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NOTE

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AWARDS AND HONOURS

Vocalist Sanjay Subrahmanyam Awarded 2015 Sangita Kalanidhi Award

Renowned south Indian classical vocalists Sanjay Subrahmanyam has been awarded with prestigious 2015 Sangita Kalanidhi award. The prestigious award was bestowed upon him by renowned mathematician Manjul Bhargava at 89th annual conference of the Madras Music Academy in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Subrahmanyam became seventh artistes to be presented with this award before completing 50 years of age.

Corp Bank gets NPCI awards

Corporation Bank has bagged three awards at the 'National Payments Excellence Awards 2015' event recently. The function was organised by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). The bank said in a release that these awards were instituted for recognition of exceptional performance of member banks.

VVS Laxman's 281 voted the best Test knock in last 50 years

VVS Laxman's historical innings of 281 against Australia at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata has been rated as the greatest Test performance of the last 50 years. The honour was accorded to the Hyderabad stylist's fabulous series-turning knock after India trailed by 274 runs on the first innings, by his fellow-players, commentators and journalists in a poll published in the January issue of ESPN's digital magazine the Cricket Monthly.

Costa Book Awards 2015 announced

The Winners of Costa Book Awards 2015 were announced. As per the official announcement, writer Kate Atkinson's novel *A God in Ruins* won the Costa Book Awards 2015 under the category Costa Novel Award 2015. The Author Kate Atkinson won this award for the second time in last three years. In 2013, she received the prestigious Costa Book Award for her novel *Life After Life*.

Angela Merkel to receive prestigious Four Freedoms Award

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has been named as this year's recipient of a prestigious international award, with organizers lauding her "great moral leadership" in Germany and pivotal role in tackling the crises buffeting Europe.

Priyanka Chopra bags award at People's Choice Awards for 'Quantico'

Bollywood star Priyanka Chopra has bagged the favourite actress in new TV series honour at the 2016 People Choice Awards for her performance of an FBI recruit on American show *Quantico*. Priyanka becomes the first Indian actor to register a win at the People Choice Awards.

Azim Premji the 'most generous Indian' in Hurun India Philanthropy List 2015

Azim Premji has emerged as the 'most generous Indian' in the Hurun India Philanthropy List 2015, a ranking of the most generous individuals from India released on January 8. Premji donated Rs 27,514 crore for education through The Azim Premji foundation.

Don't Be The Same. Be
Better!!!

Raghuram Rajan conferred Central Banker Award

RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan has been felicitated with the Central Banker of the Year Award (Global and Asia Pacific) for 2016 by the Financial Times Group’s monthly publication ‘The Banker’. The Central Banker of the Year 2016 awards celebrate the officials that have best managed to stimulate growth and stabilise their country’s economy.

India Pharma Awards given by Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers

The Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers Ananth Kumar presented the first India Pharma awards in Bengaluru. The awards constituted by Department of Pharmaceuticals were given to outstanding Pharma Industries to motivate Indian Pharma and medical devices industries.

INDIAN PHARMA AWARD WINNERS

CATEGORY OF AWARD	NAME OF THE COMPANY
Overall India Pharma Excellence Award	Cadila Healthcare Limited
India Pharma Leader Award	Shri Glenn Saldana, Chairman & Managing Director, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Limited
India Pharma Company Of The Year Award	Lupin Limited
India Pharma Bulk Drug Company Of The Year Award	Sms Pharmaceuticals Ltd
India Pharma Innovation Of The Year Award	Cadila Heathcare Limited
India Pharma Research And Development Achievement Award	Sun Pharmaceuticals Industries Ltd
India Pharma Corporate Social Responsibility Programme Of The Year Award	Abbott India Limited
India Pharma Medical Devices Company Of The Year Award	Harsoria Healthcare Pvt Ltd
India Pharma Export Company Of The Year Award	Camus Pharma Pvt Ltd
India Pharma Bulk Drug Export Company Of The Year	Sms Pharmaceuticals Ltd
India Pharma Medical Devices Export Company Of The Year Award	Scope Medical Devices Pvt Ltd
Special Award: Pharma Psu Company Of The Year Award	Karnataka Antibiotics And Pharmaceuticals Limited, A Psu Under Department Of Pharmaceuticals

Miguel Tabuena won Hilton Asian Tour Golfer of the Month

The Philippines’ Miguel Tabuena has been voted as the Hilton Asian Tour Golfer of Month for December, following his exceptional performances on home soil last month.

Denzel Washington receives Cecil B DeMille Award

Denzel Washington has been conferred with the honourable Cecil B DeMille award, which honors extraordinary contributions to the entertainment world, at the 2016 Golden Globes.

Author Balkrishna Garg awarded HK Devsare Baalsahitya award

Veteran poet Balkrishna Garg has been honoured with the second Harikrishna Devsare Baalsahitya Award 2015 for his collection of poems for children, titled 'BaalGeet'.

Golden Globe Award 2016

The Golden Globe Award is an American accolade bestowed by the 93 members of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) recognizing excellence in film and television, both domestic and foreign.

Wendell Lira wins 2015 FIFA Puskas Award for best goal over Lionel Messi

Wendell Lira won the 2015 FIFA Puskas Award for his spinning bicycle kick while playing for Goianesia in the Brazilian Goias state championship.

EPFO wins National Award on e-Governance for UAN

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation has won the National Award on e-Governance 2015-16 for launching the Universal Account Number (UAN). The EPFO won the gold award in the 'innovative use of technology in e-governance' category and the retirement body will get a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh.

UNICEF presented David Beckham with Danny Kaye Humanitarian Leadership Award

Football Player David Beckham has been conferred with the Danny Kaye Humanitarian Leadership Award at the sixth biennial UNICEF Ball in Los Angeles. Sir Elton John and David Furnish presented the award to Beckham at the black-tie gala event.

Subhashini Vasanth honoured with Neerja Bhanot Award

The Neerja Bhanot Pan Am Trust will be conferring the Neerja Bhanot award on Subhashini Vasanth of Bengaluru in Chandigarh. The award will be presented by Bollywood actress Sonam Kapoor, who is playing the lead role in biopic "Neerja". The trust said that "This is the 24th year of the annual award which comprises Rs 1,50,000, a citation and a trophy."

The Look of Silence won award at 9th Annual Cinema Eye Honours

Director Joshua Oppenheimer's "The Look of Silence" has won the Top Documentary Award at the 9th Annual Cinema Eye Honours. The film is based on the examination of the Indonesian genocide of the 1960s. The film has also won the Directing Award for Oppenheimer and the Outstanding Production honour for Signe Byrge Sørensen.

Anuradha Roy Wins \$50,000 DSC Prize For 'Sleeping on Jupiter'

Indian writer Anuradha Roy has won the prestigious \$50,000 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature for her novel 'Sleeping on Jupiter' at the Galle Literary Festival in Sri Lanka. Ms Roy was awarded the prize and a unique trophy by Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe at a glittering ceremony this evening.

GOI announced the National Bravery Awards 2015

GOI announced the National Bravery Awards 2015. Overall, twenty five children (3 girls and 22 boys) were selected for the National Bravery Awards 2015.

The Best Dreams Happen When
You Are Awake!!!

Rahul Thakkar won Scientific and Technical Achievement Award 2016

Rahul Thakkar, along with Richard Chuang has been chosen for Scientific and Technical achievement Award 2016 given by Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The duo has been picked for “groundbreaking design” of the DreamWorks Animation Media Review System.

Adele’s Hello enters Guinness Book of World Records

Adele, the singer-songwriter’s music track ‘Hello’ has achieved a ten-digit view count on YouTube. By achieving that feat in just 88 days, it has entered the Guinness Book of World Records as the fastest video to one billion YouTube hits. ‘Hello’ arrived on YouTube in October 2015. It immediately became a viral hit thanks to its status as Adele’s first music video in three years, and millions of views soon followed.

Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards – 2015 announced

The President of India has approved the conferment of Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards – 2015 on 50 persons which includes Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak to 03, Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak to 09 and Jeevan Raksha Padak to 38 persons; 09 awards are posthumous. Jeevan Raksha Padak series of awards are given to a person for meritorious act of humane nature in saving the life of a person.

Van der Horst, Welten of Netherlands named 2015’s best hockey players

The International Hockey Federation or FIH has named Robert Van der Horst and Lidewij Welten of Netherlands as the 2015 Players of the Year in the men’s and women’s categories respectively. India’s Akashdeep Singh missed out on the junior player award.

Rekha conferred with Yash Chopra Memorial award

Veteran Bollywood actress Rekha has been honoured with the third Yash Chopra Memorial Award. Maharashtra Governor C Vidyasagar Rao presented the award to the actress in recognition of her talent and contribution to the film industry. The 61-year-old actress, who worked with Chopra in 1981 romance Silsila, said the filmmaker taught her the meaning of love through his work.

Australia’s highest civilian award conferred on 3 Indian-origin persons

Three Indian-origin persons have been awarded Australia’s highest civilian honour for their contribution in the fields of physics, engineering and medicine. Chennupati Jagadish, an eminent professor at Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, Jay Chandra, an eye doctor in New South Wales, and Sajeev Koshy, a dentist in Melbourne, received Order of Australia medal for the year 2016 announced on the Australia Day.

Henri Tiphagne selected for Amnesty human rights award

Indian activist and lawyer Henri Tiphagne has won the Amnesty International Human Rights Award 2016. Amnesty International Germany will confer the 8th award on him in April. The award and 10,000 euros will be given to him on 25 April at the Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin for his “exceptional commitment to human rights”.

Amlendu Tiwari, Om Nagar get Jananpith’s Navlekhan award

Two new Hindi writers Amlendu Tiwari and Om Nagar have been chosen for the 11th Navlekhan award of the Bharatiya Jnanpith.

Abhinav Bindra honoured by ISSF

Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra has been awarded the Diploma of Honour and President's Button by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) as an acknowledgment to his "contribution as an athlete" to the sport. The 33-year-old Beijing Olympic gold medallist was bestowed the honour by ISSF President Olegario Vazquez Rana on the sidelines of the Asia Olympic Qualifying Competition at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range, New Delhi.

Wildlife filmmaker Naresh Bedi honoured with V Shantaram Award

At the inaugural ceremony of MIFF 2016, Fadnavis and Col. Rathore honoured the veteran wildlife film maker Naresh Bedi with the V Shantaram Life Time Achievement Award. The award comprising a trophy, shawl and a cash prize of Rs 5 lakhs (Rs 500,000) is instituted in memory of legendary film maker V Shantaram, who was head of the Films Division in the past.

Actress Waheeda Rehman honoured with special award

Veteran actress Waheeda Rehman was honoured with a special award for her contribution to the film industry as curtains came down on Yashwant International Film Festival. The 6th Yashwant International Film Festival-2016 is a joint venture of Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan and Pune Film Foundation. The festival was organised from January 22 to 28 and around 60-65 movies were screened.

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Everyday

APPOINTMENTS**Air Marshal R K Singh Bhadauria takes over as Deputy Chief of Air Staff**

Air Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria has taken over as Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, a post that oversees the critical procurement process of the force. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Bhadauria was commissioned in the IAF in June 1980. Prior to taking over as DCAS, Air Marshal Bhadauria was Senior Air Staff Officer at Central Air Command of IAF.

Wipro names Abidali Neemuchwala as its new CEO

India's third largest software exporter Wipro has named former TCS veteran and current chief operating officer Abidali Neemuchwala as its new chief executive, a move that was widely expected and reported earlier.

RK Mathur sworn in as 8th Chief Information Commissioner

Former defence secretary RK Mathur has sworn in as the eighth Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) by President Pranab Mukherjee at a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi.

IAMAI appoints Freecharge founder Kunal Shah as chairman

Industry body the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) has named Kunal Shah, co-founder and chief executive officer of FreeCharge as the new chairman of the association.

Lieutenant General Suresh Sharma takes over as Director General Border Roads (DGBR)

Lieutenant General Suresh Sharma has taken over as the 24th Director General Border Roads (DGBR). General Combat Engineers at Army HQ.

Gajendra Chauhan appointed Chairman of FTII

TV actor and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s Gajendra Chauhan has been appointed as the Chairman of the prestigious Film and Television Institute of India (FTII). More than 40 students protested with banners proclaiming 'Silent Emergency' and 'Tyranny of the Elected'.

Sam Pitroda appointed as Technology advisor of Odisha Government

Eminent technocrat and former chairman of National Knowledge Commission Satyanarayan Gangaram Pitroda popularly known as Sam Pitroda has been appointed technology advisor to the Odisha Government.

Sikh-American appointed top prosecutor in US County

A Sikh-American attorney has been appointed as the top prosecutor in the most populous county in New Jersey, becoming the first South Asian to occupy the post in the state. Gurbir Grewal, 42, was sworn in as acting Bergen County prosecutor on January 4, succeeding John Molinelli whose 14-year long tenure has ended.

Filippo Grandi takes charge as UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Filippo Grandi, a UN official who has worked in refugee and political affairs in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, began his five-year term as UN High Commissioner for Refugees on January 1, succeeding António Guterres. Grandi, 58, who is from Italy, has worked in international affairs for over 30 years, 27 of them with the United Nations.

AB Khare appointed CMD of Madras Fertilizers

The Centre has appointed AB Khare as the Chairman and Managing Director of the state-run Madras Fertilizers for a five-year term. Khare will succeed I Vijay Kumar. Khare was previously working with state-owned fertiliser firm Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers as Chief General Manager (Commercial).

Pavan Kapoor appointed India's new ambassador to Israel

Senior diplomat Pavan Kapoor has been appointed India's ambassador to strategically important Israel, where he will succeed Jaideep Sarkar. Mr Kapoor, a 1990 batch Indian Foreign Service Officer, is currently India's High Commissioner in Mozambique capital Maputo.

Sailesh appointed as Registrar General and Census Commissioner

Mr. Sailesh, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, has been appointed as Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary.

Devender Kumar Sikri appointed as the Chairman of Competition Commission of India

Former Gujarat cadre IAS officer Devender Kumar Sikri has been appointed as the Chairman of fair-trade regulator Competition Commission of India (CCI). Sikri will succeed Ashok Chawla as the Chairman of Competition Commission of India (CCI).

Amitabh Kant appointed as CEO of Niti Aayog

Amitabh Kant, secretary in the department of industrial policy and promotion, has been appointed the chief executive officer (CEO) of the NITI Aayog.

Sachin Bansal to be Executive Chairman, Binny Bansal CEO

In a major top management rejig at flipkart, Binny Bansal will be the new CEO in place of his co-founder Sachin Bansal, who would become Executive Chairman of India's biggest e-commerce company. Binny till now was the Chief Operating Officer (COO). Sachin along with Binny launched Flipkart in 2007. Sachin will provide strategic direction for Flipkart, mentor the senior leadership and look for new investment opportunities.

Vikas Thapar appointed as Vice President of Micromax

Smartphone brand, Micromax has appointed Vikas Thapar as its new Senior Vice President-Finance. In this role, Thapar will be responsible to build the company's asset and revenue base while leading the external relationship developments with all key stakeholders including bankers, equity partners, investors and government authority among others, said the company.

Stephen Fleming named coach of Pune IPL team

Former New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming has been named chief coach of the new Pune franchise of the Indian Premier League Twenty20 cricket tournament.

Capgemini appoints Srinivas Kandula as CEO of India operations

French IT services firm Capgemini has appointed Srinivas Kandula as the chief executive officer of its India operations. Kandula played a key role in the acquisition of Patni by iGate in 2011, and of iGate by Capgemini in 2015. Capgemini had bought iGate in a \$4-billion cash deal.

DHL Express appoints new Asia Pacific CEO

Global logistics provider DHL Express has named a new Chief Executive Officer for Asia Pacific region that includes India. Ken Lee, who has an experience of over 20 years in the logistics industry, including 18 years at DHL will succeed Jerry Hsu, who is retiring after an illustrious career with DHL Express since 2001.

Kamal Hassan and Gautam Ghosh added in Shyam Benegal committee

Actor Kamal Hassan and director Gautam Ghosh has been included in the Shyam Benegal committee. The Ministry of Information and Broadcast formed Shyam Benegal committee on January 1, 2016 to take a look at the functioning of the Central Board of Film Certification. The committee was formed to specifically provide a holistic framework and enable the members of CBFC to discharge their responsibilities keeping in view this framework.

Dinesh Sharma elected to board of directors of AIIB

India, one of the founding members of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), has been elected to the board of directors of the China-sponsored AIIB, which is expected to begin loan approvals before the end of this year. Dinesh Sharma, Additional Secretary of Ministry of Finance has been elected to the 12-member board for which a secret ballot was held. This will be the first board of directors for the new bank in which 57 members joined as founding members.

Tata Motors Appoints Guenter Butschek as CEO & MD

Homegrown auto major Tata Motors has announced appointment of ex-Airbus COO Guenter Butschek as its Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director, two years after the death of its former MD Karl Slym. Butschek will lead all operations of Tata Motors in India and in international markets, including South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia and South Africa. Jaguar Land Rover would continue to be managed by its Chief Executive Officer and Director, Ralf Speth, who is also on the Board of Tata Motors.

PayU appoints Laurent Le Moal as new global CEO

PayU, one of the world's largest payment services platforms, has appointed Laurent Le Moal as its new global CEO. PayU has operations in 16 countries and is part of the leading global media and internet group, Naspers. LeMoal would be reporting directly to Naspers' Group CEO, Bob Van Dijk.

Bachchan & Chopra – brand ambassadors for Incredible India campaign

Actors Amitabh Bachchan and Priyanka Chopra will replace Aamir Khan as new ambassadors of the Incredible India campaign to market the country to tourists abroad. Bollywood veteran Mr Bachchan, 73, the brand ambassador of Gujarat Tourism, had been picked for the position some time ago.

Atulesh Jindal appointed new CBDT chief

Senior revenue service officer Atulesh Jindal has been appointed as the Chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the apex policy-making body of the income tax department. He will succeed A K Jain, who completes his term at the end of this month.

Tendulkar named brand envoy of pleasure cruise

Cricket legend and Rajya Sabha MP Sachin Tendulkar has been named as the brand ambassador of a newly-launched pleasure cruise along with his former Australian opponents, Shane Warne and Brett Lee. The pleasure trip provides the guests an opportunity to mix with top ex-cricketers and show business personalities.

Leslie Berland appointed as CMO of Twitter Inc

Leslie Berland has been named as Twitter's new chief marketing executive. Hailing from the financial sector, Berland was Executive Vice President, Global Advertising, Marketing & Digital Partnerships at American Express.

Gurdeep Singh named chairman and MD of NTPC

Government of India has appointed Gurdeep Singh, currently head of Gujarat State Electricity Corp, as the chairman and managing director of NTPC Ltd, India's biggest power producer. Singh, 51, will be the first person to be appointed to the top job at a Maharatna company through a search committee route.

Kamlesh Kumar Pandey – Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities

Dr. Kamlesh Kumar Pandey has been appointed as the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) for a period of three years. Dr. Pandey is a Science Graduate from University of Allahabad and Medical Graduate from Agra University in 1990.

Ten Non-Official Directors appointed in banks

Ten part-time Non-Official Directors (NODs) have been appointed by the government on the board of various public sector banks. Of them, Girish Kumar Ahuja and Pushpendra Rai have been appointed NODs in State Bank of India, Amit Chatterjee and G Gopalkrishna in Dena Bank, Archana Ravindrarai Dholakia in Bank of Maharashtra, V V R Sastry and M Bhagavantha Rao in Vijaya Bank.

BANKING AND FINANCE**Replace defective 1,000-rupee notes: RBI to Banks**

Out of 300 million defective banknotes that were printed in one of the printing presses of government-owned Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India, about 100 million of those notes have hit the market leaving the general public in a tizzy. About 200 million pieces were transferred to the RBI's currency chests, some of which was then loaded in banks' automated teller machines.

PNB launches host of digital banking solutions

The Android app facilitates the customer to use GPS and reach the nearest PNB ATM, it also assists customer to instantly lodge operational issues, reducing the resolution time considerably, PNB MD Usha Ananthasubramanian said. Green PIN facility was also launched under which customer can obtain duplicate PIN for debit card instantly through SMS request, it said.

Royal Enfield records 50% sales growth in 2015

Royal Enfield has recorded yet another year of stunning growth. The iconic Bullet maker, which is part of Eicher Motors, has registered 50 per cent growth in its total sales at 4.5 lakh units for the calendar year 2015.

No interviews: PSBs to strengthen exam for clerical posts

Finance Ministry has asked Public Sector Banks (PSBs) to strengthen written examination for recruitment of clerical and sub-staff posts as there will be no interviews for such appointments.

The decision to change the recruitment process follows Prime Minister Narendra Modi's directive that there was no need for holding interviews for lower level posts.

IDBI Bank raises Rs 1,900 crore via Basel-III compliant bonds

Public sector lender IDBI Bank has raised Rs 1,900 crore through two separate Basel-III compliant tier-II bonds on private placement basis. The funds would help the bank to augment its capital adequacy ratio by about 55 basis points. This is in addition to Rs.1,000 crore raised on December 31, 2015 through the issue of similar bonds to EPFO but with 15 years tenure from the date of deemed allotment.

RBI imposes Rs 1 crore fine on State Bank of Travancore

Reserve Bank has imposed a penalty of Rs 1 crore on an SBI associate bank, State Bank of Travancore, for violation of some of its instructions. This action is based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank and its customers.

NABARD inks pact with NRSC for web-based monitoring of projects

Country's apex development bank, NABARD on Jan 4 signed a pact with National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) for web-based monitoring of its projects in four states. According to an official statement issued by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Indo-German Watershed Development (IGWDP) projects (are located) in three states- Gujarat, Rajasthan and Telangana, and Nabard-assisted watershed projects under Watershed Development Fund

Reliance capital gets CCI nod to acquire Goldman Sachs's fund arm

Reliance Capital Asset Management, part of the Anil Ambani-led group, said it has got the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) nod for acquiring Goldman Sachs's onshore business in India like mutual funds and exchange-traded funds. In October 2015, Reliance Capital Asset Management had said it is acquiring Goldman Sachs's onshore asset management business for Rs 243 crore (\$37.5 million) in an all-cash deal.

Andhra Bank launches IMPS for money transfer

Andhra Bank has launched Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) at all its branches in association with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). A multi-channel, multi-dimensional platform, IMPS makes payments possible within fraction of seconds with all the standards and integrity maintained for security. The bank said that the IMPS has been enabled across all branches to provide inter-bank electronic fund transfer service "capable of processing person to account remittances."

Cabinet approves creation of a Credit Guarantee Fund for MUDRA loans

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for the creation of a Credit Guarantee Fund for Micro Units Development Refinance Agency (MUDRA) loans and to convert MUDRA Ltd. into MUDRA Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) Bank as a wholly owned subsidiary of SIDBI. The Fund is expected to guarantee more than Rs 1,00,000 crore worth of loans to micro and small units in the first instance.

India to grow at a faster 7.8 percent in fiscal 2016-17: World Bank

The World Bank has projected that India will grow by a robust 7.8 per cent in 2016 and 7.9 per cent in the next two years. World Bank also predicted that India will be the fastest growing economy in the world in the next three years and would outpace China. With the recent fall in oil prices, India remains the bright spot of the global economy as Chinese growth is predicted to slow further.

HDFC targets fund size of Rs. 5000 crore for HCARE-1

To make medium to long term investment in development of mass housing Housing Development Finance Corporation announced that HDFC Capital Advisors, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Corporation has been appointed as an investment manager for the HDFC Capital Affordable Real Estate Fund-1 (HCARE-1). HCARE-1 is a SEBI registered Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) and has been sponsored by the Corporation.

RBI Deputy Governor Urjit Patel gets second term

Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor Urjit Patel, who drafted historic changes to monetary policy in the country, is likely to get re-appointed after his three-year term ends next month. The government will send Patel's name to the appointments committee of the cabinet for final approval. Patel, who joined the RBI in January 2013, heads its monetary policy department and is widely considered to be a trusted lieutenant to Governor Raghuram Rajan.

ICICI Bank partners with FINO PayTech for payments bank space

ICICI Bank will partner FINO PayTech to foray into the payments bank space. ICICI Bank joins some of the leading lenders of the country which have partnered with payments banks that have received licence from the banking regulator. For example, State Bank of India and Kotak Mahindra Bank have picked up stake in the payments banks that will be floated by Reliance Industries and the Bharti Group, respectively.

SBI enters wealth management space; opens branch for start-ups

State Bank of India has become the first public sector lender to launch wealth management service, a space dominated by private and foreign players, to cater to fast-growing affluent segment of the country. The bank also inaugurated a dedicated branch for start-ups which will provide advisory services to the budding entrepreneurs. The wealth management offering – 'SBI Exclusif' and the start-up branch – 'SBI InCube' were rolled out in Bengaluru.

GOI and WB sign agreement for Neeranchal National Watershed Project

The Government of India has signed a loan agreement with World Bank for the Neeranchal National Watershed Project. The Neeranchal project was approved by the cabinet in October 2015 with a total budget outlay of Rs.2142 crore with the Government share of Rs.1071 crore and the rest 50% by the World Bank

SBI starts advisory services for startups

State Bank of India (SBI) unveiled a dedicated advisory services branch for startups and wealth management service for high networth individuals (HNIs). SBI becomes the first public sector bank to offer wealth management service. SBI InCube will be a one-stop advisory services facility for entrepreneurs but will not offer loans to startups.

SBI launches SBI E-Smart SME to offer loans to e-commerce sellers

State Bank of India has announced launch of SBI E-Smart SME to offer easy working capital to online e-commerce players. The bank has initially tied up with e-commerce major Snapdeal to offer instant loans to its sellers. SBI E-Smart SME will use data analytics gathered by Snapdeal to assess the sellers credit worthiness, instead of traditional lending based on financial statements like balance sheet and income tax returns.

IMF retains India's economic growth forecast

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has kept India's growth projection unchanged at 7.3 per cent in the current fiscal and 7.5 per cent in the next, even as it cut world economic outlook to 3.4 per cent for 2016. The update released expects Indian economy to be the fastest among major economies.

The IMF has pegged the current year's growth at 7.3%, same as last year. The global economy is now forecast to grow 3.4% in 2016 and 3.6% in 2017, a reduction in 0.2 percentage point for both the years from the October forecast.

India and UK to cooperate in infra financing

India and UK have agreed to strengthen their economic cooperation in infrastructure and financial services as they vowed to address cross-border tax evasion and avoidance. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley held talks with his UK counterpart George Osborne as part of the 8th India-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue and had a series of meetings with UK-based investors and fund managers.

India starts anti dumping probe on rubber import from EU, South Korea

GOI has initiated a probe into alleged dumping of rubber variants used for leather goods by the EU, South Korea and Thailand. The Govt initiated after complaints from Reliance Industries and Indian Synthetic Rubber. The move is aimed at protecting domestic players in the sector against cheap imports.

FreeCharge Partners MasterCard, Yes Bank to Launch Virtual Card

Mobile wallet player FreeCharge has launched its new virtual card 'FreeCharge Go', in partnership with Yes Bank and powered by MasterCard. The integration is now live, and enables universal payments of its app online and offline through a prepaid virtual card, which can be activated in a few seconds.

India signs agreement with World Bank for US\$ 250 million

The Financing Agreement for World Bank (IDA) assistance of US\$ 250 million for Bihar Kosi Basin Development Project was signed between Government of India and the World Bank on January 20, 2016 at New Delhi.

RBI Simplifies Gold Monetisation Scheme

The Reserve Bank of India has simplified the Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) for bulk depositors, aimed to help temple boards to do so. RBI has also allowed banks to sell Ashok Chakra-embossed gold coins manufactured by government-owned MMTC under the 'India gold coin' scheme. MMTC was hitherto selling such coins, introduced last November, only from its 25 centres in the country.

This was a major demand of temple trusts, many having tonnes of gold and willing to deposit part of that under the GMS. Now these depositors need not move gold to a collection centre which could be far away from their storage. Banks may open a branch in an area nearby or the refinery can offer this facility directly to the trust.

HCL acquires UK-based Point to Point for around \$11M

HCL Technologies Ltd, India's fourth-largest software services firm, has agreed to acquire UK-based Point to Point Ltd and Point to Point Products Ltd (jointly referred to as Point to Point or P2P) for £8 million (around Rs 78 crore or around \$11 million). The deal amount also includes contingent payments subject to certain financial milestones.

Finance Ministry to hold India Investment Summit on Feb 4-5

In order to attract investments in infrastructure sector, the Finance Ministry will organise a two-day India Investment Summit from February 4, which would see the participation of various global investors. India has been trying to attract foreign investment for Make in India campaign with a view to boost economic growth and generating employment.

RBI Governor included in WEF task force to study global financial system

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has created a new task force with Bank of England Governor Mark Carney and his counterpart at the Reserve Bank of India, Raghuram Rajan, to study the future of the global financial system. The group, which also includes Bank of America Chairman and CEO Brian Moynihan and HSBC Chairman Douglas Flint, met for the first time at the forum's annual meeting in Davos.

India and Armenia sign Double Taxation Avoidance Convention Amendment

A Protocol to amend the existing Double Taxation Avoidance Convention was signed by the Government of India and the Government of Armenia. The Protocol amends the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention between India and Armenia that has been in existence since 9th September, 2004. The Protocol amends the Article on Exchange of Information for tax purposes to bring it in line with the updated provisions in the OECD Model.

RBI to issue Rs 10 coins on B R Ambedkar's 125th birth anniversary

Reserve Bank is going to issue Rs 10 coins to commemorate the occasion of 125th birth anniversary of B R Ambedkar. On the design details, the obverse of the coin will bear the Lion Capitol of Ashoka Pillar in

the centre with the legend 'Satyamev Jayate' inscribed below, flanked on the left periphery with the word 'Bharat' in Devnagri script. And on the right periphery with the word 'India' in English and it shall also bear the Rupee symbol and denominational value '10' in the international numerals below the Lion Capitol.

India and ADB Sign \$80 Million Loan Agreement

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed \$80 million loan agreement to continue improving infrastructure in two North Eastern State Capital cities. The loan is the third tranche of a \$200 million financing facility under the North Eastern Region Capital cities Development Investment Program and will be used for investments in water supply, solid waste management and sanitation in Agartala and Aizwal.

IMF implements long due quota reforms

The IMF has announced implementation of its long due quota reforms which was approved by the US Congress last year that will give more voting rights to emerging economies like India and China in the functioning of the organisation. For the first time four emerging market countries (Brazil, China, India, and Russia) will be among the 10 largest members of the IMF.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

LPG emergency helpline number 1906 launched

Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has launched the LPG emergency helpline number 1906 for the cooking gas consumers across the country. The consumers can call on this helpline to seek assistance to deal with gas leakage. Pradhan asked the ministry and the top brass of oil marketing companies' to make the number toll free. As for today, normal call rates will apply.

Kochi Metro gets first set of trains from Alstom

Kochi Metro Rail Ltd has received the first set of 25 trains for Kochi Metro from French company Alstom. The order was placed in August 2014 and the company today delivered the first set from its plant inside Sri City. The coaches have been manufactured at a tendered cost of ₹632.95 crore. All the 25 trains will be delivered by April 2017.

Mahindra inaugurates bio-CNG plant

Mahindra & Mahindra on inaugurated a bio-CNG facility here to create carbon neutral ecosystem at Mahindra World City (MWC). Spread over 1,000 square metres, the facility will convert eight tonnes of food and kitchen waste generated daily at MWC, into 1,000m³ of raw biogas, Mahindra & Mahindra said in a statement.

PM unveils plaque for Foundation Stone of Delhi-Meerut Expressway

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unveiled a plaque to mark the laying of the foundation stone of the of 74 km long Delhi-Dasna-Meerut 14 lane Expressway and upgradation of 22 Km

long Dasna-Hapur section of NH-24, at Sector-62 in Noida.

Inter-ministerial panel for coal gas to be set up soon

The government of India is all set up an inter-ministerial panel for the development of underground coal gasification in coal and lignite bearing areas. The eight-member panel under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary Coal will have members from ministries such as Petroleum and Natural Gas. The panel would also have members from Niti Aayog and Central Mine Planning & Design Institute (CMPDI). The Union Cabinet has approved a policy for developing Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) in coal and lignite bearing areas in the country.

Govt announces Direct Benefit Transfer scheme for kerosene subsidy

The government announced the launch of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for kerosene subsidy in a bid to cut down the diversion and black marketing of the fuel. The new scheme will be rolled out in 26 districts across eight states from 1 April, 2016 including Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Rajasthan. The centre has allocated 86.85 lakh kilolitres of subsidised PDS kerosene to states in the current financial year even as total annual consumption stands at 71.3 lakh kilolitres.

BSNL to set up 40,000 Wi-Fi Hotspots in the country

Public sector telecom major BSNL is working on setting up 40,000 Wi-Fi Hotspots in the country to counter its inadequacy in providing 4G data services. According to BSNL CMD Anupam Shrivastava they are at present neither a 4G service provider, nor do they have the

relevant spectrum to launch this service. But to deal with this challenge, we are working on a scheme to set up 40,000 Wi-Fi Hotspots in the country, as it (Wi-Fi Hotspot) is faster than 4G services. Under the scheme, 500 Wi-Fi Hotspots have been set up in the country, and the company plans to increase them to 2,500 in the current financial year.

Nitin Gadkari announces road projects worth Rs 41,000 crore for Telangana

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on January 4 announced road projects worth Rs 41,000 crore for Telangana. The announcement also includes two Express Highways from the state capital Hyderabad to Bengaluru in Karnataka and Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh. The Union Road Transport and Highways Minister laid the foundation stone of 4-lane of Yadgir and Warangal section of NH-202 (new NH-163) of length 99 km costing Rs 1,424 crore.

Nasscom opposes Airtel Zero, Free Basics plans

The industry body Nasscom has opposed Airtel Zero and Free Basics type platforms which it feels violate net neutrality principles by differentiating internet access for certain types of services. We at Nasscom oppose any model where TSPs (Telecom service providers) have a say or discretion in choosing a content that is made available at favourable rates or speeds etc.

Sachin Tendulkar named brand ambassador for diabetes awareness campaign

Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar would be the brand ambassador for 'changing diabetes' for Novo Nordisk, world's leading diabetes care company, announced on January 4. This programme in India is to fight against the lifestyle disease. The announcement supports

Novo Nordisk's efforts focused on creating awareness about diabetes and its related complications.

ARAI to collaborate with Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre

Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) has joined hands with the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) to develop a battery for passenger cars using technology. This will be useful to make batteries for space vehicles.

All IRNSS satellites to be in orbit by March: ISRO

Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) all the seven satellites of Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) are expected to be in the orbit by March 2016. IRNSS-1E is slated for launch on January 20 from the space port of Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. Earlier ISRO launched four satellites. Another satellite IRNSS-1E is on the launch pad. It is slated for launch on January 20.

Paytm acquires Delhi-based company Shifu

Paytm, a mobile payment and commerce platform has acquired Shifu, a context-aware personal assistant application. Shifu mines the smartphone usage patterns of users and makes personalised and relevant recommendations to them. Through the acquisition, Paytm aims to leverage the tech infrastructure of Shifu to enrich the customer experience it offers to its users. The 20-member team behind Shifu has also come on board across various verticals at Paytm.

India, Myanmar craftsmanship collaborate at 30th Dastkari Haat

For the 30th edition of the annual festival which commenced on January 1, Dastkari Haat Samiti, supported by Ministry of External Affairs and the Embassy of India in Myanmar, has collaborated to exhibit

traditional crafts like shell craft, basketry, mat weaving, handloom textile weaving, hyacinth grass weaving and jewellery from the neighbouring country. Artisans from Myanmar and their Indian counterparts are participating in a Crafts and Skill Development Workshop where new product designs will be created besides, establishing “long term friendships.”

President Pranab Mukherjee gives assent to 5 key bills

President Pranab Mukherjee gave nod to the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act; the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act; the Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts Act; The Atomic Energy (Amendment) Act; and the Payment of Bonus (Amendment) Act, 2015. The Atomic Energy (Amendment) Act will allow state-run Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) to have collaboration with other public sector undertakings in the nuclear field.

Home Minister approves 33% women posts in CAPFs

With a view to enhancing representation of women in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh has approved the 33% posts at Constable level for being filled up by women. The 33% reservation of Constable level posts in CRPF & CISF and 14-15% posts at Constable level in border guarding forces i.e. BSF, SSB & ITBP will start immediately to begin with. The Committee on Empowerment of Women in its Sixth Report (Recommendation No.84) of the (2010-11) had recommended urgent need to provide due representation to women in paramilitary forces.

First Company of Ganga Task Force deployed Ganga Gram Yojana launched

The first company of Ganga Task force Battalion has been deployed at Garhmukteshwar to implement the Namami Gange Programme. Ganga Rejuvenation Minister Uma Bharti said that three such companies will be deployed soon at Kanpur, Varanasi and Allahabad. The Minister said the Jawans of the Ganga Task force will be deployed on the banks of the river Ganga to ensure that industry and civilians do not pollute the river.

Amputee mountaineer Arunima Sinha scales Mount Aconcagua in Argentina

Arunima Sinha, the amputee mountaineer who set a record by conquering Mount Everest, has added another feather to her cap by conquering Mount Aconcagua in Argentina. Arunima, in a statement, said she started her mission on the morning of December 12 and hoisted the Indian tricolour on December 25 at the summit. Aconcagua is the highest mountain outside Asia, at 6,960.8 metres. Arunima lost her left leg in a train accident in 2011 and she surprised the world by scaling Mt. Everest on May 21, 2013.

GOI abolishes export duty on iron ore pellets

The government of India has reduced export duty on iron ore pellets to zero from 5 percent, a move that will make the commodity more competitive amid subdued demand and weakening prices. In 2014, the government had levied a 5 percent export duty on iron ore pellets, which are value-added products of leftover material or low-grade iron ore and are used in steel-making.

Tata Trusts and Mars join hands for agri development

Tata Trusts, India's oldest philanthropic organisation, along with the \$33 billion foods giant Mars Inc will invest in the country's agri-food sector. The two will work together on agriculture development, malnutrition reduction and food safety improvement in Asia's third-largest economy. Tata and Mars will collaborate on reducing aflatoxin (an invisible disease on crops that produces poisonous toxins) contamination in India's supply chain, addressing malnutrition and improving crop productivity.

Ratan Tata Invests Undisclosed Amount in Tracxn

Top industrialist Ratan Tata has invested an undisclosed amount in startup research platform Tracxn. Tracxn was started in 2013 by ex-investors Neha Singh and Abhishek Goyal. It leverages data analytics to help venture capital funds, private equity firms, and strategy teams globally track the startup market and identify interesting investable companies.

GOI decides to directly shift from BS-IV to BS-VI Emission norms

Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has decided to leapfrog from BS-IV to BS-VI emission norms directly by 01.04.2020. A unanimous decision was taken in a meeting chaired by Minister of Road Transport & Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari and attended by Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises Anant Geete, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar, and Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan along with senior officials of the Ministries. Therefore, the Government has taken a

bold decision to skip BS-V emission norms altogether.

Nitin Gadkari inaugurates the first River Information System of India

Union Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the River Information System (RIS) System in New Delhi. The first of its kind in India, the new system will facilitate safe and accurate navigation on National Waterway 1 on the Ganges River. RIS is being implemented under the overall responsibility of Inland Waterway Authority of India, a statutory body administered by the Ministry of Shipping.

GOI approves closure of HMT Watches

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its approval for offering attractive VRS/VSS packages at 2007 pay scales to mitigate the hardships being faced by the employees of HMT Watches Ltd., HMT Chinar Watches Ltd. and HMT Bearings Ltd. and close their operations. The movable and immovable assets of the companies will be disposed of as per the Govt. policy.

INS Kadmatt commissioned in the Indian Navy

Chief of Naval Staff Admiral RK Dhowan commissioned the second indigenous stealth Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) corvette INS Kadmatt in Visakhapatnam. It was built by M/s Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) at Naval Dockyard. The Indian Navy has planned, in another 15 years, to strengthen science and technology and build warships indigenously in association with the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) and public sector shipyards and private companies.

Govt to build 3 spl training centres for disabled sportsmen

The government will set up three state-of-the-art centres in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh to provide special training and support to sportsmen who are differently-abled. They want to adopt the best practices and parameters adopted abroad. Detailed project report will be prepared and by April or May they will initiate the construction of the buildings. The centres will be set up in Zirakpur in Punjab, Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry launches an online initiative to engage LPG consumers and citizens

The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoPNG) has launched an Online Initiative to engage the LPG Consumers and Citizens of India in providing efficient and citizen friendly services in LPG distribution. Following two online discussion forums have been launched and are available on *myGov.in* and *mylpg.in* for Citizen-Friendly Services and Increasing LPG Coverage in the Country

International kite festival begins in Vadodara

The International Kite Festival has began at Surat and Rajkot in Gujarat with kite-flyers from 31 countries set to participate in the week-long event. The festival also known as Uttarayana will be held in Vadodara, Bhavnagar, Ahmedabad city, Bhuj, Porbandar, Modhera and Khambhat cities. As many as 98 kiting experts from 31 countries will display their skills in these cities and towns during the festival. The event is open for the general public. According to the Indian calendar, the festival of Uttarayana marks the advent of summer.

GOI decides to merge Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with MEA

The government of India has decided to merge the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) with the External Affairs Ministry in sync with its broad principle of minimum government, maximum governance. The proposal for merger was cleared by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. The decision has been taken to avoid duplicity in work of the two ministries and for better coordination between them.

NPCI, CSE eGov launch Aadhaar enabled payment system

India's retail payment platform NPCI and CSC eGov have jointly launched Aadhaar enabled payment system that will facilitate government entitlements such as NREGA as well as old age pension. The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has collaborated with CSC e-Governance Services India to launch Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS) at locations where CSC eGov has been acting as Business Correspondent of banks.

DRDO developed powerful ammo for Arjun Tank

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed a new ammunition for India's main battle tank Arjun. The new ammunition is more destructive than the previous one and was successfully test fired at Chandipur in Odisha. The new Penetration-Cum Blast (PCB) and Thermobaric (TB) Ammunition is specially designed for Arjun. The research was carried out by DRDO's two labs located in Pashan — Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) and High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL).

President promulgated Enemy Property (Amendment and Validation) Ordinance, 2016

An ordinance to amend the 47-year-old Enemy Property Act has been approved by President Pranab Mukherjee to allow custodians to continue to hold sway over such properties. The ordinance amends the provisions of the Act declaring that all “enemy property” vested in the ‘custodian’ would continue to vest in the custodian irrespective of the death or extinction of the enemy.

This Republic Day, French troops to be part of parade

On January 26th this year, India’s 67th Republic Day, the country will witness something unique — a foreign contingent marching with Indian troops in the Republic Day parade. French President Francois Hollande is this year’s chief guest. While the Indian and French heads of state oversee the celebrations, Indian and French troops will together march down Rajpath.

24th edition of New Delhi World Book Fair begins

Human Resource Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 24th edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair which commenced in the Capital with China as the guest of honour country and a theme presentation of the cultural heritage of India. The nine-day fair, touted as the largest in Asia, is hosting about 30 countries in which a series of programmes including panel discussions, dramas, classical and folk dances, workshops, discussions, authors’ meets, conferences, seminars and cultural programmes will be held.

Anil Ambani announces Rs 5000 crore naval investment

Reliance Defence Ltd has signed an accord with the Andhra Pradesh government to set up a naval facility along the country’s eastern coast with an initial investment of Rs 5,000 crore (\$748 million). Reliance Defence, a unit of billionaire Anil Ambani’s Reliance Infrastructure Ltd, plans to build submarines and aircraft carriers as well as to provide services including maintenance and refitting of ships at the facility. It will be located 70 km south of Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

BHEL commissions new Andhra thermal power unit

State-run Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) has commissioned a 520-mw coal-based thermal power unit in Andhra Pradesh. The unit has been commissioned at the 2x520 mw Vizag Thermal Power Project of Hinduja National Power Company Limited (HNPC), Visakhapatnam.

BSF starts ‘Operation Cold’ along International Border

Border Security Force (BSF) has launched ‘Operation Cold’ along the international border in Rajasthan covering Sriganganagar, Bikaner, Barmer and Jaisalmer that will continue till January 30. The Operation Cold was launched to contain any infiltration or intrusion from Pakistan in fog and cold wave weather conditions in the western desert. The Operation that was scheduled for January 17 has been preponed in view of the Pathankot terror attack and the high security alert in the country ahead of the Republic Day.

Green panel nod for Reliance's AAE-I subsea project

The Centre's green panel has given the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance to Reliance Jio Infocom to build the Indian part of the Asia-Africa-Europe One (AAE-1) submarine cable system at Mumbai. AAE-1, the largest next generation subsea cable system spanning around 25,000 km and linking South Asia to Africa and Europe via the Middle East, is being constructed by a consortium of 17 global service providers. The Indian part of the project will be implemented by Reliance Jio.

RINL Inks MoU with Andhra Pradesh Government

RINL, the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant inked an MoU with the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The MoU has been signed during the 22nd CII Partnership Summit & First Sunrise AP Investment Meet, which is currently being held in Visakhapatnam. The Andhra Pradesh state government and RINL agreed on the importance of infrastructure and industrial development in Andhra Pradesh and also agreed for mutual cooperation for facilitating investments in Andhra Pradesh.

No Jallikattu in Tamil Nadu this year

Days after the central government gave a go ahead to Jallikattu, the Supreme Court ruled that the bull-taming festival would not be celebrated in Tamil Nadu this year. Hearing a bunch of petitions against the government order, the apex court stayed the Centre's notification allowing Jallikattu. The Animal Welfare Board had also filed a plea in the Supreme Court against the comeback of Jallikattu.

E-enabled Track and store management systems inaugurated

Minister of Railways Suresh Prabhakar Prabhhu inaugurated Implementation of E-enabled Track Management System (TMS) & Mobile Application of TMS on Indian Railway and Track Inventory Management System on Northern Railways.

DAC approves major changes in Defence Procurement Procedure

The Government of India has approved major changes to the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP). The Defence Acquisition Council, DAC chaired by the Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar which is the prime authority to lay down acquisition procedure gave its approval to the proposed changes. The new DPP (Defence Procurement Procedure) will streamline defence acquisitions made by the Defence establishments in India and give a big impetus to indigenisation through the 'Make in India' initiative.

Cabinet approves India joining IEA-OES

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for India becoming a member country of the International Energy Agency – Ocean Energy Systems (IEA-OES) by signing the Implementing Agreement (IA). The nodal agency for the membership would be Earth System Science Organisation – National Institute of Ocean Technology (ESSO-NIOT) under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

President gives assent to The Sugar Cess (Amendment) Bill, 2015

President Pranab Mukherjee has given his assent to the Sugar Cess (Amendment) Bill, 2015, raising the ceiling of the impost from Rs 25 to Rs 200 per quintal, a measure that will help sugarcane growers and cash-starved mills.

Presidential assent to the bill, which will help the government meet its expenditure on interventions to ensure payment of dues to the sugarcane farmers, was granted on January 8.

IMD changes language in weather forecasting and redefines terms

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has changed the languages and also redefined many of its terms to make the interface more audience friendly and fill the communication with civil administration. An official notification has been issued by the India Meteorological Department which lists out some new terms and redefined others, thus, doing away with the outdated language.

GOI constitutes Arvind Panagariya committee to fast-track bullet train project

Fast-tracking implementation of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train, the Centre has set up a high-level panel headed by NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Arvind Panagariya to sort out bilateral issues with a similar committee set up by Japan. The panel comprises the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion Secretary, the Foreign Secretary, the Economic Affairs Secretary and the Railway Board Chairman. This panel will discuss all types of bilateral issues related to the first bullet train project of the country, including funding and regulatory matters for removing all hindrances to ensure smooth implementation.

BSNL starts 4G service with soft launch in Chandigarh

State-owned BSNL has started 4G services on non-commercial basis in Chandigarh promising broadband speed of up to 100 megabit per second (Mbps). The company's local ads are promising

broadband speed of up to 100 mbps on its Long Term Evolution (LTE) based 4G mobile service. BSNL has 4G spectrum across India except in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kolkata. The company selected through request for proposal will manage the networks while BSNL would share its revenue the successful bidder. It has been expanding its footprint on this model wherein it provides only bandwidth and the infrastructure is set up by its partner.

Tendulkar launches 2 Mumbai Rail Police safety initiatives

Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar launched two initiatives by Mumbai Railway Police — SAMEEP (Safety Alert Messages Exclusively For Passengers) and B-Safe. SAMEEP is an effort towards instant communication with railway passengers in case of any eventuality. Under this scheme, the Railways Dept invite commuters to give Missed Call on 7208015207 or SMS MH RLY COP to 166 to get registered. Those who get registered will be sent an SMS when required about important developments/disruptions, safety advisories, women security updates, correct information to dispel any rumours.

NE state capitals to be linked by rail by 2020: MoS Railways

Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha has announced that the capitals of all north-eastern states would be connected by rail by 2020 and Agartala would be brought onto the map of broad gauge network by March. Sinha today received the first broad gauge trial train in Agartala in the presence of state PWD Minister Badal Chowdhury and Transport Minister Manik Dey.

Sikkim Becomes India's First Fully Organic State

Sikkim has become India's first fully organic state by converting around 75,000 hectares of agricultural land into sustainable cultivation. In Sikkim around 75,000 hectares of agricultural land was gradually converted to certified organic land by implementing organic practices and principles as per guidelines laid down in National Programme for Organic Production. It was 12 years ago in 2003 when the Pawan Chamling-led government decided to make Sikkim an organic farming state through a declaration in the legislative assembly.

Aadhaar not mandatory for DBT scheme, clarifies RBI

RBI in its statement said the use of Aadhaar cards and seeding of bank accounts with those numbers are purely voluntary and not mandatory on the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) Scheme. In view of the Supreme Court's interim orders dated August 11, 2015 and October 15, 2015. In July 2013, RBI had asked banks to take steps to complete account opening and seeding Aadhaar numbers in all DBT districts.

Now, generate your rent receipts online to claim HRA benefits

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has changed the languages and also redefined many of its terms to Cleartax.in, the online tax filing platform has launched an auto rent receipt generator for its users. It is a free-to-use product that automates the generation of rental receipts and assists individuals in submitting their House Rent Allowance (HRA) proofs to their employers. Now, there is no need to run around to get tax receipts to claim the HRA benefits

anymore. One can generate them online now.

Indian diaspora population largest in the world at 16 million: UN

India has the largest diaspora population in the world, at 16 million, the United Nations has said in its newly released survey on migration trends. The survey, which looked at people residing in a country other than their that of their birth, also revealed that 244 million people were living as international migrants in 2015, a 41% increase from 2000. Of the 244 million, 20 million are refugees.

Indian Army to conduct multi-national military exercise in March

Indian Army is set to conduct one of the largest multi-national military exercises for the first time which will see participation of 18 ASEAN Plus countries. The week-long exercise code named as Ex-Force Eighteen will be held in Pune beginning from March 2. The Field Training Exercise or FTX will see participation of over 360 personnel.

Government targets road safety audit of 3,000 km of highways in 2016

The government on January 14 said it will conduct road safety audit of 3,000 km of central and state highways this year, to avoid increasing accidents. India accounts for 5 lakh road accidents annually in which 1.5 lakh people die and another 3 lakh are crippled for life. The loss due to this is equivalent to 3 per cent of the GDP of the country.

According Road Secretary Sanjay Mitra when he was speaking at a seminar jointly organised by Road Ministry and International Road Federation (IRF) as part of the ongoing National Road Safety Week.

FIPB clears 5 FDI proposals worth Rs 6,050 cr, Cadila gets nod

The Government has approved five FDI proposals worth Rs.6,050.10 crore, including ones from pharmaceutical companies Cadila Healthcare and Recipharm. The approvals are based on the recommendations of Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) at its meeting last month. The biggest proposal to get the nod was from Cadila amounting to Rs.5,000 crore. The company was given approval for the transfer of its 99.90 per cent shares currently held by an NRI to Wellness Technology and Media Private Ltd, UK.

Nag anti-tank missile successful test fired

DRDO has test fired its indigenously developed, fire-and-forget anti-tank missile, Nag. It successfully hit the target 4 km away during a night trial in the Mahajan Field Firing Range, Rajasthan. DRDO used the Thermal Target System (TTS) developed by a defence laboratory at Jodhpur as target for the missile during the test fire of Nag anti-tank missile. Thermal Target System (TTS) imitated the target similar to operational tank. This was possible as thermal mapping from tank to TTS was carried out for generating thermal signature.

Government launches four mobile health services

The government of India has launched four mobile health services, including M-Cessation which reaches out to those who want to quit tobacco through text messages on mobile phones. The objective is to enhance access and make schemes more cost effective and robust. Union Health Minister JP Nadda while launching the four services (m-Health) – Kilkari, Mobile Academy, M-Cessation and TB Missed Call initiative, said that these

are part of the government's Digital India programme and are in line with the commitment to prioritise public health.

The Juvenile Justice(Care and Protection of Children)Act, 2015 comes into force

The Juvenile Justice Act, which allows children aged 16 to 18 years and in conflict with law to be tried as adults in cases of heinous offences, has finally come into force. The Act, passed by the Rajya Sabha in the winter session of Parliament, received President Pranab Mukherjee's assent on December 31. The Ministry of Woman and Child Development has passed orders stating that the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 will be enforceable from January 15, 2016.

Dr Jitendra Singh to inaugurate hall of Nuclear power in New Delhi

The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh will inaugurate the Hall of Nuclear Power in New Delhi on January 16, 2016. This is Northern India's first permanent exhibition on nuclear power, built in the national capital which is going to be opened to the public at National Science Centre (NSC).

Country's first 'water tourism' to begin in Madhya Pradesh

The country's first 'water tourism' will begin in Madhya Pradesh next month with the aim of attracting more tourists to the state.

Named as 'Jal Mahotsav', the 10-day extravaganza will be inaugurated on February 12 in Hanuwantiya at Indra Sagar Dam.

President launches nationwide Pulse Polio Programme for 2016

The President of India Pranab Mukherjee launched the Pulse Polio programme for 2016 by administering polio drops to children less than five years old, at the Rahstrapati Bhawan. The programme has been launched in the presence of the Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare Shri J P Nadda. In the upcoming National Immunization Day, around 17.4 crore children of less than five years across the country will be given polio drops as part of the drive of Government of India to sustain polio eradication from the country.

IOC begins petrol production from Paradip refinery

Indian Oil Corporation's latest refinery in Paradip, Odisha, the first in over a decade for the nation's largest fuel major, started production of petrol from the Rs. 34,555-crore facility. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate the 15 MMTPA Paradip Refinery, which will primarily be producing BS-IV fuels and serving the eastern and south-eastern markets apart from exports, to the nation on February 7.

IIT Kharagpur has launched an innovation centre

To promote the culture of innovation among its undergraduate students right from their first year. Named after its alumnus and former faculty, the MN Faruqi Innovations Centre was launched on Saturday with seed-funding by another alumnus Arjun Malhotra, the co-founder of HCL Technologies. The centre would promote the culture of innovation among a wide cross section of students and faculty with support from its alumni and the industry.

National Conference on 'Sustainable Agriculture, Farmer's Welfare'

The two-day National Conference on "Sustainable Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare" has begun in Sikkim on January 17, 2016. The conference is being attended by state government representatives, scientists, academicians, bankers, experts and practitioners. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the conference on 18th January and he will be the chief guest at the plenary session of the conference. Union Agriculture Minister and several State Ministers for Agriculture will also be attending the conference.

World Bank sanctioned funds for restoration Indira Gandhi Zoological Park

Indira Gandhi Zoological Park in Visakhapatnam will be funded \$7 million for restoration and development as a world-class international ecological park by the World Bank. This is for the first time that the World Bank will be funding a zoo. Indira Gandhi Zoological Park in Visakhapatnam was heavily damaged by the cyclone Hudhud in 2014. The four coastal districts of Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and East Godavari are expected to get \$20 million for forest restoration and disaster prevention measures.

"Most Film Friendly State/UT", a new award

The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting announced to institute a new award category under the National Film Awards titled – The Most Film Friendly State/UT. This award will be conferred for the first time at the 63rd National Film Awards to be held on May 3, this year. The award will be conferred by President Pranab Mukherjee.

Jayalalithaa launches 'Amma Call Centre' for grievance redressal

Tamil Nadu Chief J Jayalalithaa on January 19 launched a round-the-clock Amma call centre for ensuring fast response to grievances, aimed at quick delivery of government services. The 'Amma Call Centre', which will work all through the year, was launched by the Chief Minister here through video-conferencing. Jayalalithaa is fondly addressed as 'Amma' (mother) by her supporters and her government is already running many initiatives named after her, including the hugely popular 'Amma Canteens' which provide subsidised food, and 'Amma Mineral Water', among others.

Bombay Stock Exchange launches algorithm trading test

BSE Ltd has launched a new service for algorithm trading test environment in partnership with Symphony Fintech Solutions Pvt Ltd. The service will enable all market participants to test their trading algorithms in equity, equity derivatives and currency derivatives segments free of cost. Algorithm trading uses mathematical models and software codes to make transaction decisions on exchanges and execute them at high speed.

Ministry of Shipping initiates Project Green Ports

The Ministry of Shipping has started 'Project Green Ports' which will help in making the Major Ports across India cleaner and greener. 'Project Green Ports' will have two verticals – one is 'Green Ports Initiatives' related to environmental issues and second is 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan'.

Delhi government launches DVAT BILL app to boost tax collection

In order to boost Delhi government's tax collection and bring in transparency, deputy chief minister Manish Sodia has launched 'DVAT BILL' app and said that people can play an important role in governance through this mobile application. The software has been developed by Delhi government's Trade and Taxes department. Through this app, people can become a "VAT Inspectors."

To fight China's Andaman and Nicobar forays, India deploys submarine hunters

With Chinese nuclear and conventional submarine hunters regularly popping up in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), India now begun to deploy its latest long-range maritime patrol aircraft as well as spy drones at its forward military base in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. According to defence ministry two of the country's most potent submarine hunters/killers, the naval Poseidon-8I aircraft, are just about to complete their first-ever two-week deployment to the strategically-located Andaman and Nicobar archipelago.

FLIPKART invests in parenting social network Tinystep

Tinystep, India's first parenting social network has raised seed capital from Flipkart. The money will be used to develop the product, enhance user experience and strengthen the team. The funding will also be utilized to further accelerate the company's already impressive growth and its user engagement. Launched in September 2015, Tinystep allows users – parents – to interact on a platform where they can ask, share and connect with other parents. The startup claims to have over 10,000 parents on its platform.

Six laning of Aurangabad – Bihar/Jharkhand Border – BarwaAdda section

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its approval for development of the six laning of Aurangabad – Bihar/Jharkhand Border – BarwaAdda section on National Highway-2 in Bihar and Jharkhand. This work will be under the National Highways Development Project (NHDP) Phase-V. The approval is in BOT (Toll) mode on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (BOT/DBFOT) basis.

Seven Ancient Buddhist Caves Discovered In Mumbai National Park

A team of experts discovered ancient Buddhist caves at Mumbai National Park in India. They found a total of seven caves that they assume to be at least 2,000-years old. The caves are possibly dated between the 1st century B.C. and 5th to 6th century A.D. These caves are believed to be Buddhist viharas or monk residences, that were used by the monks as a shelter during the monsoons. The report says that even though the site still awaits a formal approval from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for more detailed exploration and documentation with regards to these new caves, they are believed to have been constructed way before the nearby Kanheri Caves, between 1st century BC and 5th-6th century AD.

L&T bags Rs 3,115 crore order for New Ganga Bridge Project

The heavy civil infrastructure business of L&T Construction, along with its joint venture partner, Daewoo E&C of South Korea, has won an order worth Rs 3,115 crore from the Bihar State Road

Development Corporation Limited (BSRDCL) for the Ganga Bridge Project.

GOI to start developing three new ports in 2016

As part of its plan to develop ports and boost maritime trade, GOI would develop three major ports in the country in 2016. GOI will start three new major ports. One is at Colachel in Tamil Nadu, the second at Sagar in West Bengal and third at Dahanur, Wadhwa in Maharashtra. The announcement was made by Union Minister Nitin Gadgari at the second convocation of Indian Maritime University. The Road Transport and Highways minister said the plan to set up new ports would definitely add to the economic growth.

Nitin Gadkari to inaugurate 19th National Conference on e-Governance

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari will inaugurate the 19th National Conference on e-Governance to be held in Nagpur from January 21, 2016. The two-day conference is being jointly organised by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Department of Electronics and Information Technology and Maharashtra government.

India ranks 89th in Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2015-16

In the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) for the year 2015-16, India ranked at the 89th position in the list of 109 countries. The list has been compiled by the INSEAD business school, in partnership with Adecco and Human Capital Leadership Institute of Singapore (HCLI). The objective of the report is finding and linking a significant correlation between the movement of talent and economic prosperity. The List is dominated by the European

countries. Among the 109 countries, Switzerland ranked at the first position in the list

Ratan Tata invests in online coupons venture CASHKARO.com

Ratan Tata has invested in online cashback and coupons venture CashKaro.com. The amount of investment hasn't been revealed as yet. The e-commerce company will utilize the funding for expanding its business to international markets, build brand awareness and hire senior-level talents. Similar to the likes of CouponDunia and CouponRaja, CashKaro offers customers cashbacks along with coupons and discounts. The e-commerce company has partnerships with about 1,000 online retailers, and claims to have more than 10 lakh registered users.

Nasscom Inaugurates T-Hub Startup Warehouse in Hyderabad

Nasscom has partnered with the Telangana government and other entities to create a "startup warehouse" that will provide an affordable co-working space to the young entrepreneurs. T-Hub Nasscom Startup Warehouse would take care of young entrepreneurs' concerns of building right product in the market and give them a platform to emerge as stronger players, said Nasscom chairman BVR Mohan Reddy in a statement.

India home to 2.36 lakh millionaires: Report

India is home to the fourth largest population of millionaires in the Asia Pacific region, with 2.36 lakh high net worth individuals (HNWIs), while Japan topped the list with 12.60 lakh people. According to the Asia Pacific 2016 Wealth Report, by New World Wealth, India ranked among the top five Asia Pacific countries in terms of number of

HNWIs. HNWIs were defined as those with net assets of \$1 million or more.

DD's freedish to provide 112 channels by March

DD Direct Plus, which is now FreeDish, is India's only free to air digital direct-broadcast satellite television. Encouraged by the increasing viewership and reach, Doordarshan is now planning to make a major expansion for FreeDish.

Doordarshan will increase the channels available under FreeDish to 112 by March end. Right now, there are 64 channels available for FreeDish users, which includes Aaj Tak and Big Magic, which are otherwise paid channels under private DTH services.

Cairn to seek \$600 mn from India in damages

British oil explorer Cairn Energy said it would seek over \$600 million from India in damages for the loss of value of its holding because of a retrospective taxation claim of Rs 10,247 crore. Using a retrospective legislation, the income tax department had in January 2014 issued the draft tax assessment order to Cairn over its internal business reorganisation in 2006 and barred it from selling its 9.8 per cent stake in Cairn India.

India Post opens exclusive counters for Ebay sellers

India Post has opened exclusive counters at the business post centres in Gurgaon and Faridabad for Ebay India sellers. The counter for eBay sellers at Gurgaon and Faridabad business post center will be exclusive for them to send their products through speed post, registered post or any other service they wish to opt for in both the cities. eBay sellers can dispatch both domestic and international parcels from eBay's special counter at Phase-V,

UdyogVihar in Gurgaon and NIT Faridabad Post Office.

Ratan Tata invests in baby care platform FirstCry

Ratan Tata has invested in baby care eCommerce platform FirstCry, continuing the slew of investments he has made in various startups globally. FirstCry is omni-channel player with presence across desktop, mobile and offline routes offering baby and maternity products in India. It started operations in 2010 and has over 2 million customers. It has over 150 FirstCry branded franchisee offline stores across 100 cities in the country.

Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya celebrated their Foundation days

Three northeastern states of Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya have organised numerous programmes and events to celebrate their Foundation Days. Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted the people of Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya on their statehood days. Tripura Governor Tathagata Roy released a publication highlighting Tripura's achievements in various fields since 1972. Cultural functions, seminars would be held across the state till January 23.

FDI flows into India nearly doubled in 2015

According to the annual report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Foreign Direct Investment flows into India nearly doubled in 2015. Global FDI flows "unexpectedly" increased significantly by 36%. Global FDI unexpectedly increased significantly to \$1.7 trillion and this is closer to the pre-crisis level and it is the highest since the global financial and economic crisis. Developing economies, as a whole, saw

their FDI reaching a new high of \$741 billion — 5% higher than 2014.

Sex ratio down, literacy rate of women up

In the past 10 years, the sex ratio has significantly decreased in nine out of 11 states of India, whereas women's literacy has gone up in each of those states, according to the first phase of the latest national family health survey, known as NFHS-4. The 11 states surveyed in the first phase were also surveyed in the last NFHS of 2005-06. These are Goa, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Sikkim, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Haryana, Bihar, and West Bengal.

Endangered olive ridley turtles found dead on India coast

Hundreds of endangered Olive Ridley turtles, besides a bottlenose dolphin, were found dead on Puri beach in Odisha. The turtles were lying scattered stretching from Digabarini and Chakratirtha Road on the Puri beach. Forest department officials say the turtles may have been hit by trawlers fishing along the Puri beach in Orissa. Local fishermen often flout the ban on fishing along the coast, disturbing the natural nesting space of turtles, they say. Olive ridley is one of the five species of marine turtles to mate and nest on India's shores. The turtles come in "large numbers to Gahirmatha, mouth of rivers Devi and Rushikulya in Orissa coast, for annual nesting.

Cabinet approves India's stand on food security at WTO

The Cabinet has cleared ex-post facto the stand taken by India on food security at the last meeting of the World Trade Organisation held in Nairobi. Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval for the approach adopted by India at Nairobi

WTO meeting. The outcomes of the Conference, referred to 'Nairobi Package' include ministerial Decisions on agriculture, cotton. The Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference concluded in Nairobi in December 2015. India wants a permanent solution on the issue of public stock holding for its food security programme.

USD 250 Mn worth Flood Recovery Project signed with World Bank

The Financing Agreement for World Bank (IDA) assistance of US\$ 250 million for Jhelum and Tawi Flood Recovery Project has been signed between Government of India and the World Bank. The Financing Agreement was signed by Mr. Raj Kumar, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs on behalf of Government of India and Mr. Onno Ruhl, Country Director in India, on behalf of the World Bank.

World Economic Forum 2016: India ranked 22nd among world's best countries

India has been ranked 22nd on an inaugural list of the world's best countries, which was released on the sidelines of WEF Annual Meeting. China is ranked 17th on the list, which ranked 60 countries on the basis of sustainability, adventure, cultural influence, entrepreneurship and economic influence. The survey was conducted among 16,200 business leaders and other high-fliers.

Apart from Germany being in the first position, other countries in the top five are Canada (2), the UK (3), the US (4) and Sweden (5). The report has been prepared by US News and World Report and New York-based brand consultancy BAV Consulting and Wharton School of Business. About India, the report said the

country faces its fair share of international and domestic challenges.

Veer Gaatha Series of Books on Param Veer Chakra Awardees launched

The Union Minister of Human Resource Development Smriti Zubin Irani launched 'Veer Gaatha' a series of books on Param Veer Chakra awardees in New Delhi. The Union Minister felicitated and expressed her gratitude to the families of Param Veer Chakra awardees for the sacrifices made by them for the country. She also appreciated the effort made by National Book Trust who materialised this initiative in collaboration with Indian army and Ministry of Defence.

ONGC gets clearance for Krishna-Godavari basin project

State-owned ONGC has got environmental clearance for drilling 45 development wells and other related infrastructure involving a cost of over Rs 53,000 crore in the Krishna-Godavari basin in Andhra Pradesh. It is expected that the proposed development drilling and subsequent development of fields would lead to production of 51.33 billion cubic metres of gas over a period of 16 years and 26.71 million cubic metres of oil in 12 years, he said.

Tougher SC/ST Act to come into force from Jan 26

To make laws tougher to tackle atrocities against the most vulnerable sections of the population, the Centre has announced that The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act, 2015, would come into force with effect from Tuesday (January 26, 2016). The SC/ST Bill was unanimously passed by the Rajya Sabha on December 21, 2015, but without a debate, and had been awaiting a formal

notification. The Lok Sabha had already passed it on August 4, 2015.

Government of India launched online payment facility for LPG cylinders

Petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan on January 24 launched the online payment facility for consumers at the time of booking their LPG refill cylinder. This will avoid leaving cash with their family members or attendants while taking delivery of the cylinder. The payment facility can be availed at www.mylpg.in which can be accessed in 13 Indian languages. Earlier, only online booking facility was available for customers of oil marketing companies (OMCs) namely Indian Oil, Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum and consumers were required to pay cash to vendor on delivery of cylinders.

President's Rule imposed in Arunachal Pradesh

The Government of India has imposed the President's Rule in Arunachal Pradesh. The northeastern state is feared to be heading towards a constitutional breakdown and the Union government is looking for a strong ground to create a stable government in the state.

Union Ministry of HRD started the Seema Darshan initiative

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) initiated SEEMA DARSHAN. An initiative to provide an opportunity for the children to experience the border environment and to foster patriotism and nationalism among the students. Seema Darshan is a unique initiative being taken up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Home affairs is organizing Seema Darshan programme for

students for a period of five days starting from 22nd January 2016.

Bird named after Salim Ali

Twenty-nine years after the demise Dr. Salim Ali, the birdman of India, an international group of ornithologists named a newly discovered species after him, thus paying homage to the man who shaped generations of ornithologists and also contributed to the better understanding of birds. Himalayan Forest Thrush, *Zoothera salimalii*, thus goes the name of the species, which has been described from northeastern India and adjacent parts. Earlier, a bat species Salim Ali's fruit bat — that was first collected from Western Ghats region of Theni district, Tamil Nadu, was named after the legendary ornithologist. The research findings were published in Avian Research.

Ratan Tata backs start-up Teabox

Teabox, the global speciality tea company, is the latest to received funding from Ratan Tata, Chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons. This is the fourth start-up in 2016 to receive the attention of Tata. As with Tata's investments, this too is an undisclosed amount. The additional capital will be used to fuel Teabox's growth as it expands to other major markets around the world. Teabox is backed by Singapore-based JAFCO Asia, Accel Partners, Keystone Group LP and Dragoneer Investment Group.

GOI launches National Job Portal for persons with disabilities

Social Justice and Empowerment minister, Thaawarchand Gehlot has launched an exclusive job portal for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). The PwDs can avail the different facilities such as self employment loan, education loan, skill training, link to scholarships and

information about jobs in a single window platform through this National Job Portal. The minister has said the Government has given very high priority to skill training programme for Persons with Disabilities and has a target for skilling five lakh persons in next 3 years. The skill training will be provided by a network of 200 clusters of "Training Partners" with financial assistance of government.

Cabinet gives nod to Reserve Battalions

The Union Cabinet under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the raising of 17 India Reserve Battalions (IR Bns) by Jammu & Kashmir and Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected States. It includes five IR Bns in the state of J&K, four IR Bns in Chhattisgarh, three IR Bns in Jharkhand, three IR Bns in Odisha and two IR Bns in Maharashtra.

Indian Railways broadband to touch 500,000 homes

Railtel Corporation's broadband will reach 500,000 households through its Railwire network providing a host of services at the block level in the next two years. The Broadband Highway will involve a three-layer network – state capitals to district headquarters, district to sub-divisional and then to gram panchayats which will be joined to the National Optic Fibre Network (NOFN).

AIR launches 24×7 classical music channel 'Raagam'

All India Radio has launched a non-conventional audio broadcast channel through Internet and 'free dish' with easy accessibility to it for connoisseurs of art, specially classical music- both Carnatic and Hindustani. The Channel, known as 'RAAGAM', is in public domain round the clock with Mobile App i.e. All India Radio

Live available in Android I OS and Windows from 6 PM from January 26.

Corruption Perceptions Index : India reflects no Change

The recently released Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2015 shows that India has moved up in rank from 85 position to 76 (however the number of countries ranked in 2015 was 168 against 174 nations in 2014). Based on expert opinion from around the world, CPI measures the perceived levels of public sector corruption worldwide.

Coco-Cola to launch dairy drinks in India

Beverages major Coca-Cola has announced its foray into value-added dairy drinks segment in the Indian market with Vio brand, which will make its debut across the country next month. The company, which will introduce two flavours under Vio, has tied up with Reliance Retail as part of pilot launch to make the brand available exclusively across the latter's 500 stores.

150th birth anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid rich tribute to great freedom fighter Lala Lajpat Rai on his 150th birth anniversary (January 28, 2016). Born in 1865 in a village in Punjab province, Rai, was one of the tallest figures in the Indian Independence movement. Popularly known as the 'Punjab Kesari', he was part of the 'Lal Bal Pal' trio. He died in Lahore, a few weeks after sustaining serious injuries during a non-violent protest against the Simon Commission in 1928.

Fresh passports to be issued without police verification

In a major decision aimed towards liberalising the passport issuance process, the government has decided to do away with police verification for first-time

normal category applicants. As per the new norms, the passport office will issue normal passports on a priority basis and leave the police verification for a later date. If a person submits application with copies of Aadhaar, Voter ID and PAN Card, with an affidavit swearing that no criminal case pending against him, then the passport office will issue a passport. The affidavit will be processed post-police verification basis, subject to successful online validation of Aadhaar number.

Permanent memorial of INS Vikrant unveiled

A permanent memorial of India's first aircraft carrier INS Vikrant has been unveiled in Mumbai by Vice Admiral S.P.S. Cheema, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command, and Municipal Commissioner Ajoy Mehta. The memorial stands at a traffic island opposite the Lion Gate near the Naval Dockyard in south Mumbai. The sculpture of INS Vikrant was designed by great metal sculptor Arzan Khambatta. The sculpture was made by using the pieces of metal recovered from the breaking up of INS Vikrant.

Union government releases list of 20 smart cities

The Union government has announced the names of the first 20 urban areas that will be developed as smart cities. The investment of Rs 50,802 crores has been proposed in selected smart cities and towns during the five-year period. There are five capital cities among the 20 smart cities chosen. The urban development ministry received proposals for 97 cities from state governments. The selected cities will be equipped with basic infrastructure, efficient urban mobility and public transport, IT connectivity and e-governance mechanisms. In the future,

the government plans to announce 40 cities each to be developed as a Smart City.

USAID extends funding for projects for TB-free India

To support India's efforts to end tuberculosis, US development agency USAID has announced grants aimed at scaling up innovative solutions for combating the disease in a country where an estimated 2.2 million such cases are reported annually. As part of the Tuberculosis Health Action Learning Initiative (THALI) project, \$7.5 million has been awarded to the World Health Partners (WHP) for implementing activities in Kolkata while another \$7.5 million has been awarded to Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) for work in Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Pune.

Akash missile successfully test fired at Chandipuri in Odisha

India has test fired its indigenously-built surface-to-air Akash missile from complex-3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur in Odisha. It was as part of a user trial mission. A total of three rounds of test were carried out by Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel aiming at para-barrel targets. The Akash (sky) is a mid-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) system. It is developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India under the integrated guided-missile development programme (IGMDP). Akash has the capability to "neutralise aerial targets like fighter jets, cruise missiles and air-to-surface missiles" as well as ballistic missiles.

IRCTC limits passengers to just 6 tickets a month

In a bid to facilitate genuine users and prevent touting activities, a limit has been imposed by authorities on IRCTC online ticket booking and this has been cut to a maximum of 6 tickets in a month from the existing provision of maximum of 10 tickets by an individual user. This provision will come into effect from 15th February, 2015. Officials at IRCTC state that this has been done keeping in view the analysis of usage of quota of 10 tickets which indicated that 90% of users are booking up to 6 tickets in a given month and only 10% are booking more than 6 tickets.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**China creates three new Army units to modernise military**

China has created three new military bodies as part of reforms to modernise its military and improve its fighting capacity. State television showed on Saturday President Xi Jinping giving military flags to the leaders of the three new units — a general command for the People's Liberation Army, a missile force and a strategic support force. Mr. Xi and PLA officers and soldiers sang the national anthem at the inauguration ceremony. Mr. Xi said the three new units had been created as part of a modernisation reform and "to realise the Chinese dream of a strong military".

China starts first nuclear reactor in ethnic minority region

The first nuclear power plant located in one of China's ethnic autonomous regions has begun commercial operations of its

first reactor that will cut coal burning and CO2 emissions and can create upto 64,0000 jobs annually. The first reactor of the Fangchenggang Nuclear Power Plant in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region can supply 24 million kilowatt-hours of electricity a day, catering to the needs of a medium-sized city, said Gong Guangchen, the plant's spokesperson.

Sri Lanka and Pakistan agree to expand FTA

Sri Lanka and Pakistan have agreed on the inclusion of services and investment in the bilateral free trade agreement. This would help companies of the two nations to form joint ventures for exports to other nations. When the FTA came into effect in June 2005, Pakistan's exports to Sri Lanka were to the tune of \$150 million. In 2010-11, they went up to \$332 million but dropped to \$260 million in 2013-14. Under the agreement, Sri Lanka's exports to Pakistan were valued at about \$52 million, accounting for around 70 per cent of the country's total exports to Pakistan, states a document of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. The MoUs covered a number of areas, including trade promotion and curbing money laundering and terrorism financing.

North Korea conducted 'successful' hydrogen bomb test

North Korea has announced that it had successfully carried out its first hydrogen bomb test, a development that, if confirmed, would marking a stunning step forward in its nuclear development. The surprise test was personally ordered by North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un and came just two days before his birthday. Only last month, during remarks made during an inspection tour, Kim had suggested Pyongyang had already developed a hydrogen bomb — although

the claim was greeted with scepticism by international experts.

Saudi Arabia cut off diplomatic ties with Iran

Saudi Arabia has cut off diplomatic ties with Iran following the storming of its embassy in Tehran. Iran's envoy has been given 48 hours to quit the Saudi kingdom. The escalating row between the rival Middle East powers over Saudi Arabia's execution of a Muslim Shia cleric has caused alarm in the US and triggered a jump in the price of oil. It's feared the diplomatic rupture between Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia and Shia-ruled Iran may snowball across the Middle East where the two powers back opposing sides in many destructive wars.

China's domain ".cn" becomes world's largest

China's country code domain '.cn' has become the world's most commonly used in the internet with 16.36 million users, surpassing Germany's '.de' domain. According to the data released by the China Internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC), which manages the domain, '.cn' had 16.36 million users by the end of 2015.

The '.cn' domain is also world leading in domain resolution service, security and the ratio of benign uses, said CNNIC head Li Xiaodong. As China began to require real-name registration in 2009, the '.cn' domain is able to protect users' interests and reduce online theft, phishing and fraud, Mr. Li said. In the past, Germany's '.de' domain had the largest number of registered websites.

Saudi Arabia is Third Happiest Country

According to the poll carried out by WIN/Gallup International, Saudi Arabia is the third happiest country in the World. What's shocking is the list which

features almost no European Country. Despite condemnation from human rights groups, and being in a region torn apart by religious and regional strife, the Saudi Kingdom has only been pipped to top position by Fiji and Colombia. At an average temperature of about 26C in January, the beautiful Fiji islands have an evident advantage – but Colombia, which suffers from drug-related gang wars and rife government corruption, was the country which came in first out of all 68 surveyed.

World's most wanted drug lord 'El Chapo' captured in Mexico

Mexico recaptured the world's top drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman in a pre-dawn shootout and chase through drains, returning him to the same prison he escaped from six months ago, in a boost for the beleaguered government. The head of the powerful Sinaloa Cartel was captured in a car wearing a filthy vest after fleeing through tunnels and drains from a raid on a safe house in the city of Los Mochis, in his native northwestern state of Sinaloa.

Burkina Faso's president named Paul Kaba Thieba as Prime Minister

Burkina Faso's president named economist Paul Kaba Thieba as prime minister. Thieba, who has little political experience, is charged with forming President Roch Marc Kabore's government as the country continues with a democratic transition after 27 years under leader Blaise Compaore, who was overthrown in October 2014. Thieba, 56, worked for many years as an economist for the West African central bank, BCEAO, in Ivory Coast.

South Korea denounces DPRK's fourth nuclear test

South Korea's parliament has passed a resolution, denouncing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s fourth nuclear test, urging the DPRK to dismantle its nuclear program. The resolution was passed unanimously through the National Assembly two days after Pyongyang announced its first successful test of a "hydrogen bomb".

Sri Lanka government proposes new constitution

Sri Lanka's new government has presented its plan for a new constitution aimed at devolving power and preventing the sort of ethnic tensions that led to a long and bitter civil war that ended in 2009. The move comes as reformist President Maithripala Sirisena's administration takes some steps to promote post-conflict reconciliation and address alleged war crimes committed during the 26-year conflict between government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels.

Nepal elected as UNICEF's executive board member

Nepal has been elected a member of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) executive board, representing the Group of Asia-Pacific States for 2016-18. Nepal's Permanent Representative of to the UN, Durga Prasad Bhattarai, was also unanimously elected vice-president to the Bureau of the Executive Board of the UNICEF for 2016, representing the Asia-Pacific region. With this election, Nepal is availed yet another global stage to contribute to the work of the UN.

Beijing to shut 2,500 firms this year to fight pollution

Beijing will close 2,500 small polluting firms this year in its latest effort to combat pollution. Pollution is a sensitive topic in China, with thousands of protests sparked every year by concerns about environmental degradation, particularly from factories. Four districts in the capital, which has been hit by bouts of choking smog this winter, will be required to shut down 2,500 companies by the end of the year. Last month Beijing issued its second ever "red alert" over heavy air pollution, closing schools and banning outdoor construction.

China reshuffles military headquarters in major revamp

In a major military reform, Chinese President Xi Jinping has reorganised four army headquarters by replacing them with 15 new agencies under the Central Military Commission (CMC) headed by him, tightening his control over the world's largest force. The new structure includes new commissions such as discipline inspection, politics and law and science and technology and general office. The reform includes formation of five more divisions, administration, auditing, international cooperation, reform, organisational structure and strategic planning.

Narendra Modi is World's Seventh Most Popular Leader

Based on the recent 'International World Leader Index' survey, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been voted as the seventh most popular leader in the world. In the survey, people from across 65 countries across the world were asked to vote and Modi got a favourable view from 24 percent of people. However, 20 percent people did not vote in favour of

him. US President Barack Obama has topped the list with a score of +30 percent with a massive 59 per cent in his favour and 29 per cent unfavourable.

South Korea appoints Yoo Il-ho as finance minister

South Korea appointed Yoo Il-ho as its new finance minister, the presidential Blue House putting him in charge of Asia's fourth-largest economy amid slow growth and low inflation. Yoo, a scholar-turned-politician and former land minister, replaces Choi Kyung-hwan, who will be running in parliamentary elections in April. In speeches and a parliamentary hearing, Yoo said South Korea's biggest problem was slowing potential growth brought on by delayed structural reforms, and vowed to continue Choi's efforts for change.

Israel gets fifth German-made nuclear-capable submarine 'INS Rahav'

Israel has taken delivery of its fifth German-built submarine, an advanced Dolphin-class vessel said to be capable of remaining submerged for up to a week. Speaking at an official welcome ceremony, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the undersea fleet allows Israel "to deter enemies who seek to destroy us." The new arrival is named "Rahav" after a biblical sea monster. Israel is the Middle East's sole of undeclared nuclear power, refusing to confirm or deny it has such weapons. Its five German-made submarines will be used to protect its shores and carry out spying missions against its arch-foe Iran. A sixth submarine is to be delivered in two to three years although defence analyst Yossi Melman, writing in Maariv newspaper, has said it is likely to be cancelled for budgetary reasons.

State Bank of India opens first branch in South Korea

India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has opened its first branch in South Korea. The Seoul branch is expected to play an important role in strengthening economic partnership between the two nations, the bank's Managing Director B Sriram said in a statement. With over 135 branches across many geographies, SBI has the largest presence in foreign markets among domestic banks. The branch will offer a range of services to corporates in trade finance, bilateral and syndicated loans and corporate deposits etc, apart from retail banking.

Aadhaar ID saving Indian govt about \$1 billion per annum: World Bank

The World Bank has said that India's Aadhaar ID will save the government \$1 billion annually by curbing corruption. India's Aadhaar digital identification system has already reached close to one billion people enabling many of the poor to access services more easily and making it possible for government to deliver welfare services more easily. India is close to registering its entire 1.25 billion population using Aadhaar ID, the World Bank said.

WHO declares world's worst ever Ebola outbreak over

The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced that the Ebola epidemic that has ravaged west Africa for two years was over after Liberia, the last affected country, received the all-clear. One of the most feared diseases in the world, Ebola killed more than 11,000 people across west Africa after it surfaced in southern Guinea in December 2013. At its peak, the tropical haemorrhagic virus devastated Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, scything

lives and dealing a hammer blow to weak economies and fragile health systems.

Taiwan opposition leader Tsai wins presidential vote

Taiwan's independence-leaning opposition leader Tsai Ing-wen has won the island's presidential election after the ruling party admitted defeat. Tsai will be thrust into one of Asia's toughest and most dangerous jobs, with China pointing hundreds of missiles at the island, decades after losing Nationalists fled from Mao Zedong's Communists to Taiwan in the Chinese civil war. She will have to balance the superpower interests of China, which is also Taiwan's largest trading partner, and the United States with those of her freewheeling, democratic home.

Xi launches Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

China-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in which India and 56 countries have joined as founding members was formally opened by President Xi Jinping. An Indian delegation headed by Dinesh Sharma, additional Secretary in the Ministry of Finance attended the opening ceremony. In all 57 countries have joined as founding members while the US and Japan have stayed out. The US-backed Asian Development Bank has started identifying potential co-financing projects with AIIB in such areas as transport, renewable energy, urban and water.

YouTube returns to Pakistan

After over three years of being told to 'Surf Safely', Internet users in the country were able to access the popular video-sharing website, YouTube, following orders from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) that the website be unblocked. However,

digital rights groups and other stakeholders, who had originally opposed the blocking of the website, still have concerns over the deal – struck between the government and Google – which may empower the former to censor content on the website.

WhatsApp is now Free and Ads-free

WhatsApp is dropping its subscription fees to access the popular messaging service. WhatsApp introduced the fees a few years ago, forcing new users to pay an annual 99 cents subscription after the first year. WhatsApp has always been free to download and use for the first year. In fact, original users of the app, who joined WhatsApp when it started out six years back, were given a free lifetime service. But in recent years, the company introduced a subscription fee of 0.99 cents after the first free year.

France declares economic emergency

French President Francois Hollande has declared what he called "a state of economic emergency" and says it's time to redefine France's economic and social model. The first measures he proposed are relatively modest, and he said they would not "put into question" the 35-hour workweek. He did not seek to assume any new emergency powers. The measures included a loosening of some worker-friendly measures to encourage companies to hire, and new training for half a million workers.

China's economic growth slowest in 25 years

China's economy grew by 6.9% in 2015, compared with 7.3% a year earlier, marking its slowest growth in a quarter of a century. China's growth, seen as a driver of the global economy, is a major concern for investors around the world. The news comes as the International Monetary

Fund said it expected China's economy to grow by 6.3% this year and 6% in 2017. Beijing had set an official growth target of "about 7%". The growth rate is a far cry from China's spectacular expansion in recent decades, but it broadly matches the government's 7% target.

IS holds 3500 slaves in Iraq : UN

The United Nations has revealed details of the "staggering civilian death toll in Iraq" over the past two years and estimated some 3500 Iraqis continue to be held captive as "slaves", since the Islamic State's insurgency flared at the beginning of 2014. In a new report this week, the UN said the jihadists' captives included many women and girls from the persecuted Yazidi sect who have been abducted and forced into sexual slavery. The report found nearly 19,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed in the last two years, while some 3.2 million Iraqis have been displaced.

UN signs up Lionel Messi to help beat poverty

Lionel Messi was recently named the best footballer on the planet. The Barcelona star Lionel Messi has set his sights on an even bigger prize – the end of poverty. The Argentine and Colombian singer Shakira head a list of 17 well-known names recruited by the United Nations to promote its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The world body's objectives include the eradication of poverty by 2030, the fight against climate change and universal access to education and health. Messi and Shakira are already goodwill ambassadors for UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund.

ISIS has destroyed Iraq's oldest Christian monastery

Satellite images confirm that the oldest Christian monastery in Iraq has been destroyed by the jihadist group Islamic State (IS). St Elijah's stood on a hill near the northern city of Mosul for 1,400 years. But analysts said the images, obtained by the Associated Press, suggested it had been demolished in late 2014, soon after IS seized the city. A Catholic priest from Mosul warned that its Christian history was "being barbarically levelled".

Singapore the second most 'up-and-coming' country globally

In a global survey of more than 16,000 people, Singapore was named the second most "up-and-coming" economy among 60 countries, after top-ranked India and ahead of China in third. This was one of the findings of the 2016 Best Countries rankings, produced by the US News & World Report in collaboration with brand strategy firm BAV Consulting and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

World Economic Forum meeting begins

The annual World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting has started in Davos, Switzerland with participation of political leaders and business persons from around the world. The Annual Meeting in Davos-Klosters remains the foremost creative force for engaging the world's top leaders in collaborative activities focused on shaping the global, regional and industry agendas. The agenda also includes the outlook of the global economy and measures to fight terrorism.

Brazil Zika outbreak: More babies born with birth defects

New figures from Brazil show a further rise in the number of babies born with abnormally small heads to mothers infected with the Zika virus. There have been 3,893 cases of microcephaly since October, when the authorities first noticed a surge, up from 3,500 in last week's report. Zika is transmitted by the bite of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which also spreads dengue and chikungunya.

Toyota keeps top global automaker crown

Toyota has kept the title of world's biggest automaker for the fourth straight year after saying it sold 10.15 million vehicles globally in 2015, driving past Volkswagen and General Motors. Dented by a pollution-cheating scandal, Volkswagen earlier logged sales of 9.93 million vehicles worldwide, while Chevrolet and Cadillac maker GM moved 9.8 million last year. Toyota shares jumped 3.80 percent to end at 6,881 yen (\$58) in Tokyo, boosted by reports it is in talks with Suzuki over a partnership to build compact cars for emerging markets, including India. Strong North American demand drove Toyota's figures as total sales slipped 0.8 percent from 2014, largely owing to a slowdown in Japan where a weak economy hit demand.

French Lawmakers Approve Terminal Sedation, Not Euthanasia

France's Parliament has approved a bill that will let doctors keep terminally ill patients sedated until death comes but stops short of legalizing euthanasia or assisted suicide. After years of tense debate over the issue and a long journey through Parliament, the bill was passed by the country's lower house and Senate. The new law will allow patients to

request deep, continuous sedation altering consciousness until death" but only when their condition is likely to lead to a quick death. Doctors will be allowed to stop life-sustaining treatments, including artificial hydration and nutrition. Sedation and painkillers will be allowed. The bill will also apply to patients who are unable to express their will, following a process that includes consultation with family members.

Tom Hanks is America's favourite movie star

Tom Hanks is officially America's favourite Hollywood star. The *Bridge of Spies* actor topped the annual Harris Poll which drew the results from a survey of over 2,200 adults. His closest competitor was actor Johnny Depp who most recently starred as real-life mobster Whitey Bulger in *Black Mass*. Reigning champion Denzel Washington – this year's recipient of the Golden Globes' Cecil B. DeMille award – fell two places to third, while the top five was rounded out with Western icon John Wayne (the only deceased actor in the top ten) and Harrison Ford.

31 countries sign Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement

As part of continuing efforts to boost transparency by multinational enterprises (MNEs), 31 countries have signed the Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement (MCAA) for the automatic exchange of Country-by-Country reports. The signing ceremony marks an important milestone towards implementation of the OECD/G20 BEPS Project and a significant increase in cross-border cooperation on tax matters. It was jointly developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the G20 to provide

governments with solutions for modernising international tax rules.

Airtel and Axiata to merge Bangladesh operations

Axiata Group Berhad (Axiata) and Bharti Airtel will merge their telecom operations in Bangladesh. Both companies have signed a definitive agreement to merge their subsidiaries in Bangladesh — Robi Axiata Limited (Robi) and Airtel Bangladesh Ltd (Airtel). Upon completion, Axiata will hold 68.3 per cent controlling stake in the combined entity, while Bharti will hold 25 per cent. The remaining 6.7 per cent will be held by the existing shareholder, NTT Docomo of Japan.

The Most Corrupt Countries in the World

In order to identify the 15 most corrupt countries in the world. The lowest 15 index scores from Transparency International's 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index of 168 countries. Nations were assessed by experts as part of a variety of data sources. National economic data came from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). GDP per capita figures are based on purchasing power parity. Literacy rates, Gini index scores, and poverty rates are from the World Bank. All data are as of the most recent period available.

INDIA AND THE WORLD

India, Pakistan exchange list of nuke installations, prisoners

India and Pakistan today exchanged a list of their nuclear installations under a bilateral agreement that bars them from attacking each other's atomic facilities. The two countries also exchanged, through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad, the lists of nationals (including

civil prisoners and fishermen) of each country lodged in their respective jails.

Netflix set to launch in India

Popular online streaming service Netflix is likely to launch in India next week during the trade show CES 2016. The website was planning to enter the Asian nations soon with Singapore and Hong Kong.

It is believed that the U.S.-based company has partnered with an Indian Telecom company to leverage 4G networks. In India, Airtel is the sole provider of 4G network. Reliance will also be launching 4G services but as of now the services are only extended to its employees.

India's Petronet LNG ink revised contract with RasGas of Qatar

India's biggest state owned gas importer Petronet LNG has signed a revised contract with RasGas of Qatar to import gas at a significantly lower price than earlier. Under the new contract, Rasgas will supply Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to Petronet at 6-7 dollar per million British thermal units (mmBtu) from January 1, 2016. It would supply to 7.5 million tonnes of LNG India until the long-term contract ending in April 2028 The new rate is sharply lower than 12-13 dollar per mmbtu agreed earlier and has been revised after falling global prices of oil and gas, saving consumers around Rs.4,000 crore.

Oasis Group to invest Rs 500 crore for setting up ethanol plant

Oasis Group is planning to invest Rs 500 crore for establishing a wheat-based ethanol plant with capacity of 5 lakh litres per day at Ferozepur in Punjab.

At present, mostly sugar mills are producing ethanol in the country, which is being sold to the petroleum companies.

India-Nepal friendship bus service resumes after gap of 27 years

A friendship bus service between India and Nepal via Champawat in Uttarakhand has been resumed after a gap of 27 years. These air-conditioned buses with free Wi-Fi facility, painted with Indian and Nepalese flags, will enter the Nepalese district of Kanchanpur at 6 a.m. everyday and start for Delhi, and return from there at 6 p.m., in-charge of Sharda barrage international police station.

Signing of MoU between India and Singapore in the field of Civil Aviation

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its ex-post facto approval for signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which was signed in November, 2015 between Airports Authority of India (On behalf of Government of India) and Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (On behalf of Government of Singapore) in Civil Aviation during Prime Minister's visit to Singapore.

Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bangladesh

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its ex-post-facto approval for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Bangladesh for,

- MoU and Mode of Operation of Border Haats signed on 23.10.2010 with Bangladesh for setting up Border Haats on India-Bangladesh Border
- Addendum to the MoU signed on 15.5.2012
- To establish new Border Haats after identification of suitable locations in consultation with Government of Bangladesh and concerned State Governments and

- To modify/revise the terms and condition of the above MoU/Addendum in consultation with relevant State Governments/Central Government agencies and Government of Bangladesh.

India-France military exercise Shakti-2016 begins

Indian and French troops began their eight-day counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency joint exercise Shakti in Rajasthan on January 8, 2016. The French contingent comprising 56 personnel of 35th Infantry Regiment of 7th Armoured Brigade, which had taken part in the Afghan war, had arrived in Jodhpur on January 6 to take part in Shakti-2016. A French Army contingent, led by Maj Thibaut De Lacoste Lareymondie on January 7 arrived at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges.

Larsen and Toubro set to partner Russia for Rs 5,000-crore defence deal

Engineering giant Larsen and Toubro is set to get a major share in a Rs 5,000-crore deal to upgrade and refit Russian-origin Kilo class submarines. The company, which is already a leading partner for the nuclear submarine project of the Indian Navy, has been chosen as the Indian partner for the Kilo class refit — a program to increase the life of the submarine by 10 years involving complex engineering.

Indo-Japan Coast Guard joint exercise Sahyog Kaijin to be held on Jan 15

A joint naval exercise between Indian and Japanese Coast Guards will be held on January 15 to strengthen relationship and refine the joint operating procedures between the coast guards of the two nations. The exercise named Sahyog Kaijin-XV is scheduled to be held in the

Bay of Bengal off Chennai on 15 January. Japan Coast Guard ship 'Echigo' will be visiting Chennai between January 11-16 and a highlight of the exercise includes a "scenario of hijacking of a merchant vessel and subsequent rescue in a combined coast guard operation of both countries".

India-Australia social security pact comes into operation

A new social security agreement signed between India and Australia has come into operation enabling people of both nations to avail retirement benefits in each other's country, a pact likely to boost bilateral business linkages. Australian Minister for Social Services Christian Porter and Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer Kelly O'Dwyer said the Commonwealth government wanted to make sure people who live and work in more than one country are not disadvantaged. The Agreement signed in November 2014 came into operation on January 1, 2016.

MoU between India and Maldives for Health

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its ex-post facto approval for the MoU between India and Maldives which was signed in January, 2014 on cooperation in the field of Health. The MoU covers cooperation in the area of exchange and training of medical doctors, officials, other health professionals and experts, assistance in development of human resources and setting up of healthcare facilities and medical and health research development.

Loan Agreement signed between GOI and JICA

The Government of India has signed a loan agreement with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for pollution abatement of River Mula-Mutha in Pune. The Government of Japan has committed to provide a soft loan of 19.064 billion Yen (about Rs. 1000 crore) to Government of India for the project at an interest rate of 0.30% per annum. The loan assistance for the project has been approved by the Union Finance Ministry at an estimated cost of Rs. 990.26 crore.

Singapore inks 4 pacts with Madhya Pradesh

Singapore has inked four pacts with the Madhya Pradesh government in various sectors including one Rs of 7,000 crore to produce nearly 1,000 MW non-conventional energy in two phases. It has also agreed to extend co-operation with the state government in five sectors – food processing, renewable energy, urban planning and smart city, skill development and Information Technology.

MoU signed with Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been apprised of the MoU between Department of Space/Indian Space Research Organization (DOS/ISRO) and Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research (KISR) on cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

India, France ink pacts for cooperation in space technology

India and France on January 25 signed a Memorandum of Understanding towards an Inter-governmental agreement (IGA) over the purchase of 36 Rafale jets from Dassault Aviation. The deal, announced in April by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been in limbo after negotiations hit a roadblock over price issues. The purchase of the 36 Rafale jets from France would cost India around Rs 60,000 crore.

India, France ink MoU on purchase of Rafale jets

To strengthen Indo-French cooperation in the field of space technology, India and France on January 25 signed two pacts that will significantly enable them in monitoring environment, weather and water resources. Implementing arrangements were signed between the space agencies of the two countries for cooperation in a future joint Thermal Infrared Earth Observation mission and hosting of the French instrument for data collection on India's Oceansat-3 satellite. The agreements were among the 14 pacts signed between the two countries after extensive talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Francois Hollande which focused on ways to enhance cooperation in counter-terrorism, security and civil nuclear energy.

International Solar Alliance – The first of its kind

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the President of France Mr François Hollande, has jointly laid the foundation stone of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Headquarters and inaugurated the interim Secretariat of the ISA in National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE), Gwalpahari, Gurgaon. GOI has dedicated 5 acre land in

NISE campus for the ISA Headquarters and also has contributed Rs 175 crore for ISA corpus fund and also for meeting expenditure for initial five years.

India donated ambulances and buses to Nepal

India has donated ambulances and eight buses to various hospitals, non-profit charitable organisations and educational institutions in Nepal to strengthen the education and health services in the Himalayan nation. Since 1994, the Government of India has gifted 542 ambulances to various organisations across 73 districts in Nepal. "This has helped in bringing healthcare services to the doorstep of thousands of people who do not have access to healthcare services," the Indian Embassy later said in a statement.

India, Arab world call for new strategy to combat terror

India and the Arab League have vowed to combat terrorism and called for developing a strategy to "eliminate" its sources and extremism, including its funding, as External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj made a strong pitch for delinking religion from terrorism. While addressing the 1st Ministerial Meeting of Arab-India Cooperation Forum here in the Bahraini capital, she also warned that those who "silently sponsor" terror groups could end up being used by them, in an apparent jibe at Pakistan.

India and Russia sign agreement on scientific research

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi was apprised about signing of an agreement between India and Russia in May 2015. The Agreement provides for competitive research grants to Indian and Russian researchers for joint implementation of

research projects in areas of Basic and Exploratory Sciences. The Agreement is valid for a period of six years and could be extended through mutual consent between Department of Science & Technology (DST) and Russian Science Federation (RSF).

Cabinet approved MoUs related to Cyber Security

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has apprised of the Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) signed between Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) with its counterparts in Malaysia, Singapore and Japan. The MoUs related to Cyber Security will promote closer cooperation for exchange of knowledge and experience in detection, resolution and prevention of security related incidents between India and respective country.

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

Quikr acquired online real estate portal Commonfloor.com

Online classifieds firm Quikr India Pvt. Ltd, one of India's most valuable start-ups, bought real estate portal CommonFloor in a distress sale orchestrated by Tiger Global Management Llc, the influential US-based hedge fund that is an investor in both.

Quikr, valued at an estimated \$1 billion, and CommonFloor (maxHeap Technologies Pvt. Ltd) didn't disclose the terms of the transaction, but two people familiar with the matter said Quikr paid \$120 million in an all-stock deal. The people spoke on condition of anonymity.

Nepal proposes 4-member EPG to review agreements with India

Ahead of Nepalese Prime Minister K P Oli's maiden visit to India next month, the government has proposed formation of a four-member Eminent Persons' Group or EPG to review the existing bilateral agreements with India including the strategic Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950.

India, Israel to intensify counter terrorism coordination

Stating that India and Israel face challenges of terrorism, the two countries on January 19 agreed to intensify coordination to deal with the menace. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj met top Israeli leadership and discussed a wide-range of bilateral and regional issues. Swaraj, who is on her first visit to West Asia as the External Affairs Minister, called on President Reuven Rivlin and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other top leaders.

Naseem Al-Bahr – India-Oman joint naval exercise from January 22

India and Oman will hold a joint naval exercise in the Arabian sea, focusing on greater interoperability to counter maritime security challenges. The 10th edition of the exercise 'Naseem Al-Bahr' will take place from January 22 to January 27. It began first in 1993 and aims to increase interoperability among the two navies and develop common understanding and procedures for maritime security operation. An Indian Navy ship had last year visited Oman in a goodwill visit as part of India's strategy to develop relation with the countries in the region.

MoU between India and UK in Public Administration and Governance Reforms

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its ex-post facto approval for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in November, 2015 between India, and United Kingdom for Cooperation in Public Administration and Governance Reforms. The form of co-operation under the MoU will be in areas like sharing good governance practices in public administration, User led service design, Reducing bureaucracy in service delivery, Government Process Re-engineering, Building and developing staff capability, Public Grievance Redress Mechanism, Local Government Reforms, Reforms towards strengthening of social security, Collaboration in strategies for promotion of ethics in Government, Collaboration between Government and Industry on staff management, Mechanisms for public engagement, Crisis and Disaster Management and Digital transformation of Government.

Apple acquires educational startup LearnSprout

Apple has acquired education-technology startup LearnSprout, which creates software for schools and teachers to track students' performance. LearnSprout is a three-year-old, San Francisco-based software startup whose online data insights help K-12 educators track students' performances. The company had raised \$4.7 million from investors across two rounds, including Andreessen Horowitz, Formation 8, and Samsung Ventures.

COMMITTEES

GOI constitute Kamlesh Chandra Committee to study wage structure of Gramin Dak Sevaks

The government has constituted a one-man committee to examine the wage structure and service conditions of gram in dak sevaks. The Department of Posts has 2.6 lakh gram in dak sevaks. Kamlesh Chandra, a retired member of the postal services board, will constitute the committee, which will be assisted by TQ Mohammad, a senior administrative grade officer, who will act as secretary. The terms of reference of the Committee will include the following.

GOI constitutes Shyam Benegal Committee to revamp Central Board of Film Censors

Government of India has constituted a Committee headed by renowned film personality Shyam Benegal for Holistic interpretation of the provisions of the Cinematograph Act and Rules. The Board of film certification recently came under attack following the cuts imposed on long kisses between Spectre's lead actors Daniel Craig and Monica Bellucci. The panel has been asked to submit its recommendations within two months on reshaping the censor board, officially known as the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

Recommendations of Justice Lodha Committee on BCCI reforms

The Supreme Court-appointed Lodha Committee has recommended sweeping reforms for the controversy-ridden BCCI, suggesting a bar on ministers from occupying positions, putting a cap on the age and tenure of the office-bearers and legalising betting. In a series of drastic reforms, the three-member panel, headed

by Justice (Retd) R M Lodha, also suggested one unit should represent one state, while taking away the voting rights of institutional and city-based units. The committee also suggested the restructuring of the BCCI's administrative set-up, proposing the position of a CEO accountable to a nine-member apex council.

CABINET APPROVALS AND BILLS PASSED

The Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Bill, 2015 notified

The Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Bill, 2015 was passed by the Parliament in the recently concluded Winter Session of the Parliament. The Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Act, 2015 received the assent of the President on the 26th December, 2015 and has been published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary on 29th December, 2015. The provisions of the Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Act, 2015 shall be deemed to have come into force on the 15th Day of June, 2015.

Cabinet apprised of the signing of protocol with Czech Republic

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been apprised of the protocol signed earlier between India and Czech Republic in the field of heavy industry, especially in industrial cooperation and facilities construction. The Protocol includes the intent for modernization of the existing facilities in India by the Czech companies, including modernization of three plants of Heavy Engineering Corporation, a Central Public Sector Enterprises under the Department of Heavy Industries at Ranchi,

set up with Czech support in the early 1960's.

Cabinet approves Stand Up India Scheme

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the "Stand Up India Scheme" to promote entrepreneurship among SC/ST and Women entrepreneurs. The Scheme is intended to facilitate at least two such projects per bank branch, on an average one for each category of entrepreneur. It is expected to benefit atleast 2.5 lakh borrowers. The expected date of reaching the target of at least 2.5 lakh approvals is 36 months from the launch of the Scheme.

Cabinet gives ex-post facto approval to India-Bahrain Agreement

The Union Cabinet under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its ex-post facto approval to the Agreement between India and Bahrain on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Trafficking in Illicit Drugs, Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances and Precursors Chemicals and its ratification. The MOU shall come into force from the date of exchange of the instruments of ratification.

Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi today has approved the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana – a path breaking scheme for farmers' welfare. There will be a uniform premium of only 2% to be paid by farmers for all Kharif crops and 1.5% for all Rabi crops. In case of annual commercial and horticultural crops, the premium to be paid by farmers will be only 5% the premium rates to be paid by farmers are very low and balance premium will be

paid by the Government to provide full insured amount to the farmers against crop loss on account of natural calamities.

SNIPPETS FROM THE STATES

Jaya launches 'Amma seeds' scheme for farmers

Implementing an announcement made in the Tamil Nadu Assembly in 2014 for farmers' welfare, Chief Minister J Jayalithaa has launched the scheme 'Amma Seeds' which is aimed at providing quality seeds. In an official release here, the state government said Jayalithaa had recently launched the scheme by giving away seeds to three farmers here. She had proposed the scheme in 2014, saying quality, certified 'Amma Seeds' would be available through 'Amma Service Centres' across the state.

8 dead, 100 injured as 6.8 earthquake hits Northeast India

A strong 6.8 magnitude earthquake struck northeast India early on January 4, sending panicked residents fleeing into the streets. The epicentre of the earthquake, which occurred at 4.37 am at a depth of 17 km below the ground, was at Tamenglong which is located 33 kilometers from Imphal in Manipur. Manipur government decided to close all schools for a week. Another aftershock of 3.4 magnitude felt at 2.30 pm.

Telangana Government launched e-Vahan Bima Insurance scheme

Government of Telangana has launched e-Vahan Bima Scheme to issue motor insurance policy in digital form. The scheme was launched by Information Technology Minister K T Rama Rao in the presence of T S Vijayan, Chairman of Insurance Regulatory Development

Authority (IRDA). With the launch of this scheme, Telangana became the first state in the country to legally accept motor vehicle insurance policy in digital form.

Bengaluru to Get India's First Space Park

The Indian space agency is soon opening a 100-acre Space Park in Bengaluru where private industry players would be allowed to set up facilities to make subsystems and components for satellites. The Space Park is coming up near Whitefield for the private industry. Indian Space Research Centre's (ISRO) satellite centre director M. Annadurai said that the space park will be inaugurated in January. The park will enable the industry to manufacture and supply their subsystems and vital components faster for spacecraft assembled at its satellite centre in the tech hub.

Delhi government scraps management quota in private schools

The Delhi government has scrapped management quotas for admissions to private schools, a move that opens more seats for general admissions but puts the government on a collision course with the schools. There will be no reservation for children of VIP, VVIP, police, MLA and MP in private schools of Delhi. Kejriwal said it was important to remove the management quota, calling it "the biggest scam" in India's education system.

Andhra Pradesh Introduced e-Tappal system

A software tool – known as the Online Tappal Management System- for the convenience of people launched by the Andhra Pradesh state Regional Transport Authority, Vijayawada. The state Government of Andhra Pradesh have introduced the system at RTA, Vijayawada, Gudivada and Nandigama as a pilot project and can be adopted at

other offices of the state Government after being tested for sometime. In most cases, locating applications is a time consuming process and at times, they even gets misplaced in different sections. Easy processing is the objective.

Governor's rule imposed in Jammu and Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir has been placed under Governor's rule with the process of new government formation following the death of chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed taking some time. The President cleared the recommendation of the Union home ministry for imposing Governor's rule on the basis of a recommendation from Jammu and Kashmir governor N.N. Vohra.

The state had to be put under Governor's rule in view of the reluctance of Mufti's daughter Mehbooba to take oath during the mourning period though her party has already conveyed to the governor that 28 MLAs of the People Democratic Party legislature party backed her for the chief minister's post. 79-year-old Sayeed died after a brief illness and since then there is a Constitutional vacuum.

Telangana becomes first State to make gender education compulsory

Telangana has become the first State to introduce compulsory gender education at the graduate level; without repeating gender stereotypes in its bilingual textbook titled, 'Towards a World of Equals.' The book introduced on a pilot basis in engineering colleges affiliated to the Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU-Hyderabad) discusses gender in its composite form without limiting itself to crime against women. It also touches upon complex subjects like female-centric history and male-female relationships.

Kerala becomes 1st state in country to achieve 100% primary education

Kerala has become the first state in the country to achieve total primary education. Through its literacy programme Athulyam, which was carried out in two phases after being launched in March 2013, the state aimed at educating those who had been unable to complete their primary education up to fourth standard. The programme was meant to provide primary school education to people aged between 15 and 50. In June 2015, 2.6 lakh people took the fourth standard equivalency exam and 2.2 lakh qualified. Examinations were held in 6,613 centres and the qualifying score was set at 30/75 in English and 20/50 in other subjects.

Uttarakhand allows heli-taxi for tourists

Tourists travelling to Uttarakhand will now be able to enjoy the aerial view of the Himalayas as the first helicopter service between the city of Haldwani and Munsiyari town started from January 19, 2016. The tourism authority of Kumaon region of Uttarakhand will run the service, known as heli-taxi, and will offer an aerial view from a height of 8,000 to 10,000 feet. The journey would give an opportunity to international and domestic tourists to enjoy the scenic view.

Maharashtra inks MoU with Tata Trust for skill training of youth

The Maharashtra government and Tata Trust has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for a skill training programme for the youth in the state. The programme has been undertaken under the state government's "Kushal Maharashtra, Rojgaryukt Maharashtra" initiative. Under the programme, skill development and vocational training centres will be set up in 10 districts in the

state. Virtual classrooms will also be set up in 100 ITIs in Maharashtra. The Trust will improve infrastructure in Industrial Training Institutes.

Bihar Government approves 35 per cent job reservation for women

Fulfilling a key election promise of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the Bihar cabinet gave the green signal to 35 per cent reservation for women in state government jobs. The decision marked Nitish's first big step in this direction in nearly 10 years after unveiling 50 per cent reservation for women in panchayat and local body polls in 2006.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Japanese recognized for discovering element 113

A Japanese team has received official credit for the discovery of element 113, making the group the first in Asia to have its accomplishments enshrined in the periodic table. The International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry certified Thursday that a team led by Kosuke Morita at government-affiliated research institute Riken discovered the element. The group first managed to synthesize it in July 2004 but could not conclusively demonstrate its existence until 2012.

World's largest database for cancer drug discovery goes 3D

Scientists have revolutionised the world's largest database for cancer drug discovery by adding 3D structures of faulty proteins and maps of cancer's communication networks, paving the way for more effective treatments. The new version of canSAR database uses artificial intelligence to identify nooks and crannies on the surface of faulty cancer—causing

molecules, as a key step in designing new drugs to block them.

Five Minor planets named after Chinese scientists

A total of five minor planets have been named after top Chinese scientists, including the country's first Nobel laureate scientist Tu Youyou. The naming was suggested by the National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and approved by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) Minor Planet Center (MPC). Chinese vice premier Liu Yandong awarded scientists certificates at the ceremony.

Nissan successfully tested driverless car using at NASA Centre

Automaker Nissan has successfully test-driven its all-electric, driverless car at NASA's Ames Research Centre in California. Nissan's all-electric LEAF performed safe autonomous drives across the Ames centre. The Nissan LEAF vehicle is equipped with cameras, sensors and cellular data networking. It uses robotics software originally developed for Ames' K-10 and K-REX planetary rovers to operate autonomously. Last year, the US space agency and the automaker Nissan announced a five-year partnership to build self-driving, zero-emission autonomous cars for earth- and eventually space. The partnership allows researchers to develop and test autonomy algorithms, concepts and integrated prototypes for a variety of vehicular transport applications. Nissan is already testing cars that can navigate urban environments on their own. The effort can develop technology that will be put to use

in passenger vehicles here on Earth and rovers on planets.

Astronomers spot most massive galaxy cluster ever

Astronomers have detected a massive, sprawling, churning galaxy cluster – about 1,000 times more massive than our Milky Way galaxy – that formed only 3.8 billion years after the Big Bang. The early universe was a chaotic mess of gas and matter that only began to coalesce into distinct galaxies hundreds of millions of years after the Big Bang. It would take several billion more years for such galaxies to assemble into massive galaxy clusters. Astronomers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the University of Missouri and the University of Florida have detected IDCS J1426.5+3508 (or IDCS 1426), the most massive cluster of galaxies yet discovered in the first 4 billion years after the Big Bang. Located 10 billion light years from Earth and potentially comprising thousands of individual galaxies, the mega structure is about 250 trillion times more massive than the Sun, or 1,000 times more massive than the Milky Way galaxy.

Scientists develop viruses to protect Muga silkworm

Scientists at the University of Leicester have developed viruses that could halt the decline of 'Muga' caterpillar in India which produces one of the finest silks in the world. Muga caterpillars, which produce a highly valuable silk, are dying from bacterial infections, in Assam. Researchers claim that they have developed viruses that could protect the silkworms from disease and as a result could save the Muga silk industry. Muga silk is produced

only in the North East India as the silkworms form their cocoons. The caterpillars have been in decline over the last few years because they are eating infected leaves.

Aurobindo Pharma receives USFDA nod for generic drug

Drug firm Aurobindo Pharma has received approval from the US health regulator to manufacture and market generic Norethindrone Acetate tablets in the American market. The company has received the final nod from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) to manufacture and market Norethindrone Acetate tablets in the strength of 5 mg.

CIRB Hisar becomes second institute to clone buffalo in India

Scientists at Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes (CIRB) in Hisar claimed to have successfully produced a cloned buffalo offspring 'Cirb Gaurav'. CIRB Director Dr Inderjeet Singh said that the cloned buffalo calf is distinct from the earlier clones produced in India. As this is produced from cells of ventral side of tail of superior bull buffalo, this part is least exposed to sunlight and may have less mutation rate, and can be good choice for isolation of donor cells to produce healthy clones.

China to land probe on dark side of moon in 2018

China has begun preparations for a new lunar mission in 2018. It has planned to send a probe to the dark side of the moon not explored by humans so far. The far side of the moon is never visible to Earth because of gravitational forces and has never been explored. The Chang'e-4 probe will be the first mission in human history to embark on this expedition. China already boasts mature science and technology for sending a probe to the far

side of the moon, and is open to cooperation with international society.

NASA's Juno became the farthest travelled solar powered spacecraft

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has declared that its spacecraft Juno has broken the Solar Power Distance Record. The solar powered spacecraft of NASA named Juno broke the previous record of travelling farthest distance set by Rosetta spacecraft of the European Space Agency. NASA's Juno travelled 793 million kilometer to break this record on January 13, 2016. Before this, Rosetta spacecraft of the European Space Agency travelled till 792 million kilometers.

Zinnia : The first flower ever grown in space

The first flower has finally bloomed in outer space. Nasa astronaut Scott Kelly has tweeted a photo of the first ever flower (Zinnia) grown in space. The flower was grown as part of an experiment astronauts are conducting on how plants grow in microgravity. Besides the flower, the team also grew lettuce in space, after a failed first attempt. Despite fears of over-watering, the crew coaxed the zinnias into a burst of colour in their zero-g vegetable garden. Zinnias are edible blooming plants that are usually on the easy ends in the spectrum to grow.

Chinese bioartificial liver set to save lives

Chinese scientists have developed a new bioartificial liver that they say will help people suffering from organ failure to live longer. Designed to be attached outside the patient's body, the device makes use of human liver cells. In its first clinical use last week, the device "saved a 61-year-old woman who was dying from acute liver failure," said Professor Ding Yitao, a member of the research team.

48-hour countdown for IRNSS-1E launch progressing smoothly: ISRO

Indian space agency ISRO is all set to make its first rocket launch of the year and the fifth satellite of India Regional Navigation Satellite System IRNSS-1E, on board PSLV-C31 rocket from Sriharikota on January 20. According to ISRO, the 48-hour countdown for the launch scheduled at 9.31 AM from the second launch pad began on January 18 at the spaceport of Sriharikota, about 100 km and was progressing "smoothly".

SpaceX Falcon rocket explodes on landing

An unmanned SpaceX Falcon rocket exploded on landing after successfully delivering an ocean monitoring satellite to orbit. The cause of the problem was that one of the rocket's legs collapsed as it tried to land on a floating ocean barge. The rocket company had managed a historic first controlled return of an orbital stage last month. This footage of the landing was posted online by SpaceX CEO, Elon Musk.

PSLV-C31 launched successfully from Sriharikota

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched PSLV-C31 rocket successfully. Launched from Sriharikota space centre, near Chennai, the rocket is carrying the fifth satellite of India Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), the IRNSS-1E. As scheduled, the rocket blasted off from the second launch pad at 9.31 am (January 20, 2016). This was the first rocket launch of 2016. The fifth navigation satellite in the IRNSS space system, a constellation of seven satellites, would be at par with US-based GPS once the full complement of spacecraft is

launched. The satellite's life span is 12 years.

Global Ocean heat doubled in last two decades

According to a new study, half of the global ocean heat content increase since 1865 has occurred over the past two decades. In recent decades the ocean has continued to warm substantially, and with time the warming signal is reaching deeper into the ocean. The findings were published in the journal Nature Climate Change. Changes in ocean heat storage are important because the ocean absorbs more than 90 percent of the Earth's excess heat increase that is associated with global warming.

Microsoft donates cloud computing 'worth \$1 billion'

Microsoft has announced that it will donate cloud computing resources worth \$1 billion to global nonprofits over the next three years. The move is aimed at ensuring that benefits of technology were not limited to the wealthy. The U.S. tech giant, which stepped up its charity efforts under the banner of "Microsoft Philanthropies" last month, has been trying to aggressively expand its cloud computing services amid rising competition.

Titan launches JUXT smartwatch

World's fifth largest watchmaker Titan Company Ltd, of the Tata Group has unveiled JUXT, a smartwatch in partnership with global technology giant HP Inc. The company said the watch is aimed at providing connectivity while staying true to the essence of classic watchmaking. The smartwatch is priced between Rs.15,995 and Rs.19,995 and is available in three variants — titanium, stainless steel and rose gold across select World of Titan, Helios and large format

stores. The timepiece features a subtle honeycomb dial, 3D indices and a leather strap. This watch can be paired with smart phones having either Android 4.4 or iOS 8.1 and above operating system.

TranServ launches India's first social digital wallet Udio

Digital payment startup TranServ has entered the mobile wallet segment with Udio. Known as the first Social Mobile Wallet, Udio wants to create a highly social, community-driven P2P digital transactions platform via its secure and seamless payment structure. Udio is different from other mobile wallets such as Paytm, Oxigen or Citrus in a way that while other mobile wallet players depend upon cashbacks and discounts to drive consumer adoption, TranServ's Udio wallet brings the user experience. The wallet users can engage with each other through social transactions such as splitting bills, sending/requesting money, and group payments.

'Ninth planet' may exist in solar system: US scientists

The US scientists have announced that a previously unknown giant planet may have been discovered lurking in the outer reaches of our solar system. Nicknamed Planet Nine, the object has a mass about 10 times that of Earth and follows a bizarre, highly elongated orbit in the distant solar system. It would take this new planet between 10,000 and 20,000 years to make just one full orbit around the Sun. The report was published in the Astronomical Journal. Researchers Konstantin Batygin and Mike Brown say have not yet observed the object directly. Rather, they found it through mathematical modeling and computer simulations.

New tree frog genus named Frankixalus discovered in NE India

For more than a century, two mysterious tree frog specimens collected by a British naturalist in 1870 and housed at the Natural History Museum in London were assumed to be part of a vanished species, never again found in the wild. A group of scientists, led by renowned Indian biologist Sathyabhama Das Biju, has rediscovered the frogs and also identified them as part of a new genus – one step higher than a species on the taxonomic ranking.

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Aurobindo Pharma gets USFDA nod for Fungal infection drug

Aurobindo Pharma has received US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) approval to manufacture and market Voriconazole tablets (50 mg and 200 mg) that are used to treat fungal infections. The company is expected to launch the product by March. The approved Abbreviated New Drug Application (ANDA) is bio-equivalent and therapeutically equivalent to the

reference listed drug product VFEND tablets of PF Prism C.V. For the 12 months ending November 2015, the product had an estimated market size of \$103 million.

Astronomers discover largest solar system

Astronomers have discovered the largest known solar system, consisting of a large planet that takes nearly a million years to orbit its star. The gas giant is one trillion kilometres away, making its orbit 140 times wider than Pluto's path around our Sun. Only a handful of extremely wide pairs of this kind have been found in recent years. The planet, known as 2MASS J2126-8140, is between 12 and 15 times the mass of Jupiter. This system is nearly three times the size of the previous widest star-planet pair.

Stockholm to get World's first 5G Network

Stockholm, the capital city of Sweden may soon become world's first city to get the ultra high speed 5G mobile network by 2018. Swedish-Finnish telecom operator TeliaSonera, and Swedish telecommunications giant Ericsson will jointly roll out 5G network at Stockholm and Tallinn, which is in Estonia.

Customs Department launches mobile app

A mobile-based application has been launched by the customs to inform people about all Indian customs rules including those related to import of pets and goods. The app—Indian Customs-Guide to Travellers—has been developed by IRS officer Sandeep Kumar Rawal, now posted as Joint Director, Regional Training Institute of National Academy of Customs Excise and Narcotics(NACEN), Bhopal in coordination with Bengaluru customs.

SPORTS

Main News	Other Info
India wins SAFF Cup for seventh time.	India defeated Afghanistan
Mumbai cricketer Pranav Dhanawade scores a record 100	He becomes the first batsman to score 1000-plus runs in an innings in any form of cricket.
Apurvi Chandela sets world record; wins Swedish Grand Prix	Chandela shot 211.2 in the event to surpass the feat of Chinese Olympic gold medallist Yi Siling, who held the record with 211.
India's Siril Verma ranked number 1 in Junior Badminton players ranking	BWF - Badminton World Federation
Victoria Azarenka of Belarus wins Brisbane International.	She defeated Angelique Kerber.
Sania, Martina start off 2016 with Brisbane title	The top seeded pair defeated the German wildcards Angelique Kerber and Andrea Petkovic 7-5 6-1
Kyrgios leads Australia to Hopman title	Australians Nick Kyrgios and Daria Gavrilova beat Ukraine's Elina Svitolina and Alexandr Dolgoplov to win the mixed teams Hopman Cup in Perth.
Novak Djokovic beats Rafael Nadal to win Qatar Open title	Score : 6-1, 6-2.
Milos Raonic stuns Federer in Brisbane final	Score : 6-4, 6-4
Stan Wawrinka defends Chennai Open title with ease	Stan defeated Croatian Borna Coric 6-3, 7-5
ICC announces MoneyGram as event partner	Event partner in an eight-year deal from 2016-2023.
India's Test captain Virat Kohli wins the Polly Umrigar Award.	The previous two winners of the prestigious award are pacers Bhuvneshwar Kumar (2013-14) and spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (2012-13).
Lionel Messi wins Ballon d'Or for fifth time	Either Messi or Ronaldo, who became a three-time winner last year, have won the past eight awards.
World Record by Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis Pair	The Unstoppable pair broke a 22-year-old world record by winning their 29th women's doubles match in a row.
Sania Mirza & Martina Hingis pair wins the Sydney title	They defeated Caroline Garcia and Kristina Mladenovic
Marat Safin Inducted Into International Tennis Hall of Fame	Safin - Russian tennis player. The first Hall of Fame members in the International Tennis Hall of Fame were inducted in 1955.
Popov claims 14th Delhi International Open chess title	Ivan Popov – Russian Chess Player

Team India regains top spot in latest ICC Test rankings	India now have 110 ranking points and have one point more than Australia, who are second in the list with 109 points.
Virat Kohli becomes fastest to 24 ODI centuries	
Life time ban imposed on IPL player Ajit Chandila by BCCI	For IPL spot-fixing scandal 2013.
England's Snooker player Ronnie O'Sullivan won Dafabet Master title 2016	He defeated Barry Hawkins on January 17 in the final at London's Alexandra Palace.
Chris Gayle equals fastest 50 in Twenty20 history	In Big Bash League against Adelaide Strikers.
ICC, MRF Tyres announce four-year partnership	Global Partner for ICC events from 2016
Roger Federer Wins 300th Grand Slam Singles Match	Becomes the first man to reach the milestone.
Heena Sidhu wins Olympic quota	She won gold in 10 m air piston in Asia Olympic Qualifiers for Shooting.
Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis wins Australian Open	They defeated Andrea Hlavackova and Lucie Hradecka
ICC T20 rankings: India rise to No. 1 after whitewashing Australia	India : 120 Points. West Indies and Sri Lanka : 118 Points.
Kerber beats Serena to win first Grand Slam title	Kerber, seeded seventh, won a thrilling final 6-4 3-6 6-4 at Melbourne Park.
Djokovic thrashes Murray to claim sixth Australian Open title	Djokovic extended his Grand Slam winning streak to 21 matches
Brazilian Pietro Fittipaldi wins MRF Challenge crown	Venue : Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu
Srikanth wins first Syed Modi Grand rix Gold	He defeated China's Huang Yuxiang in the men's singles final.

OBITUARIES

Name of the Person	Associated Field
Natalie Cole	Famous Singer (Multiple Grammy-winner)
Howard Davis Jr of USA	1976 Olympic Boxer
HD Johar	Former Punjab Assembly Speaker
AB Bardhan	Communist Party of India (CPI) Leader
Raghunandan Mandal	BJP MLA of Jharkhand
SH Kapadia	Former Chief Justice of India
Labhshankar Thakar	Sahitya Akademi Award winner Veteran Gujarati litterateur
Mufti Mohammad Sayeed	Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister
Angus Scrimm	Actor
Ravindra Kalia	Hindi Writer
David Bowie	Musical Superstar
Maria Teresa de Filippis	First female F1 driver
Lt Gen JFR Jacob	1971 India-Pakistan war hero
Alan Rickman	Harry Potter's 'Snape'

Anil Ganguly	Film Maker
Rama Rao	Former Sikkim Governor
Manpreet Akhtar	Punjabi Singer
Yasutaro Koide of Japan	World's Oldest Man
Glen Frey	Guitarist
Geethapriya	Renowned Kannada filmmaker and lyricist
Aroon Tikekar	Senior Journalist
Jihadi John aka Mohammed Emwazi	ISIS
Mrinalini Sarabhai	Bharatnatyam Dancer
Kalpana	Malayalam Actor
Abe Vigoda	Hollywood Actor
Arindham Sen Gupta	Times of India's Managing Editor
Paul Kantner	Musician
KV Krishna Rao	Former Chief of Army Staff
Kollam GK Pillai	Malayalam Actor

OBSERVED DAYS IN JANUARY

Date	Day Observed
January 12	National Youth Day
January 15	Indian Army Day
January 24	National Girl Child Day
January 25	National Voters Day Theme: "Inclusive and Qualitative Participation" Slogan: "No voter should be left behind".
January 27	International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust
January 30	World Leprosy Day & Martyrs Day

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THANK YOU 😊 😊 😊