become NATO's newest member after US Senate vote

- Montenegro is set to become Nato's newest member after the US Senate voted overwhelmingly to ratify the tiny Balkan nation's entry.
- Despite its size, Montenegro bears strategic importance. A former ally of Russia, the country is in the middle of a clash between the West and Moscow over influence in the Balkans.
- Montenegro's membership gives Nato a contiguous border along the Adriatic coast.
- US secretary of state Rex Tillerson earlier this month pressed the Senate to act quickly on Montenegro's admission.
- Montenegro will become the 29th member of the alliance. Nato invited the nation to start entry talks in December 2015, about nine years after the nation of 620,000 people split from Serbia in a 2006 referendum.
- Russia strongly opposes the expansion of the Western military alliance in a region it

considers part of its strategic sphere of interest. Wary of Russian influence in the still-volatile region, Nato wanted Montenegro to join the alliance.

NATO

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an
- intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed on 4 April 1949.
- NATO's headquarters are located in Haren, Brussels, Belgium, while the headquarters of Allied Command Operations is near Mons.

Kanha Tiger Reserve gets mascot 'Bhoorsingh the Barasingha'

The Kanha Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh has become the first tiger reserve in India to officially introduce a mascot, which has been named Bhoorsingh the Barasingha.

- The Barasingha or swamp deer is the state animal of Madhya Pradesh. Bhoorsingh was chosen among four variations by the Madhya Pradesh forest department.
- Kanha Tiger Reserve, also called Kanha National Park, is one of the tiger reserves of India and the largest national park of Madhya Pradesh, state in the heart of India. It was established in 1955.

SC bans sale, registration of BS-III vehicles from April 1

- Drawing a strong line on environmental issues, the Supreme Court banned the sale and registration of Bharat Stage III (BS-III)

vehicles from April 1, when BS-IV emission norms will come into force across the country.

- In a major setback to automobile manufacturers, a bench of Justices Madan B Lokur and Deepak Gupta decided to take the "drastic" step, saying that BS-III vehicles could aggravate the already deteriorating air quality in the country and such a step was needed to handle the menace of pollution.
- The apex court refused to grant relief to the companies.
- It said the manufacturers were fully aware way back in 2010 that BS-IV norms would be enforced from April 1 but they chose to sit back and not take sufficient pro-active steps.

BS Standards

- Bharat stage emission standards are emission standards instituted by the Government of India to regulate the output of air pollutants from internal combustion engine equipment, including motor vehicles.
- The standards and the timeline for implementation are set by the Central Pollution Control Board under the Ministry of Environment & Forests and climate change.
- The standards, based on European regulations were first introduced in 2000
- In order to comply with the BSIV norms, 2- and 3-wheeler manufacturers will have to fit an evaporative emission control unit, which should lower the amount of fuel that is evaporated when the motorcycle is parked.

Emerging Artist award for Odia artist Sitaram Swain

- Odisha-based installation artist Sitaram Swain has been chosen as the Glenfiddichs Emerging Artist of the Year 2017.
- The sixth recipient of the honour, Swain will represent India at the Glenfiddich Artists in Residence (AiR) programme where he will spend three months at the Glenfiddich Distillery in Scotland with seven artists from around the world.
- It is Swain's out of the box concepts and his way with domestic objects to exemplify social issues through his art, that make him stand out.
- The artist believes that there is a sublime quality of social relevance in day to day objects.
- The artist will be also awarded Rs 10 lakh, which includes an international allowance of Rs 1,20,000 per month and a work allowance of Rs 500,000, besides being given a solo show at Bestcollegeart.com Gallery

General Bipin Rawat made honorary General of Nepal Army

- Indian Army chief General Bipin Rawat was on Wednesday conferred the rank of honorary General of the Nepal Army by President Bidhya Devi Bhandari at a special ceremony at the President's official residence Sheetal Niwas.
- It has been a tradition between the Indian and Nepali armies to confer the honorary top rank on each other's chiefs to signify their close and special military ties. General Chhetri received a similar honorary rank from Indian President Pranab Mukherjee in February last year.

- The Indian Army chief will be visiting the Nepal Army High Altitude Warfare School at Jomsom, Mustang, close to the Nepal-China border and Pension Paying Office Pokhara on Thursday, followed by calling on Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'.

Nomura names Prabhat Awasthi as head of India

- Japan-based Nomura's India head of equities business Prabhat Awasthi is taking over as country head with effect from 1 April 2017
- Vikas Sharma, who is currently head of India, has been elevated as head of Asia – excluding Japan, also from April 1. Sharma relocated to Mumbai from Japan in 2007 to build the firm's India business after starting with Nomura in 1999 as a telecom analyst in Hong Kong.
- Awasthi has around two decades of experience in the Indian equity markets, and assumed his current role at Nomura in 2011. He joined Nomura in October 2008 as head of equity research, India, from Lehman Brothers, where he held the same position.

Nomura

- Nomura Holdings, Inc. is a Japanese financial holding company, and a principal member of the Nomura Group.
- The history of Nomura begins on December 25, 1925, when the Nomura Securities Co., Ltd. (NSC) was established in Osaka, as a spin-off from Securities Dept. of Osaka Nomura Bank Co., Ltd

Indian Navy gets new weather monitoring system

- Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba unveiled an integrated aviation meteorological system

which is expected to bring accuracy in weather monitoring mechanism in the Indian Navy.

- The Integrated Automatic Aviation Meteorological System (IAAMS) was launched at Rajali Air Station in Tamil Nadu.
- The aim of IAAMS is to modernise the meteorological infrastructure of the nine Naval Air Stations (NAS).
- Equipped with the state-of-the-art meteorological sensors, IAAMS undertakes automatic and continuous recording of relevant weather parameters that are vital for accurate weather forecasting
- It has a special alarm feature that alerts the duty staff during abnormal change of weather parameters that may affect safe flying operations.
- The system can also provide automatic dissemination of routine weather reports as per standards followed by the World Meteorological Organisation to other air stations and Air Traffic Controller towers without human intervention.

Virat Kohli, Sharad Pawar, Anuradha Paudwal Receive Padma Shri

- Political stalwarts Sharad Pawar, Murli Manohar Joshi and the late Lok Sabha Speaker P A Sangma, cricketer Virat Kohli and Bollywood singer Anuradha Paudwal were among the 39 people who were conferred this year's Padma awards

Padam Bhuhan Awardee

- Yoga guru Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati
- Father of laparoscopic surgery in India Tehemton Erach Udwadia

- Thai princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn
- Padma Shri Awardee
- Former Lok Sabha Secretary General T K Vishwanathan,
- Well-known endocrinologist M M Godbole,
- French historian Michel Danino,
- Former professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Anant Agarwal,
- Vice-president of Kanyakumari's Vivekananda Rock Memorial Nivedita Raghunath Bhide
- 'Bike ambulance dada' of Jalpaiguri district in West Bengal Karimul Hak
- Writer Narendra Kohli,
- Para-athlete Deepa Malik,
- Theatre artist Wareppa Naba,
- Kathakali exponent Chemancheri Kunhairaman Nair,
- Malayalam poet Akkitham Achyuthan Nambudiri,
- Tribal artist from Kharkhan Mukund Nayak,
- Environmentalist Balbir Singh Seechewal and
- Well-known gynaecologist Bhakti Yadav.

Padma Shri Awardee

- Folk singer Basanti Bisht,
- Entrepreneur Mohan Reddy Venkat Rama Bodanapu,
- Madhubani artist Baa Devi,
- Folk artist of Halakki tribe in Karnataka,
- Sukri Bommu Gouda,

Banking & Financial Awareness One-Liner: March 2017

BUDGETS IN VARIOUS STATES:

- Arunachal Pradesh Finance Minister presented the deficit budget of 285 crores.
- Telangana Finance Minister presented the budget of rupees 1,49,646 crores for the year 2017-18.
- Andhra Pradesh Government presented a budget of Rupees 1,56,999 Crores for the current financial year 2017-18.
- Meghalaya Government presented the budget for Rs. 1236 crores.
- Tamil Nadu Government presented a budget of Rs. 1,59,363 crores for the financial year 2017-18.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL AWARENESS:

- Mark Tucker have become the Chairman of HSBC Holding Plc and Stuart Gulliver is the Chief Executive Officer of HSBC Holding Plc.
- Intel has decided to buy Mobileye, Israeli-based company for USD 15.3 billion.
- Hyundai, a South Korean based automobile company tied up with Iran Oil company for 3.2 Billion dollars.
- Rupees 18.5 crores have been allocated by Government of Pakistan for national Census 2017.
- MOU signed between China and Saudi Arabia on Energy, investment, space and another sector for USD 65 Billion.
- USD 175 million was allocated by World Bank for National Hydrology Project of India.

- For maintenance of Sukhoi-30MKI Jets India and Russia have tied an MOU for USD 300 million.
- To acquire AH-64E apache level helicopters, US government and Boeing Co have tied up with USD 3.4 billion.
- G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governor meet held in Germany.

BANKING AWARENESS:

- Karnataka Bank has signed MOU with Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company to provide non-life insurance products to bank customers.
- Yes Bank has tied up with Udaipur, Nashik and Puducherry for smart city initiatives to provide payment related solution.
- An agreement worth of USD 274 Crores was allocated German Development Bank and State Bank of India for providing affordable housing in India.
- SBI Infra Management Solution Private Limited have been wholly own by State Bank of India to manage its premises and estate related matters.
- Reserve Bank of India have removed all the restriction on withdrawal of money from saving accounts from March 13, 2017.
- Digital Wallets are opened by Reserve Bank of India for Unified Payment Interface as a part of digitisation of India.
- One Time Settlement Scheme launched by State Bank of India for tractor loans at the total cost of 6000 crores.
- IndusInd bank, a Mumbai-based bank agreed to buy 100 percent stake in Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Service Limited.
- Chief Executive Officer of Reliance Commercial Finance Private Limited is Devang Mody.
- HDFC has launched digital loans against security services.
- Future Generali Insurance Company has tied up with UCO bank, a Kolkata-based bank to market its product through UCO bank customers.
- State Bank of India has tied up with CREDAI, a real estate developer to develop realty sector.
- Bibhu Prasad Kanungo was appointed as the new Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India replacing Mr R. Gandhi.
- Bandhan Bank, a Kolkata-based bank have tied up with Avenues India Private Limited to provide payment Gateway product and Point of Sales to merchants.
- Reserve Bank of India has got permission from Government of India to release trail plastic notes with 10 rupees denomination.
- United Bank of India had got 418 crores as a capital infusion from the centre under turnaround linked capital infusion plan.
- CASHe tied up with Rubique, an online market place to sell financial products.
- Essar Steels Nand Niketan is the first private cashless township is located in Gujarat.
- Managing Director and CEO of Indian Bank is Kishore Piraji Kharat.
- Managing Director and CEO of IDBI bank is Mahesh Kumar Jain.
- ONGC have tied up with Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation's entire 80% stake for USD 1.2 Billion.
- ONGC, a Dehradun-based Oil and gas Company, have planned to develop India's

deepest gas discovery UD-1 by investing 21528 crores.

- ESAF Small Finance Bank was opened in Thrissur in Kerala.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA:

- Rupees 52000 lakhs is given for blue revolution to develop fisheries in India by Union Government.
- Rs. 600 crores project Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES) have been launched by Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman to manage Export linked Infrastructure.
- 20 new project worth 1900 crores have been introduced by on the under Clean Ganga Project.
- India 's contribution to United Nations is Rs. 244 crores in 2015-16.
- Union Government has given dearness allowance or Dearness relief for central Government employees and pensioners from 2 percent to 4 percent.
- Rs.1160 crore was allocated to bring 50 new Kendriya Vidyalayas under Civil or defence sector.
- Next Chairman of Public Account Committee is Mallikarjun Kharge.
- Finance Ministry released a report that 29 lakh debt card were affected by virus in ATM machines which were connected to a switch made by Hitachi.
- 8586 crore have allocated by the government under turnaround linked capital infusion plan for 10 PSU's.
- Union Ministry approved 4 GST Legislations. The fourth GST legislation will be released as money bill in parliament to get final approval.

Banking And Financial Awareness: March (1 to 5)

INTERNATIONAL:

- The amount of financing Agreement has been signed between India and World Bank for the project TEJASWINI was USD 63 million. Tejaswini is a socio-economic empowerment of Adolescent girls and young women.
- International Monetary Fund has reached an agreement with Ukraine to provide fresh disbursement of USD 1 Billion in the first half of the march 2017.

TIE-UPS:

- Reliance General Insurance and Catholic Syrian Bank tied up for bancassurance project.
- HDFC Bank and ET Money jointly launches DATA LED group term Insurance plan.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MADHYA PRADESH BUDGET:

- Estimation of Madhya Pradesh Budget for the year 2017-2018 was 1,85,564.27 crores.
- For Dheendhay Rasoi yojna, Madhya Pradesh Government has allotted 10 crores.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA:

- The amount of INR 756 crores was allotted for the treatment of cataract patients over next

- five years by the Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda.
- Kerala had made maximum registration under GST.
 - GST council has agreed to provide a composition scheme for small business. Now the small business with turnover up to Rs. 50 lakh will have to pay a tax of 5 percent.
 - Estimation of rupees 2,285 crores have been allotted for Shahpur Kandi Dam project (joint project of Punjab and Haryana.)
 - The government of India has directed all the banks to make available the mobile banking facility for all the customers by March 31, 2017.
- Minimum charge of Rs. 150 per transaction will be charged by Axis Bank, ICICI bank and HDFC bank after 4 free transactions.
 - State Bank of India have revised various service charges on transaction and deposits as well as maintaining monthly average balance. It is applicable from April 1, 2017.
 - Cash deposit can be made only 3 times per month and beyond that an amount of RS. 50 will charged for per transaction.
 - ATM transaction beyond free transaction will be charged RS. 20 per transaction.
 - RBI tells that the bank refuse to exchange soiled or multilateral notes from people will have to pay a penalty of rupees 10,000.

BANKING AWARENESS:

List of Mergers & Acquisitions (Jan - March 2017)

March 20, 2017:

Vodafone India and Idea Cellular Merger:

British telecom major Vodafone is to merge its operations in India with Aditya Birla Group's Idea Cellular. The boards of Vodafone India, and Idea Cellular – India's second largest and the third largest telecom operators respectively approved the merger. Vodafone will own 45.1% of combined company after transferring around 4.9 percent to Idea founders for Rs 3,874 crore in cash whereas Idea founders will hold 26 percent of the combined entity. The prime motto of this merger is to strengthen the operations in order to compete against the intense price war triggered by Mukesh

Ambani-led Reliance Jio. After the merger, the combined entity would become # 1 telecom company in India on the basis of number of subscribers having nearly 40 Crores of subscribers – 35% of all telecom subscribers in India and 41% of the telecom market revenue share – dislodging Bharti Airtel to # 2 that had been at the top since 2001 would now be enjoying 33% telecom market revenue share.

Aditya Birla Group's current Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla is to be the new Chairman of the merged entity. Chief Financial Officer (CFO) would be appointed by Vodafone whereas the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will be named jointly after the merger. Vodafone Group's Chief Executive Vittorio Colao and Aditya Birla Group Chairman

Kumar Mangalam Birla accompanied by Vodafone India Managing Director Sunil Sood and Idea Cellular Managing Director Himanshu Kapania met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 21, 2017 to apprise him on the merger deal and to seek his Government's support in facilitating speedy regulatory clearances to conclude the approved merger. Even then the merger is expected to be completed in 2018 after all the statutory formalities. Prior to that Vodafone India and Idea Cellular will be selling off their standalone tower assets – 42% share of Vodafone India and 11.15% of Idea Cellular in Indus Towers. Till the merger is completely completed, both Vodafone India and Idea Cellular will continue operating separately. Vodafone has also made it clear that its ongoing tax dispute with the Indian government will not come in the way of its merger with Idea Cellular. According to Income tax authorities Vodafone India needs to pay capital gains tax of nearly Rs 20,000 Crores for acquiring assets from Hutchison Whampoa Ltd. in 2007.

Piramal Enterprises completes acquisition of business from Mallinckrodt LLC:

Piramal had on January 31, 2017 announced the acquisition for a cash consideration of USD 171 million for a portfolio of drugs for spasticity and pain management from Mallinckrodt LLC and now it announced completion of the said acquisition. Piramal is the world's third largest producer of inhaled medical anesthetics. The portfolio acquired includes two severe spasticity management products, which are currently marketed in the US and two pain management products, which are under development at present.

March 17, 2017:

Taro Pharma acquires Canada's Thallion Pharmaceuticals:

Taro Pharma, an indirect arm of Sun Pharmaceutical Industries is to fully acquire Canada's Thallion Pharmaceuticals for 2.7 million Canadian dollars. Taro Pharmaceuticals Inc (Canada) has entered into an agreement to acquire all of the issued and outstanding shares of Thallion Pharmaceuticals, a Canadian pharmaceutical corporation. The acquisition after fulfilling all statutory obligations would come into effect from April 1, 2019. With this Sun Pharmaceutical will have access to technology for the treatment of Coli-induced hemolytic uremic syndrome that leads to kidney failure.

March 15, 2017:

WNS acquires HealthHelp:

Nasdaq-listed business process management company WNS acquired HealthHelp to enhance its services in the healthcare segment. WNS will pay USD 95 million – approximately Rs. 632 Crores to acquire Texas-based HealthHelp, which is working in the segment of specialty healthcare areas like radiology, cardiology, oncology, sleep care, orthopedics, and pain management.

March 07, 2017:

Cyient completes acquisition of Certon Software:

Cyient, an IT consulting and Software Company, announced the completion of acquisition of US-based Certon Software. Earlier, on January 23, 2017, Cyient had signed the agreement to acquire Certon. With the acquisition, Certon will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of Cyient. The said acquisition will enable Cyient to manufacture the safety-critical products for its medical, aerospace

and transportation clients. The amount involved was not disclosed in the press release.

March 06, 2017:

Tech Mahindra Ltd acquires CJS Solutions:

Tech Mahindra Ltd – an Indian company in the software segment acquired CJS Solutions Group LLC - US-based healthcare information technology consulting firm for USD 110 million. With this acquisition, Tech Mahindra Ltd. would have the ability to cross-sell Tech Mahindra's services to a new set of clients of CJS Solutions and thereby boost its revenues.

March 05, 2017:

Dr. Reddy Laboratories Ltd acquires Imperial Credit Private Ltd:

Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd – Hyderabad based pharmaceutical company announced the acquisition of Imperial Credit Private Ltd, a non-banking finance company, based in Kolkata for Rs. 2.05 Crores. Dr. Reddy proposes to undertake the group's captive financial activities through the new entity.

March 01, 2017:

Cognizant Technology Solutions acquires Brilliant Service Co. Ltd:

Cognizant Technology Solutions acquired Japan-based intelligent products and solutions company Brilliant Service Co Ltd, specializing in digital strategy, product design and engineering, and enterprise mobility, for an undisclosed amount. As part of the acquisition, a team of 70 professionals from the company will join Cognizant.

February 28, 2017:

Sony Corporation acquires TEN Sports from Zee:

Sony Pictures Networks India - a wholly-owned subsidiary of Sony Corporation announced the completion of the first phase of the two-phased acquisition of "TEN Sports" from Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited. This acquisition was formally agreed on August 31, 2016. The first phase of the two-phase acquisition of the "TEN Sports" was completed in a majority of the countries and territories where "TEN Sports" operates, including India. An amount of USD 330 million was paid to Zee by Sony. Certain other operations and assets will be included in the final phase of the acquisition, expected to be completed in the next few months.

February 23, 2017:

Bharti Airtel acquires Telenor India:

Telecom operator Bharti Airtel announced that it had entered into a definitive agreement with Telenor South Asia Investments Pvt Ltd to acquire Telenor (India) Communications Private Limited. Airtel is currently providing telecom services in India to over 269 million subscribers and a revenue market share of nearly 33 per cent. As the new owner, Airtel will take over Telenor India's spectrum, licenses and operations, including its employees and customer base of 44 million and will acquire Telenor India's running operations in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, UP (East), UP (West) and Assam. Telenor India's operations and services will continue as normal until the completion of the transaction. With effect from 01.04.2017, Telenor India will be treated as an asset held for sale.

February 21, 2017:

Havells India acquires Lloyd Electric's Consumer Durable Business:

Havells India announced the acquisition of Lloyd Electric's consumer durable business for an enterprise value of Rs 1600 Crores. Havells will gain Lloyd's intellectual property, manpower and distribution network. The deal is expected to be completed by March-end 2017. The revenue break-up for Lloyd Electric's consumer durable business is: air conditioners accounting nearly 69% of business, TV panels nearly 23% and the rest from washing machine & appliances.

February 09, 2017:

Aurobindo Pharma acquires part of business from TL Biopharmaceutical AG of Switzerland:

Aurobindo Pharma Limited announced that it had acquired four cell culture derived biosimilar products from TL Biopharmaceutical AG of Switzerland. The company, however, did not disclose the deal value. As part of the agreement, TL will supply all the developmental data for four molecules and Aurobindo will develop, commercialize and market these products globally. Aurobindo has set up a fully functional R&D center for biologics development and is also establishing a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Hyderabad and is expected to be ready by the second quarter of the financial year 2017-18. This acquisition is in line with the strategy of Aurobindo of investing in complex pharmaceutical products.

February 08, 2017:

Nuance Communications acquires mCarbon Tech Innovations:

Nasdaq-listed voice and speech recognition company Nuance Communications has acquired

Noida-based mobile value-added services venture mCarbon Tech Innovations for USD 36 million. There are 250 employees who work for mCarbon. The employees will now continue their operations under Nuance Communications post the acquisition.

January 25, 2017:

Wipro Ltd acquires InfoSERVER SA:

Wipro Ltd - India's third-largest software services exporter, announced that it has entered into a pact to acquire Brazilian IT firm InfoSERVER SA for \$8.7 million to expand its presence in Latin America. InfoSERVER is focused on the Brazilian market and provides custom application development and software deployment services mainly to banks, financial services and insurance companies. The acquisition is in line with Wipro's aim to expand its presence in the Latin America market, the company said in a statement.

January 19, 2017:

Cadila Healthcare Ltd acquires Sentyln Therapeutics Inc:

Cadila Healthcare Ltd acquired US-based specialty pharmaceutical company Sentyln Therapeutics Inc., engaged in marketing of products in the pain management segment, for an undisclosed amount. This acquisition marks the Ahmedabad-headquartered company's foray into the specialty pain management drug market in the US, as it gains access to Sentyln's distribution network and large healthcare specialists. Acquisition of Sentyln is in line with Cadila Healthcare's strategy to enter the specialty drugs market in the USA.

January 17, 2017:

Byju acquires Vidyartha:

Education venture Byju has acquired Bengaluru-based career guidance and academic profile builder Vidyartha for nearly Rs 50 Crores. Vidyartha's 20-member team will continue to work under a separate brand name post the acquisition. Byju, founded in 2007, has 3.3 lakh subscribers and 7 million in app downloads. The app helps with learning for school students as well as for competitive exams like JEE, NEET, CAT, IAS, GRE, and GMAT. Vidyartha focuses on deep profiling of students, creating their personalized learning plan and highlighting their learning gaps.

January 10, 2017:

WNS Global Services acquires Denali Sourcing Services:

Business process Management Company WNS Global Services announced acquisition of US-based Denali Sourcing Services for \$40 million to improve its capabilities in the sourcing and procurement capabilities. All the 200 staffers of Denali including the founders will be absorbed into WNS.

January 10, 2017:

Housing.com merges with PropTiger:

News Corp.-backed real estate portal PropTiger stated that Mumbai-based Housing.com will merge with it in an all stock deal, and that it will receive \$50 million in fresh funds from News Corp.'s REA Group Ltd and \$5 million from SoftBank Group. PropTiger will retain the Housing.com brand. The joint entity will currently be the only player in India offering the full range of online and offline services

in the real estate space, such as personalized search, virtual viewing, site visits, legal and financial diligence, negotiations, property registration, home loans and post-sales service.

January 05, 2017:

Freshdesk acquires Pipemonk:

Freshdesk, a cloud based customer service software provider, acquired Pipemonk, a data integration platform that works on the software-as-a-service model and allows companies to synchronize and move data among multiple cloud apps quickly and easily.

Pipemonk serves more than 400 clients globally. At Freshdesk, the Pipemonk team of 13 professionals will work on strengthening integrations. Freshdesk has 80,000 customers globally, including the likes of Honda, 3M and Cisco.

January 02, 2017:

Tata AutoComp Systems Ltd completes acquisition of TitanX:

Tata AutoComp Systems Ltd, Tata group's auto component-making firm, completed the acquisition of TitanX, a global engine cooling supplier - according to the press release issued by Tata AutoComp Systems. It had announced the plans to buy out the unit in August 2016. The company did not disclose the value of the deal. The acquisition is in line with its strategy of expanding globally and fortifying presence in the cooling and emission control segments, the company said.

International Financial Organizations: Headquarters & Functions

World Bank Group (WBG)	
Formed in	1945
Member countries	189 countries (India is also a member)
Headquarters	Washington, DC
President:	Jim Yong Kim
The World Bank Group (WBG) is a family of five international organizations as follows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), ▪ International Finance Corporation (IFC) ▪ International Development Association (IDA), ▪ International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), ▪ Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)
Functions:	The World Bank focuses on developing countries, in fields such as human development, agriculture and rural development, environmental protection, infrastructure, large industrial construction projects, and governance.
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	
Formed on	27 December 1945
Member countries	189 countries (India is also a member)
Headquarters	Washington, DC
Managing Director	Christine Lagarde
Functions	It works for global growth and economic stability by providing policy, advice and financing to members, by working with developing nations to help them achieve macroeconomic stability and reduce poverty. The IMF provides alternate sources of financing.
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)	

Formed in	December 2015
Member countries	50 countries (India is also a member)
Headquarters	Beijing, China
President	Jin Liqun
Functions	Its function is to support the building of infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific region. The bank has 50 member states (all "Founding Members") and was proposed as an initiative by the government of China.
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	
Formed in	1966
Member countries	67 countries (India is also a member)
Headquarters	Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines
President	Takehiko Nakao
Functions	This organisation works on reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. This is carried out through investments in the form of loans, grants and information sharing.
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	
Formed in	1991
Member countries	67 countries (India is not a member)
Headquarters	London
President	Sir Suma Chakrabarti
Functions	It offers project financing for banks, industries and businesses, for new ventures or existing companies. It works with publicly owned companies to support their privatization, as advocated by the WTO since the 1980 and in the improvement of municipal services.
European Investment Bank (EIB)	
Formed in	1958

Member countries	28 member states of the EU (India is not a member)
Headquarters	Luxembourg
President	Werner Hoyer
Functions	It is a nonprofit long-term lending institution. It supports for small and medium sized enterprises to attain environmental sustainability and in development of Trans-European Networks of transport and energy and for many others purposes.
Islamic Development Bank (IDB)	
Formed in	1975
Member countries	57 countries (India is not a member)
Headquarters	Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
President	Ahamad Mohamed Ali Al Madani
Functions	This is a multilateral development financing institution which helps in the development of member states. The basic condition for membership is that the prospective member country should be a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.
African Development Bank	
Formed in	1964
Member countries	78 countries (India is also a member)
Headquarters	Abidjan, Ivory Coast
President	Akinwumi Adesina
Functions	It is established to contribute to the economic development and social progress of African countries. The primary function is to provide loans and equity investments for the socio-economic advancement, Technical assistance for development projects, and assists in organizing the development policies.

List Government Schemes, Web Portal and Apps Launched (January)

NAME OF THE SCHEMES	LAUNCHED BY	PURPOSE
Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh	Ministry of Railways	Rail Safety Funds (20000 crores)
Target Olympic Podium Scheme	Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs under head of Abhinav Bindra	Selected athletes are given financial assistance for their customized training at Institutes have world class facilities and other necessary support.
Fin Tech Startup	Government of Andhra Pradesh	100 crores investment in start-up in the states.
National Action Plan for Children	Ministry of Women and child Development	Concentrate on key area: Survival, health and nutrition; education and development; protection and participation.
Jeevan Rekha	Government of Kerala	Digitalization of Government hospitals.
Dulari Kanya	Government of Arunachal Pradesh	20000 in bank account of a girl child born in Government hospitals.
Varishtha Pension Bima Yojna	Government of India	Social Security to elderly people aged 60 years during their old age.
Know your rights	Banking codes and standards Boards of India	Awareness of Banking codes at grass root level in urban and rural area.
Nasha Mukta Campaign	Bihar	Drug addiction free state
Mission 41K	Ministry of Railway	Energy consumption in Railway

Aanandan Scheme	Government of Madhya Pradesh	Help poor and needed person to get daily needs.
Digital Dakiya Scheme	Government of Madhya Pradesh	Encourage cashless transaction in the state.
Parvasi Kausal Vikas Yojna	Government of India	Train and certify the Indian youths who are interested in overseas employment to enable them to fit with the international standard.
Swachh survekshan	Ministry of Urban Development	Improving Sanitation Standard in 500 cities.
Arogya Raksha Scheme	Government of Andhra Pradesh	Health insurance to Above poverty line families.

APPS LAUNCHED BY BANKS AND GOVERNMENT

NAME OF THE APP	LAUNCHED BY	PURPOSE
FINFIT	Lakshmi Vilas Bank and Fisdom	Wealth Management using Robo Advisory.
Uber MOTO	Uber	Hire two wheelers for short distance. Introduced in Hyderabad.
CASHe	Paytm and CASHe	Loan giving app to young salaried professionals. Transfer cash deposit from CASHe to Paytm wallet.
BHIM	Government of India	Aadhaar Pay service help to make and receive payments using their Aadhaar number.
SBI Exclusif	State Bank of India	Wealth Management App

Beat Marshall Monitoring App	Police Department of Pune	App will record the movement of Beat Marshall or patrolling cop can be mapped on real time by control room staffs.
Ditto TV	Bharath Sanchar Nigham Limited	View 80 plus channels with 7 days back up facility.
Pinakin	Government of Tamil Nadu	Provide information about famous destinations in Tamil Nadu.
e-Wallet TOKOPOISA.in	Government of Assam	Online transaction in local language.
IRCTC Rail Connect	IRCTC	Faster and easier Booking of rail tickets.
ECI360	Punjab Election Commission	Transparency and Accountability regarding the election and voting.
On chat	HDFC and Niki.ai	Recharge phones, utility bills, books cabs from Ola or Uber through a chat.
MUI App	Maritime Union of India	Indian Merchant Navy Officers

WEB PORTAL:

NAME OF THE PORTAL	LAUNCHED BY	PURPOSE
Operation Clean Money Incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in	Income Tax Department (ITD)	Verify cash deposit in bank during November 9th 2016 to December 30th 2016.
ShaGun	Ministry of Human Resource Development	Monitoring elementary education scheme Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

List of MoUs Signed between India and other Nations (2016-17)

India and Saudi Arabia

April 03, 2016: India and Saudi Arabia signed 5 MoUs during the visit of PM Narendra Modi when he met King Salman of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh (Capital of Saudi Arabia):

- MoU on Labour Cooperation for Recruitment of workers.
- MoU relating to Technical Cooperation Program.
- MoU relating to Executive Program for Cooperation in the field of Handicrafts.
- MoU relating to Money Laundering, Terrorism Financing and Related Crimes.
- MoU relating to Framework for Investment Promotion Cooperation.

India and Maldives

April 11, 2016: India and Maldives signed 6 MoUs when visiting Maldives President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom met PM Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House in New Delhi:

- MoU to avoid double taxation of income derived from international air transports.
- MoU for the exchange of information with respect to taxes.
- MoU related to Orbit Frequency Coordination of "South Asia Satellite" at 48oE.
- MoU in the area of conservation and restoration of ancient mosques and joint research and exploratory surveys in Maldives.
- MoU on cooperation in the field of tourism.
- MoU for defence cooperation.

India and Oman

May 22, 2016: India and Oman signed 4 MoUs during the visit of Union Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, to Oman when he met Minister for Defence Affairs of Oman Badr Bin Saud Bin Harib Al Busaidi, at Muscat (Capital of Oman):

- MoU on Defence Cooperation.
- MoU in the field of Marine Crime Prevention at Sea.
- MoU on Maritime Issues.
- MoU on Flight Safety information Exchange.

India and Iran

May 23, 2016: India and Iran signed 12 MoUs during the visit of PM Narendra Modi to Iran when he met Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at Tehran (Capital of Iran):

- MoU relating to the development of Chabahar Port in Iran.
- MoU relating to India-Iran-Afghanistan Trilateral Agreement. (This MoU was signed by Indian PM Narendra Modi, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani in Teheran).
- MoU relating to Letter of Credit for Chabahar Port.
- Confirmation of MoU earlier signed between EXIM (Export and Import Bank of India) and Iran Central Bank.
- MoU relating to the field of mines.
- MoU relating to cooperation in foreign trade and investment.

- MoU relating to Extension of Cultural Exchange Program till 2019.
- MoU relating to cultural relations.
- MoU relating to Science and Technology Development.
- MoU on the training of diplomats and exchanging eminent speakers.
- MoU to encourage the engagement of think tanks.
- MoU relating to Cooperation on Archival Matters.

India and Qatar

June 05, 2016: India and Qatar signed 7 MoUs, during the visit of PM Narendra Modi when he met Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani at Doha (Capital of Qatar):

- MoU for the promotion of investments.
- MoU on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters.
- MoU for the exchange of intelligence related to money laundering, terrorism financing and related crimes.
- MoU concerning the skilled workers.
- MoU on cooperation in Tourism.
- MoU for Cooperation in the field of Health.
- MoU in the field of Youth and Sports.

India and Ghana

June 13, 2016: India and Ghana signed 3 MoUs, during the visit of Indian President, Mr Pranab Mukherjee when he met President of Ghana John Dramani Mahama, at Accra (Capital of Ghana):

- MoU for visa waivers for holders of diplomatic passports.

- MoU for setting up a Joint Commission between the two countries on various matters.
- MoU for Civil Nuclear Cooperation by India to Ghana.

India and Myanmar

August 30, 2016: India and Myanmar signed 4 MoUs after PM Narendra Modi met visiting President of Myanmar U Htin Kyaw in New Delhi:

- MoU on cooperation in the Field of Renewable Energy.
- MoU on cooperation in the construction of 69 bridges.
- MoU on cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine.
- MoU for construction and up gradation of the Kalewa – Yagi Road Section.

India and Vietnam

September 03, 2016: 12 MoUs were signed between India and Vietnam during the visit of PM Narendra Modi when he met PM of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc in Hanoi (Capital of Vietnam):

- MoU relating to Framework Agreement on Cooperation in the Exploration and Uses of Outer Space.
- MoU for Amending the Agreement on Avoiding Double Taxation.
- MoU for Program of Cooperation in UN Peacekeeping Matters.
- MoU on Celebrating 2017 as the "Year of Friendship".
- MoU on Health Cooperation.
- MoU on Cooperation in Information Technology.

- MoU on Cooperation in the field of Social Sciences.
- MoU on cooperation in Cyber Security.
- MoU in the fields of Standardisation and Conformity.
- MoU for establishing Centre of Excellence in Software Development and Training.
- MoU on Sharing of White Shipping Information.
- MoU on Contract for Offshore High-speed Patrol Boats.

India and Chile

September 06, 2016: India and Chile signed the extension of the existing MoU relating to India–Chile Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), in New Delhi. It was signed by Commerce Secretary of India, Rita Teatota, and the ambassador of Chile to India, Andres Barbe, in New Delhi.

India and Japan

November 11, 2016: 10 MoUs/MoCs (Memorandum of Cooperation) were signed during the visit of PM Narendra Modi to Japan when he met Japanese PM Shinzo Abe in Tokyo (Capital of Japan):

- MoU for Cooperation for Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.
- MoU for Manufacturing Skill Transformation Program.
- MoU for Cooperation in the field of Outer Space.
- MoU for collaboration in Marine, Earth Science and Technology.
- MoC in the Field of Agriculture and Food Related Industries.

- MoU for Transport and Urban Development.
- MoU in the field of Textiles.
- MOC in the field of Cultural Exchange.
- MoC between India and Japan on Cooperation in Sports, especially in view of the forthcoming Tokyo Olympic Games 2020.
- MOU between India and Japan in the field of Academics, Business, Cultural Cooperation, Disaster Management and Environment Protection in Gujarat.

India and Vietnam

December 09, 2016: India and Vietnam signed 4 MoUs when Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, President of Vietnam met PM Modi in New Delhi:

- MoU for Civil Nuclear Cooperation.
- MoU for aviation links.
- MoU for energy efficiency.
- MoU for the promotion of parliamentary cooperation.

India and Portugal

January 07, 2017: India and Portugal signed 6 MoUs when Portugal PM Antonio Costa met PM Narendra Modi in New Delhi:

- MoU on Defence.
- MoU on Renewable Energy.
- MoU on Marine Research and Resources.
- MoU in the Agriculture and Allied Sectors.
- MoU in the field of Information Technology and Electronics.
- MoU on the establishment of an Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Chair of Indian Studies in University of Lisbon.

List of Mobile Apps & Web Portal: February 2017

Mobile Apps Launched in February 2017

NAME OF THE APP	LAUNCHED BY	PURPOSE
UberHIRE	Uber taxi	Provide customer to hire the taxi for the day on hourly basis.
Buyer Initiated Payment (BIP)	Visa card	To eliminate payment through cheques or drafts.
Iselect	Canara HSBC, Oriental Bank of Commerce Life insurance	Family protection Scheme to expand its online product suit
Pay Mall	Paytm	Combining Mall and Bazaar concept to Indian Customers for online Shopping.
MyAgriGuru	Mahindra Agri Solution	Target to double to farmers' income
CBEC Mitra	Central Board of Exercise and Customs	24*7 help desk for GST related queries
Oriental Batuaa	Oriental Bank of Commerce	Banking Service through mobile app
Citibank Online	Citi Bank	Query regarding cards, loans, domestic and non-resident accounts and online transactions.

Web Portals Launched in February 2017

NAME OF THE PORTAL	LAUNCHED BY	PURPOSE
SKYREV 360	Airport Authority of India and International Air Transport Association	e- billing by Air Port Operators and Air Navigation Service across the world.
Bharat QR Code	National Payment Corporation of India with Visa, master card and American Express	Online storage of card details.
Bank.sbi	State Bank of India	SBI rebranded from sbi.co.in to Bank.sbi.
E-Prison Portal	Government of Jammu and Kashmir	Digitalize the record about the jail.
TAMRA portal	Ministry of Power, Coal, new and renewable energy and mines.	Ease of doing business in mining sector.
Bharat Bill Payment System	National Payment Corporation of India	Ease of Bill payment service for customers. HDFC bank have started Bharat Bill Payment System.

List of Appointments - February to March 2017

Designation	Person Appointed
DGP of Karnataka	Rupak Kumar Dutta

Chairman & CEO of KPMG India	Arun M Kumar
US secretary of state	Rex Tillerson
Director of Enforcement Directorate (ED)	Karnal Singh
President of Germany	Frank-Walter Steinmeier
Pakistan's first woman foreign secretary to UN	Tehmina Janjua
Under Secretary General for UN's peacekeeping operations	France's Jean-Pierre Lacroix
Chief of Delhi & Districts Cricket Association (DDCA)	Justice Vikramajit Sen
High Commissioner of India to Canada	Vikas Swarup
US National Security Advisor	Lt-Gen HR McMaster
Chairman of Cauvery water Disputes Tribunal	Justice Abhay Manohar Sapre
Vice Chairman of Asian Hockey Federation (AHF)	Abhijit Sarkar
Chief Information Commissioner of J&K	Khursheed A Ganai
Spokesperson of MEA	Gopal Baglay
Brand Ambassador of Sight savers	Kabir Bedi
Director of SVP National Police Academy	D R Dooley Barman (IPS officer)
Chief Secretary of Maharashtra	Sumit Mullick (IAS officer)
Chairman of National commission for scheduled Tribes	Nand Kumar Sai
UN Deputy Secretary-General	Amina J Mohammed (Nigerian)
Chairman of SEBI	Ajay Tyagi
India's Ambassador to World Trade Organization	J S Deepak
Prime Minister of SUDAN	Hassan Saleh
Maharashtra's Chief Commissioner of RTS	Swadheen Kshatriya
Chairman & MD of MTNL	P K Purwar

Secretary General of SAARC	Amjad Hussain B Sial
Chief Advisor to Odisha Government	K Srinath Reddy
NSE MD & CEO	Vikram Limaye
Members of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)	Dr. Mukulita Vijayawargiya, Dr Navrang Saini and Ms Suman Saxena
MD, LIC	Hemant Bhargava
Union Mines Secretary	Arun Kumar (IAS officer)
Two new members to UPSC	Ms. Sujata Mehta (IFS officer), Air Marshal Ajit S Bhonsle
Deputy Director General (DDG), Narcotics Control Bureau	Mohammed Taj Hassan (IPS Officer)
Indian Ambassador to Nepal	Manjeev Singh Puri (IFS Officer)
Director (Finance), Power Finance Corporation	Naveen Bhushan Gupta
Additional charge of Dept of Telecommunication Secretary	P K Pujari

List of Women Playing Important Roles

Every year March 8 is celebrated as International women's Day. Theme For this year is '**Be Bold for Change**'. Women play important role in various fields. Let us see the list of women playing important roles in and around the world

Name	Position	Bank/ company/ country/ state
Arundhati Bhattacharya	Chairperson	State Bank of India
Chanda Kochhar	MD and CEO	ICICI Bank
Shikha Sharma	CEO	AXIS Bank
Zarin Daruwala	CEO	Standard Chartered Bank (India)

Usha Ananthasubramanian	CEO	Punjab National Bank
Usha Ananthasubramanian	CMD	Bharatiya Mahila Bank
Lakshmi Swaminathan	President of Administrative Tribunal	Asian Development Bank (ADB)
Vasundhara Raje	CM	Rajasthan
Mamata Banerjee	CM	West Bengal
Mehbooba Mufti	CM	Jammu and Kashmir
Indra Nooyi	Chairman and CEO	PepsiCo
Kirthiga Reddy	Director of Online Operations and Head of Office India	Facebook
Kavery Banerjee	Secretary	Postal Department
Aditi Khanna	first women President	Indian Journalist's Association
Poonam Khetrapal Singh	Regional Director	World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia Region
Aishwaryaa Dhanush	Women's advocate for Gender Equality	United Nation
Ms. Phumzile Mlambo Nquka	Women Head	United Nation
Theresa May	Prime Minister	United Kingdom
Aung San Suu Kyi	State Counsellor	Myanmar

Beata Szydło	Prime Minister	Poland
Saara Kuugongelwa	Prime Minister	Namibia
Erna Solberg	Prime Minister	Norway
Sheikh Hasina	Prime Minister	Bangladesh
Angela Merkel	Chancellor	Germany
Mallika Srinivasan	CEO	Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited
Aruna Jayanthi	CEO	Capgemini, India
Ekta Kapoor	Joint Managing Director and Creative Director	Balaji Telefilms
Neha Kirpal	Founder and Director	India Art Fair
Shobhana Bhartia	Chairperson and Editorial Director	Hindustan Times Group
Mallika Srinivasan	CEO	Tafe Motors And Tractors Limited
Sangeeta Pendurkar	Managing Director	Kellogg India Pvt. Ltd.
Ashu Suyash	MD and CEO	Crisil
Roshni Nadar	Executive Director and CEO	HCL Enterprise
Vani Venkatesh	CEO	Bharti Airtel Retail
Kamala Harris	First Indian-American US Senator	
Meriamma Koshy	President	Hockey India

Susan Kiefel	Chief Justice (First Woman)	Australia
Saina Nehwal	Athletes Commission	IOC
Geeta Phogat	DSP	Haryana Police
Mariano Rajoy	Prime Minister	Spanish
Ms. Irina Bokova	Director General	UNESCO
Ms. Baroness Patricia	Secretary General	Commonwealth
Ms. Helen Clerk	Director General	UNDP
P V Sindhu	Brand Ambassador	Bank of Baroda
PV Sindhu	Brand Ambassador	Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)
Sakshi Malik	Brand Ambassador to promote the tourism	Arunachal pradesh
Sakshi Malik	Brand Ambassador of Beti Bachao, Beti Padao campaign	Haryana
Vidya Balan	Brand Ambassador of Samajwadi Pension Yojna	Launched by Uttar Pradesh Govt
Shilpa Reddy	Brand Ambassador	Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs (COWE)

	to Create centres of excellence for women to gain knowledge, develop skills, provide infrastructure, access to resources to their business.	
Steffi Graf	Brand Ambassador to promote tourism and position the state of Kerala as home of ayurveda.	Kerala's Ayurveda
Dia Mirza	Brand Ambassador	Swachh Saathi Swachh Bharat Mission
Madhuri Dixit	Brand Ambassador	MAA- Mother's Absolute Affection'
Deepika Padukone	Brand Ambassador	Indian Psychiatric Society The largest association of Indian Psychiatrists
Ms. Renu Pall	Ambassador	India to Austria
Monika Kapil Mohta	Ambassador	India to Sweden
Iris Mittenare	Miss Universe 2017	Miss France
Dr. Neelu Rohmetra	First women Director	IIM

Manjula Chellur	Chief Justice	Bombay High Court
Anandi Ramalingam	Director (1 st women)	Bharat Electronics Ltd.
Yuriko Koike	1 st women Governor	Tokyo

List of Insurance companies in India: Tagline, Founder and Heads

CODE WORD: "Birla had accounts in ICICI and HDFC for his future needs. With that money he bought new LG TV, Videocon dish, Kotak Camera, Tata Indica car and Reliance Jio."

Name of the Company	Tagline	Founders	Heads of the Company
Life Insurance Corporation Limited	Yogaksheman Vahamyaham	Government of India (Public sector)	V.K. Sharma
New Indian Assurance Corporation Limited	India's Premier General Insurance Company	Public Sector	G. Srinivasan
General Insurance Company	Aapatkale Rakshisyami	Public Sector	Alice Vaidyan
Kotak Mahindra Old Mutual Life Insurance Limited	Faideyka Insurance	Private sector	G. Muralidhar
Future Generali Life Insurance	Ekshaagun Zindagi ke naam	Joint venture	K. G. Krishnamoorthy Rao
Tata AIA Life Insurance Company Limited	You click we cover	Private (Tata son's and American International Group)	Naveen Tahilyani

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company Limited	Zimmedarika Humsafar	Joint Venture	N. S. Kannan
HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company Limited	Sarutha ke Jiyo	Private (Hasmukhbai Parekh)	Amitabh Chaudry
Birla Sun Life Insurance Company Limited	Tour Dreams our commitment	Private (Aditya Vikram Birla)	Pankaj Razdan
Reliance General Insurance Company		Public listed company	Sam Ghosh
Liberty Videocon General Insurance			Roopam Asthana
ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company Limited	Quick easy Smart	Public Listed Company ICICI and Fair Fax	Bargava Dasgupta

NEW DELHI BASED COMPANIES :

CODE WORD: 'SBI gives MAXimum ORIENTATION in New Delhi'.

<i>Name of The Company</i>	<i>Tagline</i>	<i>Founder</i>	<i>Heads of The Company</i>
Max Life Insurance Company Limited	Aapke Sachhee Advisor	Analjit Singh	Rajesh Sud
Max New Life Insurance Company Limited	Karo Zyada kalraada	Analjit Singh	Rajesh Sud

Max Bupa Health Insurance	Your Health first	Analjit Singh	Rajesh Sud
SBI Life Insurance Company Limited	With us, you are sure	SBI and BNP Paribas	Arjit Basu
Oriental Insurance Company Limited	Prithivi, Agni, Jal, Akash, Sabhi Suraksha Hamare Pass.	Government of India	A.K. Saxena

GURGAON BASED COMPANIES:

CODE WORD: 'I am in Gurgaon and my PAApa is in Tokio.'

Name of The Company	Tagline	Founders	Heads of The Company
IFFCO Tokio General Insurance	Muskurate Raho	Indian Farmer Fertiliser Co-operative	Yokesh Lokiya
Apollo Munich Health Insurance	We know healthcare	Prathap C. Reddy	Antony Jacob
Aviva Indian Life Insurance	Kal Par Control		Trevor Bull
PNB Metlife India Insurance Company Limited	Have you met Life today?		Tarun Singh

CHENNAI BASED COMPANIES:

CODE WORD: "U can see ITC grand CHOLA hotel in Chennai".

Name of The Company	Tagline	Founders	Heads of The Company
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United India Insurance Company Limited	Rest Assured with us	Government of India	Ariful Hoda
Cholamandalam MS General Insurance		Public Listed Company	Gopalaratnam

OTHERS:

CODE WORD: BaN

Name of The Company	Tagline	Founders	Heads of The Company
National Insurance Company Limited	Trusted Since 1906, Thoda simple Socho	Government of India	Girija Kumar
Bajaj Alliance Life Insurance Company Limited	Jiyo Befiqar	Joint Venture Bajaj groups and Alliaz SE, a European group	Anuj Aggarwal

Complete List of Oscar, BCCI and ESPN Awards: 2017

Award	Awardee
Maximum No. of Awards	La La Land (7 awards).
Best Movie/Picture Award	Moonlight
Best Actor in a leading role	Casey Affleck (For movie 'Manchester by the Sea')
Best Actress in a leading role:	Emma Stone (For movie 'La La Land').

GK Digest: April 2017

<i>Best Actor in a supporting role</i>	<i>Mahershala Ali (For movie 'Moonlight'). (Indian actor Dev Patel was also nominated in this category for his movie Lion)</i>
<i>Best Actress in a supporting role</i>	<i>Viola Davis (For Movie 'Fences')</i>
<i>Best Animated Feature Film</i>	<i>Zootopia</i>
<i>Best Cinematography</i>	<i>Linus Sandgren for 'La La Land'</i>
<i>Best Director</i>	<i>Damien Chazelle for 'La La Land'</i>
<i>Best Movie Editing</i>	<i>John Gilbert for 'Hacksaw Ridge'</i>
<i>Best Foreign Language Film</i>	<i>The Salesman (Movie from 'Iran').</i>
<i>Best Music Award</i>	<i>To Justin Hurtiwz for 'La La Land'</i>
<i>Best Production Design</i>	<i>David Wasco and Sandy Reynolds-Wasco for 'La La Land'</i>
<i>Best Animated short Film</i>	<i>'Piper'</i>
<i>Best Sound Editing</i>	<i>For 'Arrival' to Sylvian Bellemare.</i>
<i>Best Visual Effects:</i>	<i>The Jungle Book</i>
<i>Best Adapted Screenplay</i>	<i>For 'Moonlight' to Barry Jenkins and Tarell Alvin McCraney</i>
<i>Best Original Screenplay</i>	<i>For 'Manchester By The Sea' to Kenneth Lonergan.</i>
<i>Best Original Song</i>	<i>City Of Stars' from 'La La Land'</i>

BCCI Awards 2017

Award	Awardee
Col. CK. Nayudu Lifetime achievement award	Rajinder Goel, Padmakar Shivalkar
BCCI Lifetime achievement award for women	Shantha Rangaswamy
BCCI special award	VV Kumar, Late Ramakant Desai
Polly Umrigar Award	Virat Kohli
Dilip Sardesai award	Ravichandran Ashwin
Lala Amarnath Award for the best all-rounder in the Ranji Trophy 2015-16	Jalaj Saxena of Madhya Pradesh
Lala Amarnath Award for the best all-rounder in domestic limited-overs competitions, 2015-1	Axar Patel
Madavrao Scindin Award	Shreyas Iyer (Highest scorer in the Ranji Trophy 2015-16)
M.A. Chidambaram Trophy	Jay. G. Bosta (Highest scorer in (U-23) Col. CK. Nayudu Trophy 2015-16)
M.A. Chidambaram Trophy	Satyajeet Bachhav (Highest wicket-taker in (U-23) Col. CK. Nayudu Trophy 2015-16)

ESPN Awards 2017

Award	Awardee
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<i>Captain of the year</i>	<i>Virat Kohli</i>
<i>Test batting</i>	<i>Ben Stokes</i>
<i>Test bowling</i>	<i>Stuart Broad</i>
<i>ODI batting</i>	<i>Quinton De Kock</i>
<i>ODI bowling</i>	<i>Sunil Narine</i>
<i>T20I batting</i>	<i>Carlos Brathwaite</i>
<i>T20I bowling</i>	<i>Mustafizur Rahman</i>
<i>Debutant of the year</i>	<i>Mehedi Hasan Miraz</i>
<i>Associate batting</i>	<i>Muhammad Shahzad</i>
<i>Associate bowling</i>	<i>Muhammad Nabi</i>
<i>Women's batting</i>	<i>Hayley Mathews</i>
<i>Women's bowling</i>	<i>Leigh Kasperek</i>

Regional Rural Banks in India - Their Sponsors and Head Office

Name of Regional Rural Bank	Sponsor Bank	Head Office
Paschim Banga Gramin Bank	UCO bank	Howrah, West Bengal
Vidharbha Konkan Gramin Bank	Bank of India	Nagpur, Maharashtra
Vananchal Gramin Bank	State Bank of India	Dumka, Jharkhand

Utkal Grameen Bank	State Bank of India	Bolagiri, Odisha
Sutlej Gramin Bank	Punjab and Sind Bank	Bathinda, Punjab
Pandyan Grama Bank	Indian Overseas Bank	Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu
Pragathi Krishna Gramin Bank	Canara Bank	Ballari, Karnataka
Prathama Bank	Syndicate Bank	Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh
Purvanchal Bank	State Bank of India	Gorakpur, Uttar Pradesh
Saptagiri Grameena Bank	Indian Bank	Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh
Chaitanya Godavari Grameena Bank	Andhra Bank	Guntur, Andhra Pradesh
Ellaquai Dehati Bank	State Bank of India	Sri Nagar, Jammu and Kashmir
Gramin Bank Of Aryavrat	Bank of India	Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
Kashi Gomti Samyut Gramin Bank	Union Bank of India	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
Langpi Dehangi Rural Bank	State Bank of India	Diphu, Assam
Kaveri Grameena Bank	State Bank of Mysuru	Mysuru, Karnataka
Malwa Gramin Bank	State Bank of Patiala	Sangrur, Punjab
Narmada Jhabua Grameen Bank	Bank of India	Indore, Madhya Pradesh
Pallavan Grama Bank	Indian Bank	Salem, Tamil Nadu
Bangiya Gramin Vikash Bank	United Bank of India	Baharampur, West Bengal

BankExamsToday Editorial Summary March 2017

Ques 1. Explain the characteristics of Direct Benefit Transfer system in India?

Ans: Initiated in 2013, it seeks to enhance the governmental delivery mechanism and to precisely target the right beneficiaries avoiding duplication

and fraud. The scheme was seeded and groomed by the planning commission. The three facilitators of DBT are Jan Dhan, Aadhar and Mobile (JAM).

Ques 2. What is the significance of initiating DBT in

fertilizer Industry ?

Ans: DBT was launched for the fertilizer segment with the view of sealing leakages as well as to monitor the subsidy scheme. The DBT scheme is to roll out benefit transfer via cash payments and to aid it promptly via the Biometrically Authenticated Physical Uptake (BAPU) involving identity confirmation via Aadhar and physical delivery of the subsidized goods. Another defining feature is that subsidies will be given directly to the fertilizer companies than to the beneficiaries. The scheme on an experimental basis will be rolled out in 16 districts at the national level such as Una - Himachal Pradesh, Kishanganj-Bihar, Hoshangabad-Madhya Pradesh, Karnal-Haryana, Kannur- Kerala etc..

Ques 3. Explain the differences between Central Bank of a nation and Commercial Banks ?

Ans: Central Bank is the apex institution of Banking and Financial sector of a nation while commercial banks are nothing more than constituents of the money market. Central banks are non-profit organizations owned by the government while commercial banks are profit making ones owned by shareholders. Central bank serves the functions of currency issuer, Banker and lender of last resort to Banks and other constituents of the financial system, controls the credit creation process for the well being of the economy, and acts as the guardian of foreign currency. While commercial banks can issue only cheques, it creates credit to run business as well as deals in foreign exchange with profit motivation. Each nation has its own Central Bank with offices across various centres of the country and the chief of a central bank is designated as Governor. On the other hand Commercial Banks are run by the respective chairman who co-ordinates the activities of hundreds of Bank branches spread across the nation via policy decisions.

Ques 4. Explain the defining features of Pradhan Mantri Aawaz Yojana?

Ans: Launched in 2015 with the motto of Housing for all, the scheme is the successor of Indira Aawaz Yojana which aims to fulfill the housing requirements of rural and urban poor by 2022. National Housing Bank and Housing and Urban Development Corporation has been identified as the central nodal agencies for the same. The prime purpose of Pradhan Mantri Aawaz Yojana is provision of affordable housing to rural and urban poor at reasonable cost levels.

Ques 5. What are the new amendments /Changes announced by the government with respect to the PMAY scheme ?

Ans: Under the auspices of the scheme middle income, low income and Economically Weaker Sections(EWS) will get 4 % exemptions on interest on home loans upto 9 lakh rupees and 3 % interest exemption on loans to build new houses in villages or for the purpose of renovation. Similarly central assistance per house for EWS has been increased to 1.5 lakh rupees from previous 70,000 rupees.

Ques 5. What is the significance of the 4 GST Supplementary bills that has been approved by the Union Cabinet and will be introduced as money bills in Lok Sabha ?

Ans: The original GST bill that has been ratified by the parliament and approved by the President of India infact requires these 4 GST supplementary bills viz, Central GST(C-GST), Integrated GST(I-GST), Union Territory GST(UT-GST) and the GST compensation to the states Law along with the State GST(S-GST) that has to be approved separately by the concerned state legislatures for the smooth roll out of Goods and Services Tax as the All India Taxation Regime in July 2017.

Ques 6. Comment on the salient features of Goods and Services Tax(GST) ?

Ans: Expected to be rolled out in July 2017 the motto of the tax regime is 'One Nation, One Tax Regime'. It aims to replace the complicated combo of 17 different tax charges into a single levy. On successful implementation of the tax regime the tax proceeds will be equally shared between centre and states in equal proportions.

Ques 7. Enumerate on the different tax slabs under the newly proposed GST regime ?

Ans: The GST council has approved four types of tax slabs for different goods and services such as 5 % , 12 % , 18 % and 28 % plus an additional cess on Demerit goods such as aerated drinks, luxury cars and tobacco products.

Ques 8. What is Minimum Reserve System ?

Ans: Minimum Reserve System refers to the policy followed by the RBI for the issue of currency in which RBI can issue currency if and only if it maintains a minimum reserve in gold and foreign exchange against which it can possibly issue currency which is a liability . Under the policy framework the minimum reserve which RBI maintains is Rupees 200 crores of which 115 crores is the worth of gold reserves. This system was introduced back in 1956.

Ques 10. What are the advantages and disadvantages of Minimum Reserve System ?

Ans: The policy of Minimum Reserve System is quite elastic in nature and it doesn't require any additional increase in reserves for the issuance of additional currency. Hence it suits to the economic framework of developing nations as well as poor countries. However the main drawback is that it poses serious threats in the form of inflationary pressures.

Ques 11. How new currency is being issued by the RBI ?

Ans: Based on the pace of economic growth of a nation RBI decides on the worth of the currency that has to be issued to sustain the money supply. For the same RBI procures certain assets such as Gold, foreign securities, Gov securities, commercial paper, internal bills of exchange, rupee coin etc which acts as the back up reserves for issuance of additional currency.

Ques 12. Explain the role and relevance of Foreign Investment Promotion Board in Indian Economy?

Ans: FIPB(Foreign Investment Promotion Board) is a national agency of Government of India vested with the duty to recommend and regulate the Foreign Direct Investment that doesn't come under the automatic route. It was primarily constituted under Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in 1990's when economy was being liberalized and globalized. In 1996 it has undergone a reformation process and got transferred to the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP). Later it further got transferred to the Department of Economic Affairs and Ministry of Finance. FIPB has acted as the institutional framework that authorizes FDI, and approve the same on behalf of the Government, if the concerned investments has assumed approval than automatic route. So far FIPB has handled investment applications to the tune of Rs 5000 crores.

Ques 13. Why does the Central government has recently ventured into banishing the FIPB ?

Ans: Scrapping of the FIPB framework was an important policy announcement of the Budget 2017-18 document. The reasons for scrapping the FIPB framework involves the fact that 90% of FDI as of now assumes automatic route, rendering the FIPB the nature of a white elephant. Also the remaining 10% of FDI inflows are handled and

approved by respective sectoral regulatory frameworks of various ministries .

Ques 14. Comment on the specifics of Idea-Vodafone merger ?

Ans: India's second largest telecom major Vodafone and third largest telecom major Idea cellular has jointly approved their merger, with the purpose of strengthening their operations in India against Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio. The combined entity will become the number 1 telecom entity in India with 40 crore subscribers, 35% of customer market share, and 41% of telecom market share dislodging Bharti Airtel to number 2 position. The merger is expected to completely materialize by 2018. As per the merger agreement, Idea Cellular's Kumar Mangalam Birla will be the new Chairman of the merged entity, while Thomas Reisten of Vodafone India will be the Chief Financial Officer, Balesh Sharma of Vodafone India will assume the position of Chief Operating Officer, while Chief Executive Officer post will be assigned based on due consultations between both the entities. In the proposed new entity Vodafone will own 45.1% stake while Kumar Mangalam Birla and other promoters of Idea Cellular group will hold 26%, 4.9% stake will be transferred to Aditya Birla Group of Idea Cellular for Rupees 3874 Crores in cash right after the merger. Over a period of 5 years Idea Cellular and its promoter Aditya Birla will buy out another 9.5% stake to realize the motto of merging of equals.

Ques 15. Comment on the specifics of the acquisition of the business from Mallinckrodt LLC by Piramal enterprises?

Ans: World's third largest producer of inhaled medical anaesthetics Piramal has acquired a portfolio of drugs for spasticity and pain management from Mallinckrodt LLC for a cash consideration of USD 171 million. The business acquired includes products under development as

well as those that is being marketed in the US market.

Ques 16. Briefly explain the acquisition of Thallion Pharmaceuticals by Taro Pharma?

Ans: Canadian Thallion Pharmaceuticals will be fully acquired by Taro Pharma an indirect arm of Sun Pharmaceuticals for 2.7 million Canadian Dollars. The acquisition will get materialised by April 1, 2019.

Ques 17. Explain the acquisition that has been initiated by WNS recently?

Ans: WNS is a NASDAQ listed business process management that has acquired Healthhelp which specialises in radiology , cardiology , oncology , pain management etc. for USD 95 million . It has also recently acquired US based Denali Sourcing Services for USD 40 million to improve its capabilities with regard to sourcing and procurement.

Ques 18. Explain the acquisition Certon Software by Cyient?

Ans: Cyient primarily an IT consulting and software company has acquired Certon for an undisclosed amount to enable itself to manufacture safety critical products for its medical, aerospace and transportation clients.

Ques 19. Explain the specifics of Tech Mahindra's acquisition of CJS Solutions?

Ans: Tech Mahindra limited an Indian company in software segment has acquired CJS solutions which are a US based health care information technology consulting firm for USD 110 million. The acquisition was aimed at boosting up cross-selling and thereby revenue of Tech Mahindra.

Ques 20. Explain the acquisition of Imperial Credit Pvt Ltd by Dr Reddy Laboratories Ltd?

Ans: Dr Reddy Laboratories Ltd, a Hyderabad-based pharmaceutical company has acquired an NBFC, Imperial Credit Pvt Ltd based in Kolkata for an amount of Rs 2.05 crores. The acquisition is expected to boost up Dr Reddy's captive financial activities.

Ques 21. Explain the specifics of the recent acquisition of Brilliant Services Co. Ltd by Cognizant Technology solutions?

Ans: Japan-based intelligent products and solutions company Brilliant Services Co. Ltd which is specializing in digital strategy, product designing as well as engineering and enterprise mobility has been acquired by Cognizant Technology solutions for an undisclosed amount.

Ques 22. Explain the details of two-phased acquisition of TEN sports by Sony corporation?

Ans: Sony pictures Networks India a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony corporation has announced the completion of the first phase of two phased acquisitions of TEN sports from Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. An amount of USD 330 million is involved in the acquisition process.

Ques 23. Explain the nuances associated with the acquisition of Telenor India by Bharti Airtel?

Ans: Bharti Airtel has entered into an agreement with Telenor South Asia Investments Private Ltd. to acquire Telenor India operations. With this Bharti, Airtel will acquire nearly 44 million customers of Telenor.

Ques 24. Explain the acquisition details of Lloyd Electric's consumer durable business by Havells India?

Ans: Havells India has announced the acquisition of Lloyd Electric's consumer durable business for an amount of Rs 1600 crores. By this arrangement, Havells is expected to gain Lloyd's intellectual

property, manpower and distribution network.

Ques 25. Explain the recent business acquisition made by Aurobindo Pharma from TL Biopharmaceutical AG of Switzerland?

Ans: Aurobindo Pharma limited has announced the acquisition of Cell Culture-derived bio- similar products from TL biopharmaceuticals for an undisclosed amount. As per the arrangement, TL pharmaceuticals will supply developmental data for molecules and Aurobindo will produce, commercialise and market these products globally initiating its investments in complex pharmaceutical products.

Ques 26. Explain the acquisition of mCarbon by Nuance Communication?

Ans: Nuance communications, a NASDAQ listed voice and speech recognition company has acquired Noida-based mobile value added services venture mCarbon Tech Innovations for USD 36 million.

Ques 27. Comment on the details of the acquisition of infoSERVER SA by Wipro Ltd?

Ans: In a move aimed at consolidating itself in the Latin American market, Wipro has announced its acquisition of Brazilian IT firm InfoSERVER SA which focusses on custom application development and software deployment services mainly to banks, financial services and insurance companies. The monetary worth of the deal is USD 8.7 million.

Ques 28. Explain the acquisition details of Sentynl Therapeutics Inc a US-based pharmaceutical company by Cadila Healthcare Ltd.?

Ans: As per the pre-supposed strategy of marking its presence in the US market, Cadila Healthcare Ltd, an Ahmedabad-based pharmaceutical company has acquired Sentynl Therapeutics Inc for an undisclosed amount.

Ques 29. Explain the acquisition of Vidyartha by the educational venture Byju?

Ans: Bangalore based career guidance and academic profile builder Vidyartha has been acquired by Byju for nearly Rs. 50 crores. Byju founded in 2007 has 3.3 lakh subscribers and 7 million in app downloads, helping students for competitive exams like JEE, NEET, CAT, IAS, GRE and GMAT. While Vidyartha focusses on deep profiling of students creating personalized learning plan and highlighting their learning gaps.

Ques 30. Explain the all-stock merger of Housing.com with PropTiger?

Ans: Real estate portal PropTiger backed by News Corp has merged with Housing.com in an all-stock deal by a receipt of USD 50 million in fresh funds from News Corp's REA Group Ltd and USD 5 million from SoftBank group. Housing.com brand name will be maintained by PropTiger. The joint entity will become the largest provider of offline and online services in Real estate space.

Ques 31. Explain the details associated with an acquisition of Pipemonk by FreshDesk?

Ans: Pipemonk a data integration platform that works on the software-as-a-service model has been acquired by FreshDesk a cloud-based customer service software provider for an undisclosed amount.

Ques 32. Explain the acquisition of TitanX by Tata Auto Comp systems?

Ans: TitanX a global engine cooling supplier has been acquired by Tata's auto component making firm Tata Auto Comp Systems Ltd for an undisclosed amount. The acquisition is in line with Tata's effort to strengthen its presence in cooling and emission control segments.