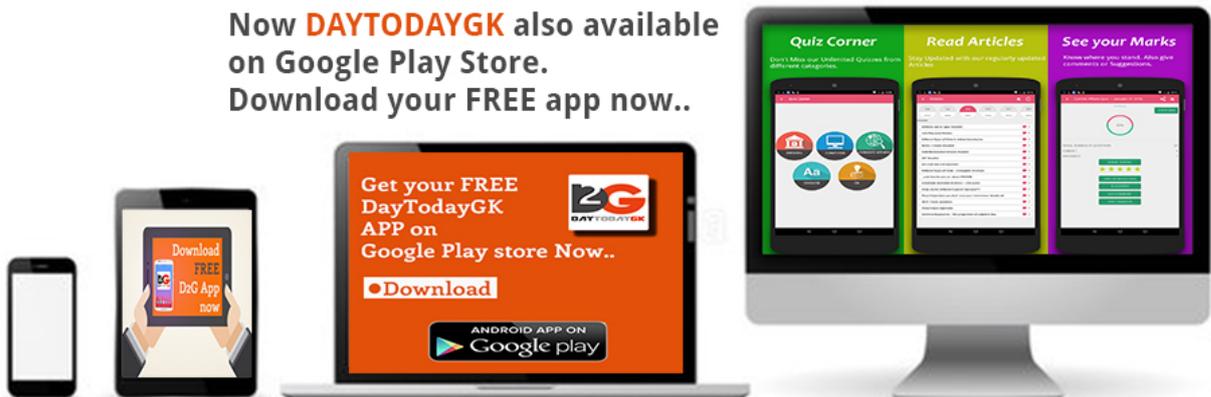




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ANNOUNCEMENT

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Awards and Honours

- **Fourteen Indian-origin** investors find place in a list of top 100 global **venture capitalists (VCs)** compiled by **CB Insights**, a **research firm** that tracks VC and angel investments.
- **Indian software engineer** has won the first prize in a **UN competition** aimed at engaging the public in sharing ideas about how to **visualize the interlinkages** between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Four Indians – **Kanika Dewan, Dhivya Suryadevara, Shaurya Veer Himatsingka** and **Sheetal Amte-Karajgi**– have made it to the list of over 121 young global leaders recognised by the **World Economic Forum**.
- Todd Haynes’ atmospheric lesbian love story, **Carol**, has been named the best **LGBT film of all time** in a top 30 list that stretches to a Weimar-era pupil-teacher romance from 1931.
- **Priyanka Kakodkar** and **Raksha Kumar** were named as joint winners of the **2015-16 Chameli Devi Jain award for women journalists**.
- According to the **TIME Magazine’s report**, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** is among the most influential people on the Internet.
- The **Assassin**, a movie about a highly-trained female assassin swept the **Asian Film Awards** in Macau.
- **Tikka Shatrujit Singh**, the royal scion of **Kapurthala’s Ahluwalia dynasty**, has been conferred with the prestigious **Knight of the Legion of Honour** for his “extraordinary work in the exchanging the French lifestyle and Indian culture with each other.”
- Union urban Development minister **M Venkaiah Naidu** has been conferred with the Skoch Lifetime Achievement Award at **43rd SKOCH summit** held in New Delhi.
- **DataWind Inc.**, the leader in delivering **Internet access** to emerging markets, has been recognized for the tablet brand with maximum consumer pull. The award was presented to DataWind during the **Tele Analysis Device World 2016, Confluence of Indian Device Ecosystem**, in New Delhi.
- **Cairn India** has remained in the top deciles of safety performance amongst peer group companies for the **FICCISafety Systems Excellence Award in Manufacturing**.

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- **DLF Mall of India (Noida)** has won the award for '**Best Retail Project of the Year – 2015**' at CNBC Awaaz Real Estate Awards held in Mumbai.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** conferred '**Krishi Karman Award**' to the **government of Himachal Pradesh** for its landmark achievement in showing highest production of food grains in year 2014-15, despite adverse weather conditions and rain-fed farming in the state.
- **Geetakshi Arora**, an Indian-origin student was awarded the inaugural **Noor Inayat Khan Prize**. The Prize consists of 1,000 pounds for a dissertation which was in "**keeping with the spirit**" of the famous **World War II**

Appointments

- **Ashley Judd** was appointed by the United Nations as their latest Goodwill Ambassador.
- Award-winning action heroine **Michelle Yeoh** has been appointed as **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Goodwill Ambassador**.
- Ending months of speculations, **Amar Abrol** will replace **Mittu Chandilya** as its CEO of AirAsia India with effect from next month.
- The government of **Bangladesh** has appointed former finance secretary and Sonali Bank chairman **Fazle Kabir** as governor of the central bank for four years.
- Ace fashion designer **Ritu Beri** has been appointed as the advisor for **Khadi promotion**. The Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises is implementing several schemes for the holistic development and promotion of khadi.
- Times of India Group's digital wing, **Times Internet**, has appointed former COO **Gautam Sinha** as the CEO.
- FC Barcelona's player **Lionel Messi** has been named **Huawei global ambassador**.
- **Pfizer India** has announced the appointment of **S Sridhar** as the company's **managing director** with effect from March 18 for a term of five years.

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Banking and Economy

- **ICICI Bank, Ferrari tie up** for credit cards - The Ferrari Credit Cards, which will be available in two variants — Ferrari Platinum Credit Card and Ferrari Signature Credit Card — will be offered to elite customers, who are enthusiasts of the iconic luxury brand.
- **Kotak Mahindra Group ties up with Canada Pension Plan** for investment in Indian stressed assets
- **RBI said Banks to Pay interest on savings accounts every quarter** - While public sector banks offer 4 per cent interest on savings deposit, private players offer as much as 6 per cent.
- Public sector lender **SBI has tied up with taxi-aggregator Uber** to provide instant vehicle finance to ‘**driver-partners**’ on the latter’s platform. The scheme would encourage **skilled drivers** to overcome liquidity crunch and excess documentation requirements to become an entrepreneur.
- **HDFC Bank Ltd** has launched **SmartUp**, a dedicated banking solution for startups, in association with Zone Startups India, a startup accelerator in Mumbai.
- **ICICI Bank** has unveiled the country’s **first contactless mobile payment solution** to enable its credit and debit customers make in-store contactless payments by just waving their smartphones near an NFC-enabled merchant terminal.
- IDBI Bank has launched a first-of-its kind “**G-Sec investment facility through ATM for retail investors.**” The facility will provide easy access to retail investors to invest in Government Securities, the public sector bank said in a statement.
- The Reserve Bank of India revised rules pertaining to **revival of advances to small businesses** and asked lenders to **form district-level committees to resolve stressed loans to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).**
- According to the data from credit information bureau **CIBIL**, more than **5,600 borrowers**, who owe banks close to Rs 60,000 crore, have been declared wilful defaulters by lenders as on December 31.
- The Reserve Bank has provided some relief to banks holding bonds of debt-ridden **State Electricity Boards (SEBs)** that were issued to them as part of the cleaning up exercises of these power utilities.

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- **Hitachi to setup ATM making firm in India** - The new company has been set up with a capital of Rs 100 crore and is set a target to produce **1,500 units of ATMs** per month at the end of calendar year 2016.
- Aadhaar enabled e-KYC (Know Your Customer) process could save over **Rs 10,000 crore for banks and telecom operators** over the next five years, says a survey.
- **Indian Overseas Bank (IOB)** has become the **first bank to commence the sale of Indian Gold Coin (IGC)** in the domestic market.
- The **Reserve Bank** said it is discontinuing a two-year-old provision where banks had to submit data pertaining to **NEFT transactions by walk-in customers** not having an account with them.
- Seeking to attract more foreign investment, the government has relaxed FDI norms for insurance sector by permitting overseas companies to buy **49 per cent stake** in domestic insurers without prior approval.
- The government has formally withdrawn the recognition of **Delhi stock Exchange**, more than a year after capital market regulator **Sebi** derecognised the bourse citing “**serious irregularities**” in its functioning.
- Insurance regulator **IRDA** is satisfied with the investments of **LIC** in public sector banks.
- India’s **current account deficit** narrowed to **3% of the gross domestic product (GDP)** in the fiscal **third quarter**, from 1.5% in the year earlier as trade deficit contracted.

National Round-Up

- MoU Signed between **M/O Tourism and Ecotourism Society** of India.
- UP Cabinet approves **Kanpur Metro project, senior citizen policy** - The Cabinet also cleared the UP State Senior Citizen Policy that seeks to safeguard the interests of the senior citizens by setting up old age and protection homes where **25 per cent** seats will be reserved for the BPL category.
- **Drug majors Pfizer and Abbott** stopped sale of their popular cough syrups **Corex and Phensedyl** respectively, after the government banned over 300 fixed dose combinations (FDCs) drugs.
- **RUSA scheme** for achieving equity, access, quality in higher education - A total of 115 Universities and 1218 colleges have been approved by RUSA PAB for infrastructure grants.

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- The bill to **include certain communities** in the list of **Scheduled Castes (SC)** in **Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Kerala and West Bengal** was passed by the Lok Sabha.
- The **Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Bill** was passed by the Lok Sabha, five days after its passage by Rajya Sabha. The Bill seeks to **protect the interest of the home buyers by enhancing transparency and fixing the accountability of developers, brokers and consumers.**
- In a move designed to protect the domestic industry, the government imposed **anti-dumping duty of up to 7 percent** on **import of plastic-processing machines** from **Chinese Taipei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam for five years.**
- A bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha which envisages to **amend 91-year-old Sikh Gurdwaras Act** to exclude Sahajdhari Sikhs from voting in the elections to Sikh religious bodies.
- Journalists now need not go to counters for **booking train tickets** as the Indian Railways **launched e-booking** for scribes on concessional passes available to them.
- More than **400 e-commerce** companies are leveraging the extensive reach of the **Department of Posts (DoP)** in an effort to deliver their consignments at every nook and corner of the country.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the **World Sufi Forum** in **New Delhi** where more than 200 Indian and international delegates, including Sufi Shuyukh, spiritual leaders, scholars, academicians and masters of Sufism, are participating.
- Seeking to promote helicopter -tourism, **Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation** and **Pawan Hans** have joined hands under an agreement that would allow flyers to book tickets through IRCTC website.
- Public sector units (PSUs) such as **Nalco and Hindustan Copper Ltd** have proposed to invest more than Rs 10,000 crore in the mining sector.
- According to the **United Nations' World Happiness Index 2016**, India ranks **118th out of 156 countries** on a global list of the world's happiest nations.
- The **FICCI-KPMG India Aviation Report** said the country is well on its way to become the third largest aviation market by 2020.
- **Bodh Gaya** will host a **Buddhist Conclave** during March 29-31, 2016. The conclave will be organised by the **Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH)** in collaboration with the **Ministry of**

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Commerce (MOC) and the **Ministry of Tourism (MOT)**, and the target will be to develop the **Buddhist Circuit** in **Uttar Pradesh** and **Bihar** in India, and Nepal, with foreign investment in the segment.

- The **Government of India** has signed a loan agreement with the **World Bank** for **Madhya Pradesh** citizen access to responsive services project.
- The government has slashed interest rates payable on small savings including **Public Provident fund** and **Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP)** in a bid to align them closer to market
- The Indian government has quietly taken US non-profit **Ford Foundation** off its watch list. The move comes only days before **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** heads to the US to meet with **President Barack Obama** at the **Nuclear Security Summit** in **Washington** later this month.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will tomorrow (19 March) inaugurate **three-day 'Krishi Unnati Mela'** providing **information on new farm schemes and technologies that will help farmers double their incomes within the next few years.**
- The Supreme Court **allowed the publication of the photos of governor, chief minister and the ministers of the department concerned in government advertisements.**
- Aiming at effective use of space technology in **remote sensing** and **graphic information system (GIS)** based applications, **Railways** is set to join hands with **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).**
- Railway stations at **Surat** (Gujarat) and **Beas** (Punjab) have been adjudged the cleanest stations in a survey conducted by the Indian Railways across 407 stations.
- The **World Health Organization** has suspended the approval of tuberculosis drugs made by India's **Svizera Labs**, a major supplier to developing countries, following an investigation into standards.
- Airplane maker **Airbus SAS** will set up a pilot and maintenance training centre in the **National Capital Region** at a cost of **\$40 million** for the first phase, to support India's need for new Airbus pilots.
- **Benhur Samson**, an NRI, has set up India's first **Gay marriage bureau** for homosexuals to help gay people find the right match for them.
- On March 18, **Indian Air Force (IAF)** put up its greatest ever **show of air power.** The event was witnessed by the President Pranab Mukherjee, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cabinet ministers and political leaders, and the entire military brass.

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- Member (Planning) **Sudhir Raheja** has been given the additional charge of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) Chairman after R K Srivastava's tenure was curtailed suddenly by the government.
- The Chhattisgarh government has disbursed **Rs 1, 821-crore** loans to several beneficiaries under the **Pradhan Mantri MUDRA (Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency)** Yojana (PMMY).
- Cinema exhibition chain **PVR cinemas and mobile payments and commerce platform Paytm** have announced a strategic relationship that will bring PVR's movie tickets to Paytm's e-commerce platform as a part of its nationwide foray in the online movie ticket segment.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched **Kisan Suvidha mobile application** for farmers. It will provide information on subjects such as *weather, market prices, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and agriculture machinery*.

International Round-Up

- The **UN Security Council** views Russia's decision to begin withdrawing from **Syria** as a positive step.
- China to set up maritime '**judicial centre**' - The top court gave few details in its announcement, but said the centre would help China become a "maritime power".
- **Mother Teresa to be made a saint** : Pope announced - Last December, he cleared the way for sainthood for the Nobel peace laureate, who died in 1997 at the age of 87 and was known as "**saint of the gutters**".
- **Myanmar's parliament** has elected **Htin Kyaw** as the country's first **non-military president** since the army took power in a 1962 coup.
- President Obama nominated **Merrick B. Garland** to be the nation's 113th Supreme Court justice.
- **China** is building a tsunami alert centre in **South China Sea** and the facility in the disputed region has been approved by the UN.
- The **Obama** administration has tightened the **US trade embargo** on **North Korea**, explicitly placing sanctions on the Pyongyang government, its ruling party and broad sectors of the country's economy.
- Brazilians have protested in several cities against **President Dilma Rousseff** after she named her predecessor, **Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Chief of Staff**.

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- **Turkey and the EU** have reached a controversial deal **European leaders** hope will stop the flow of refugees to the continent in return for political and financial concessions for Ankara.
- **General Lori Robinson** has been officially named as the next nominee to lead **US Northern Command (NORTHCOM)**, setting her up to be the **first woman** to lead a combatant command in **Pentagon**
- **Vladimir Putin's** homegrown credit-ratings firm is up and running and foreign competitors are already feeling the heat.
- **The Hinduja brothers** have emerged as the richest **Asian-origin** entrepreneurs in **Britain** for the fourth consecutive year with an estimated personal fortune of 16.5 billion pounds.
- Swedish furniture retailing giant **IKEA** will contribute **4 million euro (Rs 92.84 crore)** to provide safe water and sanitation to one million people in India and Indonesia through **Water.Org**.

India and the World

- Plans to liberalise trade between **India and China**, the world's two fastest-growing large economies, have gathered momentum with both sides exchanging offers on removal of a chunk of tariff lines on goods imports.
- **Russian energy giant Rosneft OJSC** has agreed to sell substantial stakes in two **Siberian oil and gas fields** to state-run **Indian oil companies**, advancing India's efforts to safeguard its energy security through the acquisition of overseas assets.
- To popularise **AYUSH** system of medicine across the world, the ministry will enter into an agreement with **WHO** and a partnership with **United States** for research in AYUSH medicines for treatment of cancer.
- Stung by the bitter lessons from Madhesi blockade of India trade points that caused acute fuel shortage, **Nepal signed a transit and transportation treaty with China for its third-country commerce – a move that is likely to end New Delhi's monopoly over the landlocked Himalayan nation's trade through Haldia port in Kolkata.**

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Science and Technology

- **ExoMars 2016 spacecraft** successfully launched by **ESA-Roscosmos** - The Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO) and Schiaparelli will travel to Mars together before separating on 16 October at distance of 900 000 km from the planet.
- A team of scientists from **Washington** has found that rotten or **damaged tomatoes** could soon be rescued from the bin and used to **generate electricity**.
- **The National Research Development Corporation (NRDC)** of the Department of Scientific & Industrial Research, Ministry of Science & Technology signed a License Agreement with Kudos Laboratories India for commercialization of **Ayush-82**, an ayurvedic formulation for prevention and management of Diabetes.
- Formula One outfit **Red Bull** and British luxury carmaker **Aston Martin** have announced a technology partnership to build an **Aston Martin-branded supercar**.
- Global IT company Cisco announced a **\$100 million investment plan for India** to support the next phase of digitisation in the country.
- Mobile wallet and digital payments player **FreeCharge** has announced the launch of its '**Chat and Pay**' feature.
- The Indian government has amended its **Drugs and Cosmetic Rules (DCR), 1945**, and done away with the repeat tests on animals for drugs which have already been approved by the other countries.
- One American and two Russians blasted off for their six-month stay on the **International Space Station** from
- Nine "**monster**" stars which are 30 million times brighter than the Sun have been spotted by British astronomers using the Hubble Space Telescope.
- In a breakthrough, a '**man-made**' **sun experiment in China** has successfully produced long pulse plasma discharge at a temperature of more than 50 million degrees – the longest discharge at such a high temperature.
- **Aurobindo Pharma Ltd** has received final approval from the **US Food & Drug Administration (USFDA)** to manufacture and market **Naproxen Sodium Tablets USP, 220 mg (OTC)**.

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Snippets from the States

- **Haryana's new secretariat in Chandigarh** has become the only building in the country to have an early earthquake warning and security system (onsite).
- The Punjab government notified **swine flu (H1N1)** under the **Epidemic Disease Act**.
- **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu** launched the first phase of **Fiber Grid project** to provide broadband connectivity at cheap rate.
- Goa government classified the country liquor, **Fenias Heritage Spirit of Goa**. Feni is the form of spirit produced exclusively in the coastal state.
- **Union Health Minister JP Nadda** launched **Cartridge Based Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (CBNAAT)** machines for the quick diagnosis of Tuberculosis within two hours.
- Cisco has signed an MoU with the **Andhra Pradesh** government to set up an **Internet of Everything (IoE) Innovation center in Visakhapatnam**.

Sports Point

- FIFA is seeking to claim “**tens of millions of dollars**” in bribe money seized by U.S. federal prosecutors.
- Defending champions **Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis** crashed out of the Indian Wells Masters after suffering a shock straight sets defeat in the women's doubles event at Indian Wells.
- The UN has suspended **Maria Sharapova** as a goodwill ambassador following the Russian tennis star's admission that she tested positive for the banned substance meldonium at the Australian Open in January.
- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India's leading IT services provider, announced a **three year partnership** with the **Virgin Money London Marathon** to enhance the digital experience delivered to marathon participants.
- India wrestling star **Yogeshwar Dutt** has qualified for the **2016 Rio Olympics** in the 65 kg weight category in freestyle category.
- **Mercedes' Nico Rosberg** won a dramatic **Australian Grand Prix**, after a huge crash for **McLaren's Fernando Alonso**.

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- **Novak Djokovic** and **Victoria Azarenka** rolled to easy victories in the **BNP Paribas Open**, with the top-ranked Serb collecting his record fifth title and Azarenka winning for the second time to get back into the world's top 10.
- Bangladesh pace sensation **Taskin Ahmed** and left-arm spinner **Arafat Sunny** were suspended for bowling with an illegal action by the ICC, dealing a massive blow to the team's campaign in the ongoing World Twenty20.
- **SSP Chawrasia** clinched the **Hero Indian Open title** with a two-stroke win and also secured his Full European Tour card at the **Delhi Golf Course**.
- Indian shuttler **HS Prannoy** clinched his second **Grand Prix gold** badminton tournament title by notching up a straight game victory over **Marc Zwiebler of Germany** in the summit clash of the **Swiss Open**.
- **Gurmeet Singh** has created history by becoming the first Indian athlete to clinch a gold medal in the Asian 20 km **Race Walk Championships** as he won the men's event with his season's best effort.
- Indian wrestler **Hardeepsprang** a surprise by booking an **Olympic quota** place for India in **Greco-Roman wrestling**, which is not the country's forte, after finishing with a silver medal in the 98kg category on the last day of the Asian Olympic Qualification championship.

Obituary

- **Lloyd S. Shapley**, 92, Nobel Laureate and a Father of Game Theory, Is Dead
- **Anita Brookner**, art historian and Booker prize winner, dies age 87
- **Eminent Shehnai exponent Ustad Ali Ahmad Hussain Khan**, one of the best-known players of the instrument after the legendary Bismillah Khan, passed away in Kolkata following prolonged illness.
- Frank Sinatra Jr., the son of legendary singer **Frank Sinatra** and an artist himself, has died.
- **Meir Dagan**, the former longtime chief of Israel's intelligence service, **Mossad**, has died of cancer at the age of 71.
- World famous magician **Paul Daniels** has passed away at the age of 77 due to **brain tumour**.
- Anker Jorgensen, **Denmark's prime minister** between **1972 and 1973** and again between **1975 and 1982**, died on Sunday aged 93.

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Important Days

- **March 15** – World Consumer Rights Days
- **March 18** – World Sleep Day
- **March 20** - International Day of Happiness
- **March 20** – World Sparrow Day
- **March 21** - World Puppetry Day
- **March 21** - International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- **March 21** - International Day of Forests

Tit-Bits

- **M&M enters farm equipment rental biz** - The start-up will connect farmers either through an app or a call (call centre).
- As part of efforts to spread the message of energy conservation, Delhiites will join a billion people in over **6,000 cities across the globe to observe the Earth Hour this Saturday** by switching off electrical appliances between **30 PM and 9.30 PM**.
- Realty portal **com** has acquired property analysis platform **Properji.com** for an undisclosed amount and plans to come up with reports for more than 10,000 projects in six metros that would help prospective buyers in taking right decision.
- A team of scientists including a **Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI)** research associate announced the discovery of a new species of pale goldcolored frog from the cloud forests of the high Andes in Colombia.
- Taxi-hailing app **Ola** expects its newly-launched affordable service '**Micro**' alone to overtake rival Uber in terms of number of rides in a month's time.
- India's "unique" **Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve** is among 20 new sites added by the UN's top cultural body **UNESCO** to its **World Network of Biosphere Reserves**.

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