



# RAJRAS NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

FAST REVISION MODULE

NOV 2015 – NOV 2016

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## **NOVEMBER 2016**

### **November 2016: Important Days**

#### **November 25: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (IDEVAW)**

- Significance: Seeks to raise awareness about violence against women and girls, end the violence against the women.
- 2016 Theme: "Orange the World – raise funds to end violence against women". The orange colour in the theme symbolizes a better future to women and girls all over the globe without the pervasive human rights violation which affects 1 in 3 women and girls all over the globe.



#### **November 19: World Toilet Day**

- Significance: Raise awareness and inspire action to tackle the global sanitation crisis.
- 2016 Theme: "Toilets and jobs". It focuses on how sanitation or the lack of it, can impact on livelihoods.

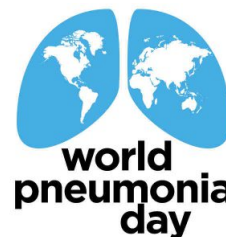


#### **November 16: International Day for Tolerance**

- Significance: Seeks to educate masses about the need for tolerance in society and help them understand the negative effects of intolerance.

#### **November 12: World Pneumonia Day**

- Significance: Generate awareness about the 'pneumonia' disease.
- 2016 Theme: Keep the Promise, Stop Pneumonia Now.



#### **November 10: World Science Day for Peace & Development:**

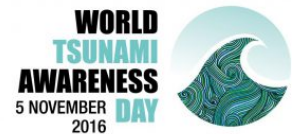
- Significance: To raise awareness of benefits of science in our daily life.

- Theme 2016: “Celebrating Science Centres and Science Museums”. It highlights the importance of science centres and museums for capacity building and to send strong messages about the importance of science for sustainable development.



### November 5: World Tsunami Awareness Day

- Importance : In December 2015, the UN General Assembly designated 5 November as World Tsunami Awareness Day, in order to raise tsunami awareness and share innovative approaches to risk reduction.
- Why 5 Nov: The date for the annual celebration was chosen in honour of the Japanese story of “Inamura-no-hi”, meaning the “burning of the rice sheaves”. During a 1854 earthquake, a farmer saw the tide receding, a sign of a looming tsunami. He set fire to his entire harvest to warn villagers, who fled to high ground. Afterwards, he built an embankment and planted trees as a buffer against future waves.
- Theme 2016: The debut World Tsunami Awareness Day focuses on education and evacuation drills.



## Current Affairs November 2016: News Snippets

### National Current Affairs November:

- Andhra Pradesh Government has launched the ‘Smart Water Distribution Monitoring’ web interface. The monitoring portal is a part of ourvmc.org from where it can be accessed. Using this portal people can check the status of drinking water in the water tanks nearby.
- The *Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)* won the prestigious 2016 Golden Peacock Award for Corporate Governance.
- India’s longest expressway connecting Agra and Lucknow was inaugurated by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav at Bangarmau in Unnao district of UP.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has formed Special Task Force under SS Mundra, Deputy Governor, RBI, to speed up the process of recalibration of automated teller machines (ATM) to dispense the new denomination notes.

- The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) for the first time has deployed a team of women commandos in anti-Naxal operations in Jharkhand. The 135 women commandos belonging to the 232 battalion's Delta company have started carrying out anti-Naxal operations.
- The Supreme Court ordered search engines Google, Yahoo and Microsoft's Bing to immediately stop displaying advertisements relating to pre-natal sex determination tests. It also directed the Union government to constitute a nodal agency to monitor and trigger search engines to crack down on online pre-natal sex determination advertisements.
- Union textile Minister Smriti Irani launched a scheme of 'Pehchan' identity cards to artisans in Ahmedabad.
- Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has extended the *Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)* in three districts of Arunachal Pradesh, which are Tirap, Changlang and Longding. They have been "disturbed area" under Section 3 of the AFSPA.
  - While NSCN-IM has signed agreement with India for peaceful negotiation of their demand of Greater Nagaland other organization such as NSCN-K continue to use violence as means to fulfill their demands, against Indian state.
- *Chhattisgarh Government* has launched *Lakshya Bhagirathi* campaign to complete the irrigation projects that could not be completed.
- The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched Healthy India Initiative magazine and No More Tension mobile App.
  - *Healthy India Magazine* be a quarterly magazine. It will cater to health related information and raise awareness about healthy living.
  - *No More Tension App* will help users to manage stress and will also provide information regarding stress, symptoms and its management.
- Entry to Indian Citizen in *Bengaluru Airport* only through Aadhar Card.
- National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) has commissioned a *50 MW Wind Power Plant in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan*.
  - Mini Ratna Category- I
  - Established: 1975 with Headquarters in Faridabad, Haryana.
- The government is developing a *national data registry (NDR)* that will require all agencies—state, private and academic — that collect and store geospatial data to provide details of the data they store.

- Maharashtra became the first state in the country to have a cyber-police station in each district to take on cyber criminals.
- The Union Government announced that the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 which ensures supply of subsidized food-grains has been implemented across the country. As a result, 81.34 crore persons will get subsidized wheat at Rs. 2 per kg and rice at Rs. 3 per kg. The subsidy implication of about Rs. 1,40,700 crore per year.
- The first titanium production project of India has started its test production Ganjam district of Odisha. The raw material ilmenite would be procured from Odisha Sands Complex (OSCOM), a unit of Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL).
- Kerala has become the third Open Defecation Free state in the country after Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) (Gramin).
- Prime Minister Modi launched the Saur Sujala Yojana in Chhattisgarh, that would provide solar powered irrigation pumps to farmers at a subsidized price.
- 1st November is the day of formation of Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Haryana.
  - Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh: 1956
  - Punjab & Haryana: 1966
  - Chhattisgarh: 2000
- The Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation has enabled online submission of applications by the urban poor for affordable houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana(Urban) from tomorrow. A MOU was signed today by the Ministry of HUPA and Common Services Centre e-Governance Services India Limited of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, in the presence of respective ministers Shri M.Venkiah Naidu and Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad.
- Construction major Hindustan Construction Company (HCC) became India's first firm to get debt recast under RBI's new Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets (S4A). Read about: [S4A](#).
- The Union Government and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have inked a \$500-million loan agreement to build a 9.8 km long road bridge across the Ganga River in Bihar. It will be country's longest river bridge and shall provide better connectivity between North and South Bihar and also Patna and its surrounding areas.

### Pradhan Mantri Yuva Yojana for entrepreneurs

The *Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)* recently announced launch of Pradhan Mantri Yuva Yojana to scale up an ecosystem of entrepreneurship for young people. The scheme was launched as part of events to mark 2nd Foundation Day of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

Highlights of Pradhan Mantri Yuva Yojana (PMYY):

- PMYY is MSDE's flagship scheme on entrepreneurship education and training. The scheme will run for five years (2016-17 to 2020-21) with a project cost of 499.94 crore rupees.
- The scheme will provide entrepreneurship education and training to over 7 lakh students in 5 years through 3,050 institutes. The institutes under the PM's Yuva Yojana include 2,200 institutes of higher learning (colleges, universities, and premier institutes), 300 schools, 500 ITIs and 50 entrepreneurship development centres through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).
- It will also include easy access to information and mentor network, credit, incubator and accelerator and advocacy to create a pathway for the youth.

### First International Agro-biodiversity Congress held at New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, recently inaugurated the first International Agro-biodiversity Congress at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The event was organized by the Indian Society of Plant Genetic Resources and Biodiversity International to discuss conservation of genetic resources.

#### **What is meant by Agro-biodiversity?**

*Agro-biodiversity* is defined as the variety and variability of animals, plants and micro-organisms that are used directly or indirectly for food and agriculture. *Agro-biodiversity* is a vital sub-set of biodiversity and includes all species that are closely inter-woven in an agricultural ecosystem.

#### **Why India as the first venue ?**

India is one of the most diverse countries in the world. It takes up only 2.4 per cent of the world's land area and possesses 7-8 per cent of all recorded species. India is home to over 45000 species of plants and 91000 species of animals (CBD, 2014)

#### **Significance of Agro-biodiversity Congress:**



- The Congress will also prepare a roadmap to enhance food, nutrition and health security by optimal utilization of agro-biodiversity while protecting agro-ecosystems.
- The Congress will provide a platform for knowledge sharing as well as exchange of germplasm, a collective union of germ cells.
- The Congress will also deliberate on the issue of efficient management of gene banks at low cost with the use of new innovative technology.
- The Congress will also lead to increase in cooperation in genetic resources, crop diversification, issues relating to quarantine, biosafety and biosecurity, and intellectual property rights.
- The first Congress has adopted *New Delhi Declaration on Agro-biodiversity Management*.

### **New Delhi Declaration on Agro-biodiversity Management:**

The international congress attended by 900 delegates from 60 countries adopted the New Delhi Declaration. **Key Points of declaration:**

- **Agro-biodiversity conservation:** Participating nations accorded top priority to the agro-biodiversity conservation and their sustainable use towards achieving targets of SDGs relating to poverty alleviation, food and nutritional security, good health, gender equity and partnership.
- **Conservation of traditional knowledge:** The congress recognized the importance of traditional knowledge of farm men-women, tribal-pastoral communities, in conservation of agro-biodiversity, sustainable food-chains and climate resilient world.
- **Use of technology for conservation:** In order to achieve efficiency, equality, economy and environmental security in agricultural production systems and landscapes, the declaration stressed on use of modern technologies including genome technologies & nano-technologies.
- **Research on conservation strategies:** The declaration urged participating nations to initiate, strengthen and promote complementary conservation strategies to conserve both ex situ, in situ agro-biodiversity and adopt on farm conservation strategies to combat food and nutrition insecurity as well as adverse effects of climate change, land degradation and biodiversity loss.



- **Global exchange:** The declaration reemphasized the necessity of global exchange of plant, animal, aquatic microbial and insect genetic resources for food and agriculture to meet the ever-growing food and nutritional needs of each country.
- **Agro-biodiversity index:** The declaration suggests for developing and implementing an agro-biodiversity index to help monitor conservation and use of agro-biodiversity.
- **Year of Agro-biodiversity:** The declaration urged UN to consider declaring soon a 'Year of Agro-biodiversity' to draw worldwide attention and to catalyze urgent action.

### Andhra Pradesh, Telangana Top in Ease of Doing Business

In recently released, World Bank's *Ease of doing Business Report 2017* India stood at 130th position in the world. Now, a sub-ranking of *India's States* on the same Ease of doing business 2015-16 has also been released and *Andhra Pradesh and Telangana* have jointly topped the list.

#### Important Observations from the Report:

- Four of the seven States with the lowest income levels in India have made it to the top 10. These are:
  - Fourth- Chhattisgarh (97.32 % Score),
  - Fifth - Madhya Pradesh (97.01 %),
  - Seventh- Jharkhand (96.57 %),
  - Eighth - Rajasthan (96.43 %)
- All the seven low income level States had an implementation rate of over 75 per cent.
- Last year's topper Gujarat slipped to the third spot.
- States of Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Meghalaya have scores between 0 and 1 on a scale of 100.

#### About Ease of Doing Business Index of Indian States:

- The exercise is conducted by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) and the World Bank and covers the period from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.
- The idea of index was originally conceived under the Make In India campaign, a 98-point action plan for easing the regulatory framework for business at the state level was prepared by

the DIPP in December 2014. A wider action plan was released in September 2015 *covering 340 points*.

- Data is collected from states on a real-time basis and is reflected on the *Business Reform Action Plan portal*.

### **Reasons of India's low ranking in World bank's Ease of Doing Business:**

Over the past two years, the government has implemented a host of reforms to make it easier for businesses to start, operate and exit. It is therefore disappointing that these achievements are not covered by the report due to methodological issues.

- World Bank Group's global Doing Business rankings does not consider reforms undertaken across the country, but just in Mumbai and Delhi. World Bank chief economist *Paul Romer* will visit India in November to specifically look into this methodology issue.
- Important reforms like enactment of introduction of single window system for building plan approvals, bankruptcy code, GST, and online ESIC (Employees' State Insurance Corporation) and EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) registrations were not recognized by the World Bank this year, the ranking should improve better next year when these reforms are accounted.

### **Science & Technology Current Affairs November:**

- India has been ranked 138th in the 2016 ICT Development Index out of a total of 175 countries. In 2015, India ranked 135th position.
- India's first banking robot named *Lakshmi* was launched by the Kumbakonam-based City Union Bank (CUB) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Lakshmi will be first on-site humanoid (robot) in India.
- Facebook's Connectivity Lab has set a world record transmitting at nearly 20 Gbps for 13.2 kilometers using Milli Meter Wave (MMW) technology.
- Doctors from *Netherland* have performed the first-ever brain implant on a 58-year-old woman paralysed by Lou Gehrig's disease (also known as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis-ALS).
- China's '*Sunway Taihulight*' has won the fastest supercomputer title in the recently released 48th edition of Top500 list of supercomputers.

- NASA has successfully launched highly advanced geostationary weather satellite Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite-R (GOES-R).
- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Thiruvananthapuram have developed a *gelator* to recover marine oil spills. Unlike current methods, the newly developed gelator can recover oil from oil-water mixture and the gelator can be reused several times. These gelators were produced using glucose as a starting material.
- The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) has signed a MoU with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi to establish a Joint Advanced Technology Centre (JATC). The JATC will be located in the campus of IIT Delhi at the upcoming Science and Technology Park (Mini-Science Park 'MSP').
- World first *hydrogen-powered* and *zero-emission* passenger train named as *Coradia iLint* was unveiled in Germany. The first of its kind ecofriendly train has been developed by French rail company Alstom. The Coradia iLint only emits excess steam and condensed water into the atmosphere.
- India's first eco-friendly liquefied natural gas (*LNG-driven bus*) was launched in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
  - Please note buses in Delhi and other states are *compressed natural gas* (CNG) based.
- Scientists have detected the presence of water on *Psyche*, the largest metallic asteroid in our solar system.
- Indian archaeologists are planning to use Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) technology to survey the archaeological evidence, flora and fauna in the ancient *Rajgir hills in Bihar*.
- NASA's *Magnetospheric Multiscale (MMS)* mission has set the Guinness world record for highest altitude fix of a Global Positioning System (GPS) signal.
- China has launched world's longest super-secure quantum communication line: connecting *Hefei*, capital of Anhui province to *Shanghai*, the country's financial hub. The super-secure quantum communication line is 712-km in length. It boasts of ultra-high security making it impossible to wiretap, intercept or crack the information transmitted through them.

**Environment Current Affairs November 2016:**

- Environment Ministry has constituted Four-Member Team for Conservation of Loktak Lake, Manipur
  - Loktak lake is a Ramsar Wetland and famous for the *phumdis* or floating plants.
  - The [Keibul Lamjao National Park](#) lies surrounding loktak lake. It is natural site of Sangai (State animal of Manipur) deer, which is classified as endangered by IUCN.
- The world's first Genetic Garden of Halophytes (naturally occurring salt-tolerant plants) was inaugurated at the coastal town of Vedaranyam in Tamil Nadu.

**Defence Current Affairs November 2016:**

- As part of the ongoing India Bangladesh defence cooperation, a joint military training exercise **SAMPRITI 2016** is being conducted at **Tangail, Dhaka, Bangladesh** from **05 to 18 November 2016**.
- The Indian Navy has formally inducted four types of indigenously developed sonars that will boost its underwater surveillance capability. These 4 types of sonars are *Abhay, Humsa, AIDSS and NACS*.
- The sixth edition of India-China Joint Training Exercise "*Hand in Hand 2016*" has started in Pune, Maharashtra.
- The tenth edition of India-Nepal Joint Military Training exercise- *Surya Kiran*- was conducted at Army Battle School (NABS), Saljhandi in Nepal from 31 October to 13 November 2016.

**International Current Affairs November:**

- Colombian Government has signed revised peace agreement with the country's largest rebel movement, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The revised document was signed between *President Juan Manuel Santos* and FARC leader Rodrigo Londono in *Bogota, capital city of Colombia*. President Juan Manuel Santos is the sole recipient of *2016 Nobel Peace Prize*.

- *Iran* for the first time ever has surpassed Saudi Arabia to become India's top crude oil supplier. It was revealed by ship tracking data and a report compiled by Thomson Reuters Oil Research and Forecasts.
- India and Cyprus have inked a revised Agreement for Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal evasion (DTAA) with respect to taxes on income, along with its Protocol.
- Techno Park to be made in Ramallah, Palestine with help from IIT- Chennai.
- The Union Government has imposed anti-dumping duty on imports of steel wire rods from China to protect domestic manufacturers from cheap in-bound shipments.
- India and Venezuela have signed an oil production deals worth about 1.45 billion US dollar to increase oil production. The agreement was signed between Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), Venezuelas Petroleos de Venezuela SA (PDVSA), and Venezuela's consortium Delta Finance BV in Caracas.
- The 2016 *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)* Leaders Summit will be held in Lima, Peru from November 19 to 20, 2016. The theme of the summit is "Quality Growth and Human Development" and the official logo is the architecture of the ancient city of *Caral*.
  - APEC is regional economic forum of 21 Pacific Rim member countries and promotes free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region. These 21 member countries collectively account for nearly 50% of the world's trade and about 57% of GDP.

### India Japan sign Civil Nuclear Deal

Six years after the negotiations began, *India and Japan* finally signed the historic civilian nuclear deal during the annual bilateral summit held in Tokyo. Negotiations which began in 2010 during the UPA government were stuck on India's non-NPT status as Japan sought assurances that the deal would be used for peaceful purposes. Further, India did not fit into Japan's 'Hikaku San Gensoku' or three non-nuclear principles. These principles adopted in a resolution by Japanese parliament provide that Japan would neither possess nor manufacture nuclear weapons, nor shall it permit their introduction into Japanese territory.

This deal marks a fundamental shift in Japan's policy and India is the first non-NPT signatory with which Japan now has a pact.

**India's gains from the Civil Nuclear deal:**

**Improve India's option for Nuclear Reactors & parts:**

- The deal will bring Japan into the Indian nuclear market where France and Russia have already have a strong presence. Apart from the Russian reactors, the nuclear reactors planned with France and the U.S. depend on Japanese parts. The deal will facilitate use of Japanese parts.
- Further, GE, Westinghouse, and Areva, the companies that are planning reactors in India have important ownership stakes of Japanese companies Hitachi Ltd, Toshiba and Mitsubishi. These companies were stopped from doing business with India without a final nuclear deal.

**Positive impact on India's bid to NSG:**

- The nuclear deal comes as the NSG is meeting in Vienna to discuss if non-NPT (nuclear non-proliferation Treaty) countries like India can enter this exclusive group. The India-Japan civil nuclear deal will have a positive impact.

**Improve India-Japan Relationship:**

- The nuclear deal reflects a new level of mutual confidence and strategic partnership between India & Japan. Apart from Nuclear field, cooperation in other fields such as trade, terrorism, clean energy, climate change, high speed railway (bullet trains) has potential to reach new levels in future.

**Concerns of Civil Nuclear:****Japan's option to scarp the Nuclear Deal:**

- Japan Times has reported that the deal includes the option that Japan can give a year's notice before terminating the deal, in case, India breaks the nuclear testing moratorium that it had extended to the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 2008.

**The deal is not valid unless ratified by Japan's Parliament:**

- The Nuclear deal can only be implemented after it is ratified by the *Diet*, Japan's parliament.

**Person in NEWS November 2016:**

- *Pankaj Patel* was elected as the President of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) for the year 2017.
- *António Costa*, the Indian origin Prime Minister of Portugal will be the chief guest at the 14th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention. The PBD Convention is scheduled to be held from January 7 to 9, 2017 in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- High energy particle physicist and an institution builder of Indian science Prof. *M G K Menon* passed away.
- Indian journalist *Malini Subramaniam* was conferred with the 2016 International Press Freedom Award. She has been honored for her reporting from the Naxal-infested Bastar area and for the commitment to a free press.
- The Union Government has appointed *Yudhvair Singh Malik* as the Chairman of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).
- US President-elect Donald Trump has named Indian-American Governor of South Carolina State, *Nikki Haley* for the high-profile post of US ambassador to the United Nations.
- Madhya Pradesh Government has selected renowned theatre personality *Prof Raj Bisaria* for the prestigious 'Kalidas Samman' national award for 2015-16.
- Union government has appointed *Jagdish Singh Khehar*, a judge of the Supreme Court, as the new Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).
- Noted flautist *Pandit Hari Prasad Chourasia* was conferred 2016 *Sumitra Charat Ram Award* for lifetime achievement in the field of Indian classical music.
- The Union Government has appointed *Praveen Kumar Sharma* as the Central Registrar (CR), Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Central Registry of Securitisation Asset Reconstruction and Security Interest of India (CERSAI).
- Union Ministry of Railways has appointed Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak (73), the founder of Sulabh International as a Brand Ambassador for Swachh Rail Mission of Indian Railway.
- Sushil Chandra, IRS (1980 Batch), today took over as the Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)
- India born Sarabjit Singh Marwah has become the first Sikh to be appointed to the Canadian Senate (upper house).



- '*An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India*' authored by Dr. Shashi Tharoor - was released by Vice-President Hamid Ansari.
- Indian lawyer, *Aniruddha Rajput* (33) has been elected as a member International Law Commission (ILC). LC was established by the UNGA in 1947 to undertake the mandate of UN to ensure promotion and progressive development of International law and its codification. It holds an annual session at the UN Office at Geneva.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed *M Rajeshwar Rao* as Executive Director (ED) following voluntary retirement of G Mahalingam.
- *Guy Ryder* from United Kingdom has been re-elected Director-General of the *International Labour Organization* (ILO) for a second five-year term.
- California's Attorney General *Kamala Harris* created history by becoming the first India-American to win the US Senate (upper chamber) seat from the state. She belongs to Republican party.

#### Sports Current Affairs November 2016:

- Indian Women's hockey team has won the 2016 Asian Champions Trophy held in Singapore.
- India's ace shuttler and Olympic silver medalist PV Sindhu has won the \$700,000 2016 China Open Super Series title in women's category. It was her maiden Super Series Premier title and first post 2016 Rio Olympics title.
- International Master Padmini Rout has won the 2016 National Women Premier Chess Championship.
- Aditi Ashok (18) became the first Indian woman to win a Ladies European Tour title. She achieved this feat by winning the Hero Women's Indian Open held at the DLF Golf and Country Club in Gurugram, Haryana. She won a prize purse of 60,000 dollar.

## OCTOBER 2016

### October Important Days

#### 2 October: International Day of Non-Violence

- The International Day of Non-violence is being celebrated on 2 October throughout the world on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- It was established by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) by passing the resolution in 2007 in an effort to spread the message of non-violence.

#### 3 October: World Habitat Day

- World Habitat Day (WHD) is observed every year on the first Monday of October throughout the world. This year it was observed on 3 October 2016.
- 2016 Theme: "Housing at the Centre".
- It aims to raise awareness about need for affordable housing for all in urban areas, cities and towns.



#### 9 October: World Post Day

- To spread awareness about the postal services and their role in the everyday lives of people and businesses.
- 2016 Theme: "Innovation, Integration and Inclusion".

#### 10 October: World Mental Health Day

- It's a day first celebrated in 1992 at the initiative of the World Federation for Mental Health, a global mental health organization.
- Theme 2016: Psychological first aid
- The hashtag #Glitch is being used by Twitter users to share their stories and help promote World Mental Health Day 2016.



**11 October: International day of Girl Child**

- The observance of the day seeks to increase awareness of gender inequality faced by girls worldwide based upon their gender and supports more opportunity for girls.
- 2016 Theme: "Girls' Progress = Goals' Progress: What Counts for Girls". It calls for action for increased investment in collecting and analyzing girl-relevant, girl-focused and sex-disaggregated data.

**13 October: International Day for Disaster Reduction**

- In 2009, the UNGA designated 13 October as the annual date by adopting Resolution 64/200.
- Significance of the day: It seeks to spread awareness about reining the risks of disasters around the world and also reduce exposure of people and communities to disasters.
- 2016 Theme: "Live to Tell: Raising Awareness, Reducing Mortality".
- The 2016 edition marks the launch of the new "Sendai Seven" campaign, centered on the seven targets of the Sendai Frame.

**15 October: International Day for Rural Women:**

- Significance of the day: Highlights the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women in enhancing rural and agricultural development, eradicating rural poverty and improving food security.
- 2016 Theme: "Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too".

**15 October: World Student Day:**

- Avul Pakir Jainul-abdeen Abdul Kalam, famous as Dr. A.P. J. Abdul Kalam, was born on 15 October 1931 in Rameshwaram, Madras Presidency, British India. Post his unfortunate demise last year on 27 July, UNO in a fitting tribute, announced his birthday (15 October) as World Student Day.

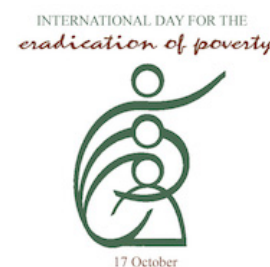


**16 October: World Food Day:**

- Why 16th October: To mark foundation of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations in 1945.
- Significance of Day: It aims to raise public awareness about hunger challenges and encourage people around the world to take action in the fight against hunger.
- 2016 Theme: "Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too". It highlights the issue of food security related to climate change. It calls adopting sustainable practices for growing more food with less area of land and use natural resources wisely.

**17 October: International day for Eradication of Poverty:**

- Significance of Day: It seeks to promote awareness among people to eradicate poverty and destitution around the world particularly in developing countries
- 2016 Theme: "Moving from humiliation and exclusion to participation: Ending poverty in all its forms".

**24 October: United Nations Day:**

- Why on 24 October: anniversary of the entry into force of the UN Charter (the founding document of UNO) in 1945.
- 2016 Theme: "Freedom First" - highlight concrete actions people can take to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

**28 October: National Ayurveda Day:**

- Why 28 October: occasion of Dhanwantari Jayanti
- 2016 Theme: Ayurveda for Prevention and Control of Diabetes'.



**31 October: World Cities day:**

- Significance: To promote international community's interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization, and contributing to sustainable urban development around the world.
- 2016 Theme: "Inclusive Cities, Shared Development". The theme highlights the role of urbanization as a source of global development and social inclusion.

**Current Affairs Summary: October News Bits:****October NEWS: Important Topics:****Hriday**

- The Union Ministry of Urban Development has approved projects worth Rs.114 crore under HRIDAY scheme for improving infrastructure facilities around core heritage sites in five cities.
- These five cities are: Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Amritsar (Punjab), Dwarka (Gujarat), Puri (Odisha) and Warangal (Telangana).

**Payment Banks new Regulations**

- Payment Banks new regulations: RBI has notified entities been granted a payments bank (PB) licence will need to take specific approval for products they would be offering to customers.

**LIGO Project:**

- Maharashtra Government has allocated 40.68 hectare land to Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) to build LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory) India Project at Dudhala village in Hingoli district.

**GSAT-18 launched:**

- India's latest communication satellite GSAT-18 was successfully launched from the spaceport of Kourou in French Guiana. GSAT-18 will provide services like television, telecommunication, VSAT and digital satellite news gathering.

**Indian Bridge Management System:**

- Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has launched the Indian Bridge Management System (IBMS).
- It will create an inventory of all bridges in country and rate structural condition of the bridges.
- The rating will help for their timely repair and carrying rehabilitation work based on the criticality of the structure.
- Each bridge will be assigned a unique identification number or National Identity Number (NIN) based on the state, RTO zone or located on National Highway, State Highway.

**Ease of Doing Business:**

- India has been placed at 130th position among the 190 countries in the recently released World Bank's ease of doing business index for the year 2017.

<b>TABLE 2.1 What <i>Doing Business</i> measures—11 areas of business regulation</b>	
<b>Indicator set</b>	<b>What is measured</b>
Starting a business	Procedures, time, cost and paid-in minimum capital to start a limited liability company
Dealing with construction permits	Procedures, time and cost to complete all formalities to build a warehouse and the quality control and safety mechanisms in the construction permitting system
Getting electricity	Procedures, time and cost to get connected to the electrical grid, the reliability of the electricity supply and the transparency of tariffs
Registering property	Procedures, time and cost to transfer a property and the quality of the land administration system
Getting credit	Movable collateral laws and credit information systems
Protecting minority investors	Minority shareholders' rights in related-party transactions and in corporate governance
Paying taxes	Payments, time and total tax rate for a firm to comply with all tax regulations as well as post-filing processes
Trading across borders	Time and cost to export the product of comparative advantage and import auto parts
Enforcing contracts	Time and cost to resolve a commercial dispute and the quality of judicial processes
Resolving insolvency	Time, cost, outcome and recovery rate for a commercial insolvency and the strength of the legal framework for insolvency
Labor market regulation	Flexibility in employment regulation and aspects of job quality

**Gender Gap Index**

- India has been ranked 87th out of 144 countries on the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2016.
- India has climbed 21 spots from 108th position in 2015.
- The report measures gender gap as progress towards parity between men and women in four areas
  - (i) Educational attainment,
  - (ii) Health and survival,
  - (iii) Economic opportunity,
  - (iv) Political empowerment.

**Global Hunger Index:**

India has been ranked low 97th among the 118 countries surveyed in 2016 Global Hunger Index (GHI). In 2016 GHI, India scored low score of 28.5 on a 0-100 point scale of the index. The Index describes India's hunger situation as "serious. The index was released by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

**World Sustainable Development Summit**

- President Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated the first edition of World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.
- The summit was organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).
- Theme:- Beyond 2015: People, Planet and Progress.

**Public Debt Management Cell:**

- Union Finance Ministry has set up a Public Debt Management Cell (PDMC) with the objective of deepening bond markets in the country.
- Debt Management Cell will take up Debt Management of Union government from RBI.



**Arbitration Center:**

- The first International Arbitration Centre of India was inaugurated in Mumbai, Maharashtra to provide an arbitration platform for Indian business houses to negotiate commercial disputes.

**High-efficiency Solar cell:**

- For the first time, Indian researcher has successfully produced a stable, high-efficiency, all-inorganic perovskite nanocrystal solar cells. It was produced by Abhishek Swarnkar, a research scholar from the Department of Chemistry at Pune's Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER)
- In another NEWS, Researchers from Kolkata based Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) have produced cost-effective, metal-free cathodes using human hair for use in solar cells. Significance: This is the first instance where a bio-waste-derived electrode (in this case human hair) has been used as cathode in a quantum dot sensitised solar cell device.

**Himansh**

- A high altitude glaciological research station in Himalaya called Himansh (meaning a slice of ice) began functioning above 13,500 ft (4000 m) in a remote region in Spiti, Himachal Pradesh.

**United Group:**

- Vice-President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Hamid Ansari has recognized a group of 22 MPs belonging to smaller parties and certain Independents as a consolidated bloc — the United Group.
- With this recognition the United Group, will be the third largest group of MPs in the Rajya Sabha, after the Congress and the BJP.

**PM Visits Himachal Pradesh**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated three hydro-electric projects (HEPs) with a generating capacity of 1,732 MW in Himachal Pradesh. These three hydro-electric projects are

- Koldam HEP: It is 4×200 MW capacity project executed by National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC).
- Parbati HEP: It is Stage-III project with a capacity of 530 MW of National Hydropower Corporation (NHPC).
- Rampur HEP: It is 412 MW capacity project of Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN).

### Inter-State Council

Recently, news of Union Ministers Smriti Irani and D.V.Sadananda Gowda being dropped from Inter-State Council, came up. The NDA Government, in July 2016, constituted inter-state council after a gap of 10 years. Lets look at various aspects of this Inter-State Council:

#### **What is Inter-State Council?**

Article 263 of the Constitution, contemplates to establishment of Inter-State Council to effect coordination between states and between Union & States. The Council is a recommendatory body to investigate and discuss subjects, in which some or all of the states or the union government have a common interest and recommend ways for the better coordination of policy and action between states.

The inter-state council is not a permanent constitutional body and can be established 'at any time' if it appears to the President that the public interests would be served by the establishment of such a council. Further, he can define the nature of duties to be performed by council, its organization and working procedure.

#### **When was first Inter-state Council organized ?**

The *Sarkaria Commission* on Centre-State relations recommended setting up of permanent Inter-State Council under Article 263. Acting on the recommendation, V.P Singh Government established the Inter-State Council through a Presidential Order dated 28 May 1990.

#### **Composition of the Council:**

The Council consists of:

- Prime Minister who is the chairman,
- Chief ministers of all states who are members,
- Chief ministers of union territories having legislative assemblies.

- Administrators of Union Territories
- Six union ministers of cabinet rank in the union council of ministers, including home minister, nominated by the prime minister

In present council - Six Union Ministers included are:

- Home Minister Rajnath Singh,
- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley,
- Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar,
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj,
- Minister for Information and Broadcasting M Venkiah Naidu
- Road Transport Highways and Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari.

#### **Meetings of Inter-State Council:**

The inter-state council has met for ten times and in seven of those meetings, the council had discussed recommendations of the Sarkaria commission. Out of a total of 247 recommendations, 180 recommendations were accepted by the council.

The tenth and last meeting of inter-state council was held in December 2006 which focussed on status of implementation of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989.

#### **What are zonal council meetings?**

The Inter-State Council is assisted by Secretariat, which is headed by a Secretary to the Government of India. Under the home ministry, the secretariat, also organizes the zonal council meetings on the same lines as the inter-state council meeting and is chaired by the union home minister.

The five zones under it are east, central, north, west and south. In the run up to the national meet, a meeting of North Eastern Council (NEC) is also held where chief ministers of all the north-east states are invited.

#### **The 11th Inter-State Council:**

The present NDA government has recently, reconstituted the Inter State Council and the Standing Committee, under Clause 2 of the Inter State Council order, 1990.

The Standing Committee will be chaired by home minister, Rajnath Singh. Its members are Ms. Swaraj, Mr. Jaitley, Mr. Naidu and Mr. Gadkari as well as the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Chattisgarh, Tripura, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Additionally, if the the Standing

Committee finds it necessary, it may invite experts and persons eminent in specific fields to have the benefit of their views while deliberation upon the related subjects.

**Functions of Standing Committee:**

- Standing Committee would have continuous consultation and process matters for consideration of the Council
- Process all matters pertaining to Centre State Relations before they are taken up for consideration in the Inter-State Council;
- Monitor the implementation of decisions taken on the recommendations of the Council;
- Consider any other matter referred to it by the Chairman/Council.

The council and the committee have been formed to "create a strong institutional framework to promote and support cooperative federalism in the country".

**Points to Remember: Inter-State Council**

- Constitutional body under article 263
- Based on recommendation of Sarkaria Commission
- Nature: Advisory /Recommendatory
- Not a permanent body
- Headed by PM
- Standing Committee/ Zonal meetings: Headed by Home Minister

**National Day of Ayurveda: Launched**

*Ayurveda*, India's natural system of healing has spread worldwide as an innovative and comprehensive system of mind-body medicine. Recognizing the importance of Ayurveda, Ministry of AYUSH decided to celebrate the National Ayurveda Day every year on *Dhanwantari Jayanti* (*Dhanteras*). This year, it was celebrated on 28th October 2016.

**Why on Dhanteras?**

Well because, Dhanteras is originally Dhanvantari Jayanti. So *Who is Dhanvantri?*

According to Hindu mythology(Bhagwat Purana), Dhanvantari is the form of Lord Vishnu, who arose from the Samudra Manthana. Lord Dhanvantari holds the nectar pot of immortality that grants optimal health, extending to rejuvenation of body and mind.

The *Sushruta Samhita* narrates how Dhanvantari, incarnated himself as Divodāsa, a mythical king of Varanasi, who then taught medicine to a group of wise physicians, including Sushruta himself

He is the ideal doctor and manifestation of compassion, representing the wisdom of ayurveda in practical application. His image can be found at ayurvedic schools and clinics, where mantras to him are chanted daily.

### What is Ayurveda?

**Ayurveda**, which literally means the science of life (Ayur = Life, Veda = Science), is an ancient medical science, incorporated in *Atharva Veda*, the last of the four Vedas. It follows a holistic approach to maintain health as well as fighting illness through therapies, massages, herbal medicines, diet control and exercise.

Ayurveda also names three elemental substances, the *doshas* (called Vata, Pitta and Kapha), and states that a balance of the doshas results in health, while imbalance results in disease. Some of the oldest known Ayurvedic texts include the *Suśrutha Samhitā* and *Charaka Samhitā*, which are written in Sanskrit.



### Theme 2016: Ayurveda for Prevention & Control of Diabetes

India has seen a surge in the incidence of diabetes over the last 15 years, especially among the younger generation and the focus of the government is on youth and pregnant women. Since mental stress could be one of the important reasons behind diabetes, a holistic management of the disease is required including Ayurveda, Unani, Naturopathy, Yoga and lifestyle management.

Since, Ayurveda touches the entire way of life, we can look towards Ayurveda not only for treatment purposes but also for the promotion of a healthy life. Consequently, the “**Mission Madhumeh through Ayurveda**” was launched and declared as the first theme for the year 2016. This would help to generate awareness about prevention and control and to promote efforts of research through year long activities.

Three renowned Practitioners, Academicians & Researchers of Ayurveda received the **National Dhanwantari Ayurveda Awards**. They are:

- Prof. Premwati Tiwari,
- Shri Parshuram Yashawant Vaidya Khadiwale
- Vaidya P. R. Krishna Kumar

### **What is Diabetes? Quick Facts**

Diabetes, often referred to by doctors as **diabetes mellitus**, describes a *group of metabolic diseases* in which the person has *high blood glucose* (blood sugar), either because *insulin production is inadequate*, or because *the body's cells do not respond properly to insulin*, or both.

**Diabetes is of three types:**

#### **A) Type 1 diabetes**

- Here, the body *does not produce* insulin.
- Approximately 10% of all diabetes cases are type 1.
- As the body doesnot produce insulin, patients with type 1 diabetes will need to regularly take *insulin injections*.

#### **B) Type 2 diabetes**

- In type 2, the body does not produce enough insulin for proper function, or the cells in the body do not react to insulin, either case there is insulin resistance in the body.
- Approximately 90% of all cases of diabetes worldwide are type 2.
- Overweight and obese people have a much higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes compared to those with a healthy body weight. Some people may be able to control their type 2 diabetes symptoms by losing weight, following a healthy diet, doing plenty of exercise, and monitoring their blood glucose levels.

#### **C) Gestational diabetes**

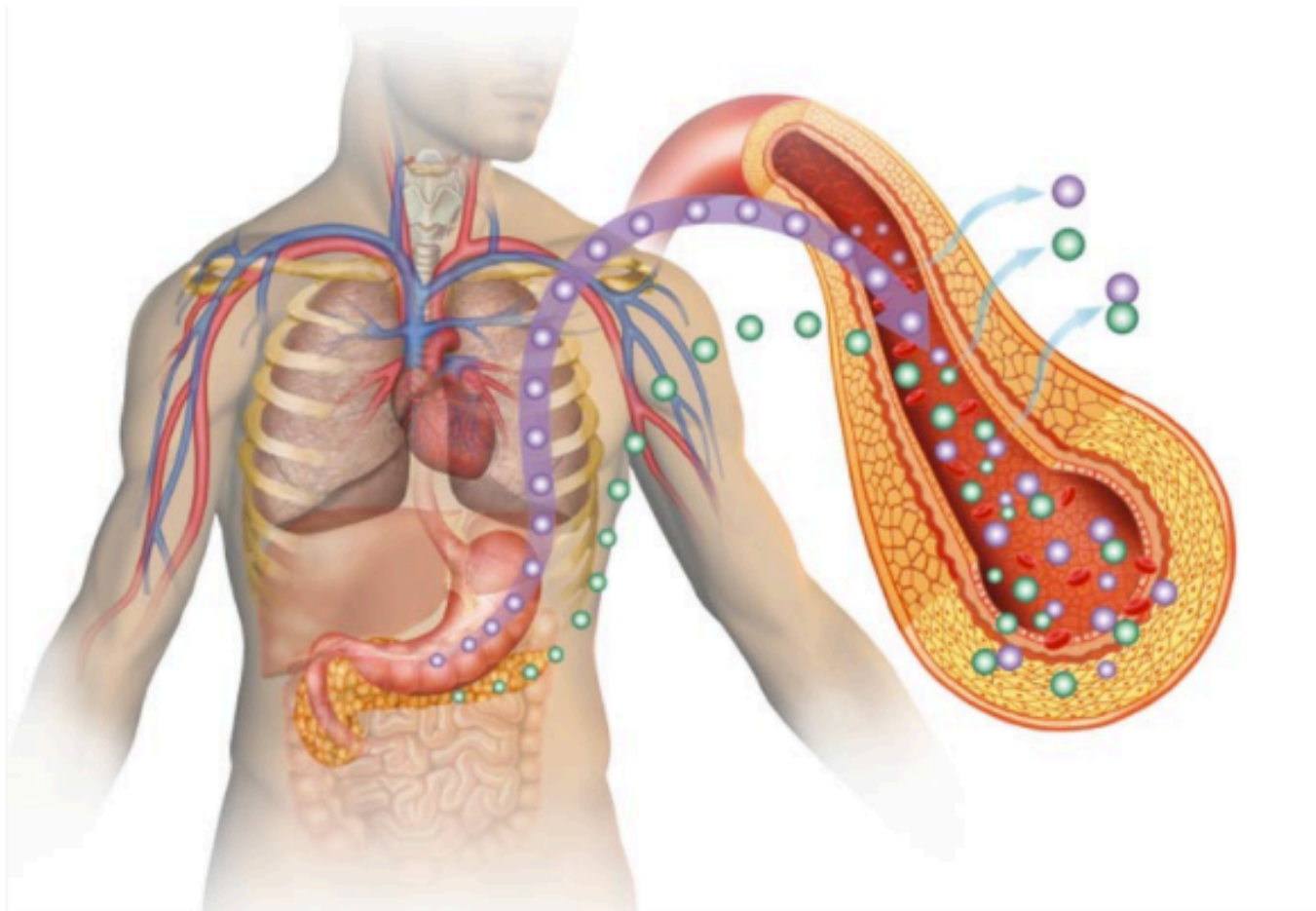
- This type affects females during pregnancy. Like type 1 and type 2 diabetes, gestational diabetes causes blood sugar levels to become too high.
- When a women is pregnant, her body naturally becomes more resistant to insulin so that more glucose is available to nourish the baby. But for some, blood sugar levels rise too high because the cells aren't using the glucose. This results in gestational diabetes. Gestational diabetes

needs to be recognized and treated quickly because it can cause health problems for mother and baby.

- Unlike other types of diabetes, gestational diabetes isn't permanent. Once a baby is born, blood sugar will most likely return to normal quickly.

## Insulin

Insulin is a hormone made by the [\*pancreas\*](#) that allows your body to use sugar (glucose) from carbohydrates in the food that you eat for energy or to store glucose for future use.



Insulin is like a key that opens up the locks on your body's cells so that glucose (blood sugar) can get inside and be used for energy. If the glucose cannot get into your cells, it builds up in your blood stream. If left untreated, high blood glucose can cause long-term complications.



### Draft National Water Framework Bill 2016

Recently, The Union Government came up with Draft of *National Water Framework Bill, 2016* aimed to *develop and manage river basins* in an integrated manner to provide equitable share of water. The draft also proposes to establish *river basin authority* for each inter-state basin to ensure optimum and sustainable development of rivers and valleys. The Bill is yet to get a nod from the union cabinet, after which it will be introduced in the parliament for further approval.

Before, going into the details of bill, it is important to understand the position of water w.r.t India's Constitution.

#### Water is State Subject

The primary entry in the Constitution relating to water is *Entry 17 in the State List*, but it is explicitly made subject to the provisions of *Entry 56 in the Union List*, which enables the Union to deal with inter-State rivers if Parliament legislates for the purpose. What does this mean?

This means that if Parliament considers it “in the public interest” that the “regulation and development” of an inter-State river, say the Ganga, should be “under the control of the Union”, it can enact a law to that effect, and that law will give the Union legislative (and therefore executive) powers over that river. That enabling provision has not been used by Parliament yet. No law has been passed bringing any river under the control of the Union.

Under Entry 56, Parliament *did enact the River Boards Act 1956* providing for the establishment of River Boards for inter-State rivers, but no such board has been established under the Act. The reasons are political, i.e., strong resistance by State governments to any enhancement of the role of the Central government.

Hence, this bill if passed normally would not be binding on State Governments. It will serve as a model bill for the states, giving them a framework to come out with local laws to use and conserve water.

#### The Provisions of Water Framework Bill:

- Considers the provision of *Right to Water for life* and says that every person has a right to sufficient quantity of safe water for life within easy reach of the household.
- The appropriate government shall strive towards rejuvenating river systems with community participation, ensuring:
  - (a) ‘AviralDhara’- continuous flow in time and space including maintenance of connectivity of flow in each river system;

- (b) 'Nirmal Dhara'- unpolluted flow so that the quality of river waters is not adversely affected by human activities; and
  - (c) 'Swachh Kinara' – clean and aesthetic river banks.
- Considers Water as common heritage of the people of India, held in public trust. Hence, States must recognize the principle that the rivers are public trustees and not owned by the basin-States.
- Establishing River Basin Authority (RBA) for each inter-State basin to ensure optimum and sustainable development of rivers and valleys.
- All basin states have equitable rights over the use of river water provided such use does not violate the right to water for life of any person in the river basin. All the basin States are equal in rights and status, and there is no hierarchy of rights among them. The upper basin state shall adopt a cautious and minimalist approach to major interventions in inter-state rivers; provide advance information to the 25 lower basin states about plans for intervention; consult them at all stages on possible impacts; and take care to avoid significant harm or injury to them.
- Managing water at river basin-level and right measurement of State's contribution to river system to in order to resolve conflicts.
- Establishing institutional arrangements to deal with inter-state water disputes in order to "obviate" disputes through negotiations, mediation or conciliation.
- Proposes other mechanisms such as National water quality and footprint standards, Integrated river basin development and management plan and Graded pricing system.

### Sagarmala: Program for Port-led Development

A recent report has highlighted that Government's ambitious push to port-led development under the Sagarmala project will help in saving as much as *INR 35,000 - 40, 000 Crore per annum in logistic costs by year 2025*. The report pointed out significant potential for moving raw materials and finished products using coastal shipping and inland waterways which is 60-80% cheaper than road or rail transport.

Here's a look at various aspects of Sagarmala Project.

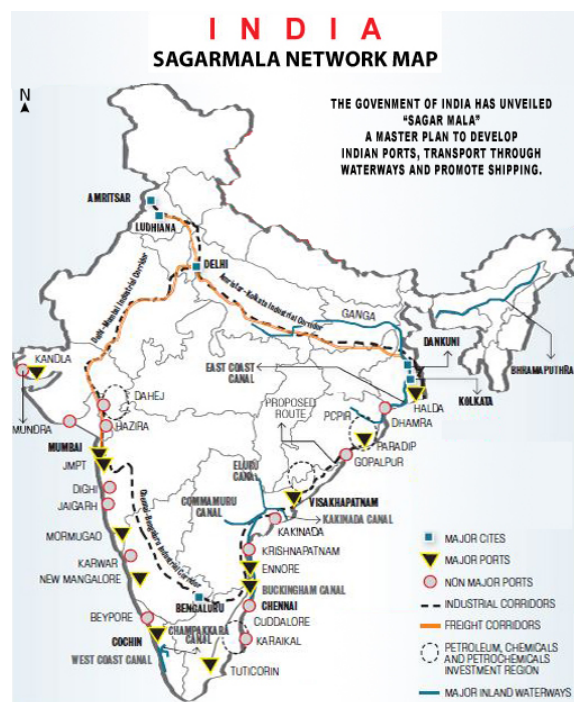
#### Background of Sagarmala Project:

The idea of the Project was first envisaged in August 2003, when the NDA Government had announced a *Sagarmala project*, which targeted a total investment of Rs.1 Lakh crore for direct and indirect development of the port sector. In 2005, UPA government renamed the project to *National Maritime Development Programme*. Later in 2010, the UPA-II government launched *Maritime Agenda 2010-20* with an objective to create a port capacity of around 3200 MT to handle the expected traffic of about 2500 MT by 2020.

In 2014, when NDA government again came to power, it revitalized the project and again renamed it to its original name "*Sagarmala Project*". March 2015, the cargo handling capacity stands at 871 Million Metric tonnes.

### What is Sagarmala Project?

It is a project to modernize India's Ports so that port-led development can be augmented and coastlines can be developed to contribute in India's growth. The project aims to harness India's 7,500-km long coastline and 14,500-km of potentially navigable waterways.



### Objectives of Sagarmala Project:

The prime objective of the Sagarmala project is to *promote port-led direct and indirect development* and to provide infrastructure to transport goods to and from ports quickly, efficiently and cost-effectively. It looks towards "transforming the existing Ports into modern world class Ports and integrate the development of the Ports, the Industrial clusters and hinterland and efficient evacuation systems

through road, rail, inland and coastal waterways resulting in Ports becoming the drivers of economic activity in coastal areas.

*How will it achieve this?*

**Three Pillars of Sagarmala Project:**

- Supporting and enabling Port-led Development through appropriate policy interventions and providing for an institutional framework for integrated development.
- Port Infrastructure Enhancement, including modernization and setting up of new ports.
- Efficient Evacuation to and from hinterland.

*So what has Government done to achieve the aim?*

*Firstly, Government has created an administrative framework.*

**National Sagarmala Apex Committee (NSAC)**

At apex level, a National Sagarmala Apex Committee (NSAC), headed by Union Minister in-charge of Shipping, has been created to provide overall policy guidance. In April 2016, NSAC prepared and approved *National Perspective Plan* for the Sagarmala programme.

**Sagarmala Coordination and Steering Committee (SCSC)**

SCSC Committee has been constituted to coordinate between various ministries, state governments and agencies connected with implementation and review the progress of implementation of the National Perspective Plan, Detailed Master Plans and projects. The Committee looks into financing options for the funding of projects, possibility of public-private partnership in the projects.

**Sagarmala Development Company (SDC)**

In September 2016, Union Government incorporated the Sagarmala Development Company (SDC) under the Companies Act, 2013. It would have an initial Authorized Share Capital of Rs. 1,000 Crore and a Subscribed Share Capital of Rs. 90 Crore

The company would serve as a nodal agency for coordination and monitoring of Sagarmala project.

*Secondly, Government has taken up development of various projects under National Perspective Plan.*

**National Perspective Plan:**

The national perspective plan has been prepared and approved by National Sagarmala Apex Committee (NSAC). It integrates the Industrial Corridors, Dedicated Freight Corridors, National Highway Development Programme, Industrial Clusters and so on.

- A total of 173 projects have been initially identified under four projects archetypes in National Perspective Plan.

S.No	Project Archetype	Number of Projects
1	Port Modernisation	53
2	Port Connectivity	83
3	Port Led Industrialisation	29
4	Coastal Community development	8

- 26 *Port Rail Connectivity Projects* were identified under NPP, of which 2 have been completed and 18 are under implementation by Ministry of Railways.
- Six Mega-ports have been planned:
  - West Bengal: *Sagar Island*
  - Tamil Nadu: *Colachel*
  - Gujarat: *Wadhwan*
  - Karnataka: *Tadadi*
  - Andhra Pradesh: *Machilipatnam*

### Benefits of Sagarmala Project:

The Sagarmala project would help in reducing cost for both the domestic as well as export-import (EXIM) cargo, as movement of raw materials and finished products through coastal shipping and inland waterways would be 60-80% cheaper than road and rail transport.

- A recent study has revealed that the project will help in saving as much as *INR 35,000 - 40,000 Crore per annum in logistic costs by year 2025*.
- The programme would increase the share of inland waterways and coastal shipping in the modal mix from 6% to 12%.
- According to the study, the cost of power generation *would get reduced by Rs.0.50 per unit of power* as the programme would enable smooth and efficient movement of coal through coastal route. The cost of coal logistics makes up for 35% of the cost of power production.

### Difference with Bharat-mala Project:

- Bharatmala is an ambitious **road and highways** project of Union Government.
- It plans to cover northern states starting from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Himalayan states -



Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, borders of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and North-eastern states of Sikkim, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, up to the Indo-Myanmar border in Manipur and Mizoram.

### Regional Connectivity Scheme: UDAN

Civil Aviation Minister Shri P Ashok Gajapathi Raju launched the Ministry's much awaited *Regional Connectivity Scheme "UDAN"* in New Delhi. UDAN or **Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik** - is an innovative scheme to develop the regional aviation market aiming to make flying a reality for the small town common man.

The scheme will take-off by Jan 2017 and continue for 10 years.

#### Objectives of UDAN:

- UDAN envisages providing connectivity to un-served and under-served airports of the country through revival of existing air-strips and airports.
- Objective of the scheme is **"Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik"** i.e. making flying a reality for the small town common man..
- The scheme aims to ensure *affordability, connectivity, growth and development*.
- It aims to increase ticketing volume from 80 million to 300 million by 2022.

#### Features of UDAN:

- Airfares would be capped at Rs 2,500 for half of the seats in flights traveling a distance of 476-500 kilometer. This translates to around a one-hour journey.
- It would provide a win-win situation for all stakeholders:
  - Citizens would get the benefit of affordability, connectivity and more jobs.
  - For incumbent airlines there is the promise of new routes and more passengers while for start-up airlines there is the opportunity of new, scalable business.
  - The Centre would be able to expand the regional air connectivity and market.
  - The state governments would reap the benefit of development of remote areas, enhance trade and commerce and more tourism expansion.
  - Airport operators will also see their business expanding as would original equipment manufacturers.

- UDAN will create affordable yet economically viable and profitable flights on regional routes.

*How UDAN will create affordable yet economically viable and profitable flights on regional routes ?*

**UDAN Model:**

On each UDAN flight, airline will provide a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 40 UDAN Seats (subsidized rates). To increase access to common man price of tickets prices on these UDAN seats, shall be *capped at Rs 2,500* for these seats in flights traveling a distance of 476-500 kilometer.

In the case of a helicopter, the operator has to bid for a minimum of 5 seats and a maximum of 13 seats. For helicopters, half-an-hour ride under the scheme would cost Rs 2,500 and for over one-hour duration, the cap would be Rs 5,000.

This means that airlines will go into loss. To compensate airlines Government has come up with various subsidies or sops. These are:

- Viability Gap Funding (VGF): to the interested airlines to kick-off operations from such airports so that the passenger fares are kept affordable.
- Financial stimulus in the form of concessions from Central and State governments and airport operators.
- Central Government would provide concessions in the form of reduced excise duty, service tax, and code sharing.
- State governments will have to lower the VAT on ATF to 1% or less, besides providing security and fire services free of cost and electricity, water and other utilities at substantially concessional rates.
- Airport operators shall not impose Landing and Parking charge and Terminal Navigation Landing Charges in addition to discounts on Route Navigation Facility Charges.
- A Regional Connectivity Fund would be created to meet the viability gap funding requirements under the scheme. A new RCF levy per departure will be applied to certain domestic flights.
- The successful bidder would then have exclusive rights to operate the route for a period of three years. Such support would be withdrawn after a three year period, as by that time, the route is expected to become self-sustainable.

**How will airlines get selected ?**



The airlines for any route shall be selected on a market-based model where a particular route would be awarded to the participant quoting the lowest VGF per Seat.

Further, if an airline wants to develop a hitherto un-connected route. It can submit proposals to the Implementing Agency. The operator submitting the original proposal would have the Right of First Refusal on matching the lowest bid in case his original bid is within 10% of the lowest bid.

### **Analysis of UDAN:**

Positive:

- There are close to 400 ghost airports in India, airports which have not seen a single flight in the last two air schedules. There are another 16 airports which are termed "under-served" which means they do not have more than a flight a day. These airports may see much more activity after the launch of UDAN.

Concerns:

- Additional levy amount will be charged to finance the regional connectivity fund. Most domestic airlines have threatened to move court opposing the levy. They opined that government needs to fund such schemes from its own budget instead of "imposing more tax on consumers. In such situation, we cannot say how effective shall be the scheme.
- The infrastructure required for 70 seater planes is not available in many of these Secondary airports. For example in Rajasthan 21 airstrips out of which only Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota & Udaipur are operational at the moment. For other centers the infrastructure needs to be upgraded before any flights can take off.

### **Avian Influenza- Bird flu in India**

In October, there has been reports of avian influenza or bird flu in Delhi and surrounding states have also released cautionary statements.

### **What is Avian Influenza?**

Avian influenza is known informally as *avian flu* or bird flu and refers to "influenza" caused by viruses adapted to birds. These flu viruses occur naturally among birds. Wild birds worldwide carry the viruses in their intestines, but usually do not get sick from them. But sometimes, they are affected by different virus strains that makes them very sick and even kills them. It is also very contagious and spreads to domesticated birds, including chickens and ducks.

**So what is the strain of virus causing this bird flu?**

The strain of virus responsible for avian flu or bird flu is **H5N1**.

**So what is the main concern?**

The bird flu disease usually spreads from bird to bird but may sometimes spread from birds to humans. Of the many subtypes of avian influenza viruses, some strains of five subtypes have been known to infect humans: **H5N1**, **H7N3**, **H7N7**, **H7N9**, and **H9N2**. Out of these strains also, **H5N1** is an emerging avian influenza virus that is causing global concern as a potential pandemic threat. It is easily transmissible and lethal to humans. The mortality rate for humans with H5N1 is 60%.

*Note that Avian influenza caused by H5N1, is often referred to simply as "bird flu" or "avian influenza", even though it is only one of many subtypes.*

India is one of 6 nations in which the disease keeps surfacing among birds — during the last outbreak among poultry in Karnataka this May, 33,000 birds had to be culled.

**Is there any Vaccine?**

There is no vaccine against H5N1.

**Is there any medication, after getting the disease?**

Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) is an antiviral medication that blocks the actions of influenza virus types A and B in human body. Oseltamivir is used to treat influenza in people 2 weeks of age and older who have had flu symptoms for 2 days or less.

**What are the symptoms of the disease?**

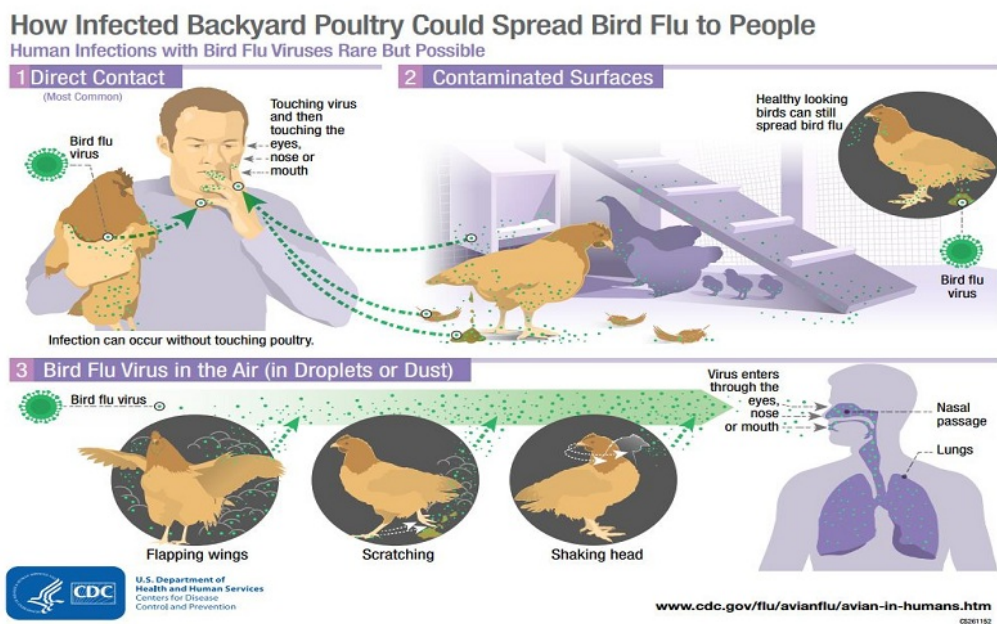
In humans, the symptoms of an H5N1 infection are the same as that of any other seasonal flu — fever, body ache, sore throat, runny nose, headache, fatigue, etc.; however it can turn serious very quickly, and lead to respiratory distress.

**What happened in Delhi?**

Nine water birds in National Zoological Park died from Avian Influenza. As a result the park has been shutdown. According to Zoo authorities, the birds were painted storks, ducks and pelicans that had migrated locally — a reason for concern because there is an increased possibility of the spread of the infection from wild birds to domestic poultry, which humans handle. Incidentally, migratory water ducks are the commonest carriers of bird flu.

**Similar Event this year:**

- Outbreaks have been reported earlier from Maharashtra, Telangana, Tripura and Manipur; according to information available with WHO, however, no human case or death has been reported in India since 2003.
- India had notified an outbreak of Avian Influenza (H5N1) on May 9, 2016, at Humnabad in Karnataka's Bidar district.
- Thereafter, there has been no further outbreak reported in the country.
- The Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare declared India free from Avian Influenza (H5N1) from September 5, 2016.
- Outbreak again reported in Delhi zoo now.



### Steps taken by Government:

- Avian Influenza Contingency Plan(2005)
- Preparedness, Control and Containment of Avian Influenza(2015)

### Ashok Leyland launched first India-made electric bus

Hinduja Group's flagship company Ashok Leyland launched its first 100 per cent electric bus made in India - "Circuit". The vehicle is a step towards India's vision of National Electric Mobility Plan 2020 which plans to enhance use of electric buses in public transport in order to reduce vehicular pollution, traffic congestion of the urban and rural roads and provide clean and affordable transport services.

Ashok Leyland controls UK firm Optare, which specializes in alternate technology, especially in the manufacturing of electric buses.

#### Facts about Circuit Series Bus:

- The electric bus has been created specifically for Indian road and passenger conditions and has a seating capacity ranging from 35 to 65.
- Circuit is zero-emission, non-polluting vehicle and can run up to 120 kilometers on a single recharge under standard test conditions.
- These buses are now being manufactured in Alwar, Rajasthan and Viralimalai facility in Tamil Nadu.
- The electric bus also has an integrated fire-detection and suppression system.

#### Background: The National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020

Government of India launched the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020 in 2013. It aims to achieve national fuel security by promoting hybrid and electric vehicles in the country.

#### Objective:

- NEMMP has National Energy Security & growth of domestic manufacturing capabilities in full range of electric vehicle technologies as its two inter-related key objectives.
- It aims to achieve 6-7 million sales of hybrid and electric vehicles year on year from 2020 onwards.

#### Associated Schemes:

NEMMP is a composite *scheme* using different policy-levers such as:

- Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles India (FAME India)
- DST Technology Platform for Electric Mobility (TPEM)

**FAME India Scheme**

Union Government launched *Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles (FAME India)* under NEMMP 2020 to provide fiscal and monetary incentives to kick start this nascent technology. The scheme was launched in 2015 and envisages Rs 795 crore support in the first two fiscals starting with 2015.

The scheme provides monetary incentives to electric and hybrid vehicles ranging from two wheelers to buses.

**DST Technology Platform for Electric Mobility (TPEM)**

To strengthen and institutionalize the collaboration between Department of Heavy Industry (DHI) and Department of Science and Technology (DST) in R&D and technology development in Electric Mobility, the government has been decided to set up a Technology Platform for Electric Mobility.

**Indosan**

INDOSAN is envisaged as an annual national event, that brings together all stakeholders working in sanitation government, NGOs, academicians, researchers, partner agencies, corporates on one platform for a shared vision.

Bringing together of all such stakeholders, will create an opportunity for collective vision, collective understanding of the key elements of the Swachh Bharat Mission programme.

PM gave new Concept of 'Swachhagraha' - an initiative for cleanliness to get the country dirt-free on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi's 'Satyagraha' that freed us from British rule.

**Indus Water Treaty****Indus Water Treaty: The Background**

At the time of independence, the boundary line between Pakistan and India was drawn across the Indus Basin, leaving Pakistan as the lower riparian meaning water from Indus & tributaries flowed from India to Pakistan. Moreover, two important irrigation head works, one at Madhopur on Ravi River and the other at Ferozepur on Sutlej River, on which the irrigation canal supplies in Punjab (Pakistan) were completely dependent, were left in the Indian territory. Pakistan felt its livelihood threatened by the prospect of Indian control over the tributaries that fed water into

the Pakistani portion of the basin. A dispute thus arose between two countries regarding the utilization water from existing facilities and future flow of water.

Pakistan wanted to take the matter to the International Court of Justice, but India refused, arguing that the conflict required a bilateral resolution. Finally, both India & Pakistan agreed to idea of The World Bank, negotiating agency.

Eventually, on 19th September, 1960, Indus Water Treaty was signed at Karachi by Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan, the then President of Pakistan, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Indian Prime Minister and Mr. W.A.B. Illif of the World Bank .

While, Indus originates from Tibet, China is has been kept out of Indus Water Treaty.

### **Indus Water Treaty: Brief Provisions**

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) deals with river Indus and its five tributaries, which were classified into 2 categories:

- **Eastern rivers:**
  - Sutlej
  - Beas
  - Ravi
- **Western rivers:**
  - Jhelum
  - Chenab
  - Indus
- The treaty gives India exclusive use of all of the waters of the Eastern Rivers and their tributaries before the point where the rivers enter Pakistan. Similarly, Pakistan was given exclusive use of the Western Rivers.
- Under the treaty, India was under the obligation to let flow the waters of the Western Rivers except for the following uses: (a) Domestic Use, (b) Non-consumptive use, (c) Agricultural (d) Generation of hydro-electric power as specified.
- Further, India was also permitted to construct storage of water on Western Rivers upto 3.6 MAF for various purposes. (India has not fully utilized this provision so far).
- Overall treaty allocated 80% of water from the six-river Indus System to Pakistan.

- For 20% water that it lost from Eastern Rivers, Pakistan also received one-time financial compensation.
- A Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) was set up as a bilateral commission to implement and manage the Treaty. India and Pakistan each created a permanent post of Commissioner for Indus Waters.

### **Disputes Subsequent to Indus Water Treaty**

Though majority of dispute of Indus Waters was settled with treaty, however, given the ephemeral relations between the countries, one or other controversies keep appearing up.

#### **Tulbul Project:**

- The Tulbul Project is a "navigation lock-cum-control structure" at the mouth of Wular Lake.
- Pakistan objected that it violated the 1960 Indus Water Treaty.
- India unilaterally suspended the Tulbul project

#### **Balighar Dam Project**

- Baglihar Dam, also known as Baglihar Hydroelectric Power Project, is a run-of-the-river power project on the Chenab River in the southern Doda district of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.
- After construction began in 1999, Pakistan claimed that design parameters of Baglihar project violated the Indus Water Treaty of 1960.
- On June 1, 2010 India and Pakistan resolved the issue relating to the initial filling of Baglihar dam in Jammu and Kashmir with the neighbouring country deciding not to raise the matter further.

#### **Kishanganga Dispute**

- The 330 MW Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project is located on the Kishanganga River, a tributary of Jhelum.
- In 2010, Pakistan appealed to the Hague's Permanent Court of Arbitration (CoA), complaining that the Kishanganga Hydroelectric Plant violates the Indus River Treaty by increasing the catchment of the Jhelum River and depriving Pakistan of its water rights.
- The International Court of Arbitration gave its "final award" on 20 December 2013, wherein it allowed India to go ahead with project. However, India was asked to maintain 9 m<sup>3</sup>/s of

natural flow of water in Kishanganga river at all times to maintain the environment downstream.

### **Sir Creek Dispute**

- The Sir Creek is a 96 km strip of water disputed between India and Pakistan in the Rann of Kutch marshlands.
- The long-standing dispute hinges in the actual demarcation "from the mouth of Sir Creek to the top of Sir Creek, and from the top of Sir Creek eastward to a point on the line designated on the Western Terminus"
- Without taking consent from India, Pakistan constructed Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) project passing through the Great Rann of Kutch area (Gujarat, India) with the assistance from the world bank.

### **Why Indus Water Treaty in news?**

- Indus Water Treaty is considered to be one of the most successful water-sharing arrangement in the world today. For 56 years, both India and Pakistan are peacefully sharing the water of Indus and its tributaries, thanks to The Indus Water Treaty (IWT).
- The treaty came into NEWS again recently when, after the Uri cross-border attack by Pakistan in 2016, PM Narendra Modi had said **"Blood and Water cannot flow simultaneously"**, passively suggesting that India could disregard the treaty and stop flow of water to Pakistan.

### **Can India stop flow of Indus River Water?**

India can think of considering such option but only after planning & years of implementation. Stopping of water would first need storing of water and currently India stores only 4% of the allocated 20%, India has to increase its storing capacity. Secondly, alternate route of water has also to be developed. Secondly, storing & diversion of water can have significant ecological consequences in India itself. Besides the obvious logistic reason, there also other major reasons that block India to take this route:

#### **Role of China:**

- India's aggressive action may be followed by China, who can block water to north-eastern states
- Further, Indus originates from Tibet in China. If China decides to stop or change the flow of the river, it will affect both India and Pakistan.

### **1969 Vienna Convention**



- Even if India wants to go about abrogating it, the country should abide by the 1969 Vienna convention on the law of treaties.

**Harm to International Reputation:**

- Not respecting the treaty, may invite global condemnation to India as the treaty is an international agreement. At present India is on a moral high ground vis-a-vis Pakistan after the Uri attack. This would be lost if India doesn't follow the deal. Such decision by India would automatically bring World bank in the picture and in support of Pakistan.

**Indus Water Treaty Conclusion:**

The Kashmir issue will get a whole new dimension if India withdraws from the treaty. Not only this, it would trigger the formal beginning of water wars, which experts like Chellaney have been predicting for long. Moreover, it is unlike that Pakistan would mend its ways under Indian pressure of Indus water. The will also be spillover impacts India's withdrawal of the treaty in other countries and India's aspirational goals like Permanent Seat in UNSC.

India has never used our rights on the western rivers. The approach of government should be to utilize provisions available in Indus Water Treaty itself and pressurize Pakistan within dimensions of treaty.

**India to seal border with Pakistan by 2018**

Considering the challenges along its border with Pakistan, India has decided to completely seal the international border in a time-bound manner by December 2018. A meeting in this regard was held In Jaisalmer, Rajasthan between Home Minister Rajnath Singh and representatives of 4 states sharing border with Pakistan.

Further, a new concept of Border Security Grid (BSG) has been envisaged, in which all the stake holders related to border security are involved. Based on their suggestions, a final shape to BSG will be given.

**India Pakistan Border Facts:**

- India Pakistan Border has length of 3,323-km, which is termed as International Border. India recognizes International Boundary based on **Radcliffe line (1947)**. However, on ground,
  - Gujarat to Jammu: International Boundary
  - Kashmir: On ground -Line of Control (LOC), which is different from International Boundary. It was demarcated after the Simla pact in 1972.

- India Pakistan Border can be considered as composed of two parts:
  - **International boundary:** The demarcated line between the Republic of India and Pakistan recognized internationally. Sir Cyril Radcliffe Demarcated the line in 1947.
  - **Line Of Control:** Line of control is the boundary between the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and Indian Jammu and Kashmir. It was demarcated after the Simla pact in 1972.
- 4 states share this international border with Pakistan.
  - 1,225 km falls in Jammu and Kashmir (Including: Line of Control: 772 Kms, ),
  - 1,037 km in Rajasthan,
  - 553 km in Punjab and
  - 508 km in Gujarat.
- The Border Security Force (BSF) controls security of the 2,313 km-long International Border with Pakistan from Gujarat to Jammu.
- In Jammu, 192 km of International Border, referred to as a Working Boundary by Pakistan, is manned by the BSF, while the remaining 8 km is secured by the Indian Army.
- The 772 km Line of Control (LoC), running along Kashmir and separating Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) is entirely secured by the Army.

\*Kms of Length may vary depending upon source. Please consider and use data only as indicative.

### India ratifies Paris climate agreement

On 2nd October, 147th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, India ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change by depositing the instrument of ratification with the United Nations.

India is the 62nd country to ratify the agreement, which will enter into force one month after 55 countries that account for 55 per cent of global emissions ratify the agreement. India accounts for 4.1 per cent of the emissions, and now the Agreement only needs slightly more than 3 percentage points to reach the 55 per cent threshold.

At least 14 other countries, representing at least 12 per cent of global emissions, have committed to ratifying the pact before the end of the year. President of General Assembly Peter Thomson said Gandhiji would have applauded the U.N. efforts to make development sustainable and equitable.

**Paris Climate Change Agreement:**

- The **Paris Agreement** is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) dealing with greenhouse gases emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance starting in the year 2020.
- The Paris Agreement was adopted by more than 190 nations at the 21st Conference of Parties of UNFCCC (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) held in Paris in December 2015.
- It seeks to accelerate and intensify the actions and investment needed for a sustainable low carbon future.
- The agreement caps limit global temperature rise (global warming) to well below 2 degrees Celsius. It also seeks to funnel trillions of dollars to poor countries facing climate catastrophe.
- The Paris Agreement requires all Parties to put forward their best efforts through “nationally determined contributions” (NDCs) and to strengthen these efforts in the years ahead.
- NDC is the contribution that each individual country should make in order to achieve the worldwide goal are determined by all countries individually. India’s Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) pledge estimated a cost 2.5 trillion dollars for its climate-action plan.

**Government notifies Monetary Policy Committee**

The Union Government notified the constitution of the six member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) under section 45ZB of the *Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act, 1934*.

**Composition of MPC**

- As per the provisions of the RBI Act, out of the six Members of MPC, three Members will be from the RBI and other three will be appointed by the Union Government.
- Members from RBI include
  - Governor of RBI (ex officio Chairperson): Urjit Patel
  - Deputy Governor of RBI, in charge of Monetary Policy (Member): R Gandhi
  - One officer of RBI (Member) - Executive Director of RBI - Michael Patra
- The appointments committee of the cabinet last Thursday approved the names of following persons as MPC members for a period of four years.:
  - Chetan Ghatge, a professor at Indian Statistical Institute;

- Pami Dua, director at Delhi School of Economics (DSE); and
- Ravindra Dholakia, professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad,

### **About Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)**

- MPC would be entrusted with the task of fixing the benchmark policy rate (repo rate) required to contain inflation within the specified target level.
- It will help in determining the Monetary Policy which in turn adds value and transparency to monetary policy decisions.
- The meetings of the MPC will be held at least 4 times a year and it will publish its decisions after each such meeting.
- The RBI Act was amended by the Finance Act, 2016 to provide for a statutory and institutionalized framework for MPC.

### **Kigali Agreement, Montreal Protocol, HFC: Issues and Importance**

#### **What is Kigali Agreement?**

Kigali Agreement is the Hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, agreed to at the 28th Meeting of Parties at Kigali, Rwanda.

#### **Facts regarding Kigali Agreement:**

- The Kigali Agreement upholds the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR & RC).
- It recognizes the development imperatives of high-growth economies like India, and provides a realistic and viable roadmap for the implementation of a phase-out schedule for high global warming potential (GWP) HFCs.
- The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol has been signed by 197 nations - including India. The agreement is legally binding and will come into force from January 1, 2019.
- The developed countries, led by the US and Europe, will reduce the HFC use by 85 per cent by 2036 over a 2011-13 baseline.

- China, which is the largest producer of HFC in the world, will reduce its use by 80 per cent by 2045 over the 2020-22 baseline and India will reduce the use of HFC by 85 per cent over the 2024-26 baseline.

*This was about Kigali Agreement, but in order to truly appreciate its importance, one needs to understand the issue of HFC, Global Warming and Ozone depletion in some detail.*

### **What are HFC?**

HFC or "Hydrofluorocarbons" are a type of gas, used widely for refrigeration. Three main HFCs used are HFC-23, HFC-134a and HFC152a.

### **What is the issue with HFC?**

Initially HFC were not used for refrigeration, instead another gas CFC or Chlorofluorocarbons were used. But the problem with CFC was that it was causing depletion of ozone layer. Hence, use of CFC was banned and use new gas HFC was proposed. Now, HFC was used as refrigeration gas, this gas did not cause depletion of ozone layer but it had another problem, it contributed to Global Warming. Hence the problem with HFC is, it is a powerful greenhouse gas with long atmospheric lifetimes (14 years).

### **What is Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol ?**

Now as we mentioned before, there was a problem of Ozone layer depletion, hence, world leaders came together and organized a Convention in Vienna(Austria) in 1985 in which a treaty called as **Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer** was signed.

Under this Vienna Convention, a meeting was held at Montreal(1989)in which an international treaty was signed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production of numerous substances that are responsible for ozone depletion. This treaty has been called as "**Montreal Protocol**". Since 1989, it has undergone eight revisions, in 1990 (London), 1991 (Nairobi), 1992 (Copenhagen), 1993 (Bangkok), 1995 (Vienna), 1997 (Montreal), 1998 (Australia), 1999 (Beijing) and 2016 (Kigali, adopted).

*In simple terms, The Vienna Convention is for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol is on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.*

### **Importance of these Agreements:**

- As a result of the international agreement, the ozone hole in Antarctica is slowly recovering.
- Climate projections indicate that the ozone layer will return to 1980 levels between 2050 and 2070.

- Rare Example of International Cooperation: The two ozone treaties have been ratified by 197 parties, which includes 196 states and the European Union, making them the first universally ratified treaties in United Nations history.
- The Montreal Protocol is also expected to have effects on human health. A 2015 report by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the protection of the ozone layer under the treaty will prevent over 280 million cases of skin cancer, 1.5 million skin cancer deaths, and 45 million cataracts in the United States
- Kigali Agreement will lead to a reduction of 0.5 degree in global temp by the end of the century and enable us to achieve the goals set in Paris.
- Further, it will also provide a mechanism for countries like India to access and develop technologies that leave a low carbon footprint.

### **What is India Doing?**

- First, India has signed the Kigali Agreement.
- Further, India announced domestic action on HFC-23 (trifluoro-methane), a super greenhouse gas with a GWP of 14,800, which is produced as a byproduct of HCFC-22 (chloro-difluoro-methane). Currently, HCFC-22 is the most commonly used refrigerant in India.
- India has mandated five manufacturers, who fully control the domestic market of India, to capture and incinerate HFC-23 so that it is not released into the atmosphere. This action will eliminate release of HFC-23 equivalent to about 100 million tonne of Carbon dioxide emissions over the next 15 years.
- Overall, India's proposal would avoid HFC emissions equivalent to 70 billion tonne of carbon dioxide."

### **Terms:**

- **Global Warming Potential (GWP)** measures the potency of a greenhouse gas over a period of time (compared to carbon dioxide, which has a GWP of 1).

### SC/ST hub, Zero Defect – Zero Effect scheme launched by PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the National SC/ST hub and the Zero Defect, Zero Effect (ZED) scheme for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) at Ludhiana in Punjab.

Further, he also presented National Awards to MSMEs and also distributed 500 traditional wooden charkhas (spinning wheels) among women.

#### National SC/ST Hub:

- The objective of the SC/ST Hub is to provide professional support to entrepreneurs from the SC/ST and to promote enterprise culture and entrepreneurship amongst the SC/ST population and to enable them to participate more effectively in public procurement.
- The MSME ministry has made an initial allotment of ₹490 crore for the national SC/ST hub for 2016-2020.
- The hub would also operate from National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) headquarters in Delhi, supported by a special cell created for this purpose

#### Zero Defect, Zero Effect (ZED) scheme:

- ZED Scheme aims to rate and handhold all MSMEs to deliver top quality products using clean technology.
- It will have sector-specific parameters for each industry. MSME sector is crucial for the economic progress of India and this scheme will help to match global quality control standards.

### India inducts INS Arihant into Service, Completes Nuclear Triad

India completed its nuclear triad by inducting the first indigenously built strategic nuclear submarine INS Arihant into service. It was formally commissioned by Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba in August, 2016. With this, India has become *4th country* in world to have status of 'nuclear triad' power, after the *US, Russia, China* (\*)

#### What is Nuclear Triad?

In simple terms, a 'nuclear triad' power is a country that has the capability to launch nuclear weapons from land, air and sea. Technically, a nuclear triad refers to the nuclear weapons delivery of a strategic nuclear arsenal which consists of three components:

- Air force: Strategic bomber planes capable of delivering nuclear bombs

- Surface: Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)
- Sea: Submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs).

### **Importance of Nuclear Triad**

The purpose of having a three-branched nuclear capability is to significantly reduce the possibility that an enemy could destroy all of a nation's nuclear forces in a first-strike attack, this, in turn, ensures a credible threat of a second strike, and thus increases a nation's nuclear deterrence.

In simple terms, Nuclear Triad status will help to prevent use of Nuclear Weapon against India, in case of War. How?

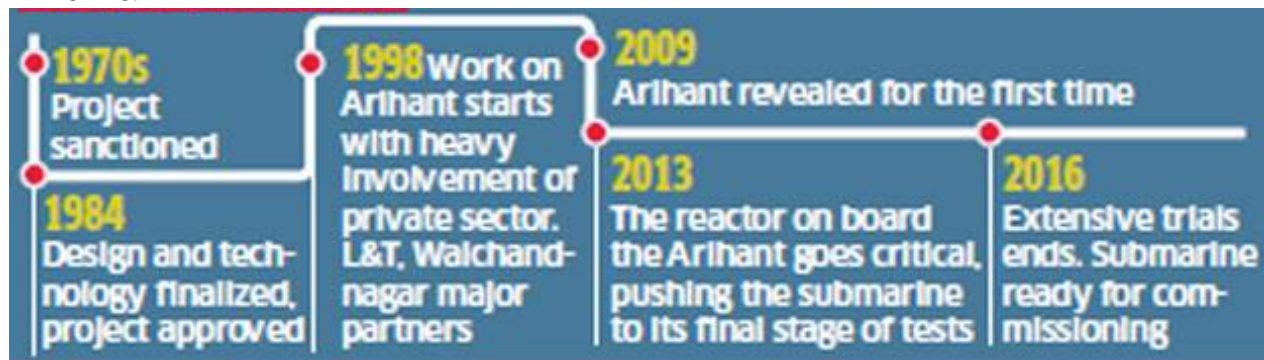
Well, in case of war, if any enemy drops Nuclear bomb on India or it launches Nuclear missile against India, it knows that, because India is nuclear triad, it can also launch nuclear weapons from sea and thus enemy state would also be eventually destroyed. This prevents use of nuclear weapons and hence, triad is called as Nuclear Deterrence.

This *Second Strike* capability is particularly important for India as it had committed to a 'No-First-Use' policy as part of its nuclear doctrine.

### **INS Arihant: Fact File**

- INS Arihant, which means 'slayer of enemies', is a 6,000-tonne SSBN (ship submersible ballistic, nuclear submarine), that can carry ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads. It is first indigenously built nuclear-powered submarine.
- It is powered by 83 MW pressurised light water nuclear reactor with enriched uranium fuel.
- The Arihant project, earlier known as the *advanced technology vessel* (ATV), has been under development since 1998. It was finally launched at the headquarters of India's Eastern Naval Command, Visakhapatnam, on July 2009 by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and was built at an approximate cost of \$3 billion.
- The submarine was jointly developed by the Indian Navy, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It will be armed with the K-15 Sagarika missiles with a range of 750 km and eventually with the much longer range K-4 missiles being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation.



**Timeline:****Advantage of Nuclear powered submarine:**

Conventionally, Submarines are powered by diesel, so they need oxygen for burning this diesel fuel. Hence, they need to come up to surface again and again for taking oxygen. This hinders their stealth capability and increases probability of spotting. Unlike conventional submarines, a nuclear submarine:

- Works on energy derived from nuclear fission and does not require large amount of oxygen. Hence, they can stay underwater for a much longer duration and need to resurface only for stocking of consumables such as food.
- Nuclear submarines can also dive much deeper and can stay in water, undetected by enemy nations.
- Further, they can operate at higher speeds for much longer duration than conventional submarines.

Apart from Arihant, India currently operates Russian-origin nuclear-powered submarine INS Chakra, which it leased for 10 years from Russia in 2012.

**BRICS GOA: About, Initiatives, Goa Declaration, Analysis, BRICS-BIMSTEC**

The 8<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit took place in Goa under the Chairmanship of India. The meeting is of global importance as BRICS nations collectively account for 43% of the world population, with around 25% of the world's total land area and close to 30 % of the world GDP with around 17 % share in the world trade.(1).

**Origin of BRICS:**

In 2001, in a research paper on global economics titled 'Building Better Global Economic BRICs' which was published by Goldman Sachs, British economist Jim O' Neill coined and used the acronym 'BRICs' for the first time for four rapidly developing economies-Brazil, Russia, India and China.

In 2006, Brazil, Russia, India and China began a regular informal interaction around UNGA and in 2009, the first BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg (Russia).

In 2011, South Africa was included to formally form BRICS.

**Cooperation Areas of BRICS:**

Cooperation in BRICS is structured around two main pillars, which are *Coordination in multilateral forums*, with a focus on economic and political governance and *Cooperation between members*. The cooperation areas among BRICS members has diversified with years and it now includes areas such as finance, agriculture, economy and trade, combating transnational crime, science and technology, health, education, corporate and academic dialogue and security, among others.

**New Initiatives of BRICS:**

- **New Development Bank (NDB)**
  - Has been setup to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging and developing economies.
  - *K.V. Kamath from India* was appointed as the President of the New Development Bank with its headquarters in Shanghai (China).
  - Recently the Bank approved its first package of loans worth about \$811 million. The four projects in Brazil, China, South Africa and India are all in the renewable and green energy development sphere.
- **BRICS Currency Reserve Arrangement (CRA)**
  - It has been setup with an initial size of \$100 billion, to help countries forestall short-term liquidity pressure.

**BRICS GOA:**

BRICS Goa is the 8th Edition of BRICS meeting. Leaders including:

- **B:** The new Brazilian President Temer
- **R:** President Putin from Russia
- **I:** Prime Minister Modi,

- **C:** President Xi from China
- **S:** President Zuma from South Africa,

participated in the meeting. The theme for BRICS GOA summit was “*Building Responsive, Inclusive and Collective Solutions*”. The summit concluded with adaptation of **Goa Declaration**.

### **Key Points of BRICS - GOA Declaration**

- Declaration called for resolution of the civil war in Syria, in accordance with the “legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria”.
- BRICS nations condemned terrorism in all its forms and agreed to strengthen cooperation in combating international terrorism both at the bilateral level and at international fora. It also out the need for countering terrorist organization, specially mentioning, the Islamic State which has occupied territories in Iraq, Syria, and Libya.
- BRICS also called for a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) in the U.N. General Assembly.
- BRICS said it reaffirmed commitment to the Financial Action Task Force international standards on combating money laundering and the Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation.
  - The FATF is an intergovernmental organization founded in 1989 on the initiative of the G7 to develop policies to combat money laundering. In 2001 the purpose expanded to act on terrorism financing.
- Appreciated progress in implementation of Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership and emphasize importance of BRICS Roadmap for Trade, Economic and Investment Cooperation until 2020.
- Welcomed adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Analysis of Summit from India's Point of View:**

#### **Positives Takeaways:**

- India's NSG bid got acknowledged in BRICS Summit communiqué but bilateral task with China remains open as China continues to oppose India's Membership.
  - NSG, an elite club of countries that controls trade in nuclear technology and fissile materials.

- New initiative of BRICS-BIMSTEC has great importance for both BRICS and India and China individually. The region averages 6.5% growth and represents an emerging consumer market.
- China and India need more and more energy resources to fuel their growth, Russian President Vladimir Putin's idea of an energy cooperation agency, is an idea for India to look forward to.

**Concerns Remaining:**

- While the declaration called for cooperation against terrorism, China blocked India's attempts to include the names of terror groups like JeM and LeT in the BRICS' Goa Declaration. Further, Russia's disinclination to argue India's case also must be point of concern.
- While Russia itself has been the clear winner in terms of BRICS' focus on security related issues(Moscow also had its full say on Syria), China continues to call the shots on financial issues (NDB headquartered in China), leading to questions about the utility of BRICS for India.

**BRICS - BIMSTEC:**

The 2016 BRICS GOA Summit also included the first-ever BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit. Leaders from both forums jointly explored possibilities of expanding ties between them on issues such as terrorism, economy, trade and connectivity. BIMSTEC issued *Leaders Retreat Outcome Document* emphasizing that there can be no justification for acts of terror.

- BIMSTEC countries strongly condemned the recent terror attacks in the region and recognized the need for urgent measures to counter and prevent the spread of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization.
- Agreed to expedite the signing of the BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and called for early ratification of the BIMSTEC Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking.
- Renewed their commitment to the early conclusion of BIMSTEC Free Trade Area negotiations, and direct the Trade Negotiating Committee and Working Groups to expedite the finalization of its constituent Agreements.
- Stressed the necessity of pursuing sustainable development and of the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and recognized that cooperation in sustainable development of fisheries in Bay of Bengal region for ensuring food security and improving livelihoods of people

## About BIMSTEC

- BIMSTEC stands for Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.
- BIMSTEC member countries are Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal.
- 



**End Note:** The ninth BRICS Summit will be hosted by China in 2017.

## India Welcomes Putin: Recent India Russia Partnership

The following are important Excerpts regarding recent development in partnership between India & Russia, from PM Modi's welcome speech of Russian President Putin for BRICS.

- Russian: सतरीय द्रुग लुछे नोवखि द्रुवुख [Means: An Old friend is better than two new friends.]
- Promotion of Make in India through agreements on manufacturing of Kamov 226T helicopters; constructions of frigates; and acquisition and building of other defence platforms.
- Agreement to work on an annual military industrial conference that will allow stakeholders on both sides to institute and push collaboration.
- India-Russia cooperation in the field of Civil Nuclear Energy resulted in successful dedication of Kudankulum 2 and laying of foundation concrete of Kundankulum 3 and 4. Further, construction of another eight reactors has also been proposed.
- Hydrocarbon Sector: Indian companies have invested close to US Dollars 5.5 billion in Russia's Oil and Gas sector. A joint study of a gas pipeline route between our two countries is also being undertaken.
- Russia is backing India's association with Eurasian Economic Union Free Trade Agreement.
- The Green Corridor and the International North South Transport Corridor will serve to strengthen trade facilitation, logistical links and ensure better connectivity between our countries.

- Funds for Infrastructure: Setting up of Investment Fund of US Dollars 1 billion between National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF), India and Russia Direct Investment Fund (RDIF).
- Cooperation in multilateral platforms like United Nations, BRICS, East Asia Summit, G-20, Shanghai Cooperation Organization.
- Against Terrorism: Both affirm the need for zero tolerance in dealing with terrorists. India appreciates, Russia's clear stand on the need to combat terrorism and support like "unequivocal condemnation" of the cross border terror attack in Uri.

**Yesterday's Agreements:**

- India Russia signed 16 important deals including one on S-400 missile systems, a game-changer in countering airborne threats.
- Inter Governmental Agreement on the missile system — worth nearly Rs 39,000 crore.
- Another deal on 'information security' aimed at countering terrorism, drug trafficking and other illegal cross-border activities, was also signed.
- Russia has also agreed to sell Kamov 226T helicopters and four Krivak class stealth frigates to India. The Kamov 226T helicopters will be manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) and Rostec State Corporation of Russia under a joint production plan. Shareholding arrangement for the joint venture was also agreed upon.
- An agreement for cooperation in the development of a network of 25 integrated infrastructure Agro irradiation centers. These irradiation centres will help in treatment of perishable food items to improve shelf life and cut post-harvest losses.
- MoU for developing smart cities in Andhra Pradesh and Haryana and for developing transport logistics systems for such cities.
- MoU for Cooperation between Russian and Indian Railways in increasing the speed of trains between Nagpur- Hyderabad/ Secundrabad.
- MoU between Gazprom and Engineers India Limited (EIL) for the joint study of a gas pipeline to India from Russia and other areas of cooperation.
- Cooperation Agreement between Rosneft Oil Company and ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) in the area of Education and Training.
- MoU for setting up an investment fund of \$1 billion by the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF).

- MoU between ROSCOSMOS and ISRO on Mutual Allocation of Ground Measurement Gathering Stations for NAvIC and GLONASS.
- MoU between India's Department of Science and Technology and Russia's Federal Agency for Scientific Organizations.

**What is S-400 'Triumf' Air Defence System?**

S-400 'Triumf' long-range air defence missile system is manufactured by Almaz-Antey and is capable of firing three types of missiles. It has capability to destroy incoming all airborne targets at ranges of up to 400 km. The five S-400 systems will be operated by the Indian Air Force (IAF). China, also purchased this S-400 defense system.

**What are Ka-226T helicopters ?**

Kamov 226T is a light multipurpose helicopter designed for work in difficult conditions like high mountains, hot climate and marine areas. It allows for reconnaissance, monitoring, targeting and transportation. The helicopters will be made by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) with Russian cooperation under Make In India. It will replace the aging Cheetah and Chetak choppers. They shall be a great help in high altitude forward posts like Siachen.

**Cooperation on Frigates:**

Navy warships are called as frigates. India and Russia will built four stealth frigates which will be improved versions of Krivak or Talwar class stealth frigates. Two of the frigates will be built in Russia and other two will be constructed at an Indian shipyard with Russian cooperation.

**Essar Oil-Deal:**

Russian consortium led energy giant Rosneft Oil Company has agreed to acquire India's second biggest private oil firm Essar Oil in an all-cash deal valued at about US \$13 billion.

**Saraswati River did exist, says K.S. Valdiya Committee**

The seven-member expert committee of geologists, archaeologists and hydrologists, headed by Professor K.S. Valdiya of the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), have found evidence of the course of the river Saraswati. The committee on "Palaeochannels of North-West India: Review and Assessment" had been appointed by Water Resources Ministry to map paleo-channels of north-west India including river Saraswati, a mythological river mentioned in the Rigveda and other literature of Hindu mythology.

**Key Facts from the submitted report:**



- Sarawati was a Himalayan river.
- Saraswati river had two branches the eastern branch included Sarsuti-Markanda rivulets in Haryana and the western branches were made of Ghaggar-Patiali channels.
- These branches met in Shatrana, 25 kilometres south of Patiala and “flowed as a large river” emptying out into the sea that is now the Rann of Kutch.
- It is assumed that River Saraswati originated from Adibadri in the Himalaya to culminate in the Arabian Sea through the Runn of Kutch.
- It was approximately 4,000 km in length with nearly 3000 km of length occurring in India and remaining one-third of the river lying in present-day Pakistan.
- During its six-month research, the committee came across “an unique” palaeochannel (a path abandoned by river when it changes its course) relating to present Ghaggar, Sarsuti, Hakra and Nara rivers.
- They also concluded that around 1700 “small and big” towns and villages were located around the palaeo-channel concerned during Harappa Civilization. “Some towns were spread over more than 100 hectares. These colonies were there for 5,500 years.

### Uniform Civil Code: Definition, debate, way-forward

Yesterday, The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), along with several other organizations associated with the Muslim community, opposed the Law Commission’s questionnaire on the possibility of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC). There has been much debate in recent times on this topic of Uniform Civil Code. The article explore's the topic in detail consolidating history of topic with the recent news.

#### Structure of Laws in India:

Before going to Uniform Civil Code, it is important that we have a look at structure of laws in India and how Indian judiciary functions.

Well, Constitution makers believed in philosophy of separation of power and so India has 3 branches of State:

- **Legislature** in form of Parliament and Vidhan Sabha that makes rules. It includes rules that define what is legal and illegal country & what is the punishment for breaking any law.



- The **Executive**, i.e. Police, Collector, Income Tax and other departments are there to see proper implementation of these laws. When someone breaks any law. Officers from one of these department show up to your place with appropriate government notice.
- The third branch is **Judiciary**, Government officials or anyone else that considers that you have broken a law, takes you to court. The court check for proofs and then Sabboto Aur Gawafoo ke maddnazar can annouce you as mujrim. The judge then checks what punishment is described and hands the same to you. Here, the judge only checks if you are culprit or not and cannot decide what punishment you will be given. The punishment is decided by Parliament itself when it passes the bills.

It is important here to highlight the beauty of the system, the rules are indirectly made by people themselves through chosen leaders to govern themselves and punish all those who don't follow these rules.

Now that working of Laws is clear, we move on to next important thing, Where does the Judge Checks from ?

Well, When the Parliament & Vidhan Sabha pass different bills like juvenile justice bill, child labor act etc., there is also a section in bill that define the punishments when someone breaks the rules. The judge looks at these documents, while passing judgments.

For Sake of understanding, the Laws working in India have been divided into few Categories like below (Other Categories also exist):

- Criminal Law
- Civi Law
- Contract Law
- Labour Law
- Company Law
- Tort Law

The categories are defined according to nature of activities. Like Criminal law covers activities against state like murder, terrorism etc. Civil laws include laws relating to activities that involve dispute between citizen. Example, property dispute within family etc.

Now, a major portion of these Civil Laws are laws that relate to activities within the family and culture(**Personal Laws**). Example, marriages, inheritance, divorce etc.

**Uniform Civil Code: The Definition**

**Uniform civil code** is the proposal to replace the personal laws based on the scriptures and customs of each major religious community in India with a common set governing every citizen. These laws are distinguished from public law and cover marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption and maintenance.

**The source of Problem: Different rules for different people**

Now, for most categories, law are same for all people, for example the punishment for murder is same whether your are hindu or muslim or sikh and so there is no issue.

However, in matters relating to personal sphere ( marriages, inheritance etc), different rules were passed for different cultures. Example: Hindu marriage act for hindu marriages, Anand Karaj for Sikhs etc. Shariat law, 1937 was passed to govern the personal matters of all Indian Muslims by Islamic laws. These were called **Personal Laws**.

Hence, the center of debate for Uniform civil code is that "there should be uniform or single rule for personal activities also." That is rules for hindu, muslim, sikh marriage, inheritance should be same.

**Personal Laws & Uniform Civil Code: Timeline:**

**British Period:** Personal laws were first framed during the British Raj, mainly for Hindu and Muslim citizens. The British feared opposition from community leaders and refrained from further interfering within this domestic sphere.

**Start of 20th Century:** The demand for a uniform civil code was first put forward by women activists in the beginning of the twentieth century, with the objective of women's rights, equality and secularism.

**1940: The Idea of Uniform Civil Code is Born****1947: Question of UCC as a fundamental Right****1948: Constitution Assembly debated UCC**

Article 44 of the Directive Principles in India sets implementation of Uniform Civil Laws as duty of the State.

**1950: Reformist Bill Passed****1951: Ambekar Resigns:**

**Ambedkar resigned** from the cabinet in 1951, when Parliament stalled his draft of the Hindu Code Bill, which sought to enshrine gender equality in the laws of inheritance and marriage.

**1985: Shah Bano Case**

Shah Bano, a 62-year-old Muslim mother of five, was divorced by her husband in 1978. She filed a criminal suit in the Supreme Court of India, the Court invoked Section 125 of Code of Criminal Procedure, which applies to everyone regardless of caste, creed, or religion. It ruled that Shah Bano be given maintenance money, similar to alimony.

The Shah Bano judgment elicited a protest from many sections of Muslims who considered it as an attack on their religion and their right to their own religious personal law. As a result, [congress] government, with its absolute majority, to pass the [Muslim Women \(Protection of Rights on Divorce\) Act, 1986](#) which diluted the judgment of the Supreme Court and, in reality (reference missing), denied even utterly destitute Muslim divorcées the right to alimony from their former husbands.

The law received severe criticism from several sections of the society. The All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) organised demonstrations of Muslim women.

**1995: Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India**

The second instance in which the Supreme Court again directed the government of Article 44 was in the case of Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India .

**2000: Supreme Court Advocates Uniform Civil Code****2015: The debate lives through****2016: Recent NEWS: Triple Talaq Debate**

The topic of "Uniform Civil Code" again came to limelight when Narendra Modi Government asked the Law Commission to examine the issue. Consequently, Law Commission has sought public views on the matter.

Then, The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), along with several other organisations associated with the Muslim community, opposed the Law Commission's questionnaire on the possibility of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC). They consider UCC will bring to an end country's pluralism and paint all in "one colour". **DEBATE RESTARTS.**

**Why India Should Go for Uniform Civil Code?**

The Constitution makers had a vision to enact UCC in future to have a same set of civil laws governing all irrespective of religion. The present government has brought forward the issue as a part of its fulfillment of manifesto of having a Uniform Civil Code.

- A **secular republic** like India needs a common law for all citizens rather than differentiated rules based on religious practices.

- The Uniform Civil Code is also equally required for **Gender Justice**. The rights of women are usually limited under religious law, be it Hindu or Muslim. The practice of triple talaq is a classic example. It is important to note that B.R. Ambedkar fought hard for the passage of the Hindu Code Bill because he saw it as an opportunity to empower women but his dreams are still far from realized.

### **Where to Start?**

The civil law in Goa—derived from the Portuguese Civil Procedure Code of 1939—could be a useful starting point for a national debate. The coastal state continued with its practice of treating all communities alike even after its entry into the Indian Union. Family laws in Goa are uniform for all state citizens and can be considered as a model for a Uniform Civil Code in the country.

### **October: Person In NEWS:**

- Union Government has appointed Senior IPS officer Karnal Singh as the Director of Enforcement Directorate
- The Founder and Chairman of Bharti Enterprises Sunil Bharti Mittal was appointed as Chairman of GSM Association (GSMA).
- GSMA:
  - The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide. It unites nearly 800 operators with almost 300 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem.
  - The GSMA Board has 26 members, including 25 operator representatives from world's largest operator groups as well as smaller, independent operators.
- Renowned Manipuri theatre legend Heisnam Kanhailal passed away. He was 75. He was awarded Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1985), Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellow (2011), META Life Time Achievement Award (2015) and Padma Shri (2004) and Padma Bhushan (2016).
- Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Chamling was honoured with prestigious Sustainable Development Leadership Award of the The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).
- The Union Government has appointed senior Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer Sushil Chandra as the Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).

- Former ISRO Chairman and space scientist Prof Udupi Ramachandra Rao became the first Indian to be inducted in the Hall of Fame of International Astronautical Federation (IAF).
- History writer Nayanjot Lahiri has won the prestigious 2016 John F. Richards Prize for her book *Ashoka in Ancient India*.
- Union Finance Ministry has constituted four-member Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) with Financial markets expert MS Sahoo as its Chairman. IBBI has been tasked to regulate functioning of insolvency professionals, insolvency professional agencies and information utilities under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016.
- Film-maker and elephant researcher Prajna Chowta (46) has been appointed Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite (Knight in the National Order of Merit) by the French government.
- Crown prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan will be the chief guest for the 68th Republic Day celebrations on 26 January 2017.
- Ace Indian Shooter *Jitu Rai* has won the 2016 Champion of Champions pistol Award of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) for pistol shooting. In the 10 m Air Pistol Champions Trophy final Jitu Rai defeated Damir Mikec of Serbia by 29.6 to 28.3 points. Olympic champion Anna Korakaki finished third in this event.
- United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has formally elected *Antonio Guterres* (67) as the new Secretary-General of the United Nations.
- IAS officer *Ajay Kumar Bhalla* has been appointed as new Director General of Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).
- Eminent writer C Radhakrishnan was selected for the prestigious Mathrubhumi Literary Award for the year 2016.
- FS officer Amandeep Singh Gill was appointed as the India's Ambassador to the UN Conference on Disarmament, Geneva.
- Ace Indian shuttler Saina Nehwal has been appointed as a member of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Athletes' Commission. It is rare honour for an Indian sportsperson.
- Two Yazidi women Nadia Murad Basee and Lamiya Aji Bashar have been selected for European Union's prestigious Sakharov Prize for Human Rights for year 2016.

**Cyrus Mistry:**

- Tata Sons Ltd has removed Cyrus Pallonji Mistry (48) as Chairman.

- However he will remain a director of the individual companies.
- The board has replaced him with his predecessor Ratan Tata as interim chairman for four months.

**Paul Betty**

- Paul Beatty won the 2016 Man Booker Prize.
- He won this award for his award for his racial satirical novel 'The Sellout' .

**Vinay Manchaiah**

- Indian-American associate professor from US Vinaya Manchaiah has been named as the Future Leader of Audiology.
- He was inducted into the 2016 class of the 'Jerger Future Leaders of Audiology' by the American Academy of Audiology.

**Nanaji Deshmukh:**

- Union Government is going to commemorate the birth centenary of social activist and former RSS leader Nanaji Deshmukh from October 11, 2016 to October 11, 2017.
- About Nanaji Deshmukh
  - He was a social activist, who worked in the fields of education, health, and rural self-reliance, and has been honoured with the Padma Vibhushan by the Government of India.
  - He was a leader of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and also a member of the Rajya Sabha.
  - He was inspired by Lokamanya Tilak and his nationalist ideology. He was associated with Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, founding Sarsanghachalak of the RSS.

**National News:**

- Union Cabinet approved establishment and operations of a *National Academic Depository (NAD)*. Under it all academic degrees, certificates and awards in the country will be made digitally available for verification on single spot.
- Union Agricultural Ministry has constituted a High-Level Committee to monitor the bird flu situation and help state governments take steps to contain the disease.

- The State of *Himachal Pradesh* has been officially declared Open Defecation Free (ODF). This means that every individual household in the state has functional toilet. *Sikkim* was the first state to achieve the feat.
- The Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has recognized *Boxing Federation of India (BFI)* as the National Sports Federation (NSF) for Boxing.
- Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval to formation of the Indian Institute of Science Education & Research (IISER) at Berhampur in Odisha.
- Andhra Pradesh government has signed a FinTech Cooperation agreement with Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) to promote innovation financial services in their respective markets.
- Microsoft has launched its first full-scale Cybersecurity Engagement Center (CSEC) in Delhi. It is first-of-its-kind Cybersecurity Centre in India and overall 7th in the world including in Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing, Singapore, Berlin and Washington DC.
- Union Government has launched *Mining Surveillance System (MSS)*, a pan-India surveillance network to check illegal mining using latest satellite technology.
- Union Government has launched *National Seismic Programme (NSP)* to trace hydrocarbon resources like oil and natural gas in Mahanadi basin. It was launched by Union Minister of State (MoS) for Petroleum and Natural Gas at Taranga village under Soro block in Balasore district of Odisha.
- Union Government has decided to utilize the vast network of post offices across the country to sell *subsidised pulses*.
- ASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) has developed a new high-tech electroactive bandage that uses electricity to significantly promote healing of injured wounds. The high-tech bandage creates an electric charge to promote the healing process of wounds in space especially in conditions of non-Earth gravity.
- Telangana Government in its the biggest administrative reform has created 21 new districts. With this reorganisation, the total number of districts in the State went up to 31 from 10.
- Union Government has decided to invest 15,000 crore rupees to increase the capacity of Panipat refinery in Haryana to 25 Million Tonnes from existing 15 Million Tonnes.
- Indian pharmaceutical companies have ranked low at 19th position with an overall score of 59 out of 100 among in the Biopharmaceutical Competitiveness & Investment (BCI) Survey.



- All Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) protected historical monuments and archaeological sites have declared polythene-free zones. Union Ministry of Culture has issued an advisory to all State Governments/UTs to support ASI in keeping monuments polythene free up to 300 meters from protected boundaries.
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved ONGC Videsh Limited's proposal to buy 11% stake in JSC Vankorneft. OVL will buy this stake in JSC Vankorneft from Rosneft, the National Oil Company of Russia which operates Vankor oil fields.
- Union Government has made Aadhaar card mandatory for availing cooking gas (LPG) subsidies after November 2016.
- Jharkhand has become the first state in the country to implement Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in Kerosene Scheme. The scheme is being implemented in four identified districts of the state from 1st of October 2016. These districts are Chatra, Hazaribagh, Khunti and Jamtara.
- The Union Urban Development Ministry has declared urban areas of *Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh* open defecation free (ODF). These are the first states to become open defecation free in urban areas.
- SBI became the first domestic bank of India to open a branch in Myanmar.
- Anil Ambani led Reliance Group and French aerospace giant Dassault Aviation have signed deal to set up a joint venture called Dassault Reliance Aerospace.
- Scientists have discovered a new species of Pika, a mammal belonging to the rabbit and hare family in the Himalayas in Sikkim.
- Delhi Police has launched a mobile application "Delhi Police Senior Citizen" for senior citizens to provide immediate assistance to them in distress. The application has an SOS button integrated with a dedicated existing helpline for Senior Citizen – 1291.
- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has received total disclosure of Rs. 65,250 crore black money in the form of cash and other assets under the Income Disclosure Scheme, 2016. The undisclosed income or black money and assets declared was liable to total 45% tax of the undisclosed income.
- "Murga Movie" won the first prize at the Swachh Bharat Short Film Festival (SBSFF). The short film was directed by young filmmaker Katyayan Shivpuri from Maharashtra. The festival was the cinematic presentation of short films of not more than 3 minutes duration, dedicated to the Swachh Bharat Mission initiative of Central Government.

- Rajasthan has become the first state in India to adopt Central Government's Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) in all its urban local bodies (ULB). Under this programme, around 5 lakh conventional street lights were replaced with LED street lights across the state.
- The National Mission on Bioeconomy was launched in Shillong, Meghalaya by the Institute of Bio-resources and Sustainable Development (IBSD). The purpose of the mission is to boost rural economy by utilizing bio-resources. Besides, it can be optimally utilized can create a large number of jobs at village level.
- India's second largest software services major Infosys has launched "Skava Commerce" a new standard for modern, mobile-first and modular e-commerce platform for retailers.
- Union Telecom Ministry has formed a committee to look into the regulator TRAI's recommendation of a Rs. 3,050 crore penalty on top three telcos — Airtel, Vodafone and Idea.
- Earlier TRAI had recommended Department of Telecom to impose penalty on these three incumbents telecom companies for denying interconnection points to Reliance Jio. Reliance Jio had alleged that due to inadequate interconnection points its subscribers were unable to make calls to other networks. According to TRAI, their actions also have stifled the competition and are seen as anti-consumer and against public interest.
- Uttarakhand High Court ordered state government to completely ban on the sale of whitener in the state following the death of a teenager from sniffing an excess of it.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first National Tribal Carnival in New Delhi to promote a sense of inclusiveness among the tribals. The main purpose of this four-day carnival is to promote a sense of inclusiveness among the tribals. It will also showcase and promote various facets of tribal culture on a large scale.
- According to the recent publication released by the Botanical Survey of India (BSI), Tamil Nadu accounts for the highest number flowering plants in the country.
- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has collaborated with social networking giant Facebook to register young voters in 5 states, which are going to polls in 2017. These five states are Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, Manipur and Uttarakhand.
- The 28th India and Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) and Second Bilateral Maritime Exercise was held at Belawan, Indonesia in the Andaman Sea.
- Union Finance Ministry has constituted a high-level committee to consolidate the regulation of pension products that is currently being done by three different watchdogs including

insurance and stock market regulators. The committee would have representatives from all financial sector regulators SEBI, IRDA, RBI and PFRDA.

- Union Cabinet has approved the establishment and operations of Indian Institute of Management (IIM) at Jammu.
- India has received the first parcel of crude oil from Iran to partly fill the strategic storage in southern India as part of the Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs) storage.
- Brazil has won the inaugural BRICS U-17 Football Tournament 2016 held at Goa on the occasion of the 8th BRICS hosted in India.
- Japanese Encephalitis has claimed 54 lives in Odisha's backward Malkangiri district in just a more than a month.
- China has successfully launched longest-ever manned mission by taking two astronauts Jing Haipeng (50) and Chen Dong (37) into the orbit. They were launched on board of Shenzhou-11 (heavenly vessel) spacecraft from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre near the Gobi Desert in northwest China. The spacecraft was put into orbit by a Long March-2F carrier rocket.
- *Antartica's Ross Sea* was declared as world's largest Marine Protected Area (MPA) to protect the Earth's most pristine marine ecosystem. It was declared after landmark international agreement among 24 countries and European Union in Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) meeting in Hobart, Australia.
- The fourth edition of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise '*MITRA SHAKTI 2016*' began at Sinha Regimental Centre in Ambepussa, Sri Lanka.
- *India won the 2016 Kabaddi World Cup* by defeating Iran by 38-29 score in the final match played in Ahmedabad (Gujarat).
- Smooth-coated otter was sighted for the first time in the mangrove forest near the Krishna wildlife sanctuary (KWS) in Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is going to declare the Kashmiri Red Stag (also known as Hangul) as a Critically Endangered species.
- The Indian Immunologicals Limited (IIL) has launched *CYSVAX*, world's first vaccine to fight against *Taenia solium* Tapeworms in pigs. The vaccine has significant potential benefit to reduce the incidence of epilepsy in humans.
- Researchers from Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya (IGKV),Chattisgarh have developed a protein-enriched rice variety.

- Union Government has signed \$650 million loan agreement with the World Bank for construction of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC)-III project.
- Maharashtra government has launched 'Kaushalya Setu', a skill development programme for students. Students of Maharashtra State Board of Secondary & Higher Secondary Education who failed to clear Class X or SSC exam, will be accommodated in skill development courses.
- India and China have conducted second joint military exercise "Sino India Cooperation 2016" in Ladakh region along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Jammu and Kashmir. This exercise compliments Hand in Hand series of India-China joint military exercises that aims to enhance cooperation and maintain peace and tranquility along border areas of both countries.

### **MOU's In October**

- Union Cabinet has approved MOU between India and European Union in the field of water resources.
- Union Cabinet has given its approval for signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Hungary on cooperation in the field of water management.
- Union Cabinet gave its approval to sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and African Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO) for capacity building programmes in the field of rural development.
- India and Singapore have signed three MOU's:
  - MoU in the field of Industrial Property Cooperation was signed between Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) and Intellectual Property Office (IPO), Singapore
  - MoU on collaboration in the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training was signed between National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and ITEES Singapore.
  - Another MoU on collaboration in the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training was signed between Government of Assam and ITEES Singapore.
- India and New Zealand signed three agreements in the areas of double taxation avoidance (DTA), sports and food security to carry forward the ties between both sides.
- Signed agreements include:

- MoU on cooperation in the field of youth affairs and sports. It was signed between the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of India and Sport New Zealand.
  - Arrangement between the Ministry for Primary Industries of New Zealand regarding Food Safety Cooperation and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)
  - Protocol to the convention for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income.
- Union Cabinet approved signing of a MoU on General Cooperation with New Development Bank (NDB) or BRICS Bank and Export Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank). The MoU will be through the BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism.
- India has signed agreement with Russia to lease second Akula-II class nuclear attack submarine (SSN). The deal is believed to be worth about \$2 billion.
- India and Myanmar have signed three Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) to boost bilateral relations between two neighbouring nations.
- Signed MoUs include:
  - MoU on Banking Supervision. It was signed between Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Central Bank of Myanmar.
  - MoU for designing an academic and professional building programme for insurance industry of Myanmar.
  - MoU on Cooperation in the field of Power Sector. Under it India has offered to enhance power supply from Moreh in Manipur to Tamu in Myanmar.

## **SEPTEMBER 2016**

### **NATIONAL NEWS in BITS:**

- The 2016 BRICS Convention on Tourism was held at UNESCO World heritage site Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh to promote intra-regional tourism.
- The first BRICS film festival has begun at the Sirifort Auditorium Complex in New Delhi. The film festival is the run up to the BRICS summit, which is to be held in Goa in October 2016.
- Indian film Thithi won the best film award at the first BRICS Film Festival concluded in New Delhi.
- The 2016 BRICS Labour & Employment Ministerial Meet was held in New Delhi from September 27- 28, 2016 to deliberate on issues including job creation and social security for workers.
- The third edition of BRICS Urbanisation Forum Meet has started in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- The Union Government has constituted four-member expert committee to study silt in river Ganga in Bihar. The team will be headed by member of Ganga Flood Control commission A .K. Sinha. The committee will submit its report within 10 days.
- The Guinness World Records has officially designation Assam's Majuli as the largest river island in the world. It is situated in the Brahmaputra River.
- India has been placed at the 35th rank in the World Bank's 2016 Logistics Performance Index (LPI) among 160 countries. World Bank recently released the index in its report titled 'Connecting to Complete 2016'. India has leapfrogged by 19 spots to 35th rank compared with 54th rank in 2014 LPI.
- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has granted national party status to All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) Party led by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.
- The Union Health Ministry has recently launched the "Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC)" to eradicate leprosy from the country. LCDC aims to cover more than 1,600 blocks in the 149 districts across 20 states where nearly 3 lakh health teams will undertake door-to-door visits to detect leprosy cases.

- India has officially received certificates from World Health Organisation (WHO), recognizing the elimination of Yaws and Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus (MNT) from the country.
- The Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE) has handed over Tihayu, a Water Jet Fast Attack Craft (WJFAC) to the Indian Navy.
- The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has successfully conducted a technical flight of the new indigenous Light Utility Helicopter (LUH). The flawless test was conducted by HAL engineers and technicians in the air for 15 minutes inside the HAL complex in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Key Facts Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) is eight-seater chopper under development for the armed forces.
- The Union Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has launched #Gas4India campaign, aimed at promoting the use of natural gas in the country.
- The first edition of 'IoT (Internet of Things) India Congress, 2016' began in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- India's largest private sector bank ICICI Bank has successfully deployed 'Software Robotics' for power banking operations. With this, it becomes first bank in the country and among few globally to deploy 'Software Robotics'.
- India's first LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory) laboratory will be set up in Aundh in Hingoli district of Maharashtra.
- The Union Government has launched Urja Mitra Helpline through which customers can get information on power outages from distribution companies by dialing 14401.
- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has launched 'e-nivaran' (electronic resolution) facility for online redressal of taxpayers' grievances.
- The first BRICS Wellness Workshop has begun in Bengaluru, Karnataka from September 10, 2016. Besides, National Fair on comprehensive Indian Medicine system (AROGYA) was also inaugurated.
- The meeting of BRICS Representatives in charge of security was held in New Delhi, India. It was hosted National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval. They agreed to intensify cooperation against terror groups like the Islamic State in West Asia and North Africa region (WANA). WANA comprises 27 countries with almost 600 million inhabitants with Morocco in west, Pakistan and Afghanistan in east, Turkey in north, and Ethiopia and Sudan in south.
- India has officially declared itself free from highly contagious Avian Influenza (H5N1) or bird flu and has notified the same to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

- India has been ranked 112th out of 159 countries in the 2016 World Economic Freedom Index (WEFI). The index was released as part of the 2016 annual report of the Economic Freedom. The report measures the economic freedom by analyzing the policies and institutions of all 159 countries and territories and was based on data from the year 2014.
- The Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Prakash Javadekar has inaugurated the super computer PARAM ISHAN at IIT Guwahati campus. PARAM ISHAN is the fastest and most powerful computer in North East, Eastern and Southern region of India outside Bengaluru (Karnataka).
- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for provision of a direct communication link through a dedicated submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) between Chennai (mainland India) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The submarine OFC will connect mainland with Port Blair and five other islands viz. Little Andaman, Havelock, Car Nicobar, Kamorta and Great Nicobar.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has given its approval for initiating the process of winding up of Hindustan Diamond Company Private Limited (HDCPL). The winding up of HDCPL will not affect supply of rough diamonds to Indian diamond dealers as Indian diamond industry has grown in these years.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the proposals of Ministry of Finance to merge of Railway budget with the General budget. Merger of Railway Budget with the General Budget will be effective from the Budget 2017-18. It will end 92-year-old tradition as the presentation of separate Railway budget started in year 1924. Since then it has continued after independence as a convention rather than under Constitutional provisions
- The Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport has become Asia-Pacific's only and one of the world's few airports, to achieve a carbon neutral status.
- The Union Government has given its approval to change the name of Gurgaon to 'Gurugram'. With this both the city as well as the district of Gurgaon would be known as Gurugram.
- Anil Ambani led Reliance Communications (RCom) has signed a deal with Maxis Communications Berhad (MCB) for merger of wireless businesses of Aircel Limited with itself.
- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for closure of Hindustan Cables Limited (HCL), Kolkata as per the provisions of Companies Act, 1956/2013 and other relevant Acts.
- India has been ranked 39th among the 138 countries in the 2016-17 Global Competitiveness Index (GCI). The index was released as part of the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global



Competitiveness Report for 2016-17. Key Facts Top 5 Countries: Switzerland (1st), Singapore (2nd), United States (3rd), Netherlands (4th) and Germany (5th).

- Multilateral funding agency Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved \$631 million loan for building India's first coastal industrial corridor between Visakhapatnam (Vizag) and Chennai. The fund will help develop the first key 800-km section of the planned 2,500-km East Coast Economic Corridor.
- The world's largest solar power plant with an installed capacity of 648MW was commissioned at Kamudhi in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu. Adani Group set up the plant on an area of around 5,000 acres at a total cost of Rs 4,550 crore. It was connected to the grid through a sub-station.
- The Tamil film "Visaranai" has been selected as the India's official entry to Oscars 2017 (89th Academy Awards) in the Foreign Language Film category.
- The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is going to launch Mission Parivar Vikas for improved family planning services in 145 High Focus districts in seven states.
- The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has signed a contract with German company DST to design vessels suited to navigate the 1620 km stretch of National Waterway (NW-1). Under the contract, DST will have been initially tasked to develop low draft vessels for transportation of cars that can carry upto 150-200 vehicles.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the scheme for granting of Permanent Residency Status (PRS) to foreign investors.
  - In order to avail this scheme, the foreign investor will have to invest a minimum of 10 crores rupees within 18 months or 25 crores rupees within 36 months.
  - Further, the foreign investment should result in generating employment to at least 20 resident Indians every financial year.
- Indian Railways has launched an insurance scheme for passengers travelling on e- ticket. The insurance cover will be up to 10 lakh rupees
  - Person booking a train ticket through the IRCTC website will be eligible for the optional insurance after paying an additional **92 paise premium**.
  - The insurance cover will not be applicable for children up to 5 years of age and foreign citizens.
  - The scheme offers travellers or nominees a compensation of 10 lakh Rupees in the event of death or total disability, 7.5 lakh Rupees for partial disability.

- Besides it will pay up to 2 lakh Rupees for hospitalization expenses and 10,000 rupees for transportation of mortal remains from the place of a train accident.
- TVSN Prasad committee submitted its report to Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi. The committee was constituted to look into the alternatives to pellet guns. In its reports, the committee does not agree complete removal of the pellet guns in the Kashmir Valley but suggests that it should be replaced with rubber, polymer and paper bullets.
  - Later in end of September, The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has approved the use of Pelargonic Acid Vanillyl Amide (PAVA) shells as an alternative to pellet guns for crowd controlling in Jammu and Kashmir.

### **MOU, Agreements & Contracts**

- India and Egypt have signed an agreement in the area of Maritime Transport to step up co-operation on the seas.
- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Kenya on cooperation in the field of National Housing Policy Development and Management (NHPDM).
- The Union Cabinet has apprised of the MoU between India and South Africa for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).
- Union Cabinet has given its approval for signing of the Bilateral Technical Arrangement (BTA) between India and Switzerland on the identification and return of Indian and Swiss Nationals and its implementation.
- India and Afghanistan have signed an Extradition Treaty to facilitate exchange of wanted terrorists and criminals.
- India and Nepal have signed three MOU's for post-earthquake reconstruction, Road infrastructure in Tarai and Line of Credit. These agreements were inked during the four days (from 15 to 18 September 2016) official state visit of Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda to India.
- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for signing and ratification of Agreement between India and Samoa for the exchange of information with respect to Taxes. It will help to

stimulate the flow of exchange of information between India and Samoa for tax purposes, which will help curb tax avoidance and tax evasion.

### DEFENCE NEWS:

- India, Kazakhstan joint bilateral military exercise PRABAL DOSTYK-16 began in Karaganda region of Kazakhstan. The fourteen day (till 17 September 2016) will be a significant step towards fostering military as well as diplomatic ties between both countries. 'Prabal Dostyk' means 'Robust Friendship'.
- China has claimed that it has successfully developed and tested a radar system that uses quantum entanglement to beat the stealth technology of modern military aircrafts. The Intelligent Perception Technology Laboratory developed this first Chinese quantum radar. Prior to it, US was only the country stealth-defeating quantum radar.
- The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has commissioned well-equipped offshore patrolling (OPV) vessel named 'Sarathi'.
- The joint military training exercise between India and United States dubbed as "Yudh Abhyas 2016" has begun in Chaubattia in Uttarakhand. It is the 12th edition of the joint military exercise hosted alternately by the two countries.
- Indian Navy's indigenously built most Advanced Guided Missile Stealth Destroyer 'Mormugao' was launched in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- The eighth edition of joint military exercise 'Indra-2016' between India and Russia has begun in Russian city of Vladivostok. The main focus of this edition of bilateral military exercise is on Counter-Terrorism Operations in semi mountainous and jungle terrain under United Nations Mandate.
- Indian Air Force (IAF) has successfully fired recently acquired long-range air-to-air MICA missile from Mirage-2000 Upgrade combat aircraft on a maneuvering target. During the test, the missile achieved a direct hit on a target, which was much smaller than an actual aircraft, and flying at a low altitude.
- India and France has signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement for the purchase of 36 Rafale fighter jets at a cost of 7.87 billion Euros.
- The first military exercise between Russia and Pakistan named Druzhba-2016 (Friendship-2016) has kicked off in Pakistan. With this, Pakistani Army and Russian Ground Forces (RGF)

have come together for the first time in military exercises reflecting growing military ties between two former Cold War rivals.

- China and Russia have carried out joint naval exercises dubbed as Joint Sea-2016 in the resource-rich South China Sea (SCS) off China's southern Guangdong province.
- India and Israel jointly developed most advanced long range surface-to-air missile (LR-SAM) Barak-8 was successfully test fired off the Odisha coast.

### SPACE NEWS:

- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has successfully launched advanced weather satellite INSAT-3DR.
- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), a US space agency has launched OSIRIS-REx spacecraft to collect samples from an asteroid 101955 Bennu and return to Earth.
- China has successfully launched Tiangong-2 space lab to develop expertise for a future space station and conduct science experiments. The space lab was launched on board of Long March-2F T2 rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China's Gobi desert.
- NASA's Cassini spacecraft after studying Saturn, its rings and moons for more than 12 years, has entered in the final year of its epic voyage. In its epic voyage, the Cassini spacecraft will make the closest-ever observations of the planet. Beginning November 30, 2016 Cassini will make the closest-ever observations of Saturn.
- China has built world's largest radio telescope nicknamed Tianyan (Heavenly Eye" or "The Eye of Heaven) or the five-hundred-metre aperture spherical radio telescope (FAST). It has started its operation and is part of China's drive to become a science powerhouse. It is located in the Dawodang depression (vast natural crater), a natural basin in Pingtang County in the Guizhou Province, Southwest China.
- Supreme Court has quashed the CPI (M)-led West Bengal government's acquisition of 997 acres of agricultural land for Tata Motors' Nano (small car) plant in Singur.

## STATES NEWS

- The Gujarat government has inked a tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Airport Authority of India (AAI).
  - Under these MoUs, 11 small airports and airstrips will be developed under the Centre's Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) to boost regional air connectivity in the State.
  - These 11 unserved or underserved airports and airstrips are in Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Surat, Bhuj, Mehsana, Porbandar, Amreli, Mandavi, Kandla, Keshod and Deesa.
  - The Central Government will provide the financial resources under viability gap funding of the RCS.
- India's first international conference on cooking gas took place in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- The annual socio-religious Solung festival of Adi tribe has started in Arunachal Pradesh. Solung is 5-day long agro-based festival is celebrated every year by the Adi tribe in the first week of September.
- The Union Government has announced a special package of 200 crore rupees for Jammu and Kashmir to engage youth of the state in constructive sporting activities. The package will provide construction of indoor sporting halls in all districts of the state to provide playing facilities to youth during long winter.
- Gumthala Garhu Village near Pehowa in Kurukshetra district in Haryana became the first Wifi hotspot village in Haryana circle.
- Haryana has won 'Best Horticulture State' award of the Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA).

## INTERNATIONAL

- Canada's British Columbia province has become the first foreign government to issue of masala bonds, a rupee-denominated bond.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has officially declared Sri Lanka a malaria-free, after certifying that the life-threatening disease had been completely eliminated in the island. With

this, Sri Lanka became second country in the South-East Asia Region declared as malaria free after Maldives by the WHO.

- The world's first daily driverless bus service has started in Lyon, France which will run in the city's Confluence area. The driverless bus service includes two electric shuttles that will transport passengers on a ten-minute route hosting five stops.
- It has features like LIDAR radar technology and motion sensors will help to avoid accidents. LIDAR is acronym of Light Detection And Ranging. Originally it was created as a portmanteau of "light" and "radar".
- State owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has granted prestigious membership of Asia-Pacific Aerospace Quality Group (APAQG) under category 'Full Member with voting rights'.
- The 193 countries of the United Nations (UN) have signed a landmark declaration to rid the world of drug-resistant infections or Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) or superbugs. It is the fourth time a UN declaration has been reached on a health issue, following HIV in 2001, non-communicable diseases in 2011 and Ebola in 2013.
- Syrian aid group White Helmets has won the prestigious Right Livelihood Award, which is also known as 'alternative Nobel' prize. The White Helmets also known as the Syria Civil Defence is a Syrian civil organisation of emergency responders in rebel-held areas.
- The world's first three-parent baby boy was born in Mexico to a Jordanian couple with the help a controversial new fertility technique that incorporates DNA from three people in the embryo. The 'three-parent' technique also known as Mitochondrial donation (Mitochondrial Replacement Therapy) allows parents with rare genetic mutations to have healthy babies.

### PERSON in NEWS

- Former Finance Secretary Ashok Chawla has been appointed as the new Chancellor of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) University.
- Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Chairperson and Managing Director of Biocon Limited was appointed Knight of the National Order of the French Legion of Honour (Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur).

- Governor of Maharashtra Chennamaneni Vidyasagar Rao, was sworn in as the acting Governor of Tamil Nadu.
- Mother Teresa, a Roman Catholic religious sister and missionary was proclaimed a Saint by Pope Francis in a ceremony at the Vatican. She was canonised at the ceremony held in St Peter's Square in Vatican.
- Noted Assamese poet, author and literary critic Nalinidhar Bhattacharyya passed away in Guwahati, Assam due to age-old ailments.
- Eminent economist, consultant and banker Dr. Urjit Patel has assumed charge as the 24th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Assam-based ecologist and conservation activist Bibhuti Lahkar has won prestigious 'Heritage Heroes Award' of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- CK Asnani has taken charge as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of state owned Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL).
- Stuart Blackburn's Novel based on Apatani tribe of Arunachal Pradesh titled "**Into the Hidden Valley**" has won 2016 MM Bennetts Award for Historical Fiction in the United Kingdom.
- The Union Government has appointed S. Sivakumar as a full-time Member of the 21st Law Commission of India (LCI). He is the professor at the Indian Law Institute (ILI) in New Delhi. He hails from Kerala and has authored several books on law.
- Union Government has chosen 105-year-old Kunwar Bai from Chhattisgarh's Dhamtari district as the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' mascot. PM Modi felicitated the old but spirited lady at a function held in New Delhi to mark 'Swachhta Diwas' on September 17, 2016
- President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed former IAS officer Alka Sirohi as chairman of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) as per Article 316 of Constitution.
- In Indian-origin South African Ravi Reddy has been appointed as the Head of International Society for Blood Transfusion (ISBT).
- Anandi Ramalingam has assumed charge as Director Marketing of the Public sector Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL).
- Renowned Hindi and Urdu writer, playwright and television personality Reoti Saran Sharma passed away in New Delhi. He was 92. He was pioneer in radio plays in All India Radio (AIR).

For his contribution to theatre (dramatic literature and performance) he was conferred with Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2007.

- Senior IPS officer R. K. Pachnanda was appointed as Director General of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). He is a 1983 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from West Bengal cadre. Prior to this appointment he was serving as ADG of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).
- Jim Yong Kim has been re-appointed as President of World Bank for a second five-year term beginning 1 July 2017. The Executive Directors of the World Bank unanimously chose him.
- Noted Dalit voice, poet and Telugu writer Prof.Kalakaluri Enoch was conferred with the prestigious Moortidevi Award of Bharatiya Jnanpith for the year 2015. The prestigious literary award was bestowed upon him for his novel, Anantajivanam by Veteran art historian Dr Kapila Vatsyayana function in New Delhi.

### SPORTS NEWS:

- Indian pair of Pranaav Jerry Chopra and N Sikki Reddy have won the 2016 Brazil Open Grand Prix title of Badminton in the mixed doubles category. It was their maiden Grand Prix title.
- Mariyappan Thangavelu won India's first gold medal at the 2016 Rio Paralympics. He won the gold medal in the Men's High Jump T-42 event with jump of 1.89 metres. With this, Thangavelu became the first Indian high jumper to win gold at the Paralympics. This was India's overall third gold at the Paralympics and the first after 12 years.
- In addition, India's Varun Singh Bhati won the bronze medal in same event with the jump of 1.86 metres to finish third. Sam Grewe of United States won the silver medal. India had won its first ever Paralympics Gold medal in the 1972 Heidelberg Games. Swimmer Murlikant Petkar won it.
- Stan Wawrinka (World no 3) from Switzerland has won the 2016 US Open men's singles title. This is Wawrinka's maiden US Open title and his third major title.
- Deepa Malik has created history by winning silver medal in Women's shotput at the 2016 Rio Paralympics. With this she becomes first Indian woman to win a medal at the Paralympics. It is India's 3rd medal in the ongoing Paralympics games at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



- Malik had won the silver medal in the shotput F-53 event with her best throw of 4.61m in her six attempts.
- Army Green has won the 2016 Durand Cup Football Title by defeating Neroca FC. It was the 128th edition of the Durand Cup.
- India's Devendra Jhajharia (36) has won gold medal in the men's javelin throw, F46 event held at the 2016 Rio Paralympics. With this, he becomes only the second gold medallist at the Paralympics for the country. He won the gold medal with world-record throw of 63.97 metres.
- Gautam Gambhir-led India Blue has won the inaugural day/night 2016-17 Duleep Trophy Cricket tournament played with a pink ball. The 2016-17 was 55th season of Duleep Trophy.
- Cricketers Ajinkya Rahane and Rohit Sharma were conferred with the Arjuna Award for their contributions to sport of cricket. The award was bestowed upon them by Union Sports Minister Vijay Goel in New Delhi. Sharma was bestowed with the award for the year 2015 and Rahane for the year 2016.
- Young Indian shooter Subhankar Pramanick has won the gold medal at the ISSF Junior World Cup for pistol, rifle and shotgun in Gabala, Azerbaijan.
- India's Priyesh Deshmukh (23) has won a historic bronze medal in the first World Deaf Shooting Championships held in Kazan, Russia.
- India's squash player Velavan Senthilkumar has won the Under-19 Asian Junior Individual squash championship title.
- India's Pinky Balhara has won bronze medal in the sporting event of kurash at the 5th Asian Beach Games held at Da Nang, Vietnam.
- Indian paddler Sathiyar Gnanasekaran has won the Belgium Open title of the table tennis in the men's singles category. This was his first pro title.
- Indian women's beach kabaddi team has won the gold medal at the 5th Asian Beach Games held in Danang, Vietnam.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### National Teachers Day

- Every year 5th September is being observed as National Teachers Day in India.
- Significance of Day: Observance of this day commemorates the birthday of India's first Vice President and second President Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan since 1962.

### International Literacy Day

- The International Literacy Day is being observed 08 September every year to emphasize the importance of literacy to individuals, society and communities. This year, the world is celebrating 50th International Literacy Day.
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) established the day in 1966.
- 2016 Theme: 'Reading the Past, Writing the Future'.

### National Hindi Divas

- The National Hindi Divas, an annual literary-day is being observed on 14 September in Hindi speaking regions of India and other countries with Hindi speaking population.
- Hindi Divas is celebrated on 14th September every year to mark adaptation of Hindi language, as the official language of India by the Constituent Assembly of India on 14 September 1949.

### International Democracy Day

- The International Democracy Day is being observed every year on 15 September to raise public awareness about the democratic system.
- 2016 Theme: "Democracy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

### International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer

- The International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer is observed every year on September 16 for the preservation of the Ozone Layer.
- Significance of the Day: The day is commemoration of the date in 1987 on which the Montreal Protocol was signed on substances that deplete the ozone layer.
- 2016 theme: "Ozone and climate: Restored by a world united".

### International Day of Peace

- The International Day of Peace is observed across the world on 21 September every year to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples.
- Significance: The International Day of Peace acknowledges the efforts of those who have strived to end conflict and promote peace. This day is also observed as a day of ceasefire.
- 2016 Theme: “The Sustainable Development Goals: Building Blocks for Peace”.

### World Tourism Day

- The World Tourism Day (WTD) is being observed annually on 27th September to raise awareness about the importance of tourism.
- Significance of the day: To foster awareness among the international community of the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic value.
- 2016 Theme: ‘Tourism for all – promoting universal accessibility’. It seeks to spread both the importance and immense benefits universal accessibility of tourism.

### World Rabies Day

- The World Rabies Day is observed on 28 September across the world to raise awareness about the rabies disease and its preventable measures.
- Observance of the day seeks to raise awareness about the impact of rabies on animals and human beings. It also seeks to share information on how to prevent the disease.
- 2016 Theme: “Rabies: Educate. Vaccinate. Eliminate”.

### World Maritime Day

- The World Maritime Day is observed across the world on 29 September to highlight the importance of shipping safety, maritime security and the marine environment.
- Several events are organized to mark this day by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), member Governments, maritime industry etc.
- 2016 Theme: “Shipping: indispensable to the world”.
- The theme focuses on the critical link between shipping and global society. It also raises awareness of the relevance of the role of IMO as the global regulatory body for international shipping.

## AUGUST 2016

### **National NEWS**

- **Strategic Forces Command (SFC) exempted from RTI**
  - Strategy Forces Command was being brought under **sub-section (2) of Section 24** of the RTI. Hence, SFC has been added to **Second Schedule** of the Right to Information Act (RTI), 2005.
  - The Section 24 of the RTI exempts security and intelligence establishments from its purview and so from now on, RTI will also not be applicable for SFC.
  - Second Schedule: Includes 26 intelligence and security agencies, which are exempted from RTI.
- Blood supply improves, but India still faces a shortfall of 10 per cent. There are total of 2708 blood banks in India, however, 81 districts spread across 17 States do not have a blood bank.
- **Luke Aikins: 1<sup>st</sup> person to jump from 25,000 feet without a parachute**
  - **Then how did he do it?** He did it successfully by falling safely into the 100x100ft net in Simi Valley, southern California after the two-minute fall from aeroplane without a parachute or wing suit.
- Union Railway Ministry has flagged off broad gauge train service dubbed as '**Tripura Sundari Express**' from Agartala (Tripura) to Delhi.
- Union Government constitutes **DISHA agency** to see timely implementation of Central Schemes
  - DISHA- District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DDCMC)
  - It will monitor the implementation of 28 schemes
  - Chairperson of the committee will be the senior most Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) elected from the district, nominated by the Union Ministry of Rural Development.
- Buddhist remains unearthed in A.P.
  - Where: Ghantasala, Krishna District in Andhara Pradesh
  - What: limestone pillars carved with half-lotus medallions, two limestone panels and a fragment of a Buddha image were also visible.

- Belongs to: 3rd Century AD — i.e., Ikshwaku times.
- **Spanish-made Talgo completed the Delhi-Mumbai trial**
  - Speed 150 Kms/hr .
  - Cover Delhi-Mumbai distance in 13 hours against Rajdhani express, which takes nearly 16 hours.
  - However, because of monsoon could not complete as desired and arrived only 9 minutes early.
- Members of Bawariya tribe are accused as culprits and Bawariya tribe has been called as notorious tribe.
  - History:
  - British in 1871 passed **Criminal Tribes Act** and labeled over 200 of such communities as **notified tribes** for criminal tendencies.
  - Post Independence, Government repealed the Criminal Act but introduced another law, **the Habitual Offenders Act (1953)** around 150 tribes have been labeled as **de-notified tribes**.
- **Sawai Madhopur Raliway Station, Rajasthan** has won National Tourism Award for 2014-15 for the 'best tourist-friendly railway station'.
- West Bengal government passed a proposal to rename the State as just **Bengal**.
- **Rajasthan: becomes first state to approve sewage & wastewater policy.**
- All district headquarters, heritage cities, and cities in the state with population more than one lakh are included in the policy.
- Wastewater would be used for agriculture, irrigation purposes.
- **Swell Waves warning in Kerala**
  - What are Swell Waves: (locally called as *Kallakdal*)
  - These are 3-4 meters high waves that are result of *high onshore winds* and *Spring tides associated with new moon phase* occurring **simultaneously**.
  - Causes floods in low-lying areas.

- **Typhoon Nida** made landfall near Dapeng Peninsula in China.
- **Asteroid Benu**
  - **Benu** is a near-Earth asteroid that is coming towards our planet after being dislodged by a gravitational pull.
  - 1 in 2700 chance of hitting earth in 2135.
  - NASA is sending - **OSIRIS-REx Mission** – to study asteroid.
- Senior Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer Rani Singh Nair has been appointed as Chairperson (Chairman) of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).
- **Novak Djokovic (World no 1)** from Serbia won the 2016 ATP Toronto Masters also known as the Rogers club title in the men's single category.
- **Anant Maheshwari** has been appointed as President of Microsoft India
- Translator **Anita Gopalan** has been awarded the 2016 PEN/Heim **Translation Fund Grants** for her English translation of Hindi novel Simsim written by Geet Chaturvedi.
- Maoist chief Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) was on Wednesday elected by lawmakers as **Nepal's Prime Minister** for a second time

#### **India will host 2016 Kabaddi World Cup.**

- **International Kabaddi Federation (IKF)** announced that India is going to host 2016 Kabaddi World Cup, scheduled to take place in October 2016.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), US approves lunar mission by **Moon Express**, a private company.

- First time, a private company has been given approval for moon project.
- Moon Express – Founder and CEO – Naveen Jain
- Investor – Khosla Ventures – created by Vinod Khosla founder Sun Microsystems.
- Motivation: Discovery of water which was accomplished by the Indian Space Research Organization's (ISRO) Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft with ISRO's Moon Impact Probe (MIP) and NASA's Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M3).

Google has released a new application, **Verne: The Himalayas**, specially designed for children to let them explore the Himalayas using maps, 3D imagery and gameplay

In September, India will launch **ScatSat-1 satellite** that will have weather forecasting abilities.

Primary payload – Scatterometer – will monitor sea surface winds and help predict the genesis of cyclones

It will replace Oceansat-2, whose service life is coming to an end.

### **India to run short of high-tech minerals**

- **Hi-tech minerals:** They are necessary for clean-energy applications and for manufacturing high-end products.
- **Used in:** Aerospace, automobiles, cameras, defence, laptops, medical imaging, nuclear energy, and smartphones and entertainment systems.
- 12 out of 49 minerals have been identified as 'most critical' for India's manufacturing.
- China is leading global supplier for 6 out of 12 minerals.
- Further, China controls 94% of global supply of rare-earth minerals.
- India, needs to develop diplomatic trade channels and long-term supply contracts to sustain its manufacturing.

### **Union Cabinet has approved the Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Bill, 2016**

- Bill seeks to amend Motor Vehicles Act (MVA), 1988 and as a deterrent measure proposes to impose hefty penalties against violations of road safety rules.
- In India, every year 5 lakh road accidents are reported in the country in which 1.5 lakh people lose their lives. Government of India has committed to reduce the accidents and fatalities by 50% in five years.

#### **Key Features:**

- Increases compensation for Hit & Run cases from present Rs. 25000 to Rs. 2 lakh.
- Adds provision for payment of compensation in road accidents fatalities upto Rs. 10 lakh.

**Vahan & Sarathi platforms:** The bill proposes to create common uniform National Register for Vehicle registration and National Register for Driving Licence.

- Increases e-governance:

- Online learning licenses
- Increases period of driving licenses validity,
- Do away with the requirements of educational qualifications for transport licenses
- For offences done by Juveniles, the owner or guardian will be deemed guilty.
- Allows State Government to regulate the activities in a public place of pedestrians and such means of transport.
- Permits states to grant exemptions in Stage carriage and contract carriage permits for promoting rural transport, last mile connectivity, public transport and for road safety and passenger convenience.

#### **Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) & related projects development undertaken by DRDO:**

- UAV – Nishant - useful for reconnaissance and monitoring of Naxal / terrorist infested areas.
- Wheeled version of Nishant UAV – Panchi
- Indigenous development of Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) UAV
- Technology Initiative for the development of MALE UAV (Rustom-I)
- Development of Aeronautical Test Range at Chitradurga (Rustom-II)
- Development of Naval Rotary Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (NRUAV).
- Artillery gun '**Dhanush**' handed over to Indian Army: 3 Nos.

#### **Special Features:**

- 8 km more range than BOFORS Gun.
- Modified Double Baffle Muzzle Brake.
- 155 mm x 45 Calibre
- The Union government, in consultation with the RBI, has set an **inflation target of 4 per cent**
- Margin: 2%. Hence,
- Upper limit of 6 per cent and
- Lower limit of 2 per cent.
- It will be in effect till March 31, 2021.
- Advantage of using Margins: Allows Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of RBI to target long-term inflation and sail through Short-term business cycles.
- Identification of Failure: IF inflation remains outside the range of 2-6% for 3 consecutive quarters.



- Inflation is measure through Consumer Price Index (CPI). Present value – 5.8%

Report: 19 **Juang tribal children** have died in the last three months

- Where: Nagada hills, in Odisha's Jajpur district
- Why: Malnutrition related diseases.

#### **Juang Tribe:**

- One of the Particularly Vulnerable Group (PVTG)s that belong to the **Munda ethnic group**
- Speak the **Juang language**, branch of the greater Austroasiatic language family
- Live in Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Angul and Jajpur districts of Odisha
- In a bid to lure passengers from airlines, the Indian Railways is planning introduce **Maglev trains** which can run at a top speed of 500 km an hour.
- Maglev: Trains and tracks that operate on the principle of magnetic levitation
- Maglev trains are in operation in China, Japan, Germany and South Korea
- Last few days, so much of discussion on Special Category State.

BJP leader - **Vijay Rupani** was sworn in as the 16<sup>th</sup> - Chief Minister of Gujarat on Sunday.

Bidar, Karnataka: Guru Nanak Jhira – Gurudwara will begin plantation drive as Amrut Kund – Pond of Gurudwara – faces shortage of water.

- Legend says - Summer of 1512, Guru Nanak returning from his tour of Dakshina Patha or the Southern Sojourn, created the Spring which never dried for 5 centuries till 2016.
- Reason – Excessive deforestation & Borewell digging.

Nag Panchmi – different festivals across different places.

- One Such, Yadgir district of Karnataka on Sunday celebrated a “**scorpion fair.**”
- First, first pooja is offered to goddess Konddammai, who is said to be a scorpion goddess and then devotes search for scorpion and play with them.

**Telangana State Scheme:** Prime Minister, Modi, launched **Mission Bhagiratha** at Komatibanda Village, in Medak District of Telangana. The scheme has been launched by the State Government with an objective to provide safe drinking water to all.

- Further he also laid foundation of:
- 1600 MW Thermal Power station of NTPC at Ramagundam
- Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences, Warangal; and
- Manoharabad-Kothapalli Railway line.
- August 7 – National Handloom day – 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Last year: 1<sup>st</sup> Handloom day was celebrated, by Modi.
- The date August 7 has been chosen due to its special significance in India's freedom struggle; it was on this day in 1905 that the Swadeshi Movement was formally launched, at a massive meeting in the Calcutta Town hall.
- (UPSC Question came on 7<sup>th</sup> August itself on this new)
- Government to take up conservation of Mithun
- Mithun – also called as Gayal
- Semi-domesticated Bovine( Cow Family) – found in North East
- State animal of Arunachal Pradesh & Nagaland.
- A Swachh Survekshan-2017 – launched
- By Union Minister of Urban Development Shri M.Venkaiah Naidu
- For: assess the levels of sanitation, efforts being made by respective States and Urban Local Bodies and to capture the improvements made since last Swachh Survekshan

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) denied any regulatory purview over ponzi schemes, and placed the responsibility of protecting investors on State governments.

- Ponzi Scheme: is a fraud investment scheme in which the operator offers high return on investment based on new capital received rather than earning profit by using it in some legitimate activity.

International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has awarded Dr. Dhrubajyoti Ghosh (environmental activist), the Luc Hoffman award.

- Luc Hoffman: Swiss ornithologist, conservationist and philanthropist. He co-founded World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and helped establish the Ramsar Convention for the protection of wetlands

7<sup>th</sup> India-Japan International Conference on 'Science and Technology: Future Challenges and Solutions', started at the University of Mysore.

- Organized by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) through Indian JSPS Alumni Association.

Rio 2016 Olympics: Gymnast Dipa Karmakar created history by becoming the first Indian gymnast to qualify for the apparatus finals of artistic Gymnastics.

Odisha Government had launched **Baristha Bunakar Sahayata Yojana**, a special assistance scheme for elderly weavers.

- Scheme aims at improving the financial condition of over 8,000 weavers in the state.

Wildlife Institute of India (WII) will house the India's first repository on tigers, under its new Tiger Cell.

- The repository will consist of database on tiger conservation and population estimation, prepared with collaborated effort with the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

Union Government launched MAA (Mothers' Absolute Affection), a nation-wide breast-feeding program.

A Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched a website **sachet.rbi.org.in** -to curb illegal and unauthorized pooling of funds by unscrupulous firms.

The Gujarat high court has quashed 10 percent reservation quota for the economically backward classes (EBCs).

United States declared Pakistan based Jamaat-ur-Ahrar (JuA) as a 'terror group' by adding it to its list of global terrorists.

### **PM flags off Tiranga Yatra to mark launch of 70<sup>th</sup> Independence Year Celebrations**

- *Where:* At birthplace of Chandrashekhar Azad, at Bhabra in Alirajpur District of Madhya Pradesh.
- Tiranga Yatra shall be organised from 16 to 23 August 2016 across the country to mark 70 years of Independence. I
- A theme song *70 Saal Azadi Yaad Karo Kurbani*, composed by Dr. Ghazal Srinivas was also been released on the occasion.

### **PM also launched Yaad Karo Kurbani Campaign**

- Yadd karo Kurbani is 15-day program aimed to commemorate 75th anniversary of the Quit India Movement (QIM) and 70 years of Independence.

### **TOP assisted athletes who could not qualify 2016 Olympics, taken out of scheme.**

- *TOP Scheme:* Target Olympic Podium
- *Valid for:* 2016 & 2020 Olympics
- *What:* 157 athletes have been selected to provide assistance under the Target Olympic Podium (TOP) Scheme under the ambit of National Sports Development Fund (NSDF).
- *How athletes are identified:* Elite Athletes Identification Committee, headed by Anju Bobby George, identifies the athletes. Other members Shri Pullella Gopichand and Ms. M C Mary Kom.

### **RBI releases 3<sup>rd</sup> bi-monthly Monetary Policy Review**

- **Key Reserve Ratio's:**
- Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR): **4%**
- Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR): **21%**
- **Key Policy Rates:**
- Repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF): **6.5%.**

- Reverse repo rate under the LAF: unchanged at **6.0 %**.
- Marginal standing facility (MSF) rate: **7%**.
- Bank rate: **7%**
- **RBI has not changed key rates. Why?**
- The main reason why RBI has not changed interest rates is because India's consumer price inflation (CPI) surged to 22 month high of 5.77 per cent in June. Further last week, the Monetary Policy Framework, signed by RBI and government, retained inflation target at 4 per cent plus or minus 2 percentage points.
- Implementation of recommendations of 7<sup>th</sup> pay commission is going to increase income and create further inflation.
- Hence, RBI did not have margin for reduction of rates.
- **Remember:**
- Income increases → Inflation Increases --→ RBI increases Rates (to counter inflation)

### **August 9: International Day of the World's Indigenous People**

- To promote and protect the rights of the world's indigenous population.
- 2016 Theme: "Indigenous Peoples' Right to Education".

### **Maharashtra Government - launched Quit India Movement:2 against social evils**

- Maharashtra state Government launched Quit India<sup>2</sup> -Swaraaj to Suraaj Movement
- Where: At August Kranti Maidan, Mumbai
- Trivia: On August 8, 1942, Gandhi Ji gave call for Quit India Movement from the same ground. Then it was called Gowalia Tank Maidan
- Now what is Quit India 2 Swaraaj to Suraaj Movement
- It is a movement to get rid of social evils from society including farmer suicide, illiteracy, wastage of water, malnutrition, addiction among youth and corruption in order to achieve faster all-inclusive progress on all fronts.

### **India approaches US and European FATF countries to crack terror fund trail from Pakistan**

- India has identified Al Rehmat Trust as the financier of terrorist outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) that is responsible for Pathankot airbase (in Punjab) attacks.

- So, India has approached US and select European countries that are part of the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** to crack terror fund trail details of the Al Rehmat Trust from Pakistan.

#### What is FATF?

- FATF was established in 1989 during the Paris-G7 Summit to combat the increasing **problem of money laundering**.
- Secretariat is at OECD headquarters in Paris.
- Currently, FATF includes over 35 countries including India and 2 regional organizations.
- FATF definition- FATF is an **inter - governmental** policy-making body with mandate to establish international standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

#### Irom Sharmila ends 16-year-long hunger-strike

- From: Manipur
- Why did she strike: She wants government to repeal *Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) of 1958*
- So Why ended strike: AFSPA is very much still active in the state but she has ended up strike *to actively participate in politics and contest elections* and bring positive changes in the state.
- Where is AFSPA active?
- Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, Meghalaya & 3 districts of Arunachal Pradesh.
- More easy to remember **not active** in Mizoram & Tripura (recently removed)
- A separate version - The Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990 – is active in Jammu & Kashmir.

#### Union Cabinet approves amendments to Maternity Benefit Act, 1961.

- **Maternity benefit Act 1961** protects the employment of women during the time of her maternity (Child delivery) and entitles her of a 'maternity benefit' - i.e. full paid absence from work - to take care for her child.
- Act is applicable to all establishments employing 10 or more persons.

**Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), 2015**

- Published by: World Economic Forum
- India rank in Air Transport Infrastructure: 35
- India rank in Ground & Port Infrastructure: 50
- Airport Density: 136
- Quality of roads: 76
- The overall TTCI ranking of India has improved to 52<sup>nd</sup> in 2015 as compared to 65<sup>th</sup> in 2013.
- Total 141 countries studied.

**Festival Colours of Independence' ('Azadi Ke Rang')**

The Colors of Independence festival is being organized by: Ministry of Textiles at 70 locations across the nation from 9th to 15th August 2016 to inculcate the passion of freedom and patriotism among the people of India especially our youth.

**Dipa Karmakar did Produnova to reach Finals**

*What is Produnova:* In simple terms, in Produnova vault a gymnast is required to run up to the vault (the gymnastics apparatus) and first do a handspring (use hands to take jump). Then, they are required to do **two neat somersaults mid-air**, following which they have to land on their feet.

- It has difficulty level of 7.0 D, hardest level in women gymnastics.
- She is first Indian women to do produnova in Olympics
- Amazing thing, Dipa one of the only five women in the world who have been able to successfully complete the Produnova vault.
- Why called Produnova: It is named after Yelena Produnova of Russia, who was the first person to compete it successfully in 1999

**Dinesh Kumar Khara** has been appointed Managing Director (MD) of State Bank of India (SBI).

Appointed by – Appointment committee of Cabinet headed BY PM

Period: 3 years

**CCEA gives nod to development of AUSC technology for thermal power plants**

- CCCEA- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs gave approval for development of **Advanced Ultra Super Critical** (AUSC) technology for thermal power plants.
- AUSC technology is still in research phase and has potential for 20% reduction in coal consumption and 20% reduction in Carbon di-oxide production.
- CCEA has approved fund of 900 Crore Rupees, which shall be utilized over a period of 3-years for development of this indigenous technology

**Unit I of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project sucessfully dedicated to nation**

Prime Minister Modi and Russian President Putin (through Video-conference) & TN Chief Minsiter Jayalalita, dedicated the first unit of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project (KKNPP) in Tamil Nadu to the nation.

Kundankulam NPP Facts:

- Reactor: Imported Pressurized Water Reatcor (PWR ) – VVER from Russia
- Overall Project 4000 MW: 4 VVVER's of 1000 MW capacity each
- Kudankulam is the highest capacity generating nuclear power plant in India.

Committee to review e-commerce regulations

- Union Government has decided to set up a committee, headed by Amitabh Kant, to look at easing the policy regime for e-commerce players.
- Terms of Reference:
- Examine various issues in e-commerce sector and making recommendations for liberalization of the policy.
- Look into all issues, including FDI norms, related to the fast growing e-commerce industry in the country.
- Trivia: Amitabh Kant is CEO of NITI Aayog

**Mahadayi tribunal term extended**

- Union Government extended term of Mahadayi tribunal by one-year
- The Inter-State River Water Disputes Act gives power to the Union government, which appointed the tribunal, to extend its tenure.



- Dispute River: Mandovi or Mhadei river, source bhimgad, Karnataka and flows westwards with total length of 77 km, 29 km in **Karnataka** and 52 km in **Goa**.
- Has famous: Dudhsagar Falls and Varapoha Falls,
- Hence, dispute between: Karnataka & Goa.

#### K M Hanumantharayappa

- K M Hanumantharayappa has assumed charge as the new Chairman of Central Silk Board (CSB), for a period of three years.

#### Central Silk Board (CSB)

- CSB is a **statutory body** established under the Central Silk Board Act, 1948.
- Functions under Union Ministry of Textile.
- CSB is a national organization responsible for overall development of silk sector in India.

#### Digital projects will get Rs.10,000 crore from USOF

- **USOF:** Universal Service Obligation Fund
- **Aim:** To provide Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) services at affordable prices to people in rural and remote areas.
- **Fund Source:** Through a **Universal Access Levy**- charged from operators as a percentage of various licenses fees being paid by them.

NITI Aayog signed a pact with US Energy Information Administration (EIA) for development of a portal that can host all the data related to energy sector in the country.

China successfully launched Gaofen-3 satellite with a new high-resolution Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)

#### Gaofen-3 – Low-earth orbiting satellite

- Launched from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in northern Shanxi Province

Press Information Bureau (PIB) starts dedicated page with Pictures & Videos on Indian Freedom Struggle.

### **MSME Ministry launches two portals**

Union Ministry of MSME has launched two portals

#### **MSME Databank Portal**

- Aims to gather information about micro, small and medium enterprises.
- Objective: To provide one-stop source of information regarding MSME in India

#### **Online Finance Facilitation Web Portal.**

- Provide collective funding options for MSMEs.
- The portal will allow the MSMEs to apply for loans from the various banks from Portal itself.

### **Assam government launches Rhino Horn Verification Process**

- Why required: 12 treasuries of Assam Government have stocks of Rhino horns that have been recovered since 1980.
- Government has formed 12-member committee that shall verify genuineness of rhino horns

### **Cabinet approves liberalization of FDI norms for NBFC's**

- New norms to improve ease of doing business
- If a NBFC comes under regulation any of the financial sector regulators, foreign investment can now come under the automatic route.
- If a NBFC is not regulated by any of the regulators (RBI, SEBI, PFRDA etc.)/government agencies then it will need approval from the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB).
- Minimum capitalization norms as mandated under FDI policy have been eliminated as most of the regulators have already fixed minimum capitalization norms.
- What is a NBFC and how it is different from Banks?
- NBFC is a financial institution that provides banking services without having a banking license.
- It is established as a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 but its operations are often still covered under a country's banking regulations.

- NBFCs may be engaged in the business of loans and credit facilities, savings products, investments and money transfer services.

**Differences from Bank:**

- NBFC cannot accept demand deposits.
- NBFCs are not part of the payment and settlement system and so are not allowed to issue cheques drawn on itself.
- Unlike Banks, deposit insurance facility of Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is not available to depositors of NBFCs.
- NBFC details (RBI) <https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/FAQView.aspx?Id=92>

**SC re-allows sale of luxury cars in NCR**

- Supreme Court in a decision has allowed the fresh registration of high-end (more than 2000CC) diesel cars and SUVs in Delhi and the National Capital Region.
- However, SC implemented polluter pays principle and imposed **Green charge of 1%** of the vehicle's ex-showroom price.

**Tulu Works shall be digitalized unde Bharatavani**

- Union government announced that 165 important Works in Tulu script shall be digitalized and made available on-line under Bharatavani project.
- Two important things

**BharataVani Project:**

- Initiative of Union Human Resource Ministry.
- Project aims at making available "knowledge in and knowledge about" **all languages** in the country in multimedia formats (text, audio, video and images) through an online portal.
- Implementing agency: The Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysuru.

**Tulu language:**

- Tulu belongs to Dravidian family of languages.
- It is spoken by around 2 million people mainly in the south-west Karnataka and in the Kasaragod district of Kerala.

- Lykaio mountain in Greece: Excavation of 3,000-year-old grave could be evidence of a rare case of human sacrifice.

#### **Phase of Smart Ganga City Program launched in 10 Cities**

- Union Government launched Phase I of Smart Ganga City Program in 10 Cities.
- 10 Cities/Towns are Haridwar, Rishikesh, Mathura, Varanasi, Kanpur, Allahabad, Lucknow, Patna, Sahibganj and Barrackpore.
- Under this programme, Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) and improve drainage network will be set up on hybrid annuity mode on public private partnership basis.

#### **Assam seeks more funds more ex-militants**

- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal's has demanded from Union to increase the monthly stipend of surrendered militants.
- CM wants stipend given to surrendered militants to increase from RS. 3,000 to RS. 10,000.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) reimburses the amount paid to the surrendered cadres by the State government under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme.
- But Centre is in a fix, because it fit agrees now, other states may also starting demanding more money.

#### **MIT Researchers create Gold Leaf tattoos that can control smart devices**

- Researchers have created temporary metallic tattoo that can be used to control your computer, smartphone and other connected devices.
- These temporary tattoos have been named **DuoSkin**, and use layers of gold leaf that that can be worn directly on the skin.
- The tattoos convert skin into a track pad, letting users connect to a computer or smartphone and control apps by swiping on the tattoo itself,

**Modi to pay homage to Pramukh Swami**

- Pramukh Swami was founder of Akshardham temples and a noted saint of the Swaminarayan sect
- He passed away on 13<sup>th</sup> evening.

Assam becomes first state to pass the amended GST Bill (122 Constitution Amendment Bill, 2014)

- 64<sup>th</sup> Nehru Race boat held at Punnamada lake in Alappuzha
- Nehru Boat Race is held on Second Saturday of August Every year
- Snake Boat - *Chundan Vallams*

**National Committee on Trade facilitation**

- Union Government has constituted a trade facilitation committee to be headed by **Pradeep Kumar Sinha**, Cabinet Secretary of India.
- The committee has been constituted for Trade Facilitation agreement of WTO, which India has ratified.
- Committee will be responsible for identifying required legislative changes and diagnostic tools needed for assessing compliance to TFA.

**Nickel Production facility in Jharkhand**

- Facility for production of Nickel at Ghatsila in Jharkhand has been launched by Hindustan Copper Limited.
- It is India's first Nickel production facility

**Diamond Quadrilateral up for feasibility study**

- Diamond Quadrilateral is a project of the Indian railways to establish high speed rail network in India.
- Diamond quadrilateral will connect the four metro cities in India, i.e. Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai.

- Feasibility study shall be undertaken for (i) Delhi-Mumbai, (ii) Mumbai-Chennai, (iii) Chennai-Kolkata, (iv) Kolkata-Delhi and both diagonals i.e. (v) Delhi-Chennai and (vi) Mumbai-Kolkata routes.
- The project is similar to Golden Quadrilateral which is a roadway project which connects the four metros by Express Ways.

### Deep Brain Stimulator

Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences & Technology (SCTIMST), Thiruvananthapuram have agreed to join hands to develop 'Deep Brain Stimulator' (DBS).

- DBS involves implanting electrodes within certain areas of brain and the regular electrical pulses generated by a pacemaker-like device placed under the skin in upper chest regulates the abnormal impulses of the brain.
- Applications: DBS is used in neurological conditions of Essential tremor, Parkinson's disease and Dystonia.

India's first BIO-CNG plant producing CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) from agricultural residue was inaugurated in Pune, Maharashtra.

Greenland sharks have been named the longest-living vertebrate on Earth.

S-400 air defence missile system has been deployed by Russia to annexed Crimea.

### Food causes WPI inflation to rise to 23-month high

- WPI inflation rose to 23 month high of 3.6%
- WPI- Wholesale Price Index
- Importance: Captures increase in price of products at **wholesale level**.
- Who releases WPI: **Office of the Economic Adviser** in the *Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion*, Ministry of Commerce & Industry is responsible for compiling WPI and releasing it.
- The new WPI series with 2004- 05 as the base year has 676 items in the commodity basket.
- The 676 items in WPI are included in three categories, where each of the categories has different weight.

- Primary Articles – 20.12%
- Fuel and Power – 14.91%
- Manufactured Products – 64.97%

### **Sedition case filed against Amnesty International**

Acting on complaint by Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), police charged Amnesty International India under *Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (Sedition)*.

- Why: Amnesty organized a program that sought to project the human suffering of the Kashmir conflict.
- What is Amnesty International?
- **Non-governmental** organization focused on **human rights**
- Amnesty works to draw attention to human rights abuses and campaigns for compliance with international laws and standards.

### **First National Conference of Investigating Agencies was held in New Delhi**

The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) and National Investigation Agency (NIA) organized the conference.

- The purpose of this conference was to provide an annual national platform to all the officers of law enforcement agencies.
- The agenda of conference included:
- Discussion on latest laws and judgements and their implications for investigation and prosecution.
- Deliberation on new legislation and criminal law amendments for meeting new challenges in investigation.
- Adoption of latest technology in forensic sciences
- Sharing of best practices that should be followed by different investigation agencies

### **India climbs 15 points in GII**

- **GII:** Global Innovation Index

- *Cornell University, INSEAD, and the World Intellectual Property Organization*, in partnership with other organizations and institutions, publishes GII.
- GII 2016 Theme: "Winning with Global Innovation".
- India climbed 15 spots, from 81 last year, to 66.
- Switzerland, Sweden, UK, U.S., Finland and Singapore lead the 2016 rankings.

Researchers have warned that Banana could well be wiped out globally in just 5 to 10 years by fast-advancing fungal diseases called the **Sigatoka complex**.

**Bihar** becomes second state to ratify GST Amendment Bill, 2014. Earlier, Assam became the first state to ratify the bill.

Prominent Punjabi writer, novelist and short story writer and Jnanpith awardee **Gurdial Singh** passed away at Bathinda, Punjab yesterday.

### **China launches QUESS satellite**

China launched world's first quantum satellite named **Quantum Experiments at Space Scaler (QUESS)** satellite.

- China's launch center (Shriharikota): Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in the northwestern province of Gansu.
- Satellite has been nicknamed Micius, after a 5th century BC Chinese philosopher and scientist who is credited as the first one in human history conducting optical experiments.
- It is designed to establish hack-proof quantum communications by transmitting un-crackable keys from space to the ground.
- Quantum Stuff: Satellite will communicate using the principle of 'quantum entanglement', an act of fusing two or more particles into complementary 'quantum states'.

### **India has its first Medal at Rio**

- Wrestler Sakshi Malik defeated Kyrgyzstan wrestler Tynybekova in **Repechage chance to win Bronze medal**.
- Sakshi Malik created history by becoming the **first woman wrestler** from India to bag an Olympic medal.



- Sakshi had lost 2-9 in the quarter-finals to Russia's Valeriia Koblova in the fifth bout of the day before getting a second chance in **repechage** when her conqueror reached the final.
- **Repechage:** Every wrestler who's been defeated by the two eventual finalists during the knockouts, participates in the repechage rounds – with two bronze medals, one for each finalist's best rival – up for grabs.

### **President Appoints new Governors**

- President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed former Union Minister Najma Heptulla (76) as Governor of Manipur.
- Banwarilal Purohit was appointed as Governor of Assam.
- VP Singh Badnore as Governor of Punjab.
- Jagdish Mukhi was appointed as Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- Constitutional Provision related to appointment of Governor.
  - Article 153: Says that there shall be governor for each state. 7<sup>th</sup> Constitutional amendment allowed same person as governor of two or more state.
  - Article 156: Governor is appointed by President and hold office during the pleasure of President.

### **Supreme Court rules on Dahi Handi Festival**

- In a recent hearing, the Bombay High Court asked the Maharashtra government to approach the Supreme Court for clarity on whether the High Court's August 11 order was still valid.
- On August 11, 2014: Bombay High Court directed the State government to declare Dahi Handi a 'dangerous performance' under the Maharashtra Police Act and imposing other safety restrictions.
- Supreme Court gave an hearing to the issue and passed the order:
  - Banning participants (Govindas) below 18 years of age.
  - Restricting height of pyramids to 20 feet

**Scientist create Sunshine, seaweed help to break down dye waste**

- Despite stringent environmental regulations, a comprehensive method of treating industrial dye is not available and as a result, annually, more than 500 tonnes of non-degradable textile colour wastes are being disposed of in natural streams without adequate treatment.
- Titanium dioxide had conventionally been used for photocatalytic degradation of industrial dyes, but it took long time to degrade dyes. So the researchers doped *titanium dioxide nanoparticles with sulphur and carbon by treating it with carrageenan*.
- The nanocomposite was found to behave as an excellent photocatalyst that helped degrade industrial dyes quickly in a single-step process.
- This photocatalyst will help to completely degrade three industrial dyes — methyl orange, methylene blue and reactive black-5 — in the presence of sunlight.
- Union Government has allowed online authentication using Aadhar for new mobile connections.
- The first South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Youth Parliamentarians Conference on 'Peace and Harmony for Development' started in Islamabad, Pakistan.
- To ease tension in disputed South China Sea, China and 10 member countries of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have agreed to form a framework for a code of conduct.
- AR Rahman was honored with the Tamil Ratna Award by the New York based Tamil Sangam, after his concert at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) chamber to honor M.S. Subbulakshi, the doyen of Carnatic music.

**President appoints new Governors**

President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed new governors for Manipur, Assam, Punjab and Andaman & Nicobar

- **Najma Heptulla** has been appointed Manipur Governor of Manipur. Previously, she was part of Narendra Modi's cabinet as Union Minority affairs minister but she resigned in July 2016.
- **Banwarilal Purohit** has been appointed Governor of Assam. He is a three-time former member of Lok Sabha from Nagpur and Managing Editor of Central India's daily 'The Hitavada'.

- **VP Singh Badnore** has been appointed as Governor of Punjab. He hails from Rajasthan and is associated with Mayo College, Ajmer.
- **Jagdish Mukhi** has been appointed Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. He is Delhi-based BJP leader and former MLA from Delhi.

### **Constitutional provisions for appointment of Governor**

- **Article 153:** It says that there shall be Governor for each state. But 7th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1956 facilitated the appointment of the same person as a governor for two or more states.
- **Article 156:** Governor is appointed by President and hold office during the pleasure of President. The article also says that Governor shall hold office for the term of 5 years from date he enters upon his office.
- Supreme Court in *Surya Narain vs Union of India* has held that term “Pleasure of President” is **not justiciable**. The governor has no security of tenure and no fixed term of office. He may be removed by the President any time.

### **Maharashtra launches Crime Criminal Tracking Network System**

- Maharashtra became first state in the country to launch India’s first comprehensive ‘Crime Criminal Tracking Network System’ (CCTNS). It was launched in Mumbai through the operationalisation of 42 cyber laboratories across the state in order to combat growing cybercrimes.

### **Additional Facts:**

- CCTNS has been developed by Pune based Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC).
- Through CCTNS, all police stations in the state will be linked with one another for sharing information about crimes in their respective jurisdictions. It will pave the way for a digital police force in Maharashtra.
- The services of the cyber labs, will be linked by secure high-speed fibre optic cable network and will be available to address cyber security concerns of private organisations and banks among others.

- The state government is also planning to raise a special cyber police force of around 1,000 policemen well trained to handle the growing incidents of cybercrimes.

### **India Post Payments Bank Incorporated**

India Post Payments Bank has received the certificate of incorporation from the Registrar of Companies, Ministry of Corporate Affairs under the Companies Act 2013, paving the way for the postal department's bank to begin operations in 2017 as announced.

IPPBL would be the first PSU under the Department of Posts (DoP).

### **Facts about India Post Payments Bank Limited (IPBL)**

The Union Government has given its approval for setting up IPPB as a Public Limited Company under the DoP with 100% Government of India (GOI) equity.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had in January approved the proposal to set up IPPB with total project cost of Rs.800 crore.

The new bank is expected to commence operations by March 2017 and will set up 650 branches and 5000 ATMs across the country.

### **Advantages (Benefits) of IPBL**

Coupled with the physical presence across 1.55 lakh post offices and the reach of "The Dakiya," the India Post Payments Bank has the opportunity to become a powerful and effective vehicle of real financial inclusion in the country.

Generate new employment opportunities for skilled banking professionals.

Facilitate spread of financial services like insurance, pensions, mutual funds to customers especially from rural areas and the unbanked and under-banked segments.

### **Narsingh Yadav banned for 4 years**

Indian wrestler Narsingh Yadav has been banned from all competitive sporting events for four years by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). The CAS panel did not accept the argument of the athlete that he was the victim of sabotage and noted that there was no evidence that he bore no fault, nor that the anti-doping rule violation was not intentional. Therefore the standard four-year period of ineligibility was imposed by the panel.

With CAS ruling, Yadav's suspension begins immediately and he will not be able to participate in the 2016 Rio Olympics. He had qualified for the 2016 Rio Olympics in the 74 category of freestyle wrestling event.

### Background

In July 2016, Narsingh Yadav had tested positive for banned substance steroid in an out-of-competition test conducted by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA).

He had tested positive for **methandienone**, a banned anabolic steroid which increases protein synthesis, muscle strength and glycogenolysis over a short space of time.

In August 2016 he was given clean chit by NADA by accepted his claim of sabotage in doping case.

However, WADA filed an urgent application before the CAS ad hoc Division to challenge the decision of NADA India to exonerate Narsingh Yadav following two positive anti-doping tests with methandienone on June 25 and July 5.

### About Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS):

CAS is an international quasi-judicial body established to settle disputes related to sport through arbitration.

Its Headquarter is located in Lausanne (Switzerland).

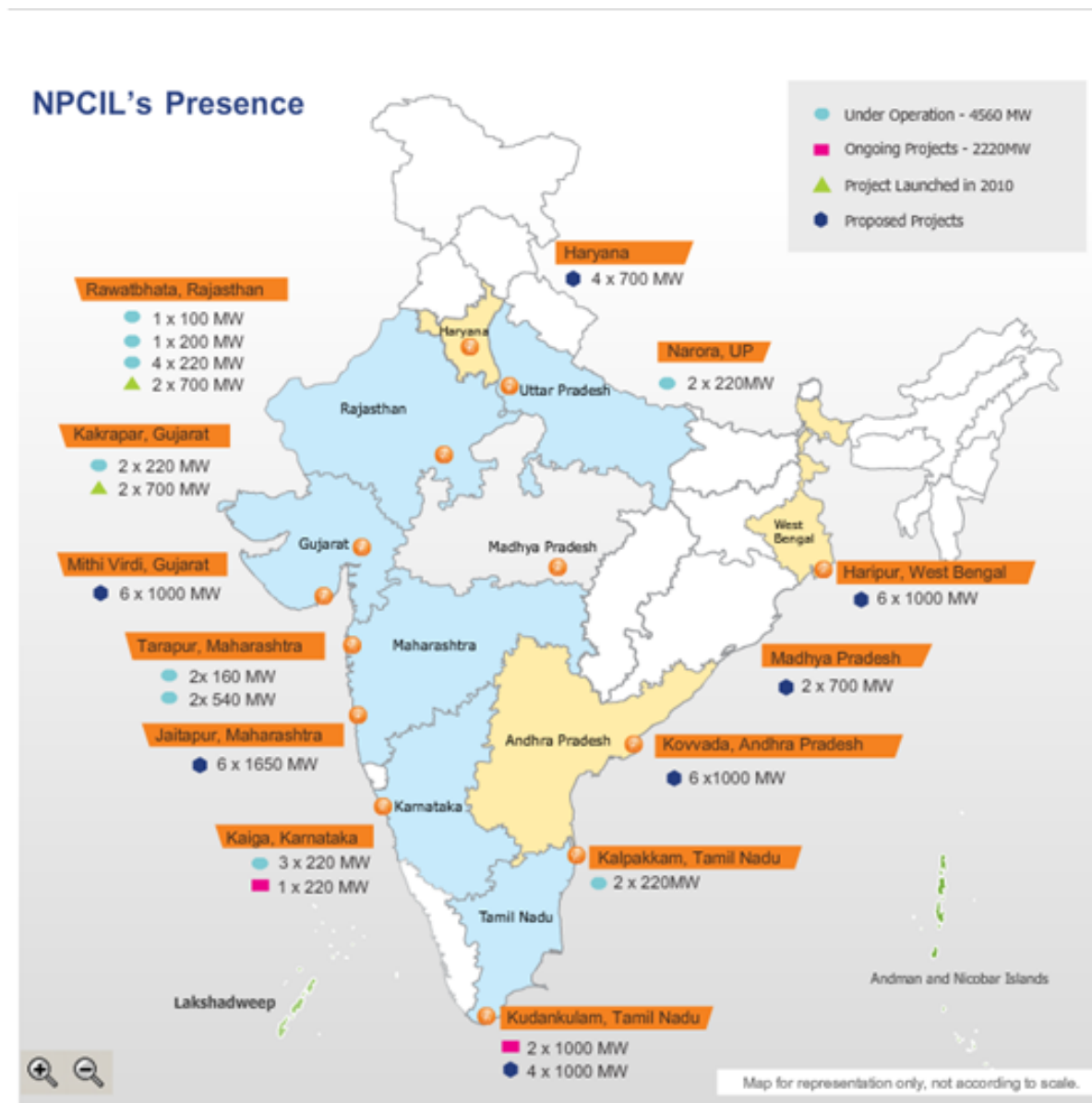
According to rule 61 of the Olympic Charter, all disputes in connection with the Olympic Games can only be submitted to CAS.

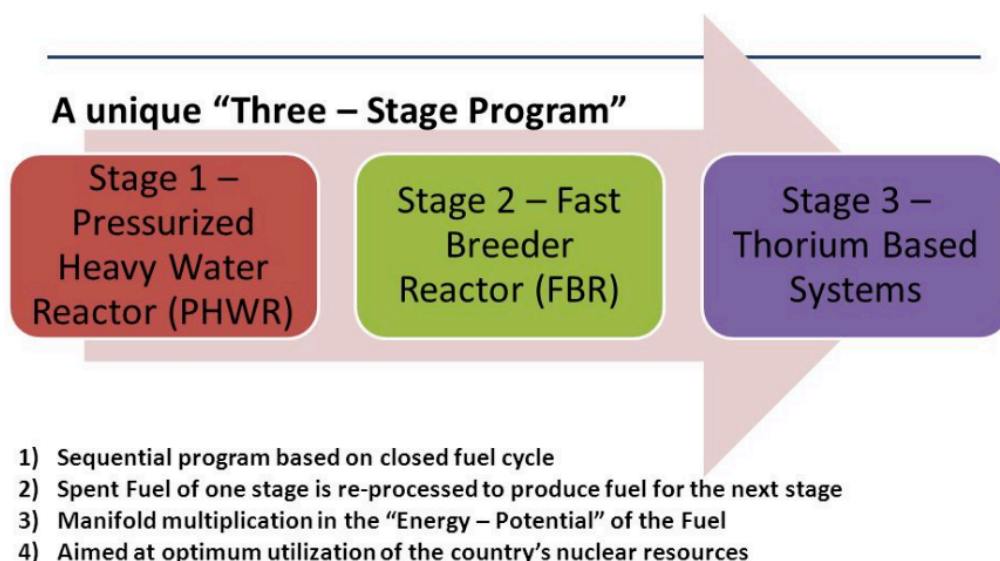
Since 2016, an anti-doping division of CAS has been given full authority to judge doping cases at the Olympic Games. It had replaced earlier mechanism of the IOC disciplinary commission.

## JULY 2016

- **BRICS: first Employment Working Group meeting held in Hyderabad**
  - Consensus between BRICS countries achieved on employment generation, social security agreement and networking of labour institutes.
  - Agenda was set to promote decent work and promote job creation between BRICS countries.
- After the Parliament passed the Bill banning employment of children below 14 years of age, India will be able to ratify two International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions, **138 & 182**, on the abolition of all forms of child labour.
  - **ILO Convention 138:** says that the minimum age for employment should not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling (14 years of age in India's case).
  - **ILO Convention 182:** calls for the need to formulate legislation for prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour.
- 29 July: International Tiger Day
- Noted Tabla maestro Pandit Lachu Maharaj (Lakshmi Narayan Singh) passed away in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
- **Colachel no threat to Vizhinjam:** Prime Minister
- Remember:
  - Colachel: New Enayam Port is coming up near Colachel in Tamil Naidu.
  - Vizhinjam: New Vizhinjam International deep sea port is coming up near Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala
- **Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor to be delayed**
  - India's first Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) is coming up at **Kalpakkam, Tamil Naidu**
  - Capacity: 500 Mw
  - This is 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage reactor of India's 3 Stage nuclear programme.
  - What is 1<sup>st</sup> Stage: The 1<sup>st</sup> stage reactors are used currently for electricity production in various nuclear plants.
  - Hence, the R & D is going on 2<sup>nd</sup>

- FBR: fuel - The Kalpakkam PFBR is using uranium-238 not thorium, to breed new fissile material, in a sodium-cooled fast reactor design.





- Lok Sabha has passed comprehensive **Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Bill, 2015** to curb *domestic black money*.
- Bill seeks to:
  - Amend the definition of benami transactions,
  - Establish adjudicating authorities and an Appellate Tribunal to deal with benami transactions,
  - Specify the penalty for entering into benami transactions.
- Union Cabinet has approved **amendments to the GST (goods & services tax) constitutional amendment Bill**
  - Inclusion of five years compensation clause for state governments for any loss that they may incur.
  - Adjudication of dispute between states and the Union Government by the GST Council, which will have representation from both the Centre and states.
  - Removal of 1% additional manufacturing levy tax by manufacturing States from the Bill.
  - Removal of 1% additional tax on inter-state sales as proposed in the Constitutional Bill.
- Union Cabinet has approved raising foreign shareholding limit from current 5% to 15% in Indian Stock Exchanges.



- Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of a new AIIMS at Bhatinda, Punjab under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).
- Rajya Sabha on Thursday unanimously passed the Compensatory and Afforestation Fund (CAF) Bill, 2016 that allows States to access nearly Rs. 42,000 crore and channel into afforestation projects.
  - The bill also establishes National Compensatory Afforestation Fund and a State Compensatory Afforestation Fund under each State
- **28<sup>th</sup> July: World Hepatitis Day**
  - 2016 Theme: “Elimination”. It focuses on elimination of hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.
  - There are 5 different types of hepatitis viz. A, B, C, D and E, caused by 5 different virus.
- India has signed a defence deal with United States for purchase of four additional **Poseidon-8I (P8I)** long-range maritime surveillance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft.
  - The P-8I is a variant of the P-8A Poseidon that Boeing is developing for the US Navy.
- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has selected Muttiah Muralidaran(Sri Lanka) , Arthur Morris(Australia), George Lohmann(England), and Karen Rolton(Australia)(Woman) to be inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame.
- Distinguished agricultural scientist Dr. Neelamraju Ganga Prasada Rao passed away in Hyderabad, Telangana following a brief illness.
  - He is famously known as “**Father of Hybrid Sorghum**”.
  - He is also famous for his basic and applied research in breeding and agronomy of several dryland crops.
- Eminent figure in Bengali literature and a respected social activist , **Mahasweta Devi**, who lent her voice to the poor, passed away at a private hospital here on Thursday.
  - The litterateur was honoured with the Sahitya Akademi, Jnanpith and the Magsaysay awards
- Because of Fuel shortage, the **Tripura** government on Thursday enforced the **odd-even formula** for vehicles.
  - Connectivity issues as stretches of the *Assam-Agartala National Highway 44* have been damaged.

- Tamil Nadu government has approached the Supreme Court seeking a permanent injunction against the newly bifurcated Andhra Pradesh from building new check dams and diversion structures on **Palar River**.
  - TN has cited a 124-year-old agreement between the erstwhile States of Madras and Mysore on the sharing of Palar water.
  - Palar River originates in Nandh Durg Hills of Kolar district in Karnataka, flows through Vellore and Kancheepuram districts of Tamil Nadu before falling into the Bay of Bengal.
- **Lok Sabha passed the Lokpal and Lokayukta (Amendment) Bill, 2016**
  - The bill seeks to amend the Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013
  - In the absence of a recognized Leader of Opposition, the amendment will now allow **the leader of the single largest opposition party** in the Lok Sabha to be a member of the selection committee.
  - It also amends section 44 of parent Act that deals with provision of furnishing of details of assets and liabilities of public servants within 30 days of joining the government service. The amendment has removed this period of 30 days.
- **Leader of Opposition:**
  - Why required: Provides constructive criticism to government policies
  - In 1977: Leader of Opposition of Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha were given Statutory recognition and hence, salaries & allowances on par with cabinet ministers.
  - Leader of Opposition is defined as that member of the Lok Sabha (or the Rajya Sabha) who, is the Leader of that House of the *Party in Opposition* to the Government having the greatest *numerical strength* and
  - Now, for a party to be recognized it has to have minimum 10% seats.
  - In 2014 Union election, Lok Sabha 543 seats, so 10% = 55 Seats. But Congress got only 44 seats and AIDMK 37 seats, hence no recognized party of opposition and no leader of opposition.

- But appointment committee and other places, leader of opposition plays integral part. Hence, government changed rule in many places from leader of opposition to leader of single largest opposition party.
- **Indians - Bezwada Wilson and TM Krishna, won the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award 2016.**
- **Bezwada Wilson (India):**
  - He is the National Convener of the Safai Karmachari Andolan (SKA) and has done remarkable work in liberating scores of people engaged in manual scavenging across the country.
  - He has been recognized for asserting the inalienable right to a life of human dignity.
- **Thodur Madabusi Krishna (India):**
  - He is a Carnatic music vocalist and been recognized for ensuring social inclusiveness in culture.
- **Ramon Magsaysay Award**
  - Asia's highest honour and is often regarded as the region's equivalent of the Nobel Prize.
  - Established in 1957 in the memory of Philippines' 3rd President Ramon Magsaysay who had died in air disaster in March 1957.
  - Funded by Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Philippine government.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has officially declared **Brazil free of measles**, after no case of the disease was registered in the year 2015.
- Hillary Clinton sealed the Democratic Party nomination for the President of the U.S. on Tuesday night.
- South Africa will open a regional office that would channel funding drawn from the New Development Bank (NDB) of the Brazil-Russia-China-India-South Africa (BRICS) group.
  - The Africa Regional Office (ARO) is expected to open in **Johannesburg** by the end of this year,
- **Earth bid a final farewell to robot lab Philae on Wednesday**
  - **Philae:** 1<sup>st</sup> craft to land on Comet.

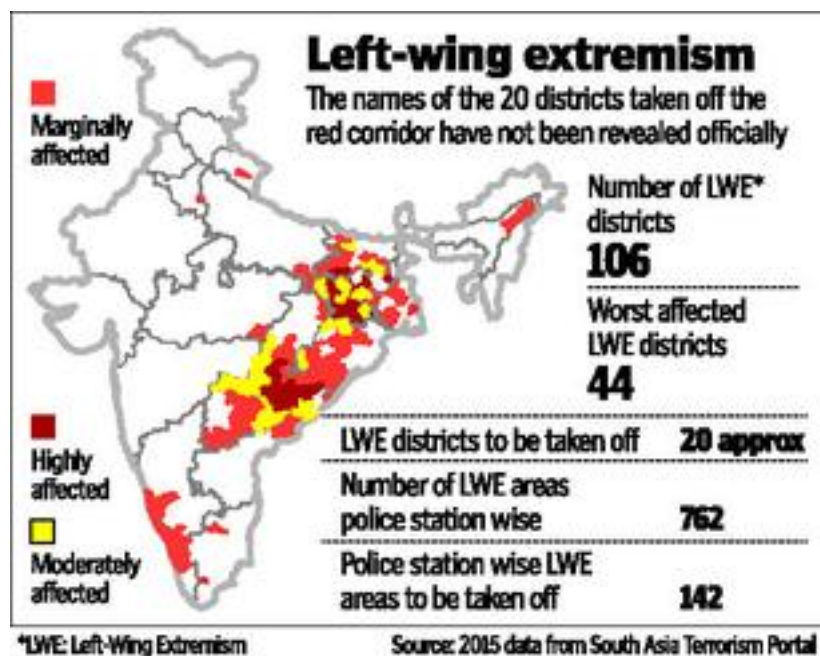
- Philae's mothership **Rosetta** will remain in orbit around comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko for another two months and then will join Philae in their final resting place.
- Union Government has approved nearly 1,600 crore rupees for Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) under skill development initiative '**Himayat**' programme'.
  - 'Himayat' is an Urdu word which means support.
  - Seeks to empower 1 Lac youth of J&K through vocational training programs and employment opportunities.
  - Scheme is part of the Skill Empowerment and Employment scheme of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).
- **Parliament passes Child Labour(Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Bill**
  - Bill seeks to amend the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.
  - Added a new category of persons called "adolescent" - between 14 and 18 years of age.
  - Prohibition of employment of adolescents in hazardous occupations as specified (mines, hazardous processes and inflammable substance).
  - Complete ban against employment of children before 14 years in any occupation, except where child helps his/her family.
  - Increased fine on employing children or employing adolescent in hazardous occupation from 20,000 to 50,000 along with, provision for Jail term of upto 2 years.
  - The Bill has a provision of creating Rehabilitation Fund for Rehabilitation of children suffering from child labour.
- Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has setup a seven-member expert committee, headed by **T V S N Prasad**, Joint Secretary - MHA, for exploring the other possible *alternatives to pellet guns as non-lethal weapons*.
- Myntra, (a unit of India's e-commerce market leader Flipkart) has acquired online fashion portal Jabong.
- Internationally, **Verizon** has acquired **Yahoo**.
  - **Verizon:** American broadband telecommunications company and the largest U.S. wireless communications service provider.

- Lok Sabha has passed Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2016 for opening of six new IITs.
  - Palakkad (Kerala), Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh), Goa, Dharwar (Karnataka), Bhilai (Chhattisgarh) and Jammu (Jammu and Kashmir).
- **G-20 Finance Ministers pledge to boost global economy**
  - In the two-day meeting of G-20 Finance ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting held in the Chinese city of Chengdu, it was pledge to improve global economy.
  - Group of 20 Major economies.
  - No permanent Secretariat. Chair system. Present Chair – **China**
  - 19 Individual Countries + European Union
  - Holds two type of meetings/summits
    - Head of State – PM
    - Finance Minister & Central Governors of all State
- India has contributed US 100,000 dollars to the United Nations' Trust Fund in support of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse **by peacekeepers**.
- **Blow to India as arbitration tribunal rules against Antrix**
- Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) tribunal (The Hague) has ruled against Antrix Corporation, in the ongoing case with Devas Corporation over sharing of spectrum on satellites.
  - **Antrix Corporation:** Commercial arm of India's space organization, ISRO.
  - Everytime that we hear ISRO sends satellite of so and so country, it is through Antrix. Antrix Company takes orders/deals etc. for sending satellite from other countries/agencies etc. and ISRO sends them.
- **26<sup>th</sup> July: Kargil Vijay Divas**
  - The day of India's Victory against Pakistan in Kargil War on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1999.
- A joint expedition by India and the U.S in Indian Ocean has found highly enriched accumulations of **natural gas hydrate** — an icy form of the fuel — in the Bay of Bengal.
- **Gas Hydrate:**
  - Natural gas hydrates are a naturally occurring, ice-like combination of natural gas and water found in oceans and polar-regions.

- The amount of gas within the world's gas hydrate accumulations is estimated to greatly exceed the volume of all known conventional gas resources.
- Gas – Mostly Methane
- **Scientists work toward storing digital information in DNA**
  - DNA: Deoxyribonucleic acid.
  - Scientists are working towards making the genetic material capable to store data for long time.
  - DNA: is essentially a biological information-storing molecule and it carries the genetic instructions used in the growth, functioning and reproduction of all living beings.
- **How DNA store information:**
  - The information in the DNA is stored in strings i.e. in the *form four-letter DNA code composed of combinations/Sequences of A (Adenine), C (Cytosine), T (Thymine) and G (Guanine).*
  - How Computers and other device store information:
  - Digital devices store information in binary format (1s and 0s) i.e. in a two-letter code that produces strings of 1s and 0s. For ex. capital 'A' stored as 01000001 in binary format.
  - Now Scientist are working towards converting and storing digital information in DNA. This involves translating between the two sequences or codes of four building blocks. For ex. capital 'A' converted and stored as AATATG.
  - The DNA digital data storage technology uses artificial DNA made using **oligonucleotide synthesis machines**.
- **Advantages:**
  - Extensive Long durability. Example Scientist can do analysis of thousands of years old human skulls and give credible information.
  - Information stored in DNA consumes very little space.
- **Challenges:**
  - The present cost of such technology is very high.
- **Indian Wrestler Narsingh Yadav fails Dope Test: NADA**

- NADA (National Anti-Doping Agency)
  - Autonomous national organization, which is responsible for promoting, monitoring and coordinating the doping control program in sports in all its forms in India.
- **Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra (18)** created history by becoming first Indian Junior athlete to create a World Record in Junior athletics Championship.
  - In the IAAF Under-20 World Athletics Championship held in Bydgoszcz, Poland, Neeraj set new record by throwing javelin at a record distance of 86.48 m in his second attempt.
- India's first **Green Rail Corridor** was inaugurated on the 114-km long **Rameswaram-Manamadurai** stretch in Tamil Nadu.
- Green Rail Corridor: Zero toilet discharge.
- Public sector **Hindustan Organic Chemicals Limited (HOCL)** going to shutdown operations owing to incurring losses.
  - Company has two facilities 1. At Kochi 2. Rasayani (Maharashtra)
  - The Company started losses since 2012, when dumping of *acetone and phenol* from other countries began.
- **Notice for privilege motion against Jairam**
- Important is What is Privilege Motion:
  - Privilege motion is a notice by any member of either House of Parliament/State Legislature, against anyone who are accused of breach of privilege.
  - Parliamentary privileges are certain immunities and rights enjoyed by MPs, MLAs and MLCs, individually as well as collectively, to enable them to effectively discharge their functions.
  - When any of these immunities or rights is disregarded, the offence is called a breach of privilege and is punishable under law of Parliament or the state legislature.
  - Here, SAD MP Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa alleged that the Congress MPs misbehaved with Ms. Badal and so gave notice for privilege motion.

- **Red Corridor to be redrawn by Union Govt.**
- **What is Red Corridor:** Areas affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE).



- - **Where:** 106 districts spanning across 10 States — Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.
  - In NEWS: Union Government is going to take out 20 such districts from 106, to be out red corridor.
- **Bioremediation:**
  - An environment-friendly mechanism that uses **microorganisms** to degrade environmental pollutants.
  - In NEWS: Scientists to undertake field trials of Oil-degrading bacteria in Kochi
- Kerala Government launched first ever Water Metro project in the country.
  - It shall be an integrated water transport project developed as feeder service to the Kochi Metro Rail.
- Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation constituted a four-member committee, headed by **Madhav Chitale**, to prepare guidelines for **desiltation of Ganga River**.



- Terms of Reference of Committee:
  - Prepare guidelines for desiltation of Ganga River from Bhimgauda (Uttarakhand) to Farakka (West Bengal).
  - Establish need for desilting for ecology and e-flow of the river Ganga.
  - Establish difference between desilting and sand mining.
- Legendary modern Indian artist Syed Haider Raza passed away in New Delhi following a prolonged illness. Awarded Padam Shri.
- India has been ranked a low 110th out of 149 countries on Sustainable Development index (SDI).
  - The index has been launched by Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and the Bertelsmann Stiftung.
  - Sweden occupies 1<sup>st</sup>
- Restoration work of moat at Fort St. George Fort will start soon.
- Fact to remember: different Forts made by English.
  - Fort St. George – Chennai – 1<sup>st</sup> British Indian Fort.
  - Fort Williams – Kolkata
  - Fort Bombay - Mumbai
  - Fort St. David – Cuddalore, 100 kms South of Chennai
  - Anchuthengu Fort – Kerala, 1<sup>st</sup> British Fort on Malabar Coast.
- Indian Airforce An-32 aircraft disappeared on Friday morning over waters between southern India and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
  - Type Russian Transport Aircraft
  - Search & Rescue operations carried by Indian Naval P-8I Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft.
- China has completed the production of the world's largest amphibious aircraft – AG600.
  - Amphibious Aircraft – Can take off & land directly from water (Sea)
- Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of All India Institute Of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and revival of fertilizer factory plant in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.

- Senior IAS officer **Ajay Bhushan Pandey** was appointed as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).
- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated the Petrapole Integrated Check Post (ICP) through Video Conferencing.
  - Petrapole ICP is the biggest land port in South Asia and the largest land customs station in Asia.
- Fortune 500 List:
  - Highest Indian: Indian Oil Corporation (161<sup>st</sup>)
  - New Rajesh Exports (423) a Private Jewelry Company.
  - Overall: Walmart (1<sup>st</sup>)
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has given its approval for installation of Ghatampur Thermal Power Project (GTPS) in Ghatampur, Uttar Pradesh.
  - The GTPC project has capacity of 1980 MW (3 X 660 MW) and would be installed through a Joint Venture (JV) Company named Neyveli Uttar Pradesh Power Limited (NUPPL).
- Pokemon Go
  - A *location based Augmented-reality game* that has been going Viral.
  - Designer: John Hanke
  - Other projects: Keyhole – Google acquired and now known as Google Earth.
- Facebook announced on Thursday it had completed its first successful test of its **solar-powered Aquila** drone, being developed to deliver internet service to remote areas of the world.
- The government is likely to approach Britain soon to get back the famed Kohinoor, one of the world's largest diamonds, which is currently set in a royal crown on display in the Tower of London.
  - History Kohinoor:
  - 13<sup>th</sup> Century - Found near Guntur, Andhra Pradesh – Kakatiya Dynasty - Malik Kafur (Alauddin Khilji's General) raided south & possibly acquired it. --- Babur – Mughals – 1739 Nadir Shah Invaded Delhi, took it – Maharaja Ranjit Singh – Queen Victoria

- Union Cabinet has approved the incorporation of **Sagarmala Development Company (SDC)** to push forward port-led economic development under ambitious **Sagarmala project**.
- **SDC** shall be incorporated under Company Act, 2013 with initial authorized capital of 1,000 Cr Rupees and subscribed share capital of 90 Cr Rupees.
- **Sagarmala Project:**
  - Project to modernize India's Ports so that port-led development can be augmented and coastlines can be developed to contribute in India's growth.
  - Aims to harness India's 7,500-km long coastline, 14,500-km of potentially navigable waterways.
  - **Six Megaports planned under Sagarmala:**
  - West Bengal: *Sagar Island*
  - Tamil Nadu: *Colachel*
  - Gujarat: *Wadhwan*
  - Karnataka: *Tadadi*
  - Andhra Pradesh: *Machilipatnam*
- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has launched National Electoral Roll Purification (NERP) 2016 across the country.
  - The 2016 motto of the ECI is “**No voter to be left behind**”.
- A Union Cabinet has approved Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between **India and Tunisia** for strengthening bilateral cooperation in the field of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Digital Economy.
- A Union Cabinet has approved signing of the Air Services Agreement between India and Mozambique.
  - This will promote air-connectivity between India – Mozambique.
- Union Cabinet has approved Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between **India and Switzerland** for cooperation in **skill development**.

- A NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog has signed Statement of Intent (SoI) with Intel India to set up Atal Tinkering laboratories (ATL) under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).
- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):
  - Innovation Promotion Platform involving academics, entrepreneurs, and researchers drawing upon national and international experiences to foster a culture of innovation, R&D in India.
  - Tarun Khanna expert committee was formed for AIM
- A The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) on Thursday rejected **Russia's** appeal against a doping ban on its **athletics team** from the Rio Olympics.
- No-confidence motion against Uttarakhand Speaker falls through(gets rejected)
- **Important: What is no-confidence motion**
  - Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to Lok Sabha(Vidhan Sabha in case of states), hence ministers can stay in office as long as they enjoy confidence in Lok Sabha.
  - So when, MP's in Lok Sabha feel that council of ministers donot enjoy confidence, a motion of No-Confidence can be moved. It is subjected to following conditions:
  - It can only be moved in Lok Sabha/ Vidhan Sabha and not in Rajya Sabha/Vidhan Parishad.
  - In Lok Sabha needs support of minimum 50 members to be admitted.
  - It is not against a particular member but complete council of ministers and so if gets passed the government has to resign.
- A previously unknown species of meat-eating dinosaur from 80 million years ago has been unearthed in Argentina. The dinosaur belongs to family called as the "Giant Thieves."
- **Rajya Sabha passes Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2012**
  - Bill seeks to amend the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.
  - Added a new category of persons called "**adolescent**" - between 14 and 18 years of age.
  - Prohibition of employment of adolescents in hazardous occupations as specified (mines, hazardous processes and inflammable substance).

- Complete ban against employment of children before 14 years in any occupation, except where child helps his/her family.
  - Increased fine on employing children or employing adolescent in hazardous occupation from 20,000 to 50,000 along with, provision for Jail term of upto 2 years.
- ILO: 12<sup>th</sup> June, World Day Against Child Labour
- *2016 theme: End child labour in supply chains*
- Canada, Quebec City: Researchers from Laval University will conduct for first time test ZIKA vaccine on humans.
  - Zika virus is transmitted primarily by **Aedes aegypti**
- Noted Indian hockey player **Mohammed Shahid** passed away due to multiple organ failure in Gurugram, Haryana.
- As per data shared by **Telecom Minister Manoj Sinha** in the Lok Sabha today, there were 34.26 Crore Internet subscribers as on March 31, 2016. In the list of 138 internet service providers shared by the minister, telecom major Bharti Airtel topped the chart with 90.53 million internet subscribers.
- The Election Commission has rejected a petition filed by A.P.J. Mohamed Muthu Meera Maraikayar, elder brother of former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, objecting to the registration of the Abdul Kalam Vision India Party (AKVIP) as a political party under the **Representation of People Act, 1951**.
  - The AKVIP was launched by **Ponraj**, former scientific adviser and close aide of Kalam, at Rameswaram on February 29.
  - What did election commission say: “National leaders cannot be said to be the exclusive right or property of any particular party or organisation and those who believe in the philosophy and ideology of such leaders cannot be prevented from propagating the same by using the name.”
- Aimed at giving an impetus to the use of Hindi, Minister for Water Resources **Uma Bharti** has directed divisions in her Ministry to prepare agenda notes of important meetings **first in Hindi** and then translate it into English. Ms. Bharti has also asked officers to make a beginning by making file notings in Hindi.
- **Guru Purnima**: was celebrated on 19<sup>th</sup> July
  - Why 19<sup>th</sup> July: Indian festival so nothing do with date. Changes every year.

- When: According to the Hindu calendar, Guru Purnima falls on a full-moon day in month of Ashadh.
- Dedicated to **Mahrishi Ved Vyasa** – credited for *the Vedas* and *18 Puranas, Mahabharata and the Srimad Bhagavatam*.
- Buddhist celebrate day as day of *first sermon of Buddha at Sarnath, UP*.
- Supreme Court has accepted majority of recommendations of **Lodha Committee** on reforms in BCCI. Approved recommendations include:
  - Civil Servants, Politicians, and other above 70 years – cannot become BCCI members.
  - Any member can't hold post for more than 3 years.
  - Parliament to decide if RTI applicable to BCCI.
  - Member of Cag to be included in BCCI's governing council.
  - Each state only vote and each member only one post.
  - Replacement of working committee with a nine-member Apex Council with player representation
- **Malcolm Turnbull** was sworn as Prime Minister of Australia for second term.
- Indian Railways has initiated process to include the **Terrain Imaging for Diesel Drivers- Infrared Enhanced Optical and Radar Assisted (Tri-NETRA)** system to avoid train accidents.
  - Ti-Netra uses infra-red and radar technology to scan for signals and transfer information to screen fitted inside engine.
- Parliament passes Regional Centre for Biotechnology Bill, 2016
  - Result: Statutory status to the existing Regional Centre for Biotechnology in **Faridabad, Haryana**.
- CBDT inks 7 Advance Pricing Agreements
- CBDT: Central Board of Direct Taxes
- Advance Pricing Agreement: Agreement between Taxpayer and Authority for intra- group transfers. What does this mean?
  - Example: Taxpayer: TATA (assume), now tata is a group, with companies in multiple countries. Lets say Tax rate in India is 30% but in UK is 10% only.

- Now if TATA has to sell lets say safari in UK. If cost price of Safari 9 lacs in India and it sells at 11 lacs. It has to pay  $30\% \times 2\text{lac} = \text{Rs. } 60,000$  tax but for sale of Safari In UK. Tata India will sell to TATA UK at cost price only (9 Lac). Hence, tata India 0 profit 7 0 tax. Tata UK will Sell at 11 lac but there tax rate is  $10\%$  only. Hence,  $\text{tax} = 2\text{lac} \times 10\% = 20,000$  so TATA saves 40,000 tax.
  - So India govt. loses tax, Advance pricing agreements look into these aspect only. Here advance mein prices are fixed let say at 10 lacs, so Indian gov.t losses are minimum and TATA also get profit. Both happy.
- Senior IAS officer Guruprasad Mohapatra was appointed as Chairman of Airports Authority of India (AAI).
- Centre injects Rs.22,915 cr into 13 public sector banks
- **SpaceX** successfully launched its **Dragon Cargo capsule** filled with supplies for astronauts aboard the International Space Station (ISS). The Dragon Cargo capsule was launched using SpaceX's workhorse **Falcon 9 rocket** from Cape Canaveral, Florida.
- **Key Facts:**
  - **SpaceX:** Space Exploration Technologies Corporation – Private company engaged in space transportation.
  - Founded by **Elon Musk** – also founder of Tesla Motors, Paypal.
  - Spacecraft: Dragon
  - Launch Vehicle: Falcon 1 & Falcon 9 – reusable
  - Difference between **Spacecraft & Launch vehicle**: Spacecraft: A controller craft which has place for people and drives the whole thing. Launch Vehicle: Engine of the system. It has fuels, which burns and provides thrust for system. In our language, Spacecraft is truck ka driver wala cabin jahan se driver sab control karta hain and launch vehicle is truck ka chassis including engine and fuel tank jo truck ko chalne ki energy deta hain.
- 18<sup>th</sup> July – Nelson Mandela day
  - 2016 Theme: "Take Action, Inspire Change"
- Turkish musician **Kudsi Erguner** has been appointed as the UNESCO Artist for Peace by the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova.

- National **Squash** Championship:
  - Winners: **Dipika Pallikal Karthik(Women)** and **Saurav Ghosal(Men)**
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Joshna Chinappa(W) & Harinderpal Singh Sandhu (M)
  - Need to remember: these 4 are associated with Squash.
- The Housing Development Finance Corporation (**HDFC**) has become the first Indian company to issue rupee-denominated bonds “**masala bonds**” on London Stock Exchange (LSE).
  - **Masala bonds**: First we understand what is Bond?
  - **Bond**: In simple terms it is a piece of paper for borrowing money from market. Now, like any money-lending deal, it has interest rate, which it will pay and the period of principal payment.
  - **Now Masala Bonds**: They refer to a rupee-denominated bond through which Indian entities can raise money from foreign markets in rupee, and not in foreign currency.
  - What does it mean, if a Indian company goes to foreign market(say London) and asks for money, if company is famous & good, people will be willing to lend money.
  - Lets say, it takes money(1,00,000 Pounds), but as people gave money in pounds and to use in India it is converted to rupees (1 pound = 80 Rupees). Hence loan = 80,00,000 Rupees.
  - But after few days, 1 Pound = 100 rupees. Hence, Indian Company loan automatically becomes  $100 \times 1,00,000 = 100,00,000$ . That is, it increases by 20,00,000. So company in loss.
  - To prevent such condition, RBI allows Masala Bonds – Now Indian Company in London borrows not in Pounds but directly in Indian Rupees. And so it is immune from any rate change.
- Railways Ministry launched 1 MW Solar Power project at Amritsar.
- Uttar Pradesh government has signed a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the Netherlands to set up a skill development center to help farmers
- Amaravati: A.P. invites proposals through Swiss Challenge method
- **Swiss Challenge Method**: 1<sup>st</sup> a company has done research and submitted the proposal for Amravati project. Now, government has opened this project for challenge from other companies. Now, when other companies submit proposal and government likes one of it, the 1<sup>st</sup> company will be given chance to match this proposal. If 1<sup>st</sup> company matches the bid, it shall be given to 1<sup>st</sup> company otherwise to 2<sup>nd</sup> company who originally came up with the idea.



- **Treasures of Versailles** to go on display in Australia
  - Treaty of Versailles, 1919, France: Peace treaty at end of WWI, signed on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1919.
  - Ended WWI between Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire) & Allied Powers (France, Britain, Russia, Italy)
- **Pema Khandu** (36) of Congress Party was sworn in as the 10th Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Union **Commerce Ministry** has launched an **e-marketplace portal** for online purchase of goods and services by various central government ministries and departments.
  - Portal has been developed by the Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals (DGS&D).
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**), the UN cultural agency has added 9 new sites on its **World Heritage List**.
  - Site added from India:
  - **Nalanda Mahavihara** (India):
  - Situated at Nalanda, Bihar
  - Nalanda Mahavihara was founded by **Kumargupta I** of the Gupta dynasty in 5th century CE.
  - It was patronized by various rulers including **King Harshavardhana of Kannauj** (7th century CE) and **the Pala rulers** (8th to 12th century CE)
  - **Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP)**
  - Located in Sikkim
  - **Capitol Complex, Chandigarh**
  - Includes the Legislative Assembly, Secretariat and High Court
  - Designed by French architect **Le Corbusier**.
- Madhya Pradesh became the first state in India to have '**Happiness Department**' that will work as knowledge resource centre on the subject of happiness on the lines of Bhutan.
- Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) and US-based Bell Helicopter have signed a deal to jointly develop the helicopter market in India.

- Union Government has launched: **Transforming India Website** ([www.transformingindia.mygov.in](http://www.transformingindia.mygov.in)), a platform for sharing the impact of various governance initiatives with citizens in real-time.
  - It shall also be a social platform where users can share their opinions about various initiatives of the government.
- The first paperless **e-court** in the **Hyderabad High Court** got inaugurated here on Sunday.
- **Over 250 dead in failed Turkey Coup**
  - Capital: Ankara (and not Istanbul)
  - President: Erdogan
  - Coup by: Military
  - Why: Because of his dictatorial policies, curbing freedom of speech etc.
  - Why failed: Military thought because of his dictatorial policies, people will support the coup but people did not support, instead they supported President. They agree that he is bad leader but they don't want military to solve this problem, they want to do it democratically through elections.
- Department of Chemistry , IIT Madras has secured \$18 million (about Rs.120 crore) funding, to further develop its nanomaterials-based water technology that is currently used in India to remove arsenic from drinking water.
- A sophisticated measuring instrument on board NASA's Aura spacecraft has located 39 hitherto unreported sources of sulphur dioxide around the globe.
- **World Youth Skills Day: 15<sup>th</sup> July**
  - 2016 Theme: *"Skills Development to Improve Youth Employment"*.
- Union cabinet approved allocation of 12000 crore rupees to Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)
  - Funds will be used to impart skill training to 60 lakh youths and certify skills of 40 lakh persons acquired non-formally.
- RBI has set up an inter-regulatory Working Group to study the regulatory issues relating to *Financial Technology (Fintech) and Digital Banking* in India.

- Headed by RBI's Executive Director **Sudarshan Sen**.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has certified India as **Yaws**, Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus free country.
- India:
  - August 2015: Neonatal & Maternal Tetanus free
  - May 2016: YAWS free.
- YAWS:
  - Chronic bacterial infection that affects the skin, cartilages and bones.
  - Caused by the spirochete bacterium *Treponema pallidum pertenue*.
  - Spreads by direct contact with the fluid from a lesion of an infected person
- Asia-Europe Meeting Summit (ASEM11) or ASEM2016 began in **Ulaanbaatar, Capital of Mongolia**.
  - The theme of the Summit is '*Partnership for the Future through Connectivity*'.
  - Includes 51 Countries + EU+ ASEAN
  - Addresses political, economic and cultural issues between the two regions.
- DRDO successfully conducted proof firing tests of Armament system for 155 mm x 52 calibre New Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS).
  - Conducted at: Proof & Experimental Establishment (PXE) in Balasore, Odisha.
- **Rakesh Kumar Chaturvedi** has been appointed as the new Chairman of the **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)**.
- India and the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** have signed a 100 million dollars loan agreement for irrigation projects, drainage system and water management in Vennar sub-basin of Cauvery delta in Tamil Nadu.
- ADB:
  - HQ: Manila, Philippines
  - Collectively owned by 67 members – 48 from the region including India.
  - Japan holds maximum shares.
  - Regional Development Bank: dedicated to reduce poverty in Asia and the Pacific region

- India's **Chess** Grand Master **Harika Dronavalli** has won the **Fide** Women's Grand Prix trophy in Chendu, China.
- What is FIDE:
  - Fédération Internationale des Échecs or World Chess Federation
  - HQ: Athens, Greece
- Union Cabinet has approved allocation of 12,000 crore rupees to **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**.
- Under Union Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.
- Funds will be used to
  - Impart skill training to 60 lakh youths
  - Certify skills of 40 lakh persons acquired non-formally.
- India launched operation '**Sankat Mochan**' to evacuate Indian citizens stranded in South Sudan's capital **Juba**.
  - Undertaken by Indian Airforce
  - Plane: C-17 Globemaster (USA se imported)
- Senior IPS officer Ashok Patnaik as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Intelligence Grid (**NATGRID**).
- What is NATGRID?
  - NATGRID is an ambitious counter terrorism programme.
  - It is an intelligence sharing network that collates data from databases of the various agencies and ministries and analyze to help track suspected terrorists and prevent terrorist attacks.
  - Like NIA( National Intelligence Agency) & NCTC ( National Counter Terrorism Center) , NATGRID is also an after-measure of 26/11 Mumbai event.
- Union Cabinet has approved Revised Cost Estimate (RCE) of 7290.62 crore rupees for the ongoing 1020 MW **Punatsangchhu-II Hydroelectric Project (HEP) in Bhutan**.
- **Peru** has declared **Zika** outbreak as a health emergency across the northern half of the country after 102 people were infected with the virus.

- **What is Zika Virus?**
  - Zika virus is a mosquito-borne virus transmitted by **Aedes aegypti** mosquitoes which also also transmit 3 other vector-borne diseases Chikungunya, dengue and yellow fever.
  - Why name Zika: Because first identified in **Zika Forest, Uganda**.
- Union government approved the revival of three defunct Fertilizer Units located at:
  - Gorakhpur,
  - Sindri
  - Barauni
- The Centre announced an extension of a deadline under the Income Declaration Scheme, aimed at bringing undeclared income and assets into the tax net to, **September 30, 2017**.
- **Ban cash transactions of above Rs 3 lakh to curb blackmoney: SIT on Black Money**
  - SIT on Black Money Head: MB Shah
- **SC orders restoration of Congress Government in Arunachal Pradesh**
- A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on Wednesday unanimously quashed (rejected as invalid) Arunachal Pradesh Governor **P. Rajkhowa's** order to advance the Assembly session from January 14, 2016 to December 16, 2015.
- **What Happened: Timeline**
  - Nov, 2011: Nabam Tuki, Congress becomes CM of Arunachal Pradesh.
  - Sept, 2015: J.P. Rajkhowa becomes Governor of Arunachal Pradesh.
  - Nov, 2015: 21 Congress MLA rebel against CM.
  - Dec, 9, 2015: Governor seeks removal of Speaker.
  - Dec14, 2015: Speaker cancels session
  - Dec16, 2015: Deputy Speaker conducts session, with rebel congress leaders+ BJP leaders to dismiss speaker.
  - Dec17, 2015: Rebels vote against Tuki, elect Pule as CM.
  - Jan24, 2016: Union Cabinet recommends President Rule in State.
  - Jan26, 2016: President rule approved

- Jan28, 2016: CM TUKI moves to SC.
- Feb 19: President's rule lifted in the State.
- Feb 20: Pul sworn in as new CM of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Importance: The first time the apex court used its powers of judicial review to restore a previous government(Tuki's Gov) when its successor government(Pul's Gov) is still in place.
- The Union Government has notified the **UIDAI (Unique Identification Authority of India) Rules, 2016** that give legal status to UIDAI.
- Rules have been framed as per provisions of **Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016**.
- Chairperson of UIDAI will be selected on the recommendation of a search-cum-selection committee.
- Selection Committee for Chairman:
  - Cabinet Secretary (Head)
  - Secretary of Department of Personnel and Training,
  - Secretary of Finance and
  - Secretary of Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY)
  - Two experts nominated by Union Communication & IT Minister.
- Conservative party leader **Theresa May** (59) became **Prime Minister of United Kingdom**
  - Follows after David Cameroon resigned.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Women PM after Margaret Thatcher
- The Union Government has constituted a high-level committee headed by **Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian** to tackle the shortage of pulses in India.
  - Frame an appropriate long term policy to promote cultivation of pulses in India.
  - Suggest hike in MSP (Minimum Support Price) for Pulses+ bonus to farmers for pulses cultivation.
- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has stayed the construction of the LPG terminal proposed by the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) at **Puthu Vypeen**.
  - Puthu Vypeen: Near Kochi, Kerala , Part of Vypin Island

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the **disinvestment of 15 per cent** paid up equity of National Buildings Construction Corporation Limited (NBCC) out of its 90 per cent shareholding,
- **Climate change:** has turned the Arctic snow pink. It is called as **Rose snow** and is not so uncommon in high altitudes and occurs when the **green algae turns pink** after absorbing too much **ultraviolet rays**.
- **Assam** First state in India to offer free higher education to students whose parents earn less than 1lac/year
- India's first Centre of Excellence on Internet of Things (**CoE– IoT**) was launched in **Bengaluru, Karnataka** by the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM).
- **Tribunal rejects Beijing's claims on South China Sea**
- The Permanent Court of Arbitration in The **Hague, Netherlands** concluded that China has no legal basis for its vast claims in the South China Sea.
- The decision was on complaint filed by Philippines against China, but in actuality 6 governments have overlapping territorial claims in South China sea.
  - China, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, & Taiwan.
  - Note: Permanent Court of Arbitration is different from **International Court of Justice, also at Hague**.
  - ICJ is Principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN).
  - It was established in June 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations and began work in April 1946.
- Indian Navy has commissioned INS Karna, an independent base of Marine Commandos (MARCOS) at Bheemunipatnam Naval Base, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
  - Marine Commando Force (MCF), is the special forces unit of the Indian Navy.
  - Operation Rakshak: Marcos deployed in Jhelum & Wular lake in J&K (1995)
- The first direct bus service between Pokhara (Nepal) and New Delhi (India) has been was launched.
  - Before Pokhara, Kathmandu & Mahendranagar in Nepal have been connected with Bus service from India.

- Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched a nationwide **Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDCF)** to check child diarrhoeal deaths
  - Oral Rehydration Salt(ORS) & Zinc Therapy shall be given:
  - **Diarrhoea:** Diarrhoea can be caused by various virus, bacteria and protozoa like rotavirus, E.coli etc.
  - Contaminated water, inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene, malnutrition and lack of immunization can be few reasons.
  - The combination of ORS and Zinc is the most cost-effective intervention to prevent deaths due to diarrhoea.
- State Bank of India (SBI) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE) at IIT Bombay to promote innovation by start-ups in the financial sector.
  - SINE is IIT Bombay's technology business incubator to promote innovation by startups in the financial sector.
- **Trivia:**
- World Blood Donor Day is celebrated on 14<sup>th</sup> June as it is the birthday of Karl Landsteiner, the creator of the ABO blood group system, for which he won the Nobel Prize. The first day was held in 2005.
- **World Population Day: 11 July**
  - 2016 Theme: "Investing in teenage girls". – empowering them with information related to their health, human & reproductive rights.
- **India, Kenya** sign seven agreements to deepen and expand cooperation
  - Defence Cooperation,
    - Space Technology Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)
    - Exemption of Visa for holders of Diplomatic passports
    - Expertise sharing, standardisation and mutual trade between Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and Bureau of Kenya Standards (BKS)
    - LoC Agreement for US \$15 million



- **Important: What is double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)?**
  - Lets say India has signed DTAA with Japan, now Toyota, a Japanese company is doing business and makes profit of 100 Million dollars in India. So by 30% rule, pays Indian Income Tax department 30 million, and now the rest 70 million will be taken by Toyota back home as profit.
  - Now, if DTAA is not signed b/w India & Japan, in Japan this will be Toyota's income from abroad and further taxable (lets say 10%). Hence Toyota would have to pay Japan Income tax of (10%) i.e. 7 Million.
  - Signing of DTAA, allows Toyota not to pay any additional tax and take full 70 million home legally.
  - So why India's keeps signing DTAA: Simple reason, a company will be more willing to invest in India, if it knows that its country has DTAA with India and they won't have to pay any double tax for income.
  - **Dark Side:** Company's from around the world set up new company in easy rule of law country such as Kenya (DTAA wali) and use black/grey funds to invest in India. Further, such business also avoids extra tax.
- President Pranab Mukherjee conferred the 51st **Jnanpith Award** on acclaimed Gujarati writer and litterateur **Raghuveer Chaudhari**.
- **Sushila Karki** became the first woman Chief Justice of Nepal
- **India, Tanzania sign five agreements**
  - MOU on Establishment of Vocational Training Centre at **Zanzibar (Locate on Map)**
  - Visa waiver agreement for Diplomatic/Official passport holders
  - Cooperation in the field of water resource management and development
  - Line of Credit (LoC) of US 92 million dollars- water supply -Zanzibar
- Joint Action Plan (JAP) between- National Small Industries Corporation of India (NSIC) and Small Industries Development Organization Tanzania (SIDO).
- Portugal has won the **2016 UEFA European** football championship (Euro Cup 2016) by defeating host France.
  - Golden Boot (maximum goals): Antoine Griezmann (France)
  - Note: Golden boot is a prize associated with football.

- The National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR) has conferred rare and singular species genetic recognition tag to the threatened breed of **Kendrapara sheep found in Odisha**.
- Second unit of **Kudankulam** Nuclear Power Plant (KNPP), in **Tamil Nadu** became operational.  
Reactor Supply: Russia
  - Reactor: VVER (Water-Water Energetic Reactor)
  - Capacity: 2000 MW.
- Remember:
  - Jaitpur, Maharashtra : with French cooperation
  - Mithi Virdi, Gujarat: with USA
  - Kovvada, Andhra Pradesh: with USA
  - Haripur, WB: again same reactor with Russia
- **300 Indians stranded in Juba as civil war reignites** Juba: Capita South Sudan
  - History:
  - Civil War in Sudan – South Sudan declares independence.
  - UN/Countries – recognize as independent country – Capital Juba
  - Now Conflict with Sudan for Abyei region & Nuba mountains.
  - December 2013, internal conflict started in South Sudan between President Kiir (Dinka Tribe) and his former deputy Riek Machar (Nuer Tribe)
  - There are 2,500 Indian soldiers in the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)
- Noting that “an issue like this has arisen never before”, the **Supreme Court** on Monday decided to hear arguments for referring to a Constitution Bench a plea challenging the restriction on women aged between 10 and 50 years to enter the famed **Sabarimala temple in Kerala**.
- In 1991, the Kerala High Court banned entry of women between ages above the age of 10 and below the age of 50 from offering worship at Sabarimala Shrine during any period of the year.
- **Note:**
  - Sabarimala: Location inside Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala Presiding deity, a ‘Nastik Brahmachari’.

- Climate Change: 7,000 hectares (17,300 acres), or 9% of the mangroves in the **Gulf of Carpentaria, Australia**, perished in just one month. (locate gulf of Carpentaria on map)
- **Impulse 2: Solar Plane** left from Spain for Egypt.
- After **Gujarat University, IIT-Bombay** has placed an order for 3,500 convocation robes made of khadi cotton.
- **Winners of 2016 Wimbledon: Tennis**
  - **Singles Men:** Andy Murray
  - **Singles Women:** Serena Williams
  - Location: Wimbledon, London, United Kingdom
- **Pakistani philanthropist, social activist, humanitarian and ascetic Abdul Sattar Edhi passed away.**
  - **Edhi Foundation: Humanitarian work in Pakistan, South Asia and across the World.**
  - **Abdul Sattar Edhi**, an autobiography: A mirror to the blind"
- DRDO has signed Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with IIT-Bombay and Madras to establish a bi-nodal 'Centre of Propulsion Technology' (CoPT) at the two institutions.
- **Captain Radhika Menon** became the first woman in the world to receive the Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea, from the **International Maritime Organisation (IMO)** for the year 2016.
  - IMO – Head Quarter – London.
- Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) has constituted a cyber-cell to check the online abuse and harassment of women and children on social media platforms.
- International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has declared Bornean orangutan, a primate species as critically endangered.
- 4 New train design types – of Indian Railways
  - Tejas - high-tech entertainment units, wi-fi facility and integrated braille displays, water level indicators for bio-toilets, CCTV, fire & smoke suppression system.
  - Hamsafar – CCTV, smoke & fire suppression system
  - Deen Dayalu – improved facilities for general class passengers

- Antodaya – fully unreserved passenger train.
- Telecom ministry is learnt to have cleared the Rs.3,500-crore 4G spectrum trading deal between service providers Bharti Airtel and Aircel.
- Russia has offered Indian oil companies a stake in the second phase of **Yamal LNG**, the biggest project to produce liquefied natural gas in the Arctic.
- **Thousands flee S. Sudan fighting**
  - Civil War in Sudan – South Sudan declares independence.
  - UN/Countries – recognize as independent country – Capital Juba
  - Now Conflict with Sudan for Abyei region & Nuba mountains.
  - December 2013, internal conflict started in South Sudan between President Kiir (Dinka Tribe) and his former deputy Riek Machar (Nuer Tribe)
- **SC ends impunity for armed forces in disturbed areas**
  - Till now, security personnel enjoyed immunity under the **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958 (AFSPA)** against criminal action for acts committed in disturbed areas.
  - In disturbed areas army could kill on basis of internal information etc. no need for justification.
  - But yesterday, Supreme Court said “Every death caused by the armed forces in a disturbed area, whether the victim is a dreaded criminal or a militant or a terrorist or an insurgent, should be thoroughly enquired into”.
  - Importance: Civil (**Article 21**) & Human Rights get acknowledged in sensitive areas under military control.
  - AFSPA applied states:
    - **North-East:** Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland and Meghalaya.
    - **Jammu & Kashmir: (J& K AFSPA act)**
- **Fat Tax**
  - Kerala applied ‘fat tax’ on food articles of conspicuous consumption (high end restaurant food) such as pizzas and burghers sold through branded restaurants.
  - Tax: 14.5%

- **Govt. to acquire 1.05 lakh acres for Bandar port and industrial corridor**
  - Bander Port – Machlipatnam Port (Andhra Pradesh)
- **Monsoon picks up, sowing of pulses gets boost**
  - Kharif Pulses: Tur(Pigeon Peas), Arhar(Split red gram), Urad(Split Black gram), Moong (Split Green gram)
- **India and Mozambique signed three Memoranda of Understanding (MoU)**
  - Signed Agreements :
  - MoU on Long-term agreement for purchase of pulses.
  - MoU on cooperation in the field of youth affairs and sports.
  - MoU on reduction of drug trafficking and psychotropic substances and related materials.
- **India and South Africa have signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) four areas.**
  - Signed agreements:
  - MoU on Tourism.
  - MOU on Information and Communication technology (ICT).
  - MoU on Grass root innovation (Science and Technology)
  - MOU on Cooperation in Arts and Culture.
- **BRICS drug control meeting begins in New Delhi:**
  - Why: Result of ‘**eThekwani Declaration**’ adopted during the BRICS summit in March 2013 at Durban, South Africa.
  - Organized by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) of India.
- **India- Nigeria: India sets up apparel training centre in Kaduna, Nigeria**
- **Vedanta Resources will invest a total of \$1 billion (about Rs. 6,600 crore) in its Gamsberg mine project in South Africa**, which is one of the world’s largest undeveloped zinc deposits.
  - India:Largest-Zinc mine: **Rampura- Agucha (Bhilwara, Rajasthan)** : Also operated by Vedanta.

**DRI unearths Rs. 2,240 cr. banking-hawala scam:**

News is hawala transactions...not imp for competition. What is imp is. Ministry of Finance has 5 departments (Economic Affairs, Disinvestment, Financial Services, Revenue & Expenditure). Now, Department of Revenue has following (**TWO**) Investigation Agencies

- **DRI:** Directorate of Revenue Intelligence
  - Functions with the Central Board of Excise and customs (CBEC), in the Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue.
- **Enforcement Directorate:**
  - Enforcement of two key Acts: the Foreign Exchange Management Act 1999 (**FEMA**) and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002 (**PMLA**)
- **FIU-IND** (Financial Intelligence Unit – India)
  - Looks into money laundering, terrorism financing and other economic offences
  - Independent body reporting directly to the **Economic Intelligence Council** (EIC) headed by the Finance Minister
- **Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO)**
  - Under Ministry of **Corporate Affairs**.
  - Mostly, cases of fraud received from Department of Company Affairs
- Trivia:
  - Department of Economic affairs, is responsible for preparing **Union Budget**.
  - Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna is launched & taken care by Department of Financial Services.

**NSCN has not given up on sovereignty, says Muivah**

- GOI & NSCN(IM) signed Peace Accord last year.
- **Why NSCN(IM)** (National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah): Because they are largest group representing nagas.
- **NSCN(IM)** demands separate naga country with Nagaland+ parts from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur & also Myanmar.

**Putin signs controversial 'Big Brother' law:**

- Law: Companies need to keep record of calls, messages, photographs and videos & government can access them for security.
- Three astronauts blasted off into the early morning sky in an upgraded **Soyuz spacecraft from Russia's** Baikonur cosmodrome on Thursday, heading towards the International Space Station.

For the first time ever, astronomers have sighted a planet orbiting a triple star system (3-sun), using the **Very Large Telescope in Chile**.

**Namami Gange Project launched at 100 places.**

- Objective: Cleaning of Ganga and its tributaries - National Mission for Clean Ganga
- No. of States: 7 (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal + Haryana+Delhi)
- Projects: Consisting of ETP(Effluent treatment plant)- Industrial wastage & STP (Sewage treatment plant)- Municipal Wastage.

The annual **Rath Yatra** (Chariot Festival) of Lord Jagannath began different parts of the country. The festival is celebrated on second day of Sukla Paksha i.e. the day in bright fortnight of Ashadha month.

- Most famous: Puri, Odisha
  - Image of Jaggannath: Wooden (ceremonially replaced 12/19 years).
  - Temple temple was built in the 12th century atop its ruins by king of the Eastern Ganga dynasty, King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva.
  - Architecture: Kalinga Style – Vimana – Rekha deula.

Union Government has constituted **Shankar Acharya Committee** to examine desirability and feasibility of new financial year. India was placed at 91st position, in the recently released 2016 Networked Readiness Index (NRI) by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF).

**Rajasthan** has become the first state in the country to introduce minimum wages for part time workers.

- Now part time workers in the state now come under the Minimum Wages Act 1948.

- Need to pay 50% of the prescribed a day minimum wage to a person who works for less than four hours in a day.

China inducted its largest indigenously-built **transport military aircraft named as Y-20**,

- India (from USA): Boeing C-17 Globemaster.
- **Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee: Birthday ( 6th July)**  
Served as Minister for Industry and Supply in Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet. Mukherjee quit the Indian National Congress and founded the right wing nationalist
- Bharatiya Jana Sangh (which later evolved into BJP) in 1951. Scheme:
- **Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee - Rurban Mission**
- What: Transform rural areas to economically, socially and physically sustainable spaces  
How: Develop 300 Smart Village clusters, with an investment of Rs 5,100 crore in three years.
- **The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** has launched '**MySpeed**' mobile application for measuring real time mobile Internet speed that consumers get.
- State Bank of India (SBI) has launched **SBI Mingle**, a social media-banking platform for Facebook and Twitter users. The Platform will allow SBI's customers to access various banking services through mentioned social platforms.
- To mitigate the shortfall in availability of pulses and to supplement the existing efforts to meet domestic demand, Union Government has entered into long term G2G arrangement for **Supply of Pulses with Mozambique**. The cabinet approved this MOU yesterday.
- The world's largest Charkha was unveiled at the Terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI) in New Delhi.
- Para swimmer Niranjana Mukundan has won eight medals at the recently-concluded IWAS (International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports) U-23 World Games held in Prague, Czech Republic.
- The Union Cabinet has approved signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Tanzania (Capital: Dodoma) in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy.
- Interest Subvention (Byaj mein sahayata): The Union Cabinet has approved the Interest Subvention Scheme for farmers for the year 2016-17.



- Budget Approved: 18,276 Crore.
- What? Farmers get short-term loan (Less than 1 year), up to 3 lacs at 4% interest rate.
- Union Cabinet approves **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme**
- Target: target of training 50 lakh apprentices by 2019-20.
- Budget: INR 10,000 Cr
- Implemented by Director General of Training (DGT) under the aegis of Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)
- How: Provide financial incentives to the employers to engage apprentices. Union Government will directly share
  - 25% of the total stipend payable to an apprentice.
  - 50% of the total expenditure incurred on providing basic training of apprentice.
- **International Borders:**
- **India-Pakistan:**
  - India recognizes International Boundary based on **Radcliffe line (1947)**. However, on ground,
  - Gujarat to Punjab: International Boundary
  - Kashmir: On ground -Line of Control (LOC) which is different from International Boundary. It was demarcated after the Simla pact in 1972.
- **India-China:**
- East: Arunachal Pradesh
  - On Paper: McMahon Line:
  - Line agreed to by **Britain and Tibet** as part of the Simla Accord, a treaty signed in 1914.
  - India: recognizes McMahon line as Border.
  - China: does not recognize, says treaty done by Tibet not China.
  - On Site: McMahon line only: Chinese occupied areas briefly during 1962 war but left.
- West: Laddak area
  - India: wants to consider: Johnson line

- China: wants to consider: line similar to the Macartney–MacDonald Line.
- However, On site: Line of Actual Control (LAC)
- India-Bangladesh: International Border(IB)
- Trivia: Pakistan- Afghanistan: Durand Line
  
- **PM expands Cabinet**
- **Rule:** 91<sup>st</sup> Constitution Amendment inserted **article 75 (1A)** which states that total number of ministers including Prime Minister in Central Council of Ministers cannot be more than 15% of strength of Lok Sabha. Hence, present strength =  $545 \times 15\% = 82$ . (Maximum possible size).
- **Similar rule**, through article 164(1A) applies to State Ministers, including Chief minister. Here, rule is 15% of size of respective Vidhan Sabha.
- **Changes:**
  - Human Resource Development (Education): **Prakash Javedkar**
  - Textiles: Smriti Irani
  - Information and Broadcasting Ministry, additional charge given to Urban Development Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu.
  - Communication Portfolio: Manoj Sinha, who has been promoted to Minister of State with independent charge.
  - Statistics and Programme Implementation: D.V. Sadananda Gowda
  - Minister of State for Power Piyush Goel, gets Coal and Mines as well.
  - Law Ministry : Ravi Shankar Prasad
  - Steel: Chaudhary Bijendra Singh
  - Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Drinking Water and Sanitation: Narendra Tomar.
  - Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister Ananth Kumar, has been given additional charge of Parliamentary Affairs.
  - Environment and Forests and Climate Change: Anil Madhav Dave, sworn in as Minister of State, Independent Charge.
  - Sports and Youth Affairs: Vijay Goel, Mos, Independent Charge.

- Hence, total ministers including PM = 78.
- **Olympic Trivia:**
  - 1900: Lone Athlete: Norman Pitchard represented India
  - 1920, Antwerp Belgium: first time India sent team to Olympics.
- **Sudarshan Sen** has been as Executive Director of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). He will replace NS Vishwanathan who was elevated as Deputy Governor of RBI.
- The **Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT) at Nhava Sheva** in Raigad District of Maharashtra has become the first port in India to implement logistics data bank tagging system of containers. The first of its kind system has been launched as part of 'Ease of Doing Business' initiatives implemented at JNPT Port.
- NASA's Juno spacecraft has successfully entered into the orbit of Jupiter (4<sup>th</sup> July) and started orbiting solar system's largest planet. The spacecraft is part of NASA's **New Frontiers program**, launched in 2011 to study Jupiter's composition, gravity field, magnetic field, and polar magnetosphere.
- NASA has also extended mission **New Horizons Mission**: whose aim is to perform flyby study of Pluto System and study one or more objects in Kuiper Belt.
  - **Kuiper belt** is a region of the solar system beyond the planets, extending from the orbit of Neptune. Like the asteroid belt, it consists mainly of small bodies, or remnants from the Solar System's formation.
- The Cabinet on Tuesday approved a change in the names of the Madras, Bombay and Calcutta High Courts to reflect the changes in the official nomenclature of these cities to Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata, respectively.
- **FCNR payout**: According to RBI data, banks had raised about \$34 billion through FCNR (B) deposits in 2013, most of which are due this year. In 2013 the rupee was at an all-time low of 68.85 against the dollar and the central bank had asked commercial banks to raise the foreign currency deposits to shore up reserves. The RBI estimates that the immediate effect of the maturity of these deposits would be an outflow of about \$20 billion.
  - **FCNR deposits**: Foreign Currency Non-Resident (FCNR) deposits.
- 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of **FSDC (Financial Stability & Development Council)** held:
- Chairman: Finance Minister & members include:

- Minister of State for Finance - Jayant Sinha,
  - RBI Governor - Raghuram Rajan,
  - Finance Secretary - Ashok Lavasa,
  - Economic Affairs Secretary - Shaktikanta Das,
  - Financial Services Secretary - Anjuly Chib Duggal,
  - Chief Economic Adviser - Arvind Subramanian,
  - SEBI Chairman - U.K. Sinha,
  - IRDA Chairman - T.S. Vijayan, and
  - PFRDA Chairman - Hemant Contractor.
- The Centre gave its 'in-principle' approval to set up the country's 13th major port at **Enayam, near Colachel in Tamil Nadu**.

## JUNE 2016

### Important Days

- **June 5: World Environment Day**
  - 2016 Theme: Go Wild for Life (Zero tolerance for the illegal trade in wildlife)
- **June 8: World Oceans Day**
  - 2016 Theme: “Healthy oceans, healthy planet”
- **June 12: World Day against Child Labor**
  - 2016 Theme: ‘End child labour in supply chains – It’s everyone’s business.’
- **June 14: World Blood Donor day**
  - 2016 Theme: “Blood connects us all”.
  - 2016 slogan: “Share life, give blood”.
  - 2016 host country: Netherlands.
- **June 17: World Day to Combat Desertification**
  - 2016 Theme: “Inclusive cooperation for achieving Land Degradation Neutrality”.
- **June 20: World Refugee Day**
- **June 21: International Day of Yoga**
  - 2016 Theme: “Connect the Youth”.
- **June 21: World Hydrography Day**
- **June 23: United Nations Public Service Day**
- **June 26: International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking**
- **29 June: National Statistics Day**
  - June 29 is Birth anniversary of Late Prof Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, India’s eminent statistician.
  - In 1933, he founded the first Indian statistical journal **Sankhya**.

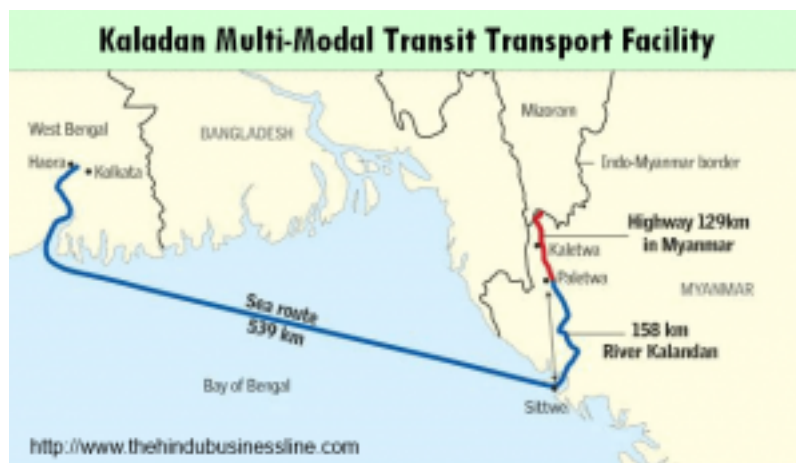
- He laid foundation of the **Indian Statistical Institute (ISI)**, and also contributed significantly to the design of large-scale sample surveys.

## NATIONAL

- In order to strengthen the healthcare sector in the country, Union Government extended the retirement age of government doctors' to 65 years with effect from 31 May 2016.
- **President rejects 3 bills passed by Manipur Assembly:**
  - Manipur Land Reforms and Land Revenue (7th Amendment) Bill, 2015,
  - The Manipur Shops and Establishment (2nd Amendment) Bill, 2015
  - The Manipur Protection of Peoples Bill, 2015.
- The **NITI Aayog** submitted a 20-page note to the PMO arguing to scrap off the convention of presenting a separate railway budget every year.
  - Reason given: Rail Budget has been reduced to mechanism to announce popular measure.
  - Separate Rail Budget introduced as a result of **Acworth Committee** recommendation in 1921.
- Union Cabinet has given its approval for setting up the **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)** as a Public Limited Company under the Department of Posts.
  - IPBB will be 100% GOI Company.
  - IPBB will leverage the Department of Post's network, resources and reach, to make simple, low-cost, quality financial services easily accessible to customers all over the country.
- Dia Mirza was named as the ambassador for Swachh Saathi (student internship) programme.
  - **Swachh Sathi Program:**
  - It is a youth-based program under Swachh Bharat Mission.
  - In this program, more than 2000 interns will be enrolled to coordinate around 10000 schools across India. They also will ensure that all students in the schools across India take the pledge for Clean India.

- Union Ministry of Railways launched a passenger service initiative **Janani Sewa** for mothers under which hot milk, hot water and baby food will be available at railway stations.
- **National Disaster Plan was release by PM**
- Aim to make India disaster resilient and reduce loss of lives.
- Based on based on four priority themes of the “**Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-30**”.
  - Understanding disaster risk
  - Improving disaster risk governance
  - Investing in disaster risk reduction
  - Disaster preparedness, early warning and building back better in the aftermath of a disaster.
- Union Home Ministry has decided to form new reserve battalion to be named after **Maharana Pratap**.
- **Axis Bank** has launched India’s first internationally-listed certified green bond to finance climate change solutions around the world at London Stock Exchange (LSE).
- Union Ministry of Power launched **Surya Mitra mobile App** to serve customers in the field of renewable energy.
- Union Ministry of Railways flagged off **Champaran Satyagrah Express** train at a function in Motihari, Bihar. The train will run from Motihari, Bihar to Anand Vihar, Delhi.
- The **Google-India Inc and Tata Trusts** have jointly launched ‘**Internet Saathi**’ program in Purulia district of West Bengal.
- Prime Minister Modi outline **RAPID**, a five-point mantra for tax officials to reform and broaden the direct tax net base. The announcement was made while inaugurating Rajasva Gyan Sangam, a two-day Annual Conference of Senior Tax Administrators in New Delhi.
  - R for Revenue,
  - A for Accountability,
  - P for Probity,
  - I for Information and
  - D for Digitization.

- Union Ministry of Power has launched '**URJA**'- **Urban Jyoti Abhiyaan Mobile application** for Urban Power Distribution Sector.
- Union Cabinet has approved merger of India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) and its associate banks.
- **Why?** To bring SBI on a par with global lenders.
- 5 associate banks of SBI include:
  - State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur
  - State Bank of Hyderabad
  - State Bank of Mysore
  - State Bank of Patiala
  - State Bank of Travancore.
- Apart from these 5 associate banks, **Bharatiya Mahila Bank (BMB)** shall also be merged with the SBI.
- The **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** and **India Ports Global Private Limited (IPGPL)** have signed a MoU for implementation of additional works on the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) in Myanmar.
- What is Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP)?



- See it uses terms multimodal, which means that it uses more than one mode of transport. In this case both Land and Sea.
- It will establish an alternate route from Kolkata to Mizoram through Myanmar.



- Hence, KMTTP is a project that will connect Indian **seaport of Kolkata** with **Sittwe seaport** in Myanmar by **sea** then Sittwe seaport will be linked to Paletwa in Myanmar via **Kaladan river-boat route** and then will use **road transport** to connect Paletwa to Mizoram (India).
- Union Government has asked all the state governments to link Aadhaar Card with information on caste and to issue domicile certificates to school students.
  - Aadhaar is a 12-digit number
- Prime Minister Modi released a book titled “**The Birds of Banni Grassland**”. The Birds of Banni Grassland is book is based on compilation of the research work, on more than 250 species of birds found in the **Banni area of Kutch, Gujarat**.

## STATES

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- **Odisha** became the first state in the country to give **transgender** people social welfare benefits – such as a housing, pension and food grains.
  - Trivia: In 2014, Supreme Court had recognized **transgender as a legal third gender** and called on government to ensure their equal treatment
- **Haryana Government** launched **Asia’s first ‘Gyps Vulture Reintroduction Program’** at the Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre at Pinjore.
- **Assam Assembly** passed Assam Ease of Doing Business Bill, 2016 to facilitate ease of doing business in the state.
- **Gujarat Government** announces IT policy to promote IT-based start-ups
  - Gujarat Government will develop 50 new incubators to mentor and guide 2,000 start-ups in the next five years.
- **Himachal Pradesh** became the first state in the country to have a State Data Centre (SDC), designed using green data centre concept.
- **Rajasthan Government** launched a mobile application named **RajVayu** for sharing information about air quality index of Jaipur, Udaipur and Jodhpur.
- **Assam’s Guwahati** declared **Gangetic River dolphin** as its official mascot and hence became the first city in the country to have its own city animal.

- **Sikkim** became the first state in India to have an open government data portal linked 'sikkim.data.gov.in'.
- **Assam Government** has launched a unique initiative '**Maitree Ek Gyan Yatra**' to link primary schools to high schools to colleges.
- Punjab government launched a special fund "**Mukh Mantri Punjab Hepatitis C Relief Fund**" to provide free treatment for patients affected by Hepatitis C.
  - Because of the initiative, Punjab also became the first Indian state to provide free treatment to confirmed cases of Hepatitis C.
- **Maharashtra Government** accorded **minority status to Jews** in the state as per the provisions of the Maharashtra State Minorities Commission Act, 2004.
- **Nagaland Government** launched women helpline "181" and "**Sakhi-One Stop Centre**", an institute to support women affected by violence.

### MOU's

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- Union Cabinet MoU between India and United States (US) to enhance cooperation in the field of wildlife conservation and combating wildlife trafficking. MoU seeks cooperation in the following areas:
  - Wildlife Forensics and Conservation Genetics.
  - Natural World Heritage Conservation.
  - Nature Interpretation and Conservation Awareness.
- Later, India signed MOU with the United States
  - To enhance cooperation in energy security, clean energy and climate change.
  - On exchange of information on terror database
- India and US has signed a MoU to facilitate hassle-free entry of Indians into America at selected airports. The facility will provide speedy security clearances for pre-approved, low-risk travellers from the country.

- India and Morocco launched the India-Morocco Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IMCCI) in Morocco's capital city of **Rabat**.
- The Union Government and World Bank have signed a US 9.2 million dollar grant agreement for the Efficient and Sustainable City Bus Service Project.
  - Grant under Global Environment Facility (GEF) program.
  - Selected demonstration cities include Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), Chandigarh, Jaipur (Rajasthan) and Mira Bhayandar, municipality in the Thane district of Maharashtra.
- Union Cabinet approved MoU between India and Taiwan for cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Allied Sector.
- Union Cabinet has approved MoU between Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and Canadian Space Agency (CSA) on cooperation in the field of outer space.
- Union Cabinet approved signing of 15 years contract for undertaking exploration and other developmental activities related to Poly-Metallic Sulphides (PMS).
  - The contract was approved between the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences and the International Seabed Authority (ISA).
- India and Tunisia have signed two MoU for co-operation in Information Technology (IT) and promotion of traditional handicrafts.
- India has signed loan agreement of US 12 crore dollars with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to improve irrigation and water management infrastructure in **Odisha**.
- Later, Asian Development Bank (ADB) also approved 100 million dollars loan to strengthen a key irrigation system and improve water management in the Vennar sub-basin of Cauvery Delta in **Tamil Nadu**.

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## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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- **Scientists discover rare Einstein ring**
- Phenomenon was predicted by Einstein's theory of General Relativity and has been given its own name "The Canarias Einstein ring".
- What is Einstein ring?
  - It is the deformation (distortion) of the light from a source (such as a star or galaxy) into a ring through gravitational lensing of the source's light by an object with an extremely large mass (such as a black hole or another galaxy).
- The world's first 3D-printed **aircraft THOR** was unveiled by Airbus, the European aerospace company, at the International Aerospace Exhibition held in Schoenefeld, Germany.
- Scientists from Iceland working on **CarbFix project** have discovered a new way to trap the greenhouse gas (GHG) carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) deep underground by changing it into rock.
- International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry -IUPAC has announced proposed names for the four new elements Nihonium (Nh), Moscovium (Mc), Tennessine (Ts), and Oganesson (Og).
- Australian Great Barrier Reef rodent (Bramble Cay melomys) has become the first mammal species driven to extinction by **human-induced climate change**.
- Scientists using NASA's Kepler Space Telescope have discovered a Jupiter-like circumbinary planet named Kepler1647b orbiting a system of two stars.
- Russia has launched the new Project 22220 nuclear powered icebreaker dubbed 'Arktika', world's largest and most powerful vessel of its kind.
- A recent report of World Health Organization (WHO) has revealed that hot drinks (beverages) consumed at temperatures above 65 Celsius can cause esophageal cancer.
- Scientists for the second time have successfully detected gravitational waves created by the collision of two black holes 1.4 billion light years away.
  - The waves were detected using the twin Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) interferometers in the US.
- Microsoft is going to design mobile application for HRD Ministry's SWAYAM platform.
  - Under Swayam, ministry is going to launch 2000 Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) for over 3 crore students in the year 2016.

- The 2016 edition of Top500 list of supercomputers has revealed that China's **Sunway TaihuLight** supercomputer is the world's most powerful supercomputer system.
- The Union Government has banned use of potassium bromate (KBrO<sub>3</sub>) as a food additive as it is carcinogenic.
- The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has named a crater on Mars as **Langtang** after one of the villages most affected by the devastating 2015 earthquakes in Nepal.
  - IAU - Headquarters: Paris, France
- Scientists have developed a new stem cell-containing **bio-ink** that allows 3D printing of complex living tissues, which can be used for surgical implants.
  - The new bio ink contains stem cells, which allow scientists to 3D print living tissue, this is also known as bio-printing.
  - The ink contains two different polymer components: a natural polymer and a sacrificial synthetic polymer.
- The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has launched **BGR-34**, an anti-diabetic ayurvedic drug designed for type 2 Diabetes mellitus.

### PERSON in NEWS

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- Admiral **Sunil Lanba** took charge as Chief of the Naval Staff.
- Oscar winning Indian music composer **A R Rahman** has been awarded Japan's Fukuoka prize for the year 2016.
- Former IPS officer **Bhim Sain Bassi** has been appointed as a member of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) as per provisions of Article 316 of Constitution.
- R Seetharaman, Group CEO of Doha Bank, has been honored with the 2016 Green Economy Visionary Award.
- Rahul Johri took charge as first ever **chief executive officer (CEO)** of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (**BCCI**) at its headquarters in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Nita Ambani, Founder and Chairperson of Reliance Foundation has been nominated as a candidate to be a new member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

- Two Indian-origin women Neerja Sethi & Jayshree Ullal have been named in the Forbes' second annual list of America's wealthiest and most successful self-made women.
- American boxing icon Muhammad Ali passed away after 32-year battle with **Parkinson's disease** in Phoenix, Arizona.
- Indian American author Akhil Sharma won the prestigious 2016 International Dublin Literary Award for his semi-autobiographical novel "Family Life."
- Fijian diplomat Peter Thomson has been elected as President of 71st session of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
- The chief executive of Bharti Group, Sunil Bharti Mittal has been elected chairman of the International Chambers of Commerce (ICC).
- Zubaida Bai, an Indian social entrepreneur, has been named among the ten '2016 Global Compact SDG Pioneers', an initiative launched by UN.
- Zubaida is the founder of 'ayzh', a for-profit social venture providing health and livelihood solutions and technology solutions to impoverished women worldwide.

## SPORTS

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- **Indian boxer Sonia Lather** won silver medal at the AIBA Women's World Championships, which was held in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- World Number One tennis player **Novak Djokovic** from Serbia won the 2016 French Open title in the men's singles category.
- **Garbine Muguruza (Spain)** won the Women's singles title of 2016 French Open
- Lucknow city (Uttar Pradesh) will host the 2016 Junior Men's hockey World Cup.
- The International Tennis Federation (ITF) has banned former Russian World No. 1 tennis player Maria Sharapova for two years over doping charges.
- Ace Indian shuttler Saina Nehwal has won the 2016 Australian Open Super Series Badminton tournament title in women's singles category.
- Australia has won the 2016 Champions Trophy title of Hockey by defeating India by 3-1 score. With this victory, Australia created history by winning the title for record 14 times.

- The Indian mixed resurvey team of Deepika Kumari and Atanu Das has won the silver medal at the Archery World Cup held in Antalya, Turkey.
- Defending **champion Chile won the 2016 Copa America Football** tournament by defeating Argentina in a penalty shootout.
- Ace Indian **shooter Jitu Rai** won silver medal at the ISSF (International Shooting Sport Federation) Shooting World Cup held in Baku, Azerbaijan.

## DEFENCE

- India has joined the **Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCoC)**:
- What is HCOC?
  - Established in 2002
  - It is a voluntary, legally non-binding, international confidence building and transparency measure that seeks to prevent the proliferation of ballistic missiles that are capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction (WMD).
  - HCOC does not ban ballistic missiles, but it calls for restraining their production, testing, and export. It is the only normative instrument to verify the spread of ballistic missiles.
- India, Japan and United States (US) navies have kicked off **2016 MALABAR trilateral naval Exercise near South China Sea**.
- The Indian Air Force (IAF) created history by inducting 3 women fighter pilots for first time.
  - These three women fighter pilots are Bhawana Kanth, Avani Chaturvedi and Mohana Singh.
- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has unveiled indigenous Basic Trainer Aircraft (BTA) HTT-40 in Bengaluru.
- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Union Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar has given its approval to for the purchase of 145 Ultra-Light Howitzers (ULH) guns from the US.
- Indigenously built heavyweight anti-submarine torpedo **Varunastra** was successfully inducted in the Indian Navy.

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## INTERNATIONAL

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- The world's longest and deepest railway tunnel: **Gotthard Base Tunnel** was inaugurated in Switzerland.
  - The Gotthard Base Tunnel is **57-kilometer long** and connects northern and southern Europe and also shortens travel time for rail route.
  - The tunnel is through the Alps Mountain and is situated 2.3 km deep under the Alps.
- Asia's largest annual **security forum Shangri-La Dialogue** was inaugurated in **Singapore** to talk about security issues in the Asia-Pacific region.
  - The forum has been organised by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)
  - Attended by Defence Ministers
- The **New Development Bank (NDB)** sponsored by BRICS countries is set to issue its first **Gotthard Base Tunnel** to finance sustainable development projects.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani jointly inaugurated the **Afghan-India Friendship Dam** in **Herat province** (Western Afghanistan).
  - The Afghan-India Friendship Dam was earlier called as **Salma Dam**,
  - It is earth and rock fill dam, built on **Hari River**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with **Amir Amanullah Khan Award**, the highest civilian honour of Afghanistan.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that Thailand has become the first Asian country to eliminate mother-to-child HIV transmission.
  - Previously in 2015, Cuba was the only and first country in the world to eliminate mother-to-child transmission under the WHO's criteria.
- India has surpassed Japan to become the world's third-largest oil consumer, this has been stated by recently released BP Statistical Review of World Energy.
- **Economic Forecast by World Bank:**



- The World Bank in its report on global economic prospects has cut global growth forecast to 2.4% in 2016 and at 2.8% in 2017.
  - India is stated to remain one of the fastest growing major economies, ahead of China, for the next three years.
  - India's growth projections have been marginally lowered by 0.2% to 7.6% for 2016-17 and 7.7% in 2017-18 due to downfall of exports.
- United States has recognized India as a major defense partner, as a result, India will come in category of closest US allies for defence related trade and technology transfer.
- Pakistan has topped in the list of 19 countries figuring in the 2016 Malware Infection Index (MII) in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Most encountered malware in region:
  - Gamarue, a malicious computer worm that is commonly distributed via exploit kits and social engineering.
  - Trojan: Skeeyah
- **Norway** has become the first country in the world to prohibit deforestation.
- Prime Minister Modi along with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena inaugurated **Duraiappah Stadium** in Jaffna, which was renovated by India.
- As per the recently released 2016 World Investment Report, India ranks 10th in FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) inflows.
  - Highest US
- The 2016 **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** summit took place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The two-day meeting of heads of state of SCO was conducted under the presidency of Uzbekistan.
- **Mahasthangarh**, the 3rd century BC archaeological site in Bogra, Bangladesh, has been declared as the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) **cultural capital** for the year 2016-17.
- **How it will help:** The historic place will now host festivals on literature, films, foods and dances from October 2016 to September 2017.
- Further, the year 2016-17 has also been declared the SAARC Year of Cultural Heritage.

- The **Colombian government** and the **leftist FARC** (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) rebels have signed a historic ceasefire and disarmament agreement.
- China has launched its first dark sky reserve at Ngari, Tibetan Region, bordering Nepal and India.
  - The China Biodiversity Conservation, Green Development Foundation (GDF) and the regional government of Tibet have launched the reserve.
  - **What is Dark-sky reserve:** It is an area that is kept free of artificial light pollution. Generally, Surrounded by a park or observatory, the main purpose of a dark sky preserve is to promote astronomy.
- People of United Kingdom (UK) in a historic referendum have voted in favour of leaving European Union (EU).
- The China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved first set of loans amounting to US 509 million dollars to finance projects in four countries viz. Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia and Tajikistan.
- India became **the 35th full-time member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)**.
- **Sweden inaugurated world's first electric road**
  - Test stretch of an electric road has been inaugurated in Sandviken to conduct tests with electric power for hybrid heavy transports on public roads.

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## MAY2016

### IMPORTANT DAYS

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- **May 1: International Workers Day**
  - Also known as International Labor Day or May day.
  - 2016 Theme: “Celebrating the International Labour Movement”.
- **May 3: World Press Freedom day**
  - 2016 Theme: “Access to Information and Fundamental Freedoms – This Is Your Right!”
- **May 11: National Technology Day**
  - 2016 Theme: ‘Technology enablers of Startup India’.
- **May 14: World Migratory Bird Day**
  - The date keeps on changing based on 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of May.
  - 2016 Theme: “Stop the Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds”.
  - Day is actually anniversary of first of the five tests of Operation Shakti (Pokhran-II) nuclear test, held on 11 May 1998 in Pokhran, Rajasthan.
- **May 21: Anti-Terrorism Day**
  - Day is death anniversary of former PM Rajiv Gandhi
- **May 22: International Day for Biological Diversity**
  - 2016 Theme: “Mainstreaming Biodiversity; Sustaining People and their Livelihoods
- **May 29: International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers**
  - 2016 theme: “Honouring Our Heroes”.
- **May 31: World No Tobacco Day**
  - Theme 2016: “World No Tobacco Day – Get ready for plain packaging”

## NATIONAL

- South India's first underground metro services started in Bengaluru i.e. at East-West corridor (Purple Line) of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL).
- Union Government launched **National LED program – UJALA - Unnat Jyoti Affordable LEDs for All.**
  - Shall be implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL),
  - It is part of LED based Domestic Efficient Lighting Program (DELP).
  - In Madhya Pradesh, people will get 9W LED bulb at Rs85.
- Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 came into force from 1 May 2016.

## Bill Summary

### The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Bill, 2013

- The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Bill, 2013 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on August 14, 2013 by the Minister of Housing and Poverty Alleviation, Dr Girija Vyas.
- The Bill seeks to establish Real Estate Regulatory Authorities (RERAs) at the state level for the regulation and development of the real estate sector. It aims at (a) ensuring consumer protection and (b) standardisation in business practices and transactions in the real estate sector.
- **Real Estate Regulatory Authority:** RERAs must be established by the appropriate governments. Two or more state governments can establish a RERA jointly, and conversely, a state can have more than one RERA. Each authority will consist of a chairperson and two or more full time members. Key functions of the RERA include (a) rendering advice to the appropriate government on the development of the real estate sector and (b) maintaining and publishing records relating to real estate projects on its website. The RERA might conduct an inquiry into the affairs of, issue directions to, and penalise any (a) promoter, defined as any person or public authority concerned with the development of land for the purpose of selling, (b) allottee, defined as a person who is allotted, or purchases the building, plot or apartment or (c) real estate agent if required. It may refer the case to the Competition Commission of India.
- **Central Advisory Council (CAC):** The CAC will be chaired by the head of the Ministry of the central government dealing with housing and will consist of members from other concerned ministries, state governments and private members. It will advise the central government on matters concerning the implementation of the Act, especially relating to consumer protection, and policy matters.
- **Real Estate Appellate Tribunal:** A tribunal, consisting of a chairperson and two members, shall be established to settle disputes related to the provisions in the Act. It shall have the powers of a civil court.
- **Registration of real estate projects and agents:** Real estate projects must be registered with the RERA if the area of the land to be developed exceeds one thousand square meters or involves the construction on more than twelve apartments. Real estate agents must register themselves with the RERA in order to facilitate any real estate transactions.
- **Functions and duties of the promoter:** The promoter must (a) make information about the project such as updates on the construction of buildings available to the allottee (b) compensate the allottee on any damages incurred as a result of false advertising; and (c) not accept more than 10% of the total cost of the building without entering into a written agreement with the allottee. If the promoter is unable to give possession of the building to the allottee he or she is liable to return the entire amount given to him by the allottee with interest.
- **Rights and duties of allottees:** The allottees are given certain rights pertaining to accessing information about the site plans and have duties relating to timely payments to the promoter.
- **Offences, penalties and adjudication:** The Bill outlines various penalties for non-compliance with the provisions of the Act. Penalties for a promoter are up to 10% of the total cost of the real estate project and penalties for allottees are up to 10% of the total cost of the apartment, for various offences. Adjudicating officers shall determine compensation to allottees.
- **Finance, accounts, audits and reports:** The RERA may receive funds from the central and state governments. A 'Real Estate Fund' shall be created to collect these funds. The Comptroller and Auditor General shall audit the accounts of the RERA and the RERA shall publish an annual report detailing its activities.

- On 1<sup>st</sup> May - Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA) had notified 69 of the total 92 sections of the Act.
- **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)** was launched by Union Government, to provide free of cost LPG (cooking gas) connections to women from BPL Households.
  - Tagline for the scheme: *Swachh Indhan, Behtar Jeevan*.
  - Launched from: *Maldepur Morh, Ballia* in Uttar Pradesh by PM.
  - Each beneficiary under PMUY will receive monetary support of about 1,600 rupees to get a connection of cooking gas.
  - Scheme implemented by Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
- Parliament passed **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2016**.

## The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2016

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2016 was introduced in Lok Sabha on March 16, 2016. The Bill amends the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.</li> <li>▪ The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 regulates the mining sector in India and specifies the requirement for obtaining and granting leases for mining operations.</li> <li>▪ <b>Transfer of mining leases:</b> The Act allows for the transfer of mining leases which have been granted through an auction process. The holder of these mining leases may transfer the lease to any eligible person, with the approval of the state government, and as specified by the central government. If the state government does not convey its approval within 90 days of receiving the notice, the transfer shall be considered as approved. No transfer shall take place if the state government communicates, in writing, that the transferee is not eligible.</li> <li>▪ The Bill allows for the transfer of mining leases which have been granted through procedures other than auction, and where the minerals are used for captive</li> </ul> | <p>purpose. Captive purpose has been defined as the use of the entire quantity of mineral extracted in the lessee's own manufacturing unit. Such lease transfers will be subject to terms and conditions, and transfer charges as prescribed by the central government. These transfers will be in addition to the existing transfers that are allowed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill, this provision will allow for merger and acquisition of companies with captive mining leases.</li> <li>▪ <b>Leased area:</b> The Bill adds a definition of leased area, as the area within which mining operations can be undertaken. This will also include the non-mineralised area required for the activities defined under mine in the Mines Act, 1952. The 1952 Act defines mine as any excavation where any operation for searching or obtaining of minerals is being carried out. It includes (i) borings, bore wells, and oil wells, (ii) all opencast workings, (iii) all workshops and stores within the precinct of a mine, and (iv) any premises being used for depositing waste from a mine or where any operations in connection with such waste is being carried out.</li> </ul> |
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- Supreme Court appointed a three-member high-powered committee to be headed by former Chief Justice of India (CJI) **RM Lodha** to oversee the functions of the **Medical Council of India (MCI)**.
    - MCI is the statutory regulator of medical profession and education in India.



- Union Railways Ministry launched an application - *Project Management and Information System (PMIS)* - for proper monitoring of all the Railway projects throughout the country.
- Lok Sabha passed **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill, 2015**

## Bill Summary

### The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill, 2015

- The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill, 2015 was introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Mr. Prakash Javadekar on May 8, 2015. The Bill seeks to establish funds at the national and state level to receive money collected for compensatory afforestation.
  - Compensatory afforestation is defined as afforestation done in lieu of the diversion of forest land for non forest use under the Forests (Conservation) Act, 1980.
  - **Creation of Compensatory Afforestation Funds:** The Bill seeks to establish a permanent National Compensatory Afforestation Fund under the public account of India. It also allows states to establish State Compensatory Afforestation Funds.
  - The National Fund will be under the central government, and managed by a National Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA). The central government will appoint a State CAMPA in each state. The State CAMPA will be responsible for the management of the State Fund.
  - **Sources of funds:** At present, an *ad hoc* National CAMPA and *ad hoc* State CAMPAs, established by government orders, receive money collected for compensatory afforestation. Once the National Fund is created, money collected by state governments which has been placed with the existing National CAMPA will be transferred to the National Fund. Other sources of funds for the National Fund will be: (i) 10% of the funds collected for compensatory afforestation by states each year; and (ii) grants-in-aid/other sums received by, and loans/borrowings taken by the National CAMPA.
  - The major sources of funds for the State Fund will be: (i) unspent balances lying with existing State CAMPAs; (ii) money transferred from the National Fund to the State Funds (90% of the money transferred from the existing National CAMPA to the National Fund); (iii) money received for compensatory afforestation; and (iv) grants-in-aid/other sums received by, and loans/borrowings taken by the State CAMPA.
  - The balance with both funds will be non-lapsable and get interest as per a rate declared by the central government on a yearly basis.
  - **Utilisation of funds:** The money in the National Fund will be used to meet expenditure for the management of the National CAMPA, and on schemes approved by the National CAMPA.
  - The money in the State Fund will be used for the following purposes: (i) site-specific schemes implemented by the state; (ii) artificial regeneration, forest management and wildlife protection; and (iii) protection and conservation activities in protected areas under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
  - If the diversion of forest land affects multiple states, the National CAMPA may order that money be transferred to one of those states.
  - **Composition and functions of Authorities:** The National CAMPA will consist of a governing body, an executive committee, and a monitoring group, in addition to an administrative support mechanism.
  - The governing body will be responsible for formulating the broad policy framework for the functioning of the National CAMPA. The executive committee will be responsible for the approval of annual plans of State CAMPAs and the formulation and implementation of schemes approved by the governing body. The monitoring group will be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of works implemented by states and fund utilisation by the CAMPAs.
  - The State CAMPA will consist of a governing body, a steering committee, and an executive committee. The governing body, chaired by the Chief Minister of the state, will be responsible for formulating the broad policy framework for the State CAMPA, within the overall framework laid out by the National CAMPA. The executive committee will be responsible for formulating the annual plan of operations, after obtaining the approval of the steering committee. The executive committee will also monitor works funded by the State Fund, and invest the surplus amounts available with the State Fund.
- Lok Sabha unanimously passed **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2015**
  - Code seeks to ensure time-bound settlement of insolvency, faster turnaround of businesses and create a unified database of serial defaulters.

## Bill Summary

### Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2015 was introduced by the Minister of Finance, Mr. Arun Jaitley, in Lok Sabha on December 21, 2015, and subsequently referred to a Joint Committee of Parliament. The Committee submitted its recommendations and a modified Code based on its suggestions on April 28, 2016. This modified Code was passed by Lok Sabha on May 5, 2016. The Code creates a framework for resolving insolvency in India. Insolvency is a situation where an individual or a company is unable to repay their outstanding debt.
- The Code repeals the Presidency Towns Insolvency Act, 1909 and Provincial Insolvency Act, 1920. In addition, it amends 11 laws, including the Companies Act, 2013, and the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993, among others.
- The Code will apply to companies, partnerships, limited liability partnerships, individuals and any other body specified by the central government.
- **Insolvency Resolution Process:** The Code specifies similar insolvency resolution processes for companies and individuals, which will have to be completed within 180 days. This limit may be extended to 270 days in certain circumstances. The resolution process will involve negotiations between the debtor and creditors to draft a resolution plan.
- The process will end under two circumstances, (i) when the creditors decide to evolve a resolution plan or sell the assets of the debtor, or (ii) the 180-day time period for negotiations has come to an end. In case a plan cannot be negotiated upon during the time limit, the assets of the debtor will be sold to repay his outstanding dues. The proceeds from the sale of assets will be distributed based on an order of priority.
- **Priority under liquidation:** The assets will be distributed in the following order, in case of liquidation: (i) fees of insolvency professional and costs related to the resolution process, (ii) workmen's dues and secured creditors, (iii) employee wages, (iv) unsecured creditors, (v) government dues and remaining secured creditors (any remaining debt if they enforce their collateral), (vi) any remaining debt, and (vii) shareholders.
- **Fresh Start Process:** The Code provides a Fresh Start Process for individuals under which they will be eligible for a debt waiver of up to Rs 35,000. The individual will be eligible for the waiver subject to certain limits prescribed under the Code.
- **Insolvency professionals and agencies:** The resolution process will be conducted by a licensed insolvency professional (IP). The IP will control the assets of the debtor during the process. Insolvency professional agencies will be created to regulate these IPs. The agencies will conduct examinations to enrol IPs and enforce a code of conduct for their functioning.
- **Information Utilities:** The Code establishes multiple information utilities to collect, collate and disseminate financial information related to a debtor. This will include a record of debt and liabilities of the debtor.
- **Insolvency regulator:** The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India will be established as a regulator to oversee functioning of IPs, insolvency professional agencies and information utilities. The Board will have 10 members, including representatives from the central government and the Reserve Bank of India.
- **Adjudicatory Authorities:** The Code proposes two tribunals to adjudicate insolvency resolution cases: (i) the National Company Law Tribunal will adjudicate cases for companies and limited liability partnerships, and (ii) the Debt Recovery Tribunal will adjudicate cases for individuals and partnership firms.
- **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Fund:** The Code creates an Insolvency and Bankruptcy Fund. The Fund will receive voluntary contributions from any person. In case of insolvency proceedings being initiated against the contributor, he will be allowed to withdraw his contribution for making payments to workmen, protecting his assets, etc.
- **Cross-border insolvency:** Cross border insolvency relates to an insolvent debtor who has assets abroad. The central government may enter into agreements with other countries to enforce provisions of the Code.
- **Offences:** The Code specifies penalties for offences committed under corporate insolvency (such as concealing property). This penalty will be imprisonment of up to five years, or a fine of up to one crore rupees, or both. For offences committed under individual insolvency (such as providing false information), the imprisonment will vary based on the offence. For most of the offences, the penalty will be imprisonment of up to six months, or a fine of up to five lakh rupees, or both.

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- Parliament passed Anti-Hijacking Bill, 2014.
- Bill broadens the definition of Hijacking and subscribes various punishments for offences related to Hijacking.



## The Anti-Hijacking Bill, 2014

- The Anti-Hijacking Bill, 2014 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha by the Minister of Civil Aviation, Mr. Ashok Gajapathi Raju on December 17, 2014. The Bill seeks to repeal The Anti-Hijacking Act, 1982, and give effect to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, 1970 and its Protocol Supplementary, signed on September 10, 2010.
  - **Definition of hijacking:** The Bill defines hijacking as seizing control of an aircraft in service, unlawfully and intentionally, by technological means or by exercising force, coercion, or any other form of intimidation. An aircraft is considered to be in service from the time it is being prepared for a specific flight by the crew or ground personnel until 24 hours after any landing.
  - **Related offences:** The Bill includes several acts within the definition of hijacking including: (i) attempt and abetment of hijacking; (ii) making a credible threat to commit hijacking; (iii) organising or directing others to commit hijacking; (iv) agreeing with another to commit the offence, and acting on the agreement; etc.
  - **Punishment for hijacking and related offences:** The Bill provides for: (i) death penalty, where the offence results in death of hostage or security personnel; (ii) life imprisonment in all other cases; and (iii) moveable and immovable property of the accused may be confiscated. For any acts of violence committed in connection with the hijacking, the accused shall be punished with the same punishment as provided under the laws in force.
  - **Jurisdiction:** Indian courts can exercise jurisdiction on several grounds including where the offence is committed: (i) in India; (ii) against an aircraft registered in India; (iii) on board an aircraft which lands in India with the accused still on board; (iv) by or against an Indian citizen; (v) by a person who is present in India and is not extradited by the central government, etc.
  - **Previous sanction for prosecution:** The Bill requires that sanction must be taken from the central government before prosecuting an accused for hijacking or related offences.
  - **Investigation, arrest, bail, etc.:** The central government may confer powers of investigation, arrest and prosecution on any officer of the central government or the National Investigation Agency. An investigating officer can order seizure or attachment of property which is related to the offence, and is likely to be concealed or disposed of by the accused.
  - Where an accused is forwarded to a Magistrate to authorise detention because investigation could not be completed within 24 hours, a Judicial Magistrate may authorise detention up to 30 days. An Executive Magistrate may authorise detention up to seven days.
  - With regard to bail, an accused cannot be released on bail or bond unless: (i) the public prosecutor has had an opportunity to oppose the release; and (ii) if the release has been opposed, the designated court is satisfied that there is reason to believe the accused is innocent and is unlikely to commit any offence while on bail.
  - **Trial by designated courts:** The accused person shall be tried by a Sessions Court which is notified to be a designated court by the concerned state government. In case the investigation is carried out by the National Investigation Agency, the designated court shall be a court set up under the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008. The designated court shall have the power to order for attachment of the accused person's properties.
  - **Presumption of guilt:** The court will presume the accused to be guilty if the prosecution establishes either: (i) arms, ammunition or explosives were recovered from the accused and there is reason to believe that similar arms, etc. were used in the hijacking or (ii) there is evidence of use of intimidation against the crew or passengers in connection with the hijacking.
  - **Extradition:** Hijacking and the related offences shall be extraditable. Extraditable offences are those offences for which one country may transfer the accused to another country's legal jurisdiction. No request for extradition shall be refused on the ground that hijacking is a political offence or is connected to a political offence.
- Union Government began the process for issuance of **Unique Business Identification Number (UBIN)**, which will enable budding entrepreneurs set up their business without any delays.
    - UBIN is an initiative of Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
    - Post issuance, UBIN will UBIN would be automatically linked to portal of Ministry Of Corporate Affairs (MCA).



- Single emergency number '112' shall be operational throughout India from January 1, 2017. The single number will enable people to reach immediate services of police, ambulance and fire department.
- Union Government constituted a three-member committee, headed by Sanjay Mitra, Secretary of Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, to prepare a policy framework for **online taxi aggregators** and other transport operators.
- Supreme Court upholds constitutional validity of penal laws on defamation and said that the right to life under Article 21 includes the right to reputation.
- Supreme Court in a ruling declared Penalty on Telecom companies for call drop as illegal and said that Telecom companies will not compensate mobile phone users for inconvenience caused by call drops.
  - SC considered rule imposed by TRAI as arbitrary, unreasonable and non-transparent.
- ICICI Bank launched India's first **contactless business credit card** in association with Jet Airways for small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs).
  - Contactless Technology: VISA payWave.
- Union Government approved **National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy, 2016** with an aim to promote the IP regime and innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in India.
- Policy reiterates India's commitment to the *Doha Development Agenda and the TRIPS agreement*.
- IPR policy shall endeavor for Creative India; Innovative India: रचनात्मकभारत; अभनिव भारत".
- Lays down 7 Objectives of IPR policy as:
  - Improve & promote IPR Awareness
  - Stimulate generation of IPRs
  - To have strong and effective IPR laws & Legislative Framework
  - To modernize & strengthen IPR management.
  - To get value for IPRs through commercialization.
  - To provide for enforcement and adjudicatory mechanisms for combating IPR infringements.
  - Human Capital Development

- A NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog has decided to replace 5 years Plan document with a 15-year vision document in tandem with global trends and economic growth.
- Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) conducted the trial run of the country's first ever Metro train
- World's largest single rooftop solar power plant of 11.5 MegaWatt (MW) capacity was inaugurated at Dera Baba Jaimal Singh in Beas near Amritsar in Punjab.
- The Income Tax (IT) department, has launched electronic grievance redressal system '**e-nivaran**' to fast track taxpayer grievances and ensure early resolution of their complaints.
- Union Government constituted a five-member committee, headed by **NK Singh**, to review and give recommendations on the *Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management* (FRBM) roadmap for the future.
- HDFC Bank launched **SmartUp**, a dedicated solution for startups to fulfil all their banking needs.
- Tropical Cyclone Storm, **Roanu**, originating from Bay of Bengal, hit the eastern coast of India.
- India's **Medicines with the Red Line campaign** on antibiotics was appreciated in report of Global Review on Antimicrobial Resistance
  - Medicine with Red line campaign by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare aims to curb misuse of antibiotics.
  - Hence, all prescription only antibiotics were marked with a vertical red line on the packets.
- Pakke Tiger Reserve in East Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh has won the 'India Biodiversity Award 2016'.
  - Why? For its Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme.
- Union Government shortlist 13 Cities for Smart Cities Mission in 2nd batch
- In first batch, 20 cities were selected. ----->

Rank	City	State
1	Bhubaneswar	Odisha
2	Pune	Maharashtra
3	Jaipur	Rajasthan
4.	Surat	Gujarat
5	Kochi	Kerala
6	Ahmedabad	Gujarat
7	Jabalpur	Madhya Pradesh
8	Visakhapatnam	Andhra Pradesh
9	Solapur	Maharashtra
10	Davanagere	Karnataka
11	Indore	MP
12	New Delhi Municipal Council	Delhi
13	Combattore	Tamil Nadu
14	Kakinada	Andhra Pradesh
15	Belagavi	Karnataka
16	Udaipur	Rajasthan
17	Guwahati	Assam
18	Chennai	Tamil Nadu
19	Ludhiana	Punjab
20	Bhopal	MP

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Note: remember cities from your state

13 shortlisted smart cities (Rank wise) are

1. Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).
2. Warangal (Telanagana).
3. Dharmashala (Himachal Pradesh).
4. Chandigarh (UT of Chandigarh).
5. Raipur (Chattisgarh).
6. New Town Kolkata (West Bengal).
7. Bhagalpur (Bihar).
8. Panaji (Goa).
9. Port Blair (UT of Andaman & Nicobar Islands).
10. Imphal (Manipur).
11. Ranchi (Jharkhand).

12. Agartala (Tripura).
  13. Faridabad (Haryana).
- Union Cabinet approved MoU signed between ISRO and the United Arab Emirates Space Agency (UAESA) for cooperation in the exploration and user of outer space for peaceful purposes.

### MOU's

- The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has inked MoU with SAARC Development Fund (SDF) for mutual cooperation and collaboration. The two will work together in co-funding of projects in Indian MSMEs on risk sharing basis in identified sectors.
- India and New Zealand signed **Air Services Agreement** paving the way for introduction of direct flights between the two countries.
- Union Ministry of Railways signed MOU with Forest Department of Haryana & Punjab for plantation of trees alongside Railway Track on Railway Land Boundary.
- Union Cabinet approved MOU between Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Central Bank of United Arab Emirates (UAE) on currency swap.
  - UAE Currency: Dirham
  - UAE Capital: Abu Dhabi
  - UAE most populous city: Dubai
- Union Cabinet was also made aware of MOU between India and Qatar on Information Communication Technology (ICT).
  - Qatar Currency: Qatari Rial/Riyal
  - Qatar Capital: Doha
- The trade body of IT firms in India: NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Companies) has signed MoU with Facebook to build a product design initiative for Indian entrepreneurs.

- India's largest private sector lender ICICI Bank signed MoU with the BRICS promoted New Development Bank (NDB) for a partnership in bond issuances, co-financing, treasury management and human resources.
- India and Australia MoU to enhance research and development (R&D) capabilities in biotechnology
  - BIRAC: PSU under the Union Ministry of Science and Technology and seeks to stimulate strategic research and innovation capabilities of the Indian biotech industry.
- Union Government has approved setting up of National Investment & Manufacturing Zone (NIMZ) in Kalinganagar, Odisha.
- A Union Cabinet approved a MOU between Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) with Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA), Abu Dhabi, for mutual co-operation and technical assistance.
- Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) has launched the multilingual knowledge portal [www.bharatvani.in](http://www.bharatvani.in)
- India has emerged as the world's fifth largest electronic waste (e-waste) producer, this was highlighted by recent study conducted by ASSOCHAM-KPMG.
- Saudi Arabia's Islamic Development Bank (IDB) has decided to open its first branch in India at Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari launched 20 Nirbhaya buses, fitted with multiple IT –enabled safety measures, of Rajasthan State Transport Corporation (RSTC).
- Union Cabinet was briefed regarding General Framework Agreement (GFA) on Renewable Energy Cooperation between India and United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- Union Cabinet approved as Inter-Governmental Agreement between India and **Mauritius** on cooperation in **cooperatives** and related fields.
- National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) signed MoU with Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) – to setup aluminium smelter plant in Chahbahar.

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## STATES

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- Maharashtra Government has launched **Adi Praman**, a web-based application for state's tribal population to get the caste validity certificates online.
- Andhra Pradesh Government launched **Chandranna Bima Yojana** to provide insurance scheme for the working class people.
- Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Project **Harita Priya**, won the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) 2016 prize in the e-Agriculture category.
  - **Harita-Priya Project** uses wireless sensor networks to collect micro-climatic information from farms and then the data is used to create alerts and advisories on irrigation schedules and pests and plant diseases.
- Gujarat Government accorded minority status to the **Jain community** in the state.
  - Union Government in 2014 accorded minority status to Jains making it 6<sup>th</sup> community after Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis to have minority status in India.
- Karnataka Government decided to set up Asia's first Rice Technology Park at **Gangavati in Koppal district**. Further, government has also decided to set up a Maize Technology Park at **Ranebennur in Haveri district**.
- **Madhya Pradesh Tourism** (MPT) was awarded, the best Indian Destination for Wildlife by the Lonely Planet Group.
- To encourage eco-tourism in vicinity of Taj Mahal, Uttar Pradesh Cabinet approved development of over 197 km long 'bicycle highway' from **Agra up to the lion safari in Etawah**.
- Odisha Government launched Green Passage scheme for orphan students to ensure that they get free of cost higher education in the state.
- Himachal Pradesh fisheries department launched an artificial propagation program for rehabilitation and conservation of Golden Mahseer fish, whose population in Himachal rivers has decreased considerably, due to hunting for food and sports.
- Gujarat Government launched **Smart Village Program** for improving public facilities in the villages.
- State Assembly Election results:

- Assam – BJP+ Alliance won 87 of 126 seats in Assam assembly - Sarbananda Sonowal - CM
- Kerala - Coalition of Left Democratic Front (LDF) – won 91 of 140 seats in Kerala assembly - Pinarayi Vijayan - CM
- Tamil Naidu - All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) - won 134 of 234 seats in TN assembly – Jayalalita- CM
- West Bengal - All India Trinamool Congress Party (TMC) – won 211 of 295 seats in WB assembly – Mamta Banerjee - CM

## SPORTS

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- **Leicester City FC** became champions of the English Premier League for 2015-16.
- World number One - snooker player **Mark Selby from England** won the 2016 World Championship title of Snooker.
- **Pakistan** won the third edition of the Asian Kabaddi Championship 2016 (Circle Style) by defeating India.
- Red Bull F1 driver **Max Verstappen (18) from Netherlands** became Formula One's youngest race winner when he won Spanish Grand Prix.
- Mohun Bagan FC won the 2016 Indian Federation Cup football tournament title for the 14th time.
- India's ace cueist Pankaj Advani created history by winning the Asian 6-Red Snooker title held in Abu Dhabi.
- Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) has won the ninth edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL).

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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- Researchers from University of Cambridge built the world's smallest (nanoscale) working engine - **ANTs** (Actuating Nano-Transducers).
  - Fuel – Uses light to power itself.
  - Made from: Tiny charged particles of gold

- Joined: Bound together with temperature-responsive gel-like polymer called pNIPAM.
  - Significance: The nanoscale engine can form the basis of future nano-machines. This engine can also help to navigate in water or enter living cells to fight disease.
- In an announcement, Union Government that currently **34 Indian satellites** are operational in the space.
- Communication Satellites: 13 in Nos.
  - INSAT-3A, INSAT-3C, INSAT-4A, INSAT-4B, INSAT-4CR, GSAT-6, GSAT-7, GSAT-8, GSAT-10, GSAT-12, GSAT-14, GSAT-15 and GSAT-16.
- Earth Observation Satellites: 12 in Nos.
  - Resourcesat-2, RISAT-1, RISAT-2, Cartosat-1, Cartosat-2, Cartosat-2A, Cartosat-2B, Oceansat-2, SARAL, Kalpana-1, Megha-Tropiques and INSAT-3D.
- Navigational Satellites: 7 in Nos.
  - IRNSS-1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F and 1G
- Space Science Satellites: 2 in Nos.
  - Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) and Astrosat
- Further, it was also said that 30 service providers are utilising Ku-band (a part of K band) transponders onboard indigenous communication satellites for various communication applications including Direct-To-Home Television (DTH), Digital Satellite News Gathering, telecommunication, VSAT services for banking, tele-education and business communication etc.
- NASA unveiled the first global digital elevation (topographic model) of Mercury.
  - The topographic model, was unveiled by **NASA's MESSENGER** (MErcury Surface, Space ENvironment, GEochemistry, and Ranging) mission.
- Scientists from Canada's Queen's University developed the world's first holographic flexible smartphone - **HoloFlex**.
  - **What is Holography?**
  - Holography is photographic recording of a light field and not just an image formed by a lens.



- It is used to display a fully 3D image of the holographed subject and can be seen without the aid of intermediate optics or special glasses.
- Hypersonic superjet technology was successfully tested in Australia
  - Hypersonic Speed: Speed greater than 5 times the speed of sound (Mach 5).
- The world's first robot lawyer named - '**ROSS**' -has been employed by a US law firm BakerHostetler to assist its teams in various legal research.
- ISRO (ISRO) successfully test launched the first indigenous **Reusable Launch Vehicle-Technology Demonstrator (RLV-TD)**.
- Union Government launched '**Qora**', an indigenously developed affordable Fecal Incontinence Management System (FIMS).
  - Fecal incontinence (FI) is a medical condition in which person loses ability to control one's bowel movements. As a result, feces (stool) leaks unexpectedly from the rectum.
- For the first time since the last observation 40 years ago, scientists have detected atomic oxygen in the atmosphere of Mars.
  - Atomic Oxygen was detected using an instrument onboard the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA).

### PERSON in NEWS

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- Indian-American journalist **Neela Banerjee**, along with her colleagues from Inside Climate News, was felicitated with a prestigious Edgar A Poe award by President Obama in the annual White House Correspondents Dinner held in Washington DC.
- Indian American woman **Harmeet Kaur Dhillon** from California was elected to an important position in the **Republican Party** at the United States national level.
- Indian Information Service (IIS) officer Bhupendra Kainthola took charge as Director of Pune based Film and Television Institute of India (FTII).
  - FTII is an **autonomous** Institute under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- Dada Saheb Phalke Award, the highest official recognition (award) in Indian cinema, for 2015 was awarded to Legendary actor Manoj Kumar.

- Renowned statistician **Dr Radha Binod Barman** took over as the part-time Chairperson of the National Statistical Commission (NSC).
  - National Statistical Commission (NSC) is an advisory body on all statistical matters. It has been set up to enhance public trust in official statistics.
- Indian author Parashar Kulkarni won the regional Commonwealth Short Story Prize for 2016 for the Asia region.
  - He was awarded for his fiction story 'Cow and Company' about four men in search of a cow.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) appointed Atma Ram Nadkarni (Senior advocate of Bombay High Court) as the **Additional Solicitor General**.
- Mrugank Paranjape took charge as managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) of Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).
  - It is country's largest commodity exchange.
- **Shashank Manohar** (58) got elected unopposed as ICC's (International Cricket Council) first independent Chairman.
- India captain Anil Kumble was re-appointed ICC (International Cricket Council) Cricket Committee chairman for a second term of three years.
- Justice **Naveen Sinha** has sworn in as the 31st Chief Justice of Rajasthan.
- Justice **Mukul Mudgal** has been appointed as Deputy Chairman of FIFA Governance Committee.
- Former ISRO Chairman and space scientist Prof Udupi Ramachandra Rao became the first Indian to be given 'Hall of Fame' Award by the International Astronautical Federation (IAF).
- South Korean author, Han Kang, has won the 2016 Man Booker International Prize for her novel 'The Vegetarian'.
- Indian American teenager from Texas, **Syamantak Payra** (15) won the \$50,000 Intel Foundation Young Scientist Award for developing a low-cost electronically-aided knee brace device that will allow people with weakened legs to be able to walk better.
- Ratan P Watal has been appointed as Principle Adviser for social sector in NITI Aayog
- As per provisions of Article 239 of Constitution, President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed Kiran Bedi as the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Puducherry.

- Anurag Thakur was elected as President of BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) by the board's special general meeting (SGM) held in Mumbai.
- Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Chamling was conferred with one of the Nepal's prestigious literary award- the Yug Kavi Siddhicharan Award.

## DEFENCE

- The ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) Exercise on Maritime Security and Counter Terrorism (Ex MS & CT) took place at **Brunei**.
- Indian Navy's first indigenous **Scorpene-class** stealth submarine - NS Kalvari, was launched for the first sea trial in the Mumbai naval dockyard.
  - Type: Diesel-Electric
  - Built by Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) under the **strategic Project 75**. MDL collaborated with French company DCNS.
- Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) launched Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) **Shaurya at Panaji**.
- Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar inaugurated a state-of-the-art submarine assembly workshop at the Mazgaon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Indian Army in conjunction with Indian Air force conducted major military training exercise '**2016 Chakravyuh-II**' in Suratgarh, Rajasthan.
- Indian Navy has decommissioned the aging fleet of **Sea Harriers** at a function organised at INS Hansa base in Vasco, Goa.
  - A squadron of Russian MIG 29k jets shall replace the Harriers, and the retired aircrafts will be put on display in museums.
- Indian Navy launched the state-of-the-art underwater Harbour Defence Systems, - Integrated Underwater Harbour Defence and Surveillance System (IUHDSS) in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
  - Please Note: In August 2015, India's first - Integrated Underwater Harbour Defence and Surveillance System (IUHDSS) - was commissioned in Kochi, Kerala.
- Indian Air Force has launched its Electronic Maintenance Management System (e-MMS) Project, world's largest automated(IT) military maintenance system.

- Developed by Wipro as a system integrator.
- The multilateral Red Flag Aerial combat exercises between NATO & allied forces, India Air Force (IAF) and US was held in Alaska, US.
- Union Government constituted 11 members committee under **Gen D B Shekatkar**, to recommend measures to enhance the combat capabilities of the armed forces and re-balance the overall defence expenditure.
- Indian Navy has commissioned indigenously built highly maneuverable Fast Attack Craft INS Tarmugli at the commissioning ceremony held in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

## INTERNATIONAL

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- India extended 1 billion US dollars Line of Credit (LoC) to Mongolia to develop institutions, infrastructure and human resources in Mongolia.
- ADMM-Plus (ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus) Exercise on Maritime Security and Counter Terrorism (Ex MS & CT) was held in Brunei.
  - There shall also be multinational naval exercise conducted under ADMM Plus consortium.
- Bangladesh Government has given its in-principle approval to Anil Ambani-led Reliance Power's Phase-I of the 3,000 MW LNG-based power plant at Meghnaghat in Narayanganj district.
- The fourth edition South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAARC - SAIEVAC) Ministerial Meeting was held in New Delhi.
- Zabol City in Iran, which has annual PM2.5 measure of 217 due to months of dust storms in the summer, has been declared By WHO as most polluted city of the world.
  - Gwalior from India came second.
- United States activated a land-based missile defence station (Aegis Ashore Missile Defence System) in Deveselu, Romania.
  - The missile defence station is part of larger **NATO's European Shield** to protect member countries from short and medium-range missiles, particularly from the Middle East.

- Because of Nation Security issue, Kenyan Government has decided to close Dadaab refugee camp, the world's largest refugee camp.
- Prime Minister Modi along with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena released '**Simhashta Declaration**' at Ninora village in Ujjain.
- **Key highlights of Declaration Simhashta Declaration** include:
  - 51 sacred points for betterment of mankind that shall start new discourse not only in India but around the world.
  - It is also a prescription on how a duty-centred system that had been the origin of Indian philosophy of life is relevant in today's India.
  - Sessions on sustainable development, sanitation and climate change, peace, values of life, agriculture and cottage industry.
  - '**Vichar Mahakumbh**' Session of Saints and seers, subject experts and scholars from the country and abroad on various issues.
- World Bank's Board has approved **625 million dollars loan** to support India's grid connected rooftop solar programme to generate clean energy.
  - The funds shall be used to finance the installation of at least 400 MW of grid connected rooftop solar photovoltaic (GRPV) across India.
- World's first Conference on Tourism for Development (WCTD) was held in Beijing, China. Event was jointly organized by the Government of China and United Nations World Tourism Organization.
- India, Iran and Afghanistan signed a historic three-way land transit agreement on Iran's strategic southern port of Chabahar, located in Sistan-Balochistan Province.
- The World Bank launched **Pandemic Emergency Finance Facility (FEP)** to help countries and health agencies fight deadly disease outbreaks.

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## APRIL 2016

### IMPORTANT DAYS

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- **April 5: National Maritime Day**
  - 2016 theme was “Ease of doing business in the maritime sector”.
- **April 7: World Health Day**
  - 2016 theme: “Beat Diabetes”.
- **April 12: International Day of Human Space Flight**
  - On this day in 1961, Yuri Gagarin, Soviet Union (USSR) cosmonaut undertook first successful first human space flight
- **April 18: World Heritage Day**
  - Also known as International Day for Monuments and Sites.
  - 2016 Theme: ‘The Heritage of Sport’. – Decided by the International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
- **April 22: Earth Day**
  - 2016 Theme: ‘Trees for the Earth!’
  - The first Earth Day was celebrated in 1970.
  - John McConnell, formally proposed concept of Earth Day, at UNESCO conference on Environment in 1969.
  - In 1971, a proclamation was signed to observe international Earth Day annually on the **Vernal Equinox** by UN Secretary-General U Thant.
- **April 23: World Book and Copyright Day**
- **April 24: National Panchayati Raj Diwas**
  - Why April 24?: The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 that came into force with effect from 24 April 1993.
- **April 25: World Malaria day**
  - 2016 Theme: “End Malaria For Good”.

- Aligns with the SDG vision of a malaria-free world and set out in the Global technical strategy for malaria 2016-2030
- **April 26: World Intellectual Property Day**
  - 2016 Theme: “Digital Creativity: Culture Reimagined”
- **April 28: World Day for Safety and Health at Work**
  - 2016 Theme: “Workplace Stress: a collective challenge”.

## NATIONAL

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- Union Government constituted 8-member inter-ministerial committee, headed by Ashok Dalwai , to prepare blueprint for doubling farmers’ income by **2022**.
- Mahindra & Mahindra became the first Indian company to sign up for global energy productivity campaign -“**EP100**”.
  - By joining the campaign, M & M has committed to double their energy productivity by 2030,
  - EP100 energy is a brainchild of the “**Climate Group**”, an international non-profit organization.
  - Helps businesses, state, regional, finance and civil society leaders to increase their energy productivity and thereby lessen their carbon footprints.
- India formally ratified the WTO’s (World Trade Organisation) **Trade Facilitation Agreement**, which aims at easing customs procedures to boost commerce.
- The Ceasefire between the Centre and the **NSCN-IM** (National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah) has been extended by another year i.e. till April 2017.
- President Pranab Mukherjee has nominated of six eminent members to Rajya Sabha
  - Mary Kom: Boxer
  - Narendra Jadhav: Economist

- Suresh Gopi: Malayalam Actor
- Swapan Dasgupta: Journalist
- Subramanian Swamy: BJP leader
- Navjot Singh Sidhu: cricketer-turned-politician
- The nominations have been made as per Article 80 (Part V) of the Constitution, under which President can nominate 12 members in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha).
- These persons should have special knowledge or practical experience in the field of Art, Science, Literature and Social Service.
- Union Commerce and Industry Ministry launched a new service **Twitter Seva** to address issues and grievances of startups, exporters and importers.
  - Twitter handle: #mociseva
- Reserve Bank of India gave in-principle approval to Bharti Airtel's payments bank venture — Airtel M Commerce Services Ltd.
- Union Government renamed Department of Disinvestment as *Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM)*.
- Flipkart acquired a Bengaluru-based mobile payments company PhonePe for an undisclosed sum.
- Germany's Development Bank **KfW** announced to provide loan assistance for the modern and sustainable metro system for **Nagpur city**.
- Union Finance Minister extended **the safeguard duty** on import of some steel products for another two years, till March 2018.
  - The Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) issued notification declaring that safeguard duty will be reduced to 10% in stages till 2018 from current 20%.
  - What is Safeguard Duty?
  - The safeguard duty is a tariff barrier imposed by government on identified commodities to ensure that imports in excessive quantities do not harm the domestic industry.
- The IIT (Indian Institute of Technology)-Kharagpur won the National Intellectual Property (IP) Award in the academic institutes category.



- DCB Bank launched India's first of its kind *Aadhaar-based Automatic Teller Machine (ATM)* usage facility.
  - Under this facility, DCB customers will be able to transact using aadhar based biometric details instead of the PIN.
  - Thus it is a cardless and PIN less ATM.
- India's First Semi-High Speed Train (SHST) Gatimaan Express was flagged off between New Delhi and Agra.
  - Speed 160 Km/hr
- Union Cabinet gave its ex-post facto approval for implementation of One Rank One Pension (OROP) retrospectively with effect from **1st July, 2014**.
  - OROP shall include ex-servicemen of all three services- Army, Navy and Air Force.
- Prime Minister Modi launched the Stand-up India scheme aimed at providing credit to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and women borrowers in the **non-farm sector**.
  - Under the scheme, composite loans between 10 lakh rupees and up to 1 crore rupees will be provided to SC/ST and women entrepreneurs
  - The loan shall be inclusive of working capital component for setting up any new enterprise.
- The third phase of **Indradhanush**, Union Health Ministry's universal vaccination programme Mission began on 7 April, 2016.
  - Mission Indradhanush:
  - The 7 colors of the rainbow which aims to cover all those children who are either unvaccinated, or are partially vaccinated against 7 vaccine preventable diseases by 2020
  - The 7 diseases included in program are diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, measles and hepatitis B.
  - All vaccines under the program are made available free of cost.
- The East Coast Railway (ECoR) Zone headquartered in Bhubaneswar (Odisha) has emerged as largest Freight Loading Railway Zone the country in year 2015-16 in terms of revenue loading performance.

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) entered into collaboration with the **Germany's Government** for a special programme on 'Soil Protection and Rehabilitation for Food Security'.
  - The programme is part of recently introduced special initiative 'One World, No Hunger' initiative by the Germany's government.
- **Parliament passes Industries (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2015**
  - Bill seeks to bring industries engaged in the manufacture of **potable alcohol** under the **exclusive control of States** in all respects.
  - History: In the Bihar Distillery versus Union of India case (1997), Supreme Court demarcated the regulation of production of alcohol between Centre and states. SC ruled that Union Government should regulate the production of alcohol for industrial use and states should regulate the production of alcohol for potable purpose (domestic consumption).
  - However, Union Government will continue to be responsible for formulating policy and regulating foreign collaboration for all products of fermentation industries, including industrial and potable alcohol.
- To check the price rise of sugar in the market, Union Government decided to allow States to impose and enforce stock limits on sugar.
- Union Government decided to make addition of built-in panic button and global positioning system (GPS) mandatory for mobile manufacturers in all phones models from January 1, 2017 and 2018 respectively.
  - In this context, Department of Telecommunications notified the Panic Button and Global Positioning System in Mobile Phone Handsets Rules, 2016 under section 10 of the Indian Wireless Telegraph Act, 1933.
- Union Railway Ministry decided to create *1 lakh crore rupees safety fund* named **Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh** to strengthen safety measures on the rail network to prevent accidents.
- Union Tourism Ministry launched *National Monuments Authority Web Portal called NOC Online Application and Processing System (NOAPS)*.
  - The web portal shall provide single window clearance for construction-related works near protected monuments and allow applicants to get no-objection certificates (NoC) within six working days.

- Union Government launched India's first online interactive heritage portal named **Sahapedia**.
  - The web portal is a portal of collaborative knowledge resource on the arts, culture and heritage of India.
- Union Government merged Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA) with the Khelo India Programme for development of sports.
  - Khelo India Programme is based on Gujarat Government's model of Khel Mahakumbh.
- The RBL Bank (formerly Ratnakar Bank) became the first private sector bank in India to open **dedicated branch for startups**.
- Union Government extended the **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme** in additional 61 districts across 11 States and UT's with low Child Sex Ratio.
  - The campaign was launched in January 2015 by PM from Haryana in 100 districts of the country to address the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio.
- Union Government released *a circulation coin of 10 rupees and commemorative coin of 200 rupees* on freedom fighter **Tatya Tope**.

### About Tatya Tope

- **Tatya Tope** was one of the notable generals in India's First War of Independence (1857-58) i.e. Revolt of 1857.
- He was born as **Ramachandra Pandurang Tope** in Yeola in Nashik District of Maharashtra.
- He was most intimate friend of Nana Dhundu Pant (also known as Nana Saheb) of Bithur who was adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao-II.
- **Tatya Tope** had revolted against British after Nana Saheb was deprived of his father's pension by then Governor General Lord Dalhousie under the Doctrine of Lapse in 1851.
- In May 1857, after the rebellion political storm had gained momentum he had won over the Indian troops of the East India Company stationed at Kanpur.
- During the revolt, he was able to establish Nana Saheb's authority in Kanpur and became the Commander-in-Chief of his revolutionary forces.
- However after Kanpur was re-occupied by British, he had shifted his headquarters to Kalpi and joined hands with Rani Lakshmi Bai and led a revolt in Bundelkhand.
- But he was not able to consolidate his position and was defeated by General Rose in a memorable battle in Gwalior in which Rani Lakshmi Bai suffered martyrdom.
- Later, he had launched a successful guerrilla campaign for over a year in the Sagar and Narmada Khandesh regions and in Rajasthan after losing Gwalior to the British.
- He was captured by the British Forces on 7th April, 1859 and after a hurried trial for waging war against the East India Company.
- He was hanged to death on 18th April 1859 at Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh.

- The Union Government has imposed **anti-dumping duty** of up to US 149 dollars on imports of **N-Butyl Alcohol** from 5 countries namely Malaysia, Singapore, US and European Union (EU).
- Prime Minister Modi launched **National Agriculture Market portal eNAM** to connect e-mandis in several States to one single platform.
  - During the launch, 21 mandis from 8 states were connected to the portal.
  - The States include Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.
- Prime Minister Modi inaugurated **Maritime India Summit 2016** in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
  - Organized by Union Ministry of Shipping.
- Prime Minister Modi launched '**Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan**' (Village Self Governance Campaign) to strengthen Panchayati Raj institution in villages and ensure Village social harmony.
  - Launched on the occasion of 125th birth anniversary of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at his birthplace **Mhow, Madhya Pradesh**.
- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) launched "**Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**" to revolutionize mobile payment system in the country.
- **India and Germany** signed Implementation Agreement for Ganga Rejuvenation under the Namami Gange Programme.
- Union Ministry of Human Resource Development launched the International Standard Book Number (**ISBN**) portal in New Delhi.
  - ISBN is a 13-digit unique International Publisher's Identifier number.
  - The ISBN Nos. are allotted free of cost.
  - In India, Raja Ram Mohan Roy National Agency for ISBN, affiliated to UK based International Agency, is responsible for ISBN registration and is.
- Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry constituted a three-member Committee, under former CEC **B B Tandon**, to see that guidelines set for government advertisements by the Supreme Court are followed.
- The first-ever North East-ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Business Summit was held in Imphal, Manipur.
  - Focus on road connectivity, trade and tourism.

- Union Cabinet approved operationalization of new Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) at Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh.

## MOU

- Union Cabinet approved MoU between India and Sweden on Technical Cooperation in the Railway Sector.
- India and Papua New Guinea signed four MoU's in various sectors to boost bilateral cooperation.
  - Capital of Papua New Guinea: Port Moresby
- Union Cabinet approved increase of investment by Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) in Bharat Oman Refineries Limited (BORL).
  - BPCL functions under Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and holds India's second-largest refinery capacity.
- Union Cabinet approved MoU between Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) and the Insurance Authority of United Arab Emirates.
- Union Cabinet has given approved expansion of India-Chile Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between both countries.
- Union Cabinet approved MoU between India and Bhutan on Technical Cooperation in the field of benchmarking, capacity building and bilateral exchange in Infrastructure Engineering.
- India and Mauritius inked MoU to promote cooperation in **traditional medicine and homeopathy**.
- India and South Korea signed MoU for cooperation and mutual assistance in development of **ports**.
- Union cabinet approved the adoption of the Statute of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN).
  - Hence, India became member of SAWEN.
  - What is SAWEN?

- SAWEN is regional inter-governmental body combating wildlife crime and supporting wildlife law enforcement.
  - Launched in January 2011 in Paro, Bhutan.
- Union Cabinet approved signing of MoU between India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) on cooperation in preventing and combating of Human Trafficking.

## STATES

- Bihar Government in a decision put complete ban on all types of liquor (alcohol) throughout the state including Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL)
- Kachhabali village in Bhim tehsil of Rajsamand district became the first in Rajasthan to liquor-free village.
- World's first White Tiger Safari was inaugurated at Mukundpur in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh.
  - In 1951, Rewa Maharaja Martand Singh captured a white tiger cub named Mohan.
  - Later the cub later became the progenitor of all known white tigers in the world after the Maharaja arranged for its breeding.
- Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Radha Mohan Singh laid the foundation stone of Haryana State University of Horticultural Sciences at Karnal.
- Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited commissioned a season-wise tiltable canal top solar PV plant at Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh
- Odisha Government launched Adarsh Vidyalaya (AV) project to provide modern schools facilities on the lines of Kendriya Vidyalayas in the underdeveloped rural areas of the state.
- Gujarat Government decided to provide 10 percent reservation for economically backward classes (EBCs) in general category.
- India is going to host the 2018 Commonwealth Judo Championships in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
  - The Judo Federation of India (JFI) announced it.
- In order to check sale of spurious liquor, Maharashtra Government made it mandatory to have a hologram on every alcohol bottle manufactured and sold in the state.

- To check the steep decline in ground water level across the state, Maharashtra Government banned digging of borewells beyond 200 feet in order.
- Delhi Government launched the second phase of odd-even car rationing scheme to check pollution in the national capital.
  - The second phase was implemented 15 April 2016 till 30 April 2016
  - Each day it was applicable from 8 AM to 8 PM
- Jharkhand Government has launched Bhimrao Ambedkar Awas Yojana for widows to create equality and harmony in society, ensuring all round development enshrined in the Constitution.
- Delhi government banned the manufacture, distribution, storage and sale of all forms of chewable tobacco for one year in the interest of public health.
- The Maharashtra legislature has unanimously passed the Maharashtra Prohibition of People from Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2016
  - Why? To end the menace social boycott practiced by extra-judicial institutions like caste and community panchayats.
  - Maharashtra became first state in the country to implement a law to root out oppression carried out by parallel justice delivery system (kangaroo courts).
- Haryana Government decided to rename **Gurgaon as Gurugram**.
- The traditional festival of **Sajibu Cheiraoba** was celebrated in Manipur to mark the beginning of a new year with cultural gusto and religious fervor.
- Rajasthan state assembly passed the Rajasthan Urban Land (Certification of Titles) Bills, 2016 for providing statutory backing to land records
  - Hence, Rajasthan has become the first state to pass land title bill for effectively guaranteeing land and property ownership.
- The Union Government approved country's first **Metrino Pod project**. personal rapid transit (PRT) network for Gurgaon, Haryana.

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## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

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- India signed MoU with US for setting up Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) in India.
- Union Government released Indian Intellectual Property (IP) Panorama to increase awareness and build sensitivity towards IP in the SME sector, academia and researchers.
  - The IP Panorma is a single window interface for information on IP.
- Scientists fear that ballast water carried by ships is providing a vehicle to bring in exotic invasive species across the Indian Coast.
  - What is Ballast?
  - Ballast is a compartment in a ship that holds water, which moves in & out and provides balance the ship.
- Indian scientists successfully developed an eco-friendly biopolymer using nanotechnology for water-softening and water purification applications.
  - Developed by the team of scientists from Guwahati (Assam) based Institute of Advance Study in Science & Technology (IASST).
  - The eco-friendly biopolymer has been created using a naturally occurring substance, **chitosan**.
- **China has successfully launched the Kunpeng-1B sounding rocket**
- Sounding rockets:
  - They are low-cost launch vehicles designed to carry scientific instruments that take measurements during the rocket's sub-orbital flight.
  - Kunpeng-1B sounding rocket is research rocket for carrying measurements in the upper atmosphere and help in high-speed flight and space tourism research.
- Chinese researchers developed Graphene based all-weather solar cell that can generate electricity even during rains.
- India and France launched \$1 trillion Potential Solar Program under the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- ISRO has indigenously developed world's lightest synthetic material called '**silica aerogel**' or '**blue air**'.



- Arogel is made up of 99 per cent air.

**Applications**

- It can be used as filler in soldiers' uniforms to save lives of soldiers at the Siachen glacier.
- It can be used to insulate rocket engines as it can be used both in space and on Earth.
- It can be also used to make light weight clothing.
- It can be also painted on windows in to keep buildings cool or warm.
- ISRO is going to use this material on moon rover in Chandryaan-2 mission of India.
- To provide Internet to over 1.5 million people, Google extended free internet service through WiFi to 10 railway stations across the country.
- Supercomputer **Param Kanchenjunga** was unveiled at the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Sikkim.
  - It has been named after Kangchenjunga mountain (8,586 m), the third highest mountain in the world
  - Kangchenjunga lies partly in Nepal and partly in Sikkim.
- Private SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket contracted by NASA successfully launched the first inflatable habitat room that will attach to the International Space Station (ISS).
- Researchers developed the world's smallest nanoscale diode or molecular rectifier
  - This could impact the development of molecular electronic devices in future.
  - The same was achieved through insertion of layers of a molecule called **coralyne** between layers of DNA.
  - This made it electrically active and the behavior of the circuit showing necessary characteristics of a nano diode.
  - What are diodes?
  - Diodes are electronic devices that that allow current to move through it in one direction with far greater ease but not another.

## SPORTS:

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- Cyprian Kotut from Kenya has won the 40th edition of the 2016 Paris marathon in the men's category.
- West Indies has won the ICC Cricket World Men's T-20 Cup 2016 by defeating England by 4 wickets in the final match played at Eden Gardens, Kolkata.
- Australia has won the 25th edition of Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey Tournament 2016 for record ninth time.
  - Azlan Shah Hockey Tournament is an annual international men's field hockey tournament held in Malaysia.

## DEFENCE

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- Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has constituted high-level committee, headed by **Madhukar Gupta**, to suggest ways to tighten security along India-Pakistan border.
- Terms of reference include:
  - Suggest ways to strengthen the security along the India-Pakistan Border
  - Address the issue of gaps and vulnerability in border fencing.
- The Southern Command of the Indian Navy inaugurated a naval detachment at **Androth Island** of the Lakshadweep archipelago.
- The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of India-Mongolia joint military training Exercise '**Nomadic Elephant – 2016**' was held in Mongolia.
- Japan successfully tested the maiden flight of its first domestically developed single-pilot stealth fighter jet X-2.

- The Indian Army conducted major battle exercise code named '**Shatrujeet**' in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan.
  - Aim: To check Cold Start - proactive war strategy to respond swiftly to any threat to nation's security.
- Nuclear capable submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLMB) code named **K-4**, was successfully test fired from an undisclosed location in the Bay of Bengal.
- Pakistan successfully test fired anti-ship surface to sea "Zarb" missile from the coastal areas.
- Key facts:
  - Zarb is the Chinese C-602 Missile (export version of the YJ-62).
  - The C-602 is claimed to have a range of 280 kms and weighs around 300 kg.
  - It has semi-armour-piercing warhead and GPS guidance.
- Pakistan and China launched joint bilateral air force exercise named **Shaheen (Eagle) 5** in Pakistan.

### PERSON in NEWS

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- Former bureaucrat and parliamentarian Nand Kishore Singh has been selected for Japan's highest civilian award - 'Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver'.
- IT major Mindtree co-founder Subroto Bagchi was appointed as head of the Odisha Skill Development Authority.
- Pakistani women's rights activist from Swat valley Tabassum Adnan won prestigious 2016 Nelson Mandela Graça Machel Innovation Award.

- Senior IPS officer Surender Kumar Bhagat was appointed as the Director General (DG) of Railways Protection Force (RPF).
  - RPF is under Ministry of Railways.
- K Ashok Kumar, a research food engineer scholar from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur won the prestigious 2016 International Plant Nutrition Scholar Award (IPNSA).
- **Rahul Johri** was appointed as the first Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- Co-founder of Hero Cycles group Satyanand Munjal passed away in Ludhiana, Punjab.
- Dogri Poetess and novelist Padma Sachdev was awarded Saraswati Samman for the year 2015.
  - She was chosen for her autobiography 'Chitt-Chete' written in Dogri language and published in 2007.
- Mother Teresa was posthumously conferred with the United Kingdom's prestigious Founders Award 2016.
- The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) appointed CP Gurnani as its Chairman for 2016-17.
  - Currently, Gurnani is MD & CEO of Tech Mahindra.
  - NASSCOM Headquarter: New Delhi.

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## INTERNATIONAL

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- Fourth edition of Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) began in Washington, United States
  - Agenda: To discuss issues pertaining to nuclear security.
  - Heads of about 53 countries and representatives of 5 international organizations that includes the UNO, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), European Union (EU), Interpol participated.
- India was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> among the world's Top-Ten largest manufacturing countries in the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) 2015 Yearbook report.
  - Top 5: China, United States, Japan, Germany and South Korea.
- Asia's first public dengue vaccination programme was launched in the Philippines with a French drug Dengvaxia (world's 1st dengue fever vaccine) to combat mosquito-borne disease.
  - Globally, Mexico was the first.
- A bronze bust of ancient Indian mathematician and astronomer Aryabhata was unveiled at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France.
  - An international conference on zero was held at UNESCO HQ
- Reliance Infra-led Reliance Defence Ltd signed a strategic partnership agreement with 3 Ukrainian state firms (Ukroboronprom, Spetstechno Exports and Antonov) to collaborate on a range of military products.
- Russia successfully launched the first rocket from its newly built Vostochny Cosmodrome in the Amur Oblast, in Far East Russian region bordering China.
- The Tibetan government-in-exile re-elected **Lobsang Sangey** as the Prime Minister for a 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive term.

- The **Heart of Asia (HoA)** conference began in New Delhi with the objective of bringing peace and stability to **Afghanistan**.
- 175 nations including India signed the historic *Paris Climate Change Agreement* at United Nations Headquarters in New York along marking a significant step to combat global warming.

**Key facts**

- The Paris Climate Agreement was formulated within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- Facilitates enforcement of global GHGs reduction measures, adaptation and finance in the post-2020 i.e. in post Kyoto Protocol scenario.
- The agreement was adopted by representatives of 195 countries at the 21st Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC held in Paris (France) in December 2015.
- In the agreement, all countries agreed to work to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and to strive for 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- Takes into account the principle of equity (climate justice) and common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and respective capabilities.
- The mitigation will be based on consensus among the members that have incorporated their respective Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).
- Developed countries will provide 100 billion dollars annually to the developing counterparts beginning in 2020 and it would increase with time.
- 
- China and Pakistan signed an agreement to launch a special satellite to monitor the development of the multi-billion dollars China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects.
  - Both countries agreed to launch Pakistan Remote Sensing Satellite (PRSS-1) System in June 2018.

- According to FDI Intelligence Report India has replaced China as the top Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) destination by attracting \$63 billion worth FDI projects in 2015.
  - FDI Intelligence is a division of international media company – The Financial Times Limited.
- Vietnamese American professor **Viet Thanh Nguyen** has won the Pulitzer Prize for his fiction novel - *The Sympathizer*
- Europe became the world's first region to wipe out Malaria, a mosquito-borne vector disease with **zero cases** reported in the year 2015.
- India and China agreed to adhere to peaceful negotiations to settle the border issue and reach a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution.
  - Decision in this regard was taken during the annual 19<sup>th</sup> round of boundary talks between National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi at Beijing.
- India ranked 133/ 180 nations in the recently released 2016 World Press Freedom Index (WPI).
  - Finland -Ranked 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - WPI is compiled and produced by France-based international non-governmental organization Reporters Without Borders (RWB), or Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF).
- In the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **Foreign Ministers** of the Russia, India and China (RIC) Forum agreed to deepen cooperation in combating terrorism.
- Meeting was held in Moscow, Russia
- The federal grand jury in the US State of Wisconsin slapped fine of 940 million US dollars against two companies of India's Tata group –

- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)
- Tata America International Corp.
- The Republic of Nauru became the 189th member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank i.e. Bretton-Woods institutions.
  - Nauru is a tiny island country in Micronesia, in Pacific Ocean, northeast of Australia. I
  - Smallest sovereign state in the world after the Vatican City in terms of both area and population.
- Global Tiger population increased for the first time in 100 years by 22%: WWF & GTF
  - India highest population of tigers: 2226
- The Group of G7 countries' foreign ministers issued **Hiroshima Declaration** that calls for a world without nuclear weapons.
  - G7 countries include Canada, Germany, France, Italy, UK, Japan and US.
- Sri Lankan Government formally announced the resumption of work on the stalled **Chinese Colombo Port City project**.
- In a recent report of World Bank titled Migration and Development Brief - India remained the world's largest remittance recipient in 2015.
- In 2015, India attracted about 69 billion US dollars in remittances, down from 70 billion in 2014
- Saudi Arabia and Egypt decided to build bridge connecting each other over the **Red Sea** to boost trade and commerce.
- The World Bank unveiled an ambitious Climate Change Action Plan (CCP) to accelerate efforts to tackle climate change over the next five years i.e. by 2020.



- It seeks to help developing countries to deliver their targets set in the national climate plans submitted for the historic climate agreement reached at COP21 in Paris in December 2015.
  
- The World Trade Organization revised its 2016 global trade updated forecast for 2016 downward to 2.8% from 3.9%.
  - The main reasons for cutting the forecast rate include
  - Slowdown in China and
  - Broad market volatility.

## **MARCH 2016**

### **IMPORTANT DAYS**

- **March 3: World Wildlife Day**
  - 2016 theme: “The future of wildlife is in our hands”.
- **March 8: International Women’s day**
  - 2016 theme declared by United Nations: “Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality”.
- **March 15: International Consumer Rights Day**
  - India: 24<sup>th</sup> December Consumer Rights Day
  - 2016 Theme: “Antibiotics off the menu”.
- **March 19: Earth Hour**
  - Happened on 19 March 2016 from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm local time.
  - **What is Earth Hour:** An annual global environmental event (movement) organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).
  - It was started Sydney 2007
  - Different from Earth Day, which is celebrated on April 22.
- **March 20: World Sparrow Day**
- World Sparrow is organized to raise awareness for the house sparrow and other common birds to urban environments and threats to their populations.
- **March 21: International Day of Forests**
  - Theme for 2016: “Forests and water”
- **March 22: World Water Day**
  - 2016 Theme: “Better Water, Better Jobs”.
- **March 23: World Meteorological day**
  - Theme for 2016 year is “Hotter, Drier, Wetter. Face the Future”.
- **March 24: World Tuberculosis Day**

- 2016 Theme: “Unite to End TB”.
- **March 25: International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade**

## NATIONAL

- Supreme Court approved Union Government’s guidelines to protect **Good Samaritans** from being unnecessarily harassed by police or any other authority.
  - Good Samaritans - who help road accident victims.
  - Guidelines based on recommendations of K S Radhakrishnan committee.
- Union Government released Defence Procurement Procedure 2016 (DPP 2016)- Based on recommendations of **Dhirendra Singh Committee**.
- India’s land, naval and homeland security exhibition- **Defence Expo 2016 was held in Goa**.
  - 2016 Theme is “Rise of Futurism”
- Union Government notified Aadhaar Act, 2016
  - Result: The act gives statutory status for establishment of the Unique Identification Authority of India
- President Pranab Mukherjee imposed President’s Rule (State Emergency) – in Uttarakhand - under Article 356 of Constitution.
- Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched India’s first indigenous rotavirus vaccine named **Rotavac** to combat infant mortality due to diarrhoea.
  - Rotavac vaccine is another addition to three new vaccines that have been introduced by Union Government as part of country’s UIP.
  - These three vaccines are Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV), Adult Japanese Encephalitis (JE) vaccine and Measles, Rubella (MR) vaccine.
- Indira Gandhi International Airport of Delhi retained World’s number one airport for 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year in 25 to 40 Million Passengers per annum category.
- Union Government constituted **Mahesh Kumar Singla** committee to consider Scheduled Tribe status to six Communities of Assam.

- India ranked at the 90/126 countries on the basis of their ability to deliver secure, affordable and sustainable energy.
  - Revealed by Global Energy Architecture Performance Index (GEAPI) Report compiled by World Economic Forum (WEF).
- Parliament passed the **Carriage by Air (Amendment) Bill, 2015** which empowers union government to revise the limits of liability for airlines and compensation as per the Montreal Convention which India accepted in 2009.
- Union Government has decided to wind up of National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council (NMCC) as it has fulfilled the mandate.
- Prime Minister Modi launched **Setu Bharatam Project** to make all national highways free of railway crossings by 2019.
- The flagship conference on Geopolitics and Geo-economics - Raisina-Dialogue 2016- was held in New Delhi.
  - The 3-day conference is joint initiative of Union Ministry of External Affairs and Observer Research Foundation, an independent think tank based in India.
- Prime Minister Modi selected **Nagepur village** in his Varanasi Constituency of Lok Sabha in Uttar Pradesh under the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY).
- New species of burrowing snake named **Melanophidium khairei** or **Khaire's Black Shieldtail**, was discovered by researchers in Northwestern Ghats.
- Jalandhar based Capital Local Area Bank Limited became the first financial entity in India to get **Small Financial Bank License** by the Reserve Bank of India.
- To facilitate women entrepreneurs to sell their products to buyers, Union Government launched an online marketing platform - **Mahila E-HAAT**
- **MoEFCC releases 4-Colour Classification Scheme for industries based on Pollution Index**
- The 4-colour classification scheme of industrial sectors is based on the Pollution Index, which is function of:
  - Emissions (air pollutants)
  - Effluents (water pollutants)
  - Hazardous wastes generated &
  - Consumption of resources.

- **Key facts:**
- The PI of any industrial sector is a number ranging from 0 -100.
- Based on the on 'Pollution Index', industrial sectors have been categorized into 4-colours categories:
- **Red category:**
- Severely Polluting
- PI score of 60 and above.
- Total 60 industries including sugar, thermal power plants, paints and others are under in it.
- **Orange category:**
  - Moderately Polluting
  - PI score of 41 to 59.
  - Total of 83 industries like coal, washeries and automobile servicing are placed under it.
- **Green category:**
  - Significantly low polluting.
  - PI score of 21 to 40.
  - Total 63 industries are under in it.
- **White category:**
  - Non- polluting
  - PI score below and upto 20.
  - Total 30 industries are under in it.
  - These industries are exempted from requirement of environmental clearance.
- Germany will partner with India's smart city programme and help in developing Kochi (Kerala), Bhubaneswar (Odisha) and Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) as smart cities.
- Air India successfully flew the World's longest all-woman operated and supported flight from the national capital New Delhi to San Francisco (United States).
- Indian Railways formed new Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to implement the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Bullet Train project.

- Name of the SPV: National High Speed Rail Corporation (NHSRC) Limited.
- ICICI Bank has rolled out iWork@Home program for its women employees.
  - They can use the facility for up to a year.
- Union Power Ministry ] announced name UJALA for the LED based Domestic Efficient Lighting Programme (DELP).
  - UJALA - Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All.
- NITI Aayog launched the 'Women Transforming India' initiative.
  - Through the initiative NITI Aayog seeks to directly engage with women leaders from across urban and rural areas of India.
- **Allahabad High Court: 150th foundation year**
  - Allahabad High Court was established in 1869 after seat was shifted from Agra to Allahabad in 1869.
  - It is fourth-oldest High Court in India after Calcutta, Madras and Bombay established under Indian High Courts Act 1861.
  - At present it is the highest judicial body of Uttar Pradesh and it has also a bench in Lucknow.
- **India INC.** adopted the United Nations' (UN) agenda for the world's sustainable development
  - Consequently identified 17 goals identified for implementation.
  - It was for the first time that UN is involving private and public sector corporates across the globe to drive its development agenda.
- **Sustainable Development Goals**
  - SDG succeeded 8 MDGs, which were adopted in 2000 for fifteen years till 2015.
  - SDG has 17 non-binding goals with 169 specific targets.
  - SDG comprise of different socio-economic issues to be implemented from 2015 to 2030
- Union Government notified maximum sale price of **Bt cotton seed** for the year 2016-17.
  - The notification has been issued under the Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 through the Cotton Seed Price (Control) Order, 2015.

- Union Government imposed anti-dumping duty of up to 44.7 % on import of **plastic-processing machines** from Chinese Taipei, Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam for period of 5 years.
  - Plastic-processing machines are better known as injection-moulding machines.
- The international exhibition and conference on civil aviation, India Aviation 2016, was organized in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- The largest fair on Food and Hospitality Sector in India, AAHAR 2016 was held in Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.
  - Organized by India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO) under Ministry of Commerce and Industry..
- World Sufi Forum was held in New Delhi.
- Supreme Court has allowed publication of photographs of Chief Ministers, Governors and the Ministers of the department concerned in government advertisements.
  - Prof **NR Madhava Menon Committee** recommended Guidelines on Regulating Government Advertisements.
- Union Government unveiled Model Building Bye-Laws, 2016
  - MBBL-2016 intend to improve ease of doing business regarding issuance of construction permits.
  - The time limit for all kinds of single window approvals has been set as 30 days and if the same is not done by the concerned agencies within 30 days then it will be deemed as approved.
- Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare done away with requirement of repeat tests on animals for drugs which already have been approved by other countries.
- To give effect, ministry has amended Schedule Y of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945.
- **Surat (Gujarat)** was declared the cleanest A1 Category, in the survey of Indian Railways published in April.
  - Category A: Beas (Punjab)
  - **Category A-1** stations are those earning revenues more than 50 crore.
  - **Category A** stations are those earning revenues between Rs. 6 crore and Rs. 50 crore

- Prime Minister Modi launched Kisan Suvidha mobile application for farmers to provide quick access to agricultural relevant basic information.
- MOEFCC notified new **Plastic Waste Management Rules**.
  - These rules seek to curb over 6000 tonnes of uncollected plastic waste generated daily by industries.
  - These rules will replace the Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules 2011.
  - The Rules also introduce concept of extended producer responsibility (EPR)
  - Rural areas have also been included and Gram Panchayats have been given more responsibility.
  - Plastic carry bags thinner than 50 microns have been banned.
- Prime Minister Modi conferred 2014-15 Krishi Karman Awards:
  - Awards list:
    - **Madhya Pradesh:** For production greater than 10 million tonnes in *Category I States*.
    - **Himachal Pradesh and Odisha:** For production between 1 and 10 million tonnes in *Category II States*.
    - **Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya:** For production less than 1 million tonnes in *Category III States*.
  - **Individual Crops:** Total 5 winning states were awarded a trophy, a citation and a monetary award of 2 crore rupees. These states are
    - **Haryana, Assam:** Rice.
    - **Rajasthan:** Wheat.
    - **Chhattisgarh:** Pulses.
    - **West Bengal:** Oil Seeds.
- **Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve** of Kerala was included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of UNESCO
- Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare launched **Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI)** to assess the needs of its elderly people and frame policies accordingly.
- Union Consumer Affairs Ministry released a self-regulation Code of ethical business conduct to be adopted by the Industry on providing best products and services.
- Union Cabinet approved implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin



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## MOU

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- India signed 'Raptor MoU', on conservation of birds of prey in Africa and Eurasia.
  - With this India became 56<sup>th</sup> country to sign the Raptor MoU under the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS), which is also known as Bonn Convention.
  - Comes under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).
- The Reserve Bank of India signed MoU with Bank of Israel (BOI) for exchange of information pertaining to banking supervision.
- Union Cabinet approved MoU between India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Technical Cooperation in Cyber Space and Combating Cyber-Crime.
- Union Cabinet approved signing and ratification of the Bay of Bengal Initiative on Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters.
  - BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative on Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) is the sub-regional group of 7 countries in South Asia and South East Asia.
  - Participants include India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka (from South Asia) and Myanmar, Thailand (from South East Asia).
- Union Cabinet approved a MoU between India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) to mobilise long-term investment in National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).

## STATES NEWS

- Telangana Government launched **M-Wallet**, new mobile app to facilitate citizens to get digital copies of documents like driving licence and registration certificate.
  - These digital documents can be used by users before the police and RTA authorities when demanded.
- Haryana became the first state in the country to implement the use of injectable contraceptives as a family planning measure.
  - **Project Salamati'** was launched by CM in this regard.

- Andhra Pradesh government inaugurated **Pattiseema lift irrigation project** -connecting Godavari River with Krishna River from the ongoing Polavaram Multi-purpose Irrigation Project.
- Japanese International Cooperative Agency (JICA) and Mizoram State Government signed MoU on 'Capacity Enhancement for Sustainable Agriculture and Irrigation Development'.
- The traditional festival of **Chapchar Kut of the Mizos** was celebrated across the north-eastern state of Mizoram and also in the Mizo-inhabited areas in the neighbouring states.
- Telangana and Maharashtra Governments have signed MoU to set up an inter-state water board construct 5 barrages across Godavari and Pen Ganga rivers.
- Karnataka government launched **Mukhyamantri Santwana Harish Yojana** to provide free medical treatment to road accident victims for the first 48 hours (2 days) in the nearest government or private hospital.
- Kerala Tourism's campaign titled 'New Worlds' has won the prestigious 'Golden City Gate Award' at the at the Internationale Tourismus-Börse Berlin (ITB-Berlin) 2016.
- Haryana's New Secretariat Building in Chandigarh became the first building in the country to have an early Earthquake Warning and Security system (onsite).
- Punjab Government notified swine flu (H1N1) under the Epidemic Disease Act to prevent the spread of disease in the state.
- India signed loan agreement of 35 million dollars with the World Bank for Madhya Pradesh citizen access to responsive services project.
- The aim of the project is to improve access and quality of public services in the state through implementation of the Public Service Delivery Guarantee Act, 2010.
- Goa government classified **Feni**, country liquor as the heritage spirit of the state.
- Punjab Legislative Assembly has passed Punjab Settlement of Agriculture Indebtedness Bill, 2016.
  - The Bill seeks to provide relief to laborers, agriculturists, and others dependent on agriculture by providing them fair settlement of their debt related disputes.
- Delhi has become the first state (UT) in the country to launch the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine as a public health programme for school children.

- HPV is a DNA virus from the papillomavirus family which is mainly a sexually transmitted infection (STI) that causes genital warts and cervical cancer.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- PM Modi unveiled Asia's largest optical telescope *Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES)* at Devasthal in Nainital District, Uttarakhand.
  - Result of joint efforts of India & Belgium.
- ISRO installed Gadanki Ionospheric Radar Interferometer (GIRI) Radar System near Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh.
- Scientists at Lucknow based CSIR-Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants found that mint plant has medicinal values that can cure cancer.
- Indian scientists developed herbal medicine against mosquito borne dengue fever using traditional Indian medicine system Ayurveda.
  - Herbal dengue medicine was developed using alcoholic extract of *Cissampelos pariera* Linn (Cipa extract) derived from velvetleaf, a species of flowering plant.
  - The drug proved to be potent inhibitor to all four types (strains) of dengue virus.
- Bacterium species **Ideonella sakaiensis 201-F6** capable of breaking down plastic polyethylene terephthalate (PET) or polyester was successfully isolated by Japanese Researchers.
- India and United States launched the **Fulbright – Kalam Climate Fellowship** enabling Indian research scholars to work with American institutions in the field of climate change.
- An unmanned spacecraft named **ExoMars 2016** was successfully launched jointly Europe and Russia to search for bio-signatures on Mars (or Martian life) in past or present.
- ICICI Bank has launched new contactless mobile payment solution Touch & Pay based on **Near Field Communication (NFC) technology**.
  - NFC is a short-range high frequency wireless communication technology.
  - Devices need to be in close proximity typically, 10 cm (4 inches) from each other.
- The India Meteorology Department (IMD) has deployed indigenously developed **Drishti**, an instrument that will provide real time visibility information to pilots.

- The instrument will help pilots in quick decision-making during critical landings and take-offs of aircraft particularly during foggy or rainy days.
  - Drishti has been developed by the National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), Bangalore and transfer the crucial visibility updates to the pilots in real time.
- British astronomers have discovered largest sample cluster of nine monster stars named as R136 using NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope.
- New **anti-TB (Tuberculosis) drug Bedaquiline** was launched by Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry.
  - Further, Union Health Minister also launched CBNAAT (Cartridge-Based Nucleic Acid Amplification Test) diagnostic machines that can provide quick diagnosis of TB within two hours.
  - These machines have revolutionised rapid molecular test, which simultaneously detects Mycobacterium tuberculosis and rifampicin drug resistance.

## DEFENCE

- India launched its first indigenous composites sonar dome.
  - Designed and manufactured by DRDO
  - SONAR - Sonar: Sound Navigation And Ranging. It uses sound propagation (usually underwater) to navigate, or detect objects on or under the surface of the water, such as other vessels.
- India, Seychelles joint military exercise **LAMITYE 2016** was conducted in Victoria, Mahe Island, Seychelles.
- The multinational Military Exercise Force Eighteen conducted by Indian Army has started in at Pune, Maharashtra.
  - Included 300 participants from 18 ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Plus countries.
- The Cabinet Committee on Security cleared a proposal to purchase two Phalcon Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS), surveillance aircrafts from Israel.

- The fourth edition of the India-Indonesia Joint Training Exercise **Garuda Shakti** has begun at Magelang in Indonesia.
- Indian Air Force (IAF) has conducted its flagship day-night exercise 'Iron-fist 2016' at Pokhran firing range in Rajasthan.
- The fast patrol vessel (FPV) of the Indian Coast Guard ICGS Arnvesh was commissioned at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

## SPORTS

- Late Capt. Shankar Laxman was posthumously chosen for the 2016 Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award.
- Rahul Sachdev has won the first All India Open Invitational Snooker Championship 2016 held at Aurangabad in Maharashtra.
- Ace Indian shooter Jitu Rai won Gold medal in the 50m Pistol Men final event at the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) World Cup held in Bangkok, Thailand.
- Rest of India defeated Mumbai to win the Irani Cup Cricket Title 2015-16.
- Services defeated Hosts Maharashtra to win 70<sup>th</sup> edition of 2016 -Santosh Trophy Football Championships
- Ace Indian shuttler HS Prannoy (World no 13) has won the prestigious 2016 Swiss Open Grand Prix Gold badminton tournament in the men's single category.

## PERSON in NEWS

- Playback singer P. Susheela Mohan, was recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records for singing most number of songs in Indian languages.
- Indian-American Nandita Bakshi was appointed the President and CEO of Bank of the West, a subsidiary unit of French banking giant BNP Paribas.
- Former Chief Justice of India HL Dattu took charge as the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

- Eminent poet Dr Bhagwati Lal Vyas has been selected for the 2015 Bihari Puraskar for his anthology of Rajasthani poems 'Katha Sun Aawe Hai Sabad' published in 2010.
- Microsoft Co-founder, Bill Gates has retained the title of the world's richest person in the Forbes' 30th annual ranking of the world's billionaires list (2016 edition).
- Sunil Sabharwal, an independent Indian-American investor took charge as Alternate Executive Director at International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- E-mail inventor Raymond Tomlinson passed away in Washington, United States.
  - He was first to use sign "@"
- Renowned Dogri poetess and writer Padma Sachdev was awarded prestigious Krutitava Smagra Samman for the year 2015.
- Former Supreme Court (SC) judge Justice **Balbir Singh Chauhan** was appointed Chairman of the 21st Law Commission of India (LCI).
- Mahindra & Mahindra Chairman and MD Anand Mahindra was conferred with Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur (Knight of the Legion of Honour) by French Government.
- Tikka Shatrugit Singh, the royal scion of Kapurthala's Ahluwalia dynasty, was conferred with the prestigious Knight of the Legion of Honour by the French Government.
- Eminent Shehnai exponent Ustad Ali Ahmad Hussain Khan passed away following prolonged illness in Kolkatta, West Bengal.
- British mathematician Andrew Wiles was named as the winner of the prestigious 2016 Abel Prize.
  - Abel Prize is Norwegian prize, described as Nobel prize in Mathematics.
  - It is awarded annually to one or more outstanding mathematicians.
- Ashley Judd from US has been appointed as Goodwill Ambassador of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
- Indian student **Geetakshi Arora** was awarded the inaugural **Noor Inayat Khan Prize** for her excellent dissertation on "*Goddess Myths in Graphic Novels: Reimagining Indian Femininity*"
  - Noor Inayat Khan: famous World War II heroine.
- Retired Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court Justice **Permod Kohli** has been appointed as the Chairman of Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT).

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## INTERNATIONAL

- 13th edition of India-European Union Summit was held on in Brussels, capital of Belgium.
- Key Outcomes:
  - Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement between EU and India – Agreed to carry on further negotiation.
  - European Investment Bank (EIB) agreed to lend loan of 450 million Euros – for Lucknow Metro.
  - Cooperation on Water & Environmental program - including India's flagship program like the 'Clean Ganga' and 'Clean India'.
- Russian Government approved a deal of ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) to acquire 15% stake in Vankor oilfield from Rosneft.
- World Health Organisation has declared that Ebola outbreak in West Africa out of global risk and Public Health Emergency of International Concern.
- Syrian Army and popular defence forces have regained control of the ancient city of **Palmyra** from Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist group
  - The city is situated in a strategically important area on the road between Syria's capital Damascus and the oil rich eastern city of Deir al-Zour.
- Government of Peru has declared emergency for 3-weeks because of a major oil pipeline burst in Peru's northeast region affecting two rivers Chiriaco and Morona.
- South Korea's Parliament has passed the country's first anti-terror bill that was first proposed 15 years ago in 2001 after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in US.
- The world's most expensive train station opened at the 9/11 site in New York, United States. It has been named World Trade Center Transportation Hub.
- India has filed a complaint against the United States decision to impose high fees L-1 and H-1B categories of temporary working visas in the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- India's largest lender State Bank of India has been granted preliminary approval to operate Myanmar.
- China's Supreme Court has decided to set up its own International Maritime Judicial Centre (IMJC) to handle territorial disputes and protect its sea rights.

- Mother Teresa, a Roman Catholic religious sister and missionary will be elevated to Sainthood.
  - Decision in this regard was confirmed by, Pope Francis.
- After 53 years of military rule Myanmar's Parliament elected Htin Kyaw as the first civilian (non-military) President of the country.
- India ranked 118/157 countries on the United Nations' World Happiness Index (WHI) 2016.
  - Revealed by the 4<sup>th</sup> World Happiness Report 2016 published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), a global initiative for the UN.
  - Denmark came first and Switzerland second.
- The agreement between the European Union (EU) and Turkey in order to tackle the migrant crisis has formally come into effect.
  - Under the agreement all irregular migrants into Greece crossing from Turkey after 20 March 2016 will be sent back.
  - And, EU will resettle Syrian migrant for each Syrian returned to Turkey.
- India assumed BRICS Chairmanship from the Russian Federation for the year 2016.
  - **Logo:** Lotus with colours from all the five members and traditional namaste at the centre.
  - **Core theme:** Building responsive, inclusive and collective solution for the grouping.
- Nepal signed agreement with China to build a strategic railway link between the two countries through Tibet.
- Nepal was officially made a dialogue partner of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a Beijing-based regional security grouping.
- Union Cabinet approved India to accede to international transport and transit corridor agreement- the **Ashgabat Agreement**.
  - **Ashgabat Agreement** is a transit agreement established in year 2011.
  - It establishes international transport and transit corridor between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf countries.
  - Its founding members include Uzbekistan, Oman, Iran and Turkmenistan.
  - Kazakhstan had joined the grouping in 2015.



## FEBRUARY 2016

### NATIONAL

- Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) of Union Government has given its final approval to Kerala Government's approval to set up India's first Defence Industrial Park at
- The 30<sup>th</sup> edition of Surajkund International Crafts Mela was held at Faridabad in Haryana.
- Union Government has appointed senior IPS officer K Durga Prasad as Director General (DG) of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
- Senior IPS officer Archana Ramasundram (58) was appointed as the Director General of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).
- Principal Adviser (Cost) Mrs. Aruna Sethi was appointed as head of Indian Cost Accounts Service (ICoAS). With this, she becomes first lady ICoAS officer this topmost post.
- February 4: World Cancer Day
  - 2016 Theme: We can, I can
- February 10: National Deworming Day
  - Every year on 10 February is observed as National Deworming Day to combat parasitic worm infections among preschool and school-age children across India.
- February 21: International Mother Language Day
- 28 February: National Science Day
  - 2016 Theme: Scientific Issues for Development of the Nation
  - Why 28 Feb? Discovery of Raman Effect by Indian physicist Chandra Sekhara Venkata Raman (CV Raman) on February 28, 1928.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited (BCPL) at **Lepetkata, Assam**. It shall be the first ever petro-chemical plant located in the entire North-Eastern region of Indian.
- Prime Minister also dedicated wax producing unit in **Numaligarh** Refinery Limited to the nation. It is India's highest wax producing unit and shall be using indigenous technology.

- Sarangi maestro **Pandit Ram Narayan** was chosen for the prestigious Bharat Ratna Pandit Bhimsen Joshi Classical Music Award for 2015-2016.
- Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda has launched Project Sunrise on for prevention of AIDS specially among people injecting drugs in the 8 North-Eastern states.
- Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has decided to set up the National Organic Farming Research Institute (NOFRI) in Sikkim.
- Micro blogging site Twitter in partnership with FICCI for first time has launched #**Positionofstrength** campaign in India to empower women to raise voices against any form of discrimination.
- President Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated the first phase Kerala Tourism's Muziris Heritage Project (MHP) at Trissur in Kerala to reinstate the historical and cultural significance Muziris.
  - Muziris was an ancient seaport and urban centre which dates from at least the 1st century BC and located at the mouth of the Periyar River in Kerala.
- Former CAG Vinod Rai has been appointed as the first Chairman of **Banks Board Bureau (BBB)**.
- Appointed Members of Banks Board Bureau are:
  - **Vinod Rai (Chairman)**: He is former CAG.
  - **Sinor (Member)**: Former Joint Managing Director of ICICI Bank.
  - **Anil K Khandelwal (Member)**: Former CMD of Bank of Baroda
  - **Rupa Kudwa (Member)**: Former chief of CRISIL.
  - The tenure of Mr Rai and other members of the board will be of two years.
  - About Banks Board Bureau (BBB) :
  - BBB will be a super authority (Autonomous Body) of eminent professionals and officials for public sector banks (PSBs).
  - It will replace the Appointments Board of Government.
  - The bureau was announced by the Union Government in August 2015 as part of seven point **Indradhanush Mission** to revamp the PSBs.
- Functions:

- Give recommendations for appointment of full-time Directors as well as non-Executive Chairman of PSBs.
  - Give advice to PSBs in developing differentiated strategies for raising funds through innovative financial methods and instruments and to deal with issues of stressed assets.
  - Guide banks on mergers and consolidations and also ways to address the bad loans problem among other issues.
  - Currently, there are 22 state-owned banks or PSBs in India including State Bank of India (SBI), IDBI Bank and Bhartiya Mahila Bank etc.
- President Pranab Mukherjee has formally declared **Kerala as the country's first digital state.**
- President Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated India's first Gender Park at Kozhikode district of Kerala. It is also the first of its kind gender equality convergence centre in Asia.
- Union Cabinet has approved proposal of raising of 17 Indian Reserve Battalions (IRBs) in Jammu & Kashmir and 4 Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected states.
- Committee to examine the Possibility of Replacing Multiple Prior Permissions with Pre-Existing Regulatory Mechanism headed by Ajay Shankar, submitted recommendation.
- Multiple permissions including environmental, inspection etc.
- Recommendations included:
  - Adopt global practices.
  - Establish mechanism for independent regulatory impact assessment.
  - Introduction of credible third-party certification to cut down on multiple permissions needed by investors.
- The 13<sup>th</sup> edition of World Spice Congress (WSC) was held at Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The theme of the three-day biennial event was 'Target 2020: Clean, Safe and Sustainable Supply Chain'.
- Lok Sabha has passed Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2016 to grant voting rights to people who became citizens of India following the exchange of enclaves between India and Bangladesh.
- **New Initiatives under Railway Budget 2106-17:**
- Theme of this Budget: 'Chalo, Milkar Kuch Naya Karen' for overcoming challenges – Reorganize, Rejuvenate, Restructure Indian Railways

- Three pillars strategy: **Nav Arjan** – New revenues, **Nav Manak** – New norms, **Nav Sanrachna** – New Structures. Railway Fares No new hike in passenger fares and Freight fares.
- For the unreserved passenger:
  - Antyodaya Express: superfast unreserved service.
  - Deen Dayalu: unreserved coaches with potable water facility and higher number of mobile charging points.
- For the reserved passenger:
- Tejas: Will operate at speeds of 130 kmph and above and shall showcase the future of train travel in India. It will offer onboard services such as local cuisine, entertainment, WiFi, etc.
- Humsafar: Fully air-conditioned service with an optional service for meals.
- UDAY (Utkrisht Double-Decker Air-conditioned Yatri) Express: Overnight double-decker express on the busiest routes.
- SMART (Specially Modified Aesthetic Refreshing Travel) Coaches: Higher carrying capacity and new amenities including automatic doors, bio-vacuum toilets, bar-code readers, water-level indicators, accessible dustbins, ergonomic seating, vending machines, improved aesthetics, LED lit boards for advertising, entertainment screens, PA system.
- High Speed Rail: From Mumbai to Ahmedabad will be undertaken with the assistance of the Government of Japan.
- State Bank of India (SBI) has launched **SBI e-Smart SME** to provide a working capital loan for sellers on ecommerce platforms.
- Union Cabinet approved establishment of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Self Employment and Talent Utilisation (SETU) in NITI Aayog.
  - Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) including Self-Employment and Talent Utilization (SETU) is Government of India's endeavour to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.
  - Includes setup of Atal tinkering Laboratories & Atal Incubation centers, along with scale-up support to established incubation centers.
- India's - **Yes Bank** has been awarded inaugural **Green Bond Pioneer Award** in London, United Kingdom.

- Green Bond: are bonds that receive capital from the investors only if the investment (capital) is being raised to fund green projects relating to renewable energy or emission reductions etc.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has hiked Minimum Support Price (MSP) of raw jute from 2,700 to 3,200 rupees per quintal.
  - Note: CCEA looks after MSP of Jute.
- Union Government has selected former Chief Justice of India (CJI) **H L Dattu** as new Chairman of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).
- Selection Committee:
  - Prime Minister
  - Lok Sabha Speaker
  - Union Home Minister
  - Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha
  - Leader of Opposition Rajya Sabha
- NHRC: Apex Statutory body to look after human rights preservation in India.
- Union Government has launched 'Swachh Parayatan' mobile application to keep tourist places clean.
- Haryana is set become the first state in the country to complete aquifer mapping for its groundwater resources by May 2016.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the **National Rurban Mission** (NRM) from **Kurubhat** in Rajnandgaon district of Chhattisgarh.
- West Bengal Finance Minister Amit Mitra was appointed as the Chairman of the Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers on Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- Union Cabinet has approved acceptance of protocol of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
  - TFA is the WTO's first-ever multilateral accord that aims to simplify customs regulations for the cross-border movement of goods.
  - Outcome of WTO's 9th Bali (Indonesia) ministerial package of 2013

- State Bank of India (SBI) launched 'Japan Desk', a single window for inbound Japanese investments in India and vice-versa.
- Mysuru city from Karnataka has been ranked first in terms of cleanliness for second time in row among the 73 surveyed cities in **Swachh Sarvekshan 2016**.
- India's first indigenously developed **lightest revolver (gun) Nidar** weighing merely 250 grams was successfully launched.
  - Nidar is much lighter than 'Nirbheek' (500 grams) revolver which was exclusively designed for women.
- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has declared **Wild Pig (sus scrofa)** as vermin in Uttarakhand for a year.
- So what? This will allow hunting of Wild Pig outside Reserve Forest.
- Karnataka's flagship mobile-one governance application has won gold medal at the fourth World Government Summit in Dubai, UAE in the m-governance awards category.
- The UAE's national oil company Abu Dhabi National Oil (ADNOC) Company has agreed to store crude oil in India's maiden Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs) storage.
  - India is building underground SPR storages at Visakhapatnam (1.33 million tonnes capacity), Mangalore (1.5 million tonnes) and Padur (2.5 million tonnes) to store about 5.33 million tonnes of crude oil.
- Union Government has sanctioned about 580 crore rupees for Agartala-Akhaura railway link Project to connect Kolkata (West Bengal) with Tripura via Bangladesh.
- As per recently released Index of Internet Readiness of Indian States (IIRIS) report, Maharashtra has topped in terms of the overall Internet readiness index.
- **Gujarat** state government has decided to set up India's first aviation park near Bagodara village in Ahmedabad district to strengthen the aviation sector.

## SCIENCE

- World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared an international public health emergency over the explosive spread of the mosquito-borne **Zika virus**.
  - Carrier: Aedes Aegypti – Msoquito.

- Other disease transferred by Aedes Aegypti mosquito: Dengue, Chikungunya and Yellow Fever.
- Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) launched the country's first anti-diabetic ayurvedic drug named **BGR-34** for type two Diabetes mellitus.
  - BGR-34 stands for Blood Glucost Regulator and offers effective, safe, patient-friendly solution for managing type two Diabetes.
- ISRO is working to establishment of a Satellite Tracking & Data Reception Station and Data Processing Facility for ASEAN Member countries in Vietnam.
- ISRO is set to launch the country's **first solar mission called Aditya-L1**.
  - Aditya-L1 satellite will be placed in an orbit about 15 lakh kilometres from the earth in a **halo orbit** around the L1 **Lagrangian point**.
  - Launch Vehicle: PSLV XL.
  - **Lagrangian point**: Locations in space where the combined gravitational pull of two large masses roughly balance each other, hence, net gravitational is near zero. In Sun-Earth system there are 5 such points: L1, L2, L3, L4 L5.
  - Halo Orbit: Periodic three-dimensional (3D) orbit near the Lagrangian points L1, L2 or L3
- World's first fast-acting anti-rabies drug "**Rabies Human Monoclonal Antibody**" (RMAB) will be launched in India.
- Birdwatchers for first time have sighted Falcated Duck in Goa, which is considered as rare vagrant migrant bird species to the south of India.
  - IUCN Status: (NT) Near Threatened
- Google's Project Loon began its operations in Sri Lanka after first helium-filled balloon landed in Pupuressa area in Gampola town.
  - Project Loon is a pet project of Google for providing Internet access to rural and remote areas using high-altitude helium-filled balloons.
- Astrophysicists at NASA have found a super-Earth exoplanet dubbed as 55 Cancri e with an atmosphere for the first time.
- A team of scientist in US led by an Indian-origin Ashutosh Tiwari has discovered **Tin Monoxide (SnO)** conductor to replace silicon.

- SnO is a new kind of 2D semiconducting material for electronics that opens the door for much speedier computers and smartphones that consumes less power.
- Union Cabinet has approved the **LIGO-India project** (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory in India) proposal for research on gravitational waves.
  - LIGO-India project shall be piloted by Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Department of Science and Technology (DST)
- Japan has launched ASTRO-H space observation satellite to probe mysterious black holes.
- Scientist for the first time have discovered Gravitational Waves (GW) that were hypothesised by Albert Einstein in 1916.
  - These waves were detected by the scientists working at two LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory) facilities in United States.
- Banaras Hindu University (BHU) founded by Freedom fighter **Pt Madan Mohan Malviya** has turned 100 years on 13th February 2016.
- Neem extract may help treat Pancreatic Cancer: Study
  - Neem oil contains fatty acid and vitamin E
- A For the first time, scientists from National University of Singapore (NUS) have successfully converted paper waste into green nontoxic cellulose aerogels.
- Applications:
  - It is ideal for applications such as oil spill cleaning.
  - It can serve as heat insulation materials for buildings.
  - In Biomedical applications, it can be potentially be used as coating materials for drug delivery and as smart materials.
  - It can be also used in packaging industry as it is biodegradable and environmentally-friendly material.
- The Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) has ordered **Chennai** based Geographical Indications Registry (GIR) to issue 'Geographical Indication' tag for basmati rice.
  - This GI tag will be issued to basmati rice variety grown in 7 states that includes Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, parts of Uttar Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.



**DEFENCE**

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- The International Fleet Review (IFR) 2016, an international military exercise hosted and conducted by Indian Navy was inaugurated in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
  - Naval ships from 50 countries and various dignitaries will also participate in the event and close to 4000 sailors have participated in the fleet review.
- Akash missile successfully test fired at Chandipuri in Odisha
  - Type: Surface to Air
  - Speed: 2.8 – 3.5 Mach
  - Powered by Ramjet-rocket propulsion system (RRPS)
  - Range: 25Kms
  - Warhead: Conventional 60 Kgs
- Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has signed cyber-security agreement with its counterparts in **Malaysia, Singapore and Japan**.
- Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In)
  - Nodal department under Union Ministry of Communications and Information Technology that deals with cyber security threats like hacking and phishing in India.
  - HQ: New Delhi
- Fifth edition of **IBSAMAR 2016** trilateral naval exercise between **Brazil, India and South Africa** kicked off in Goa.
- India's first indigenously built nuclear armed submarine **INS Arihant** has successfully passed several deep sea diving drills as well as weapons launch tests
- India continues to remain the world's largest arms importer, accounting for 14% of the global arms imports in the 2011-2015 timeframe.
- For the first time, India has participated in the Cobra Gold 2016 multilateral amphibious exercise hosted by Thailand after 12 member Indian Army delegation joined it.
- The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of India, Seychelles joint military exercise **LAMITYE 2016** has begun in Victoria, Seychelles.

- The 9th edition of India-Nepal Combined Military Exercise **Surya Kiran IX** has commenced at Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.
- The Union textile Ministry has bestowed the Indian Handloom Brand tag on **Chettinad cotton saris** for its unique designs and identity.
  - Chettinad cotton saree is also known as “kandaangi”. It is the traditional sari of the Chettinad region in Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu.
- Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) and Muzzafarpur (Bihar) were on the top in National Air Quality Indices for 24 cities released by CPCB.

## SPORTS

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- Ace Indian **shuttler Kidambi Srikanth** won the 2016 Syed Modi International Grand prix Gold Championship Title of **Badminton** in men’s singles category.
- World Number One tennis player **Novak Djokovic** from Serbia won the 2016 Australian Open Title in the men’s singles category.
- The 12th edition of South Asian Games (SAG) was held in Guwahati, Assam
- Mumbai won Ranji 2016
- India’s **Kumaravel Prem Kumar** has won a silver medal in **long jump** event on the final day of Asian Indoor Athletics Championships held in Doha.
- **West Indies** for the first time has won the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup by defeating three time champions India by five wickets played at Mirpur (Bangladesh).

## INTERNATIONAL

- India and Afghanistan signed an agreement for visa-free travel for diplomatic passport holders of the two countries.
- Japan’s ShinMaywa Industries is planning to set up manufacturing plant of US-2 amphibious aircraft in India under ‘Make in India’ initiative to cater to international demands.
  - Amphibious Aircraft: An aircraft that can land on Water.

- Alphabet Inc., the parent company of Google has overtaken Apple as s most valuable company in the world.
- India and Brunei have signed three Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) to cooperate in the fields of defence, health and youth affairs & sports.
- Major General Jai Shanker Menon of India was appointed as the Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF).
- **12 nations sign historic Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement**
  - 12 Pacific Rim countries have signed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement in Auckland, New Zealand.
  - 12 countries are: Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Canada, United States, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Australia and New Zealand.
  - TPP is Free Trade Area and these member countries across the Pacific Rim are home to 800 million people and account for 40% of global trade.
- India has ratified Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC), 1997 which sets parameters on a nuclear operator's financial liability.
- Benefits:
  - Facilitate and boost India's nuclear commerce with international partners. Contribute to strengthen an international convention and global nuclear liability regime.
- Oscars: Best Picture – Spotlight
- **IMF Reforms: India, China, Brazil, Russia get more voting rights**
  - IMF's long-pending 2010 Quota and Governance Reforms finally become effective in Feb, 2016.
  - These reforms shifted more than 6% of the quota shares to emerging and developing countries from the US and European countries.
  - India's voting rights increased by 0.3% from the current 2.3% to 2.6%. China's voting rights increased from current 3.8% to 6 %.
  - China will have the 3rd largest IMF quota and voting share after the US and Japan. While, India, Russia and Brazil will also be among the top 10 members of the IMF.
- The Union Government has extended e-Tourist Visa Scheme to 37 more countries. With this, the total count of countries under the scheme will become 150.

- Pakistan's Parliament building located in national capital Islamabad became the first in the world to completely run on solar power.
- Christine Lagarde (60) from France was re-appointed as the Managing Director (MD) of the International Monetary Fund for a second five-year term.
- United States International Trade Commission (USITC) has decided to initiate anti-dumping investigations into a certain category of tyres imported from India and Sri Lanka.
- Anti-Dumping Duty:
  - Duty imposed by government on imported products which have prices less than their normal values or domestic price.
- Prasar Bharati has signed a MoU with **Empressa de Brazil Comunicacao** (EBC) in connection with several broadcast related activities including exchange of news, programmes and co-production.
- The first long distance cargo train connecting Iran and China arrived in the Iranian capital city Tehran after starting its journey from China.
  - Passes through Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.
  - It marks the revival the ancient Silk Road and gives impetus to China's ambitious One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative part of revived Silk Road diplomacy.
- The first phase of the world's largest concentrated solar power (CSP) plant was launched in the Souss-Massa-Drâa area in Morocco.
  - **Concentrated Solar Power Plant:** In this plant, sun light is focused or concentrated using mirrors to heat up a liquid mixed with water at around 4000C to produce steam which drives a turbine and generates electrical power.

## JANUARY 2016

### **NATIONAL Current Affairs**

- **Lodha Committee submits recommendation**
- **Why Setup:** To look into IPL-2013 Spot fixing scandal.
- **Recommendations:**
  - Policy of One State – One Member – One Vote
  - Delink IPL & BCCI
  - Three new positions—an ombudsman, an ethics officer and an electoral officer.
  - Bring BCCI under RTI
  - Legalize Betting
  - Form a players association.
- President of India promulgated the Enemy Property (Amendment and Validation) Ordinance, 2016 to make amendments to the **Enemy Property Act, 1968**.
- **What is Enemy Property:**
  - When partition happened in 1947, Union(Central) Government took control of all property/ Companies of such persons who had taken Pakistani nationality and labeled them as Enemy Property.
  - Hence, Central Government was vested as custodian of all such property.
- **Why Ordinance was required?**
  - Ordinance was needed to ensure that law of succession does not apply to such property and they are vested permanently in government control.
- **What is an Ordinance & Why used?**
  - Article 123 of the Constitution empowers President to promulgate (issue) Ordinance when Parliament is not in session (in recess).
  - Similarly, Article 214 of Constitution empowers Governor to promulgate Ordinances.
  - An Ordinance has same force & effect as Act passed by parliament/ State legislature.
  - Ordinance ceases to operate after **6 weeks** reassembly of Parliament/ State legislature.

- Ordinance are issued only on advice of Council of Ministers.
- Government drafted new **TRANSPORT AND ROAD SAFETY BILL, 2015** to reduce road accidents by at least 50%.
- **Aim:**
  - To provide a scientifically planned and evolving framework for the safety of all road users in India, including vulnerable road users.
  - To enable development of a secure, efficient, cost-effective, sustainable and inclusive transport system for movement of passenger and freight in the country
- **Proposes:**
  - Technology up gradation & increase in Funding – safety
  - Motor Vehicle Regulation & Road Safety Authority of India: Independent Authority accountable to Parliament of India.
  - Unified Driving License system based on Biomterics
  - Unfied Vehicle Registration System integrating all stakeholders like manufacturer, owner, transport authority, insurer, and enforcement agency.
  - Creation of National Road Transport & Multimodal Coordination Authority for improving quality of road transportation.
- In NEWS: Road accidents occurring due to Black Spots
- **What are Black Spots:** Road locations that have a record of large numbers of crashes. In simple terms in each area there are few locations where majority of accidents take place.
- **Reason** for Black spots is noncompliance with Road Safety Norms during design, construction and operation of roads including National Highways. Example:
  - Very Sharp-turn at end of straight road.
  - Hidden-junction on fast road etc.
- **Step taken by Government:** A website has been launched where citizens can also identify and submit location of such spots.

- A NEW PORTALS LAUNCHED FOR BRINGING TRANSPARENCY IN ROAD PROJECTS
- **By NHIDCL:** National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation is a fully owned company of the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India, setup to fast-track highways construction in border areas and tough terrains
  - **INAM-PRO:** Procurement of Cement etc.
  - **e-PACE:** Enable people to know about highway projects status, funding and other details.
  - **INFRACON:** all the information about individual consultants and consultation firms.
- A Union government and the World Bank signed a \$50-million credit agreement for **Nai Manzil**
  - Scheme aims at helping young people from **minority communities** complete their **education** and improve their employment opportunities.
  - Launched by the Ministry of Minority Affairs in August 2015
- Centre urged state level and central board schools to consider Open Text Based Assessment (OTBA) at board level after the recommendation of eight-member committee.
- Government has set up a panel headed by **Shyam Benegal** to suggest measures for the revamp of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).
  - **About CBFC:** is a statutory body regulating the public exhibition of films under the provisions of the Cinematograph Act, 1952.
- Berlin based **Transparency International's** Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2015 released on Wednesday shows that India has ranked at 76<sup>th</sup>
  - **Denmark**, least corrupt.
- The Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) has won the National Award on e-Governance 2015-16 for launching the Universal Account Number (UAN).
- Union Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways inaugurated the **River Information System (RIS)** on 06<sup>th</sup>
  - RIS will facilitate safe and accurate navigation on National Waterway – 1 on the Ganges River.

- In a major step towards digitization, the Indian Railways on Monday launched a web-based system to monitor track maintenance on a real-time basis by replacing more than a lakh registers related to it.
- Union government launched Kilkari, a mobile voice message service.
  - This service will deliver weekly messages to families about pregnancy, family planning, nutrition, childbirth and maternal and child care.
- The Department of Pension & Pensioner's welfare has launched online software - '**Anubhav**'.
  - It will showcase the outstanding work by retiring employee and sharing experience of working with the Government.
- Union government has decided to scrap National Development Council.
  - Government also passed a resolution for transferring its powers to the **Governing Council of the NITI Aayog**.
- Union Government has approved the merger of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
  - The primary task of the MOIA was to connect the Indian diaspora with its motherland by initiating various programmes.
- A The Drug Authentication and Verification Application (**DAVA**) project of The **Department of Commerce** has won the 2015 **eASIA Award** under Trade Facilitation category.
  - DAVA is an integrated platform for implementation of the *Track and Trace* system for exporters and domestic markets of Drugs and Pharmaceuticals.
  - Using it drugs can easily be identified and recalled due to traceability of stocks which in turn helps in prevention of black marketing which especially arises during epidemics.
- India's **biggest state owned** gas importer **Petronet LNG** has signed a revised contract with RasGas of Qatar to import gas.
  - New Price 6-7 \$ per million British thermal units (mmBtu). Savings of 4000 Crore.
- Union Government is going to roll out LPG-like Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme for kerosene from 1st April 2016.



- In the initial phase will be implemented in selected 26 districts of eight states. These states are Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan.
- Union Government has constituted a one member-committee comprising of **Kamlesh Chandra** to examine the wage structure, service conditions of the **Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS)** in the Department of Posts (DoP).
  - **Gramin Dak Sevaks:** are extra-departmental agents recruited by the Department of Post to serve in rural areas.
  - Presently, DoP has around 2.6 lakh Gramin Dak Sevaks and they have been demanding pay and facilities at par with regular postal department employees.
- Telangana became first state to legally accept motor vehicle insurance policy in digital form, after state Government launched **e-Vahan Bima Scheme** to issue motor insurance policy in digital form.
  - 4<sup>th</sup> January: World Braille day, birth anniversary of Louis Braille, inventor of Braille script or Braille code.
- NABARD- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development has signed a MOU with *Hyderabad-based* National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) for web-based monitoring of watershed projects.
- Union Government has signed loan agreement with World Bank for **Neeranchal National Watershed Project**
- The loan credit will support the watershed activities of the **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)** in selected sites in 9 states. States include Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Jharkhand, Odisha, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Neeranchal National Watershed Project**
  - Project is implemented by the Union Ministry of Rural Development over a six-year period (2016-21) to achieve objectives PMKSY.
  - Support the PMKSY in hydrology and water management, agricultural production systems, capacity building and monitoring and evaluation.
  - Seeks to ensure access to irrigation to every farmland (*Har Khet Ko Pani*) and for efficient use of water (*Per Drop More Crop*).

- Former Defence Secretary **Radha Krishna Mathur** has been sworn in as the 8<sup>th</sup> Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) of the Central Information Commission.
  - CIC is appointed by President on recommendation selection committee consisting of PM, Leader of largest opposition Party Lok Sabha(Mallikarjun Kharge), Union Finance Minister.
- *Abid Ali Z. Neemuchwala* has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Member of the Board of WIPRO.
- Reserve Bank of India has imposed a monetary penalty of one crore rupees on **State Bank of Travancore**, an SBI associate bank for violation in reporting of data to Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC).
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 103rd edition of the Indian Science Congress (ISC) on January 3, 2016 in *Mysuru, Karnataka*.
  - 2016 theme: “*Science and Technology for Indigenous Development in India.*”
  - In speech PM gave new mantra of 5E’s - “Economy, Environment, Energy, Empathy and Equity”.
- To enhance women representation in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), Union Government has reserved 33 per cent posts of Constables for women.
- Fast growing, harmful species of *snowflake coral* (*Carijoa riisei*) were discovered off the coast of Thiruvananthapuram and Kanyakumari. These can be threat to ecology of the region.
- Jharkhand became first state MoU with Union Government on Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) scheme.
- Reliance Capital Asset Management (RCAM) has received nod from Competition Commission of India (CCI) to acquire Goldman Sachs’s mutual funds and exchange-traded funds business in India.
- Union Government has launched Ganga Gram Yojana to develop 1600 villages in Uttar Pradesh (UP) situated along the banks of Ganga River.
  - The villages shall be developed under the *Sichewal model* (*Village in Punjab*), which is based on cooperation of the villagers for water management and waste disposal.
- Andhra Bank has launched *Immediate Payment Service* (IMPS) to provide inter-bank electronic fund transfer service.

- Maximum cap of 2 Lac and charges per transaction of Rs 5.
- IMPS is a *multi-channel, multi-dimensional* inter-bank electronic fund transfer platform that allows customers to transfer money electronically.
- IMPS is round-the-clock real time instant fund transfer system, a feature not available in NEFT.
- Union Cabinet has approved the **Stand Up India Scheme** to promote entrepreneurship among Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) and Women entrepreneurs.
- Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has decided to implement the stricter emission norms of **Bharat Stage (BS) VI from 1st April 2020** in a bid to curb vehicular pollution.
  - Presently BS-IV auto fuels are being supplied in Northern India States including Punjab, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, parts of Rajasthan and Western UP.
  - Rest of the country is being supplied has BS-III grade fuel.
  - The deadline implementation for BS-IV auto fuels is 2017 across the country.
  - Government has decided to skip BS-V and shift directly to BS-VI.
- Union Cabinet has approved creation of a **Credit Guarantee Fund (CGF)** for Micro Units Development Refinance Agency (**MUDRA**)
  - MUDRA, is a wholly owned subsidiary of SIDBI.
- India's largest private sector lender ICICI Bank has partnered with FINO PayTech to foray into the payments bank space.
- RBI regulations allow universal banks to invest up to 30 per cent in payments bank
- **Payment Banks:**
  - Based on recommendation *Nachiket Mor*
  - Licensed as payments banks under *Section 22 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949* and registered as public limited company under the *Companies Act, 2013*.
  - Minimum Capital required 100 Crore.
  - Deposits by customers capped at 1,00,000 Rs.
  - Cannot undertake lending activities.
  - It can accept Utility Bills.

- Union Government has appointed former IAS *Devender Kumar Sikri* as Chairman of Competition Commission of India (CCI).
- **CCI:**
  - Statutory body established under *The Competition Act of 2002*.
  - Established in 2003 and became fully functional in 2009.
- The 14th edition of Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (PBD) was held in **New Delhi**
  - It is held on 9<sup>th</sup> January to mark return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India i.e. on **9 January, 1915**.
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor **Raghuram Rajan** has been conferred with the Central Banker of the Year Award (Global and Asia Pacific) for year 2016.
  - Awarded by *The Banker*, a monthly publication of Financial Times Group.
- Union Government has reappointed **Dr Urjit Patel** as Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for a second three-year term.
- **Deputy Governors of RBI:**
  - RBI has 4 Deputy Governors.
  - 2 are from outside, a commercial banker (**S. Mundra**) and an economist (**Urjit Patel**)
  - 2 others are promoted from within its ranks. ( **Gandhi & R. Khan**)
- 10<sup>th</sup> January: World Hindi Day
- It is in addition to present **National Hindi Divas**, which is observed annually on 14 September to mark the day **14 September 1949** on which the Constituent Assembly adopted *Hindi written in Devanagari* script as the *Official Language of the Union*.
- Poet Balkrishna Garg conferred with 2015 Harikrishna Devsare Baalsahitya Award
- A Senior IAS officer Sailesh has been appointed as **Registrar General and Census Commissioner (RGCC)** of India.
- **RGCC:**
  - Responsible for conducting the decennial Census.
  - Heads the Census Organization (mentioned in entry 69 of seventh schedule of Constitution) which functions under Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

- Telangana has become the first State in the country to introduce compulsory gender education at the graduate level.
- Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes (CIRB), Hisar, Haryana - successfully produced a cloned buffalo offspring named 'Cirb Gaurav'.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> to do: National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) , Kamal, Haryana did same.
- **January 12: National Youth day**
- To mark birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.
  - Swami Vivekananda was born on 12 January 1863 as Narendranath Dutta and died on 4 July 1902.
  - Gave inspiring speech in World's Religions Parliament held at Chicago in 1893
  - Follower of Ramkrishna Paramhansa
  - Founder Ramakrishna Mission
- Union Government constituted a committee under **Arvind Panagariya**, to fast track the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor.
  - Committee will speed up interaction with Japan, which has promised investment of 78000 Cr in the project.
- IMD Changes definitions related to weather forecasting:
- **Standardization of key terms:**
  - **Severe Cold Wave:** Minimum temperature is 2 degree C or lower.
  - **Cold Wave:** Temperatures less than 4.5 degree C above usual temperatures for the region.
  - **Heat Wave:** Temperatures greater than 4.5 degree C above usual temperatures for the region.
  - **Severe Heat Wave:** Temperatures greater than or equal to 47 degree C.
- **Classification of all-India rainfall into 5 categories:**
  - **Below normal:** Rainfall lower than 10 per cent below average of the lpa.
  - **Normal:**  $\pm 10$  per cent of the long period average (lpa).
  - **Above normal:** Rainfall greater than 10 per cent above average of the lpa.

- **Deficient year:** Rainfall deficit between 10 and 20 per cent up to 40 per cent of India's spatial area.
- **Large deficient year:** Rainfall deficit of over 10 per cent across more than 40 per cent of India's area.
- **Criteria to classify seasonal rainfall**
- The rules have been changed to classify seasonal rainfall.
- IMD has introduced 6 new categories replacing old four rainfall categories (excess, normal, deficient and scanty).
- New categories are:
  - *No Rain:* 0 per cent.
  - *Large deficient:* below 60 per cent
  - *Deficient:* minus 20 per cent to minus 59 per cent.
  - *Normal:* minus 19 per cent to plus 19 per cent;
  - *Excess:* between 20 per cent and 59 per cent.
  - *Large excess:* 60 per cent and above.
- Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has launched the high speed 4G (Fourth Generation) telecom services at Chandigarh in Punjab circle .
  - With this launch, BSNL became 5th telecom service provider in India to launch 4G service after Airtel (1st), Aircel (2nd), Vodafone (3rd) and Reliance Jio (4th).
- Kerala has become the first Indian state to achieve 100 per cent primary education.
  - Scheme behind achievement: *Athulyam Scheme*.
- Lt Gen JFR Jacob, 1971 India-Pakistan war hero passes away: wrote:
  - Books: *Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation*, *An Odyssey in War and Peace: An Autobiography* Lt Gen. J.F.R. Jacob.
- Union Cabinet has approved *Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana*, a new crop insurance scheme to boost farming sector in the country.
  - Farmers need to pay 2% for Kharif & 1.5% for rabi crops.

- Government will pay balance premium to provide full insurance amount to the farmers against crop loss on account of natural calamities.
  - The scheme will replace existing two schemes viz. National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (mNAIS)
- India has decided to become member country of the International Energy Agency – Ocean Energy Systems (IEA-OES) to boost for country's quest for tapping ocean energy sources.
- A State Bank of India (SBI) has launched dedicated specialized branch for start-ups called '**SBI InCube**' in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- Madhya Pradesh has been conferred the Union Government's **Krishi Karman Award** in maximum food grains production category for year 2014-15 for the 4th consecutive year.
- Expert Committee to **simplify income tax laws** headed by Justice (retired)**V. Easwar** has submitted its report to Union Finance Ministry.
- **Sikkim** has formally become India's first fully organic state after it successfully implemented organic farming practices on around 75,000 hectares of agricultural land.
- **National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 4: Phase I data released**
- The NFHS-4 is the fourth in a series of national surveys after 2005-06 (NFHS-3), 1998-99 (NFHS-2) and 1992-93 (NFHS-1). (Details shall be compiled in separate post)
- Union Cabinet approved MOU between Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research (KISR) on cooperation in the exploration of outer space and use of outer space technology for peaceful purposes.
- 19<sup>th</sup> edition of National Conference on e-Governance has begun on 21 January 2016 in Nagpur, Maharashtra.
- 2016 Padma Awards given:
  - Separate Post (On Indian Awards)
- 25<sup>th</sup> January: National Voters Day
- Theme 2016: *Inclusive and Qualitative Participation.*
- *Foundation day of ECI*
- Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Nasim Zaidi also released the book titled Belief in the Ballot and presented the first copy to the President.

- Union Government has launched **Sahaj Scheme** for online booking of LPG cylinders.
- 2016: 150th birth anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai
  - In 1921, he had founded **Servants of the People Society**, a non-profit welfare organisation, in Lahore.
  - He established the nationalistic Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School and became a follower of Dayanand Saraswati (founder of the Arya Samaj).
  - He was also associated with the foundation of Punjab National Bank in 1895 and later Lakshmi Insurance Company
  - Author of *The Story of My Deportation* (1908), *Arya Samaj* (1915), *The United States of America: A Hindu's Impression* (1916), *Unhappy India* (1928)
  - He died on 17 November 1928 after sustaining serious injuries in lathi charge, in a non-violent protest against Simon Commission.
- India has overtaken Thailand as the world's largest rice exporter in the year 2015 by shipping (exporting) 10.23 million tonnes of rice.
- Naresh Bedi has been conferred with the V Shantaram Life Time Achievement Award at 14th edition of 2016 Mumbai International Festival (MIFF), Mumbai.

### SPORTS Current Affairs:

- India won the 2015-South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) championship by beating Afghanistan.
- India's star amputee mountaineer **Arunima Sinha** has successfully scaled **Mount Aconcagua in Argentina** as part of her Mission 7 Summits.
- 4 already climbed include: *Everest (Asia)*, *Mt. Kilimanjaro (Africa)*, *Mt. Elbrus (Europe)*, *Mt. Kosizko (Australia)*
- Former Cricketer *Syed Kirmani* was honoured with the *Col CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award* in Mumbai (Maharashtra) for his contribution to Indian cricket.
  - Cottari Kanakaiya Nayudu was country's first Test captain.



- Indian **ace shooter Apurvi Chandela** has set a new world record in the women's 10 metre air rifle event at the 2015 Swedish Cup Grand Prix.
- Ace Indian tennis player **Sania Mirza and her Swiss partner Martina Hingis** have won the 2016 WTA Brisbane International Tennis trophy in the women's doubles category.
- The first female F1 (Formula One) driver Maria Teresa de Filippis passed away on 8 January 2016 in Italy.
- Barcelona FC forward Lionel Messi from Argentina has won the 2016 FIFA Ballon d'Or Award.

### DEFENCE & SCIENCE Current Affairs:

- Anti-submarine warfare (ASW) corvette INS Kadmat has been commissioned in the Indian Navy by Chief of the Naval Staff *Admiral R K Dhowan* at naval dockyard in Visakhapatnam
  - It is the second ship of Project 28 (P28) class ASW corvettes and is the latest ship after Shivalik class, Kolkata class and INS Kamorta.
- India and France have started their eight-day counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency bilateral military exercise Shakti-2016 in Rajasthan.
- Bilateral exercise by the Indian Coast Guard and its Japanese counterpart titled '**Sahayog-Kaijin 2016**' began off the coast of Chennai, Tamil Nadu in the Bay of Bengal.
- The indigenously-built 3<sup>rd</sup> generation anti-tank missile Nag was successfully test fired at Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan.
  - **Range:** 500m to 4km (Land version), 7-10km (Air-launched).
  - **Guidance system:** Incorporated with advanced Active Imaging infra-red (IIR) seeker.
- 15<sup>th</sup> January: Indian Army day
- **Significance:**
  - In 1949, on this day, Lt. General (later Field Marshal) **Kodandera Madappa Cariappa** became the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army
- ISRO launched India's fifth navigation Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System (IRNSS) 1E satellite.

- Launched on board of PSLV-C31 rocket from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SHAR), Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
- Indian Regional Navigation Satellite system (IRNSS)
  - Constellation of 7 satellites of which 3 are geostationary and 4 are non-geostationary.
  - Alternative to GPS system, presently used for navigation.
- Scientists have discovered a new bird species named Himalayan Forest Thrush in northeastern India and adjacent parts of China.
- Ace Indian **Shuttler** Puserla Venkata **Sindhu** (World No.12) has won the 2016 Malaysia Masters Grand Prix **Gold Badminton**
- **Marvin Minsky**, the pioneer of artificial intelligence passed away on 24 January 2016 in Boston, United States due to cerebral hemorrhage. He was 88.
- Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has signed cyber security agreement with its counterparts in Malaysia, Singapore and Japan.
  - CERT-In is nodal department under **Union Ministry of Communications and Information Technology** that deals with cyber security threats like hacking and phishing in India. Headquarters: New Delhi.

### INTERNATIONAL Current Affairs:

- An Indian-origin cancer research expert Harpal Singh Kumar was honoured with a Knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II for his influential work on prevention and treatment of cancer.
- India and Pakistan exchanged the list of their nuclear installations and facilities as part of the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear installations. This exchange is done on 1<sup>st</sup> of January every year and prohibits them from attacking each other's nuclear facilities.
- A friendship bus service between India and Nepal was flagged off via Champawat district in Uttarakhand after a gap of 27 years.
  - Why was service suspended: Bus Service was suspended 27 years back in the wake of the **Indo-Nepal Trade and Transit Treaty**.

- Union cabinet has approved MOU with Bangladesh for Mode of Operation of **Border Haats** on India-Bangladesh Border signed in 2010.
  - Border Haats: Small rural market along border.
- United Nations (UN) official *Filippo Grandi* from Italy has taken the charge as new UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
- UNHCR is a United Nations agency mandated to protect and support refugees. It is a member of the United Nations Development Group.
  - Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland.
  - Established: December 14, 1950.
- Union Cabinet has approved MOU between India and Singapore on cooperation in the field of civil aviation.
- The British writer, Kate Atkinson has won the 2015 Costa novel award for her novel “**A God in Ruins**”.
- Chinese President Xi Jinping has formally opened **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** in Beijing (HQ).
  - AIIB is backed by China and is seen as rival to World Bank & Asian Development Bank.
  - 57 members, of which 37 are regional and 20 non-regional Prospective Founding Members (PFM).
  - Authorized Capital: 100 Billion US dollars.
  - China Largest, India 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - India's **Dinesh Sharma** has been elected to the board of directors of the China-sponsored Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).
- Important note: BRICS bank is different, **New Development Bank**. – its HQ is Shanghai, China.
- Pro-Independence Opposition candidate of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) **Tsai Ing-wen** (59) has been elected as first female and 14th President of Taiwan.
- Indian writer **Anuradha Roy** has won the on the prestigious \$50,000 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature for her novel ‘*Sleeping on Jupiter*’.

- United States removed a wide range of nuclear sanctions against Iran after it has meet its commitments to roll back its nuclear programme.
- - These sanctions were lifted after International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed that Iran has met its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPA) or **Vienna agreement** with P5+1 countries signed in July 2015.
- India ranked 89th globally in Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) 2015-16 list of 106 assessed countries in terms of talent competitiveness of its human capital.
  - INSEAD business school, in partnership with Adecco and Human Capital Leadership Institute of Singapore (HCLI), compiled the GTCI list.
- Union Cabinet approved MOU between India and United Kingdom for Cooperation in the field Public Administration and Governance Reforms.
- The annual World Economic Forum (WEF) meeting was held in Swiss resort of **Davos, Switzerland**
  - WEF established in 1971, HQ: Geneva , Switzerland
- The first Ministerial Meeting of **Arab-India Cooperation** Forum was held Manama, capital city of Bahrain.

## DECEMBER 2015

### NATIONAL:

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has adopted a resolution to designate 5th November every year as World Tsunami Awareness Day.
- **1st December** - World Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Day.
  - Theme for year 2015 is 'Getting to zero, End AIDS by 2030'.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> December:** International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)
  - Theme 2015: *Inclusion matters: access and empowerment for people of all abilities.*
- **10 December:**
  - Human Rights Day is celebrated on **10th December** to commemorate the day in 1948 when the United Nations (UN) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
  - The theme chosen for the year 2015 HRD is 'Our Rights. Our Freedoms. Always'.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> December is observed as National Mathematics Day to celebrate birth anniversary of great Indian autodidact Mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- In India, 24th December is being observed as National Consumer Day. On this day the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 had received the assent of the President.
- In India, National Good Governance Day is being observed every year on 25th December on the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna recipient Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

- 2014: Government relaxed norms to 100% FDI in railways.
  - Dec 2015: Indian Railways signed 40,000 crore rupees contracts with General Electrics (GE) and Alstom to set up two locomotive plants in Bihar.
- President Pranab Mukherjee has given his assent to Maharashtra Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2015 of Maharashtra government to allow women to work in factories in night shifts
- **Maharashtra** is the biggest economy among the states in India, as per latest report published by credit rating agency Brickwork Ratings.
- Union Cabinet approved introduction of Regional Centre for Biotechnology Bill, 2015, which aims for establishment of a Regional Centre for Biotechnology (RCB) in **Faridabad, Haryana** and provide a legal status to the Centre.
- Union Cabinet approved proposal of setting up of 6 new Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in - Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala and Karnataka.
- Union Government is going to allow **e-Postal Ballot System** and Proxy voting to Overseas electors as an alternative voting option.
- Lok Sabha passed **The Bureau of Indian Standards Bill, 2015** to establish Bureau of Indian Standards (**BIS**).
  - The Bill replaces the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986 and establishes BIS as a national standard body for development of standardization and assessment and quality assurance of goods, articles, services, processes and systems.
- Union Government has released a commemorative postage stamp to mark the Centenary year of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI).
  - Head Quarter: Kolkata
  - Deals with Animal taxonomy, publishes Red Data Book on Indian Animals.
- Plants kingdom taken care by Botanical Survey of India HQ: Kolkata Both Come under MOEFCC – Ministry of environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Uttar Pradesh Government launched **International festival on Birds** to promote state as an international bird-watching destination.
- **Himachal Pradesh** became the first state India to start Rotavirus vaccination project under the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP).

- Rotavirus is a genus of **double-stranded RNA virus** in the family Reoviridae. It is the most common causative agent of moderate-to-severe **diarrhoea** (MSD) among infants, below 11 months age group in India. Rotavirus vaccine, help children immunize against diarrhea.
- The Delhi Assembly has unanimously passed the Delhi Jan Lokpal Bill, 2015 for establishment of statutory anti-corruption ombudsman.
- Union Government launched **Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan** (Accessible India Campaign), a nationwide campaign in a bid to achieve universal accessibility to persons with disabilities.
  - Priority: Making Railway Stations, International Airports, at least 10% of government owned public transport carriers, and at-least 50% for issuing all public documents by Centre and state compatible for use by disabled persons.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has released 2 commemorative coins on Dr B R Ambedkar as part of the 125<sup>th</sup> (1891) birth anniversary year celebrations
- **Maharashtra** legislature has become the **first** in the country to launch an online mechanism to send questions and move different motions in the House by its members.
  - The state government launched a website [mls.org.in](http://mls.org.in) as part of **Digital MLAs initiative** in the winter session of state legislature in Nagpur.
- Lok Sabha has passed The High Court and the Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2015
  - To note: Salaries etc of Judges of HC/SC decide by Parliament.
- Parliament passed the Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Bill, 2015. The bill seeks to amend The Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 in order to make cheque-bounce filing of cases more convenient for check payees (person who receives the cheque).
  - Note: Cheque is negotiable instrument.
  - Other Negotiable Instruments:
    - Promissory note.
    - Bill of Exchange
- **Pune and Rajkot** have become the new interim franchises in the Indian Premier League (IPL) through the reverse bidding process
- Indian-American entrepreneur and philanthropist Frank Islam (63) has been selected for the prestigious 2015 Uttar Pradesh Ratna Award.

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved creation of buffer stock of pulses to deal with wide fluctuation in prices of pulses and check food inflation.
- Union Cabinet chaired approved amendments in The National Waterways Bill, 2015.
  - Inclusion of 106 new waterways hence, total national waterways now is 111, from 5.
  - Note: As per Entry 24 of the **Union List** of the 7th Schedule of the Constitution, Union Government is empowered to make laws on shipping and navigation on inland waterways, which are classified as national waterways by Parliament.
- December 2015: Tamil Naidu – Floods because of North-Eastern Monsoon.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released *On My Terms: From the Grassroots to the Corridors of Power*, an autobiography of former Union Minister Sharad Pawar.
- Union Government has imposed anti-dumping duty on import of cold-rolled flat products of stainless steel for 5 years from 7 countries. Countries included are China, South Korea, United States, South Africa, Thailand and Taiwan and the European Union.
- Two Indian cities for first time have been designated as members of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (UCCN).
- **Varanasi City (Uttar Pradesh):** Added in the City of Music category of network. **Jaipur City (Rajasthan):** Added in the City of Crafts and Folk Art category of network.
- Union Government inks MoU for establishing (Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIITs) at Ranchi, Nagpur & Pune.
- Public-private-partnership(PPP) model.
- India and Japan have signed historic Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) to introduce High Speed Rail (HRS) on Mumbai Ahmedabad track.
- Technology: Shinkansen Technology.
- National Green Tribunal (NGT) has ordered ban on registration of new diesel-run vehicles in Delhi to curb the growing menace of air pollution in the capital city.
- Legendary actor Dilip Kumar (93) has been conferred with the prestigious Padma Vibhushan.
- The festival of Losar has begun in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir to mark the beginning of New Year



- Union Government has appointed former Chief Justice of Patna High Court Justice L **Narasimha Reddy** as head judicial committee on One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme. The committee will look into implementation of OROP.
- Rajasthan has become the first state in the country to submit smart city plans for three selected cities (Udaipur, Ajmer, Kota) to Union Government.
- India has been placed at 130th position in the 2015 Human Development Index (HDI) among the 188 countries.
  - Life Expectancy: 68 years
  - Gross National Income (GNI)/Capita = 5497\$
  - Expected years of Schooling= 11.6 years
  - Mean years of schooling = 5.4 years
  - Gender Development Index (GDI): is 0.795 in 2014.
  - Gender Inequality Index (GII): India rank at 130th position with value of 0.563.
- The World Bank has approved a 1.5 billion dollars loan to support the Union government's flagship cleanliness drive Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM).
- Funds shall be used to develop Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS) infrastructure.
- The Supreme Court has appointed Justice (Retd) Virendra Singh as new Lokayukta of Uttar Pradesh.
- Former Delhi High Court Judge Reva Khetrapal took oath as Lokayukta of Delhi. Lieutenant Governor Najeeb Jung administered the oath to office at a function held at Raj Niwas.
- The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has launched three separate indices on three corporate houses of India viz. Tata, Aditya Birla and Mahindra Group i.e Nifty Tata group Index, Nifty Aditya Birla Group Index & Nifty Mahindra Group Index.
- Former Defence Secretary **Radha Krishna Mathur** (62) has been appointed as Chief Information Commissioner (CIC).
- Sahitya Akademi Award is conferred on writers of outstanding works in one of the twenty-four major Indian languages (22 Scheduled Languages+ English and Rajasthani). – 2015 Awards announced.
- Uttar Pradesh government has decided to enforce the ban on the use of polythene across the state to protect the environment and public health.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has formally inaugurated the All-India conference of Directors General of Police (AICDGPs) at **Dhordo in white Rann of Kutch** region near Bhuj, Gujarat.
- India's biggest Wildlife Rescue Centre named as **Gorewada Zoo and Wildlife Rescue Centre** has been commissioned at Gorewada near Nagpur, Maharashtra.
- President Pranab Mukherjee has been awarded 2015 Garwood Award for Outstanding Global Leader in Open Innovation from UC Berkeley-Haas School of Business.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off first prototype pollution free electric bus for Members of Parliament.
- India has joined select club nations to build Liquefied natural gas (LNG) ships after state owned Cochin Shipyard has received certification in this regard.
- Parliament has passed Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill, 2015 for trying juveniles as adults.
  - The bill allows trying of juveniles between the ages of 16 and 18 years as adults for heinous offences.
- Senior IAS officer Pawan Kumar Agarwal has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Food Regulator Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Head Quarter – New Delhi
- Union Government has launched two mobile applications namely *Crop Insurance* and *AgriMarket* Mobile to benefit farmers
- Union Government has adopted the strategy of developing integrated industrial/economic corridors across the country. Industrial Corridors:
  - Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC):
  - Chennai-Bengaluru IC
  - Mumbai-Bengaluru IC
  - Vizag-Chennai IC
  - Amritsar-Kolkata IC
- North India's first cable-stayed bridge named **Atal Setu** was inaugurated on Dunera-Basohli-Bhadharwah road in Basohali town in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir.
- State-run Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has emerged as the country's biggest company in terms of annual revenue as per an annual list of 2015 Fortune 500 companies in India.

- Tech Mahindra has launched first of its kind 'Tap N Pay' contactless digital payment wallet **MoboMoney** for the Indian masses.
- India's first commercial NFC ecosystem rollout - NFC (Near Field Communication) - short-range high frequency wireless communication technology – range 10 cm.
- Union Government brings 376 drugs under the NLEM
  - Essential medicines – drugs that satisfy the priority health care needs of the country's population.
  - National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) under the Union Ministry of Chemical and Fertiliser decides the ceiling prices essential medicines under The Drug (Prices Control) Order 2013.
- Senior IAS officer **Amitabh Kant** has been given additional charge as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog.
- The Union Civil Aviation Ministry has given clearance for four greenfield airports in two states. Of the total four approved greenfield airports, three will be in Andhra Pradesh (Bhogapuram , Nellore, Kurnool) and one at international airport at Dholera in Gujarat.
- Eminent Sarangi player, Ustad Sabri Khan – passed away.

## DEFENCE:

- 44th Navy Day was observed on 4 December 2015
- Why 4<sup>th</sup> December – to commemorate success of the Operation Trident of 1971 India-Pakistan War where Indian Navy sank three Pakistani vessels near Pakistani port of Karachi.
- The eighth edition of **India-Russia joint naval exercise-INDRA NAVY-15** has begun in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- **Israel** has successfully tested Arrow ballistic missile Weapon System as part of Anti-missile shield. Arrow functions at exo-atmospheric level (high altitude) whereas Iron-dome functions at low altitude.
- Pakistan has successfully test-fired nuclear-capable Shaheen-III ballistic missile.
  - Type: Surface-to-Surface
  - Medium Range (2750 Kms)

- Warhead: Conventional
- Few days later, Pakistan has successfully tested the nuclear-capable Shaheen-IA ballistic missile with a range of 900 km.
- Combined Commanders Conference, an annual tri-services event chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was held on board **INS Vikramaditya** about 50 kms off Kochi coast. This is the first time when the conference was held outside New Delhi.
- Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has cleared the purchase of Russian advance S-400 Trium Air Defence Missile Systems at an estimated cost of 40,000 crore rupees.
- DRDO successfully tested crucial anti-jamming capability of the Astra missile.

## SPORTS:

- Australia has won the 2014-15 Men's Hockey World League Final by defeating Belgium. India – 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- India's star **golfer Anirban Lahiri** has won the coveted Order of Merit crown of Asian Tour for year 2015.
- Olympic medallist **Vijay Kumar** of Indian Army has won gold medal at the 59th National **Shooting** Championship held in New Delhi.
- **Apurvi Chandela** from Rajasthan has won a Gold medal in the 59th National **Shooting** Championship in Delhi.
- Chennaiyin FC has won the second edition of Indian Super League (ISL) Football tournament.
  - India's former wicket-keeper batsman Syed Kirmani has been nominated for prestigious BCCI-instituted Col. C.K. Nayudu (India's first test captain) Lifetime Achievement Award 2015.
- Indian **luger Shiva Keshavan** has won a silver medal at the 2015 Asian Luge Championship held in Nagano, Japan.
  - Note: Luge is one of the three Olympic sliding sports. It is the fastest and most dangerous sports on ice and is part of Winter Olympic program since 1964.
- Gujarat has won the 14th season of prestigious Vijay Hazare Cricket Trophy for season 2015–16 for first time in its history of championship. Government of India has constituted All India Council

of Sports (AICS) headed by Prof V.K. Malhotra as its President in the rank of Minister of State. The salient aims & objectives of the Council are as follows:

- Popularising sports amongst youth as a way of life;
- increasing outreach of sports to rural and tribal areas, and areas affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE), North East and Jammu & Kashmir;
- matters relating to promotion of inclusiveness in sports with special focus on women, differently-abled, tribals, etc.;
- preventing drug abuse in sports, fraud of age and sexual harassment of women in sports;
- early identification of sports talent and nurturing of the identified talent; and
- Integration of sports in educational curriculum in schools, colleges and universities

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- India and France have launched International Solar Alliance (ISA) at the Conference of Parties (CoP21) Climate Conference in Paris, France.  
**CoP22: Marrakech, Morocco -2016**
- Union Cabinet has approved an agreement with **Germany** to expand bilateral cooperation in the field of solar energy between both countries.
- The World Bank has launched a \$500 million dollars **Transformative Carbon Asset Facility (TCAF)** to help developing countries pay for emission reductions and combat climate change.
- First India International Science Festival (IISF) was organized at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Delhi campus.
- The South Western Railways (SWR) Zone with headquarters in Hubli, Karnataka has introduced **biodiesel for trains**, operating under its zone.
- Biodiesel is a green fuel obtained from crops such as sugarcane, cassava, corn, potato, beetroot and recently from grapes, banana and dates etc.
- China has granted a license for production of first manned two seater electric aircraft **RX1E** known as RX1E by the Civil Aviation Administration of China.
- Scientists have genetically modified malaria-causing mosquito *Anopheles gambiae* species to fight the deadly disease of malaria.

- Mosquito species *Anopheles gambiae* are the major carrier of dangerous malaria parasites in sub-Saharan Africa region where 90 per cent of annual malaria deaths occur.
- Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has bagged a United States military contract for research and development (R&D) on solar powered micro-grid with battery and super capacitor energy storage system.
- Global software major **Wipro** has been awarded 2015 Aegis Graham Bell Award for developing a solution for the Internet of Things (IoT).
- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully placed six commercial satellites from Singapore in their dedicated orbits.
- ISRO launches other country satellite as commercial service through Antrix Corporation, the commercial arm of ISRO
- Union Government has given in principle approval to work on **Loon project** of Google for providing Internet connectivity by using large balloons in remote and rural areas.

## INTERNATIONAL:

- Roch Marc Christian Kabore elected as president of Burkina Faso
  - Burkina Faso: Land-locked country in Africa, Capital : Ouagadougou
- International Monetary Fund (IMF) included **China's Yuan** into its elite reserve currency basket mainly used as an international reserve asset with an effect from 1st October 2016.
  - **Chinese Yuan** also known as **Renminbi** will be the fifth currency along with the US Dollar, British Pound, Japanese Yen and Euro.
- Beijing, China hosted the first Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS)
- Union Cabinet has approved signing and ratification of a protocol between **India and Japan** for amending the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC).
- India and South Korea ink MoU on taxation treaty
- Union Cabinet has approved MoU between **India and Israel** in the field of water resources management and development cooperation.
- Union Cabinet approved Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on cooperation between India and United Kingdom in the energy sector.

- Union Cabinet approved Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa) countries for energy conservation.
- Australia's Federal Parliament has passed Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill, 2015 to strip citizenship of convicted persons on terrorism charges.
- Chinese President Xi Jinping has announced a 60 billion dollars package to African nations during the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Canada has successfully sent the first consignment of 250 tonnes of uranium to India as part of bilateral civil nuclear cooperation between both countries.
- **Singapore** has replaced Mauritius as the top source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India during the first half of the current fiscal year 2015-16.
- Iran has successfully carried out test of medium range **Ghadr-110** ballistic missile near the **Chabahar**, a port city in southeast of country along the **Gulf of Oman**.
  - Note: India helping Iran in developing Chabahar Port.
- Fifth edition of 'Heart of Asia' conference, an annual regional gathering of Asian and other countries held in Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Time magazine has named German Chancellor **Angela Merkel** as Person of the Year 2015.
- Global Financial Integrity's (GFI's) Illicit Financial Flows from Developing Countries: 2004-2013 Report – revealed India has 4<sup>th</sup> largest Black money outflow.
- Mexico Government has approved world's first-ever Dengue fever vaccine branded as **Dengvaxia** for the public use.
- Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet (NDQ) has been awarded prestigious 2015 Nobel Peace Prize at a ceremony held in Oslo, Norway.
- India-born author Salman Rushdie has been awarded the prestigious 2015 Mailer Prize for Lifetime Achievement.
- Myanmar launched the country's first UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Inle Lake in Shan state.
- COP 21 adopts historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change
  - Mandates all Countries to keep global temperature rising below 2°C by 2100 above pre-industrial levels with an ideal target of keeping temperature rise below 1.5°C.

- Developed countries to provide 100 billion dollars annually to the developing counterparts beginning in 2020 and it would increase with time.
- Ground breaking ceremony of 1800-kilometre-long Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project was held at the ancient city of Mary of Turkmenistan.
- Typhoon Melor (also known as Nona) has hit the central Philippines
- 2015 - World Trade Organisation (WTO) Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya.
- Afghanistan has become 164th member nation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), global trade body after 11 years of negotiations.
- The United States (US) Senate has ratified reforms in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to boost the representation of emerging economies as part of a budget bill.
  - The reforms deal with 2010 Quota Reforms and now it will go to President Barack Obama for assent.
- The United States (US) has lifted a 40 year ban on oil exports marking a historic shift for the booming US oil industry.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the reconstruction and completion of Salma Dam Project in Afghanistan at the Revised Cost Estimates (RCE) of 1775.69 crore rupees.
- Salma Dam: on the upper reaches of Hari Rud River in Herat province of western Afghanistan.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the new building of Afghanistan Parliament in the capital city Kabul built by India.
- Seychelles government allowed India to build its first Naval Base on the Assumption Island in the Indian Ocean region (IOR) as a joint project between both countries.
- China has officially abandoned its One Child Policy amid deepening demographic crisis of shrinking workforce and aging population in the world's second largest economy.
- India has emphasised to Iran for early completion of all necessary procedures for its participation in the **Farzad-B gas** field worth 5 billion US dollars.
- World Health Organization (WHO), a UN health agency has declared Guinea Ebola-free after no new cases were reported.
- Russia's Rostech State Corporation has signed one billion US dollar deal with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to manufacture 200 Kamov 226T light helicopters. These helicopters



will be manufactured under make in India initiative and shall replace the ageing fleet of Cheetah and Chetak helicopters.

- China has successfully launched its most sophisticated observation satellite Gaofen-4, as part of the country's high-definition (HD) earth observation Gaofen project
- The Union Cabinet has given its approval to sign Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia.
  - MoU - also called as the 'Raptor MoU' under the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) and is not legally binding on signatory parties.

## NOVEMBER 2015

### NATIONAL:

- Union Government announced **Draft Aviation Policy 2015** aimed at popularizing air travel among the people in the country.
  - Aims to improve air connectivity among the smaller cities and aims to bring India to 3<sup>rd</sup> position from the current 10<sup>th</sup> position in the global aviation sector.
- Archeologist **V.N. Mishra**, who did excavations at the world heritage site of Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh and the 6,000-year-old site of Balathal in Rajasthan, passed away.
- India was placed at **7th position** in world's **most valuable nation brands** report among the 100 assessed nations.
- Indian Railways has launched **Vikalp scheme** to facilitate waitlisted passengers to get an alternative train accommodation.
  - No extra charges, but need to opt for scheme while booking
- Facebook has partnered with the state-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) for setting up 100 wi-fi (Wireless Fidelity) sites in rural India.
- Hero MotoCorp patriarch **Brijmohan Lall Munjal** passed away in New Delhi.
- Supreme Court has ruled that a daughter's right to ancestral property does not arise if the father died before **Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005** came into force in 2005. The Judgment invalidates any retrospective effect of Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005.
- All India Radio's (AIR's) Programme on child labour titled **Nilkkam Ivarkkoppam** has won the first prize at the 2015 Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Prize ceremony.

- Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Indian Premier League (IPL) Sundar Raman has resigned from his position.
  - Why: name came up in IPL Spot fixing Scandal.
  - Trivia: **Supreme Court** appointed **Mudgal Committee** to look into IPL Spot fixing scandal.
- Maharashtra Government has approved **APJ Abdul Kalam Amrut Yojna** scheme to provide one full hot cooked nutritious food to pregnant, lactating women in the tribal areas.
- Justice **T S Thakur (63)** will be next Chief Justice of India. His name has been recommended by current CJI Justice Dattu.
- National Green Tribunal (NGT) has banned age-old agricultural practice of straw burning in pollution-ravaged New Delhi and 4 northern western states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
  - Straw is burn bi-annually by farmers post harvesting crop.
- As on 31.10.2015, cumulative capacity of about 38 GW of grid-interactive renewable energy capacity has been installed in the country. The Government has up-scaled the target of renewable energy capacity to 175 GW by the year 2022 which includes 100 GW from solar, 60 GW from wind, 10 GW from bio-power and 5 GW from small hydro-power.
- Union Cabinet has given its nod **Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojna (UDAY)** for financial restructuring of debt of power distribution companies.
  - How: Allows power DISCOMs in selected states to convert their debt into state bonds as well as roll out number of measures to improve efficiency at power plants.
- CCEA hikes MSP for major Rabi crops including wheat, gram and pulses

- Important is: That CCEA (Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs) Chaired by PM, looks into MSP of wheat, gram and pulses.
- Union Government has launched three gold related scheme viz:
  - **Gold Monetization Scheme (GMS),**
  - What: Give option to resident Indians to deposit their precious metal and earn an interest on it. *Tagline: Earn, while you secure.*
  - **Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme (SGBS)**
  - What: To reduce demand of physical gold seeks to shift part of physical gold in form of bars and coins for investment into Demat (Dematerialised) gold bonds. These gold bonds are interest bearing and will be payable in terms of grams of gold. *Scheme tagline: Invest wisely. Earn Safely.*
  - **Indian Gold Coins (IGC):**
  - What: Gold coins that bear national emblem Ashok Chakra on one side and Mahatma Gandhi's engraved image on the other side.
  - Denomination 5/10 Grams.
- President Pranab Mukherjee launched Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (**IMPRINT**) India to boost research in the country. The initiative is a joint venture of Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).
  - Objective: Identify areas of immediate relevance that requires innovation in the society and perform direct scientific research in the identified areas.
- Every year 9th November is celebrated as the **National Legal Services Day (NLSD)** in India to spread awareness for ensuring reasonable fair and justice procedure for all citizens. Lok Adalats are organized on this day throughout the nation. National Legal Services Day (NLSD) was first started by Supreme Court of India in 1995 to provide *help and support to poor and weaker sections of the society.*

- Indigenously developed Communication satellite GSAT-15 of Indian Space Research Organisation was successfully launched from the spaceport of Kourou in French Guiana.
  - GSAT-15 carried 24 communication transponders in Ku-band along with GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation (GAGAN) payload operating in L1 and L5 bands. It is the 3rd satellite to carry GAGAN payload after GSAT-8 and GSAT-10 which already are providing navigation services from orbit.
- President Pranab Mukherjee has given his assent to the **Haryana Gauvansh Sanrakshan and Gausamvardhan Bill, 2015** or **Haryana Cow Protection Bill, 2015**. Thus, with the presidential assent the bill has come into force in the form of a law (Act). It completely bans cow slaughter, sale of beef and beef products in Haryana. It also has provisions for rigorous imprisonment and penalty for violators.
- Annual Hundred Drums **Wangala Festival** has begun on a cultural fervor at Asanang near Tura town in Meghalaya. Post-harvest festival of garo tribes of NE.
- Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has opened country's first Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) outlet at AIIMS in New Delhi to sell drugs at highly discounted rates.
- Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has declared Naga militant outfit National Socialist Council of Nagaland (**Khaplang**) formally known as NSCN (K) as a terrorist organization.
  - Union Government signed peace accord with NSCN (IM) – (Isak-Muivah)
- Union Government has approved **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)** Action Plans for 81(later 102) cities in 5 states with total project outlay of 5,748 crore rupees.

5 states are Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand & Odisha

  - Under AMRUT, Union Government provides an assistance of 50 % of project cost for cities with a population of up to 10 lakhs each and 1/3 of project cost for cities with a population

of above 10 lakhs each. Rest of the project cost is borne by the states and urban local bodies.

- Funds shall be used to enhance basic infrastructure including water supply and sewerage connections.
- Union Cabinet chaired has approved setting up of a National Resource Facility for Bio-medical Research (NARF) at **Genome Valley in Hyderabad, Telangana**.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has decided to pay a production-linked subsidy of Rs 4.50 per quintal directly to sugarcane farmers in the current crushing season.
  - (Important is who decides production subsidy: ie CCEA)
- Tata Steel has commissioned the first phase of its integrated steel plant at **Kalinganagar steel plant in Jajpur** district of Odisha. Largest green-field project of the country.
- The second World Congress on Disaster Management (WCDM) took place in **Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**.
- The United Nations High Commissioner for **Refugees** (UNHCR) has been chosen for the prestigious 2015 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development.
- Union Government has launched the Technology Acquisition and Development Fund (**TADF**) under the National Manufacturing Policy (NMP), 2011.
  - Will facilitate Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) to acquire clean, green and energy efficient technologies.
- **Harshavardhan Neotia** has been elected as the President of industry body Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (**FICCI**).

- Assam new railine: Silchar-Lumding broad gauge rail line – inaugurated.
- Uttar Pradesh government's ambitious *Clean UP, Green UP* initiative has earned itself a place in the Guinness Book of World Records. Under state government's green drive initiative 10 lakh saplings were planted in one day within a span of eight hours on November 7, 2015 at 10 locations in the state.
- HRD Ministry has constituted a 13 member expert committee on Sanskrit in its attempt to revive interest in the ancient Indian classical language Sanskrit. It will be headed by former chief election commissioner (CEC) **N Gopalaswami**.
- The deadline for completion of flagship Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) for rural connectivity through all- weather roads from **2022 to 2019**.
- Every year on 25th November is observed as International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (IDEVAW) across the world.
- Every year 26 November is being observed as National Milk Day (NMD) to mark birth anniversary Father of the White Revolution Dr.Vergheese Kurien.
- Delhi Assembly Delhi (Right of Citizen to Time Bound Delivery of Services) Amendment Bill, 2015 aimed at providing citizens with time bound delivery of Government services.
- Liquor consumption prohibited now in Bihar (latest), Gujarat (1958), Nagaland (1989), Manipur (1991) and Kerala (2014) and Union Territory of Lakshadweep.
- Union Government has decided to advance the date for implementation of Bharat Stage (BS) V (2019) and BS VI emission (2012) norms for **four-wheelers** in order to reduce vehicular air pollution from road transport sector.

- BS: Bharat Stage norms
- Presently: BS-IV = Euro 4 issued from 2015 (63 cities till 1 April 2015)
- Committee on BS norms: Saumitra Chaudhri Committee.
- Tribal Advisory Council (TAC) has been established in the States having Scheduled Areas namely **Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan** and Telangana. Besides, two other States viz, **Tamil Nadu and West Bengal**, have also set up TAC.
- Part B of the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution provides for establishing a TAC in each State having Schedule Areas and also in any State having Schedule Tribes but not Schedule Areas.
- The Central Statistics Office (**CSO**) in Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation releases the estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare launched the injectable Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV). This injection will be given along with 3<sup>rd</sup> dose of Oral vaccines that are already given.

### SPORTS:

- **Sania Mirza (India) and Martina Hingis (Switzerland)** has won the 2015 BNP Paribas World Tennis Association (WTA) Finals Women's double category.
- **New Zealand** won the **2015 Rugby World Cup** for record third time by defeating Australia.
- Ace **Indian shooter, Heena Sidhu** has won Gold medal in 10 metre Air Pistol event in women's category at 13th Asian Shooting Championships held in Kuwait.
- Shuttler **Saina Nehwal** has won silver medal at 2015 China Open Superseries Premier **Badminton** tournament



- Indian cueist **Pankaj Advani** won the 2015 IBSF World **Snooker** Championship.
- World number one **Novak Djokovic from Serbia** has become the first **tennis player** to win the ATP World Tour Finals for record fourth consecutive time.
- Young Indian **shuttler Siril Verma** has won silver medal at the prestigious 2015 BWF World Junior **badminton** Championships.
- Former world long jump champion **Anju Bobby George** was appointed as the Chairperson of Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) by Union Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs. TOPS is formulated under the National Sports Development Fund (NSDF) with an objective of identifying and supporting potential medal prospects sportspersons for 2016 and 2020 Olympic Games.
  - The focused disciplines under this scheme are Boxing, Athletics, Badminton, Archery, Wrestling and Shooting.
- Australia and New Zealand created history by playing first day-night Test match at the *Adelaide Oval Cricket Stadium* with a pink *Kookaburra ball*.
- Andy Murray led Great Britain have won the 2015 Davis Cup for first time since 1936
- Indian boxer **Shiva Thapa** has attained second rank in the latest international rankings of boxing in the 56-kilogram category.

### DEFENCE:

- Captain **Krishna Swaminathan** has assumed charge as the second Commanding Officer (CO) of Indian Navy's new and formidable aircraft carrier **INS Vikramaditya**.

- INS Vikramaditya is a Kiev class aircraft carrier which was commissioned by Russian Navy in 1987 under the name Baku and later was rechristened as Admiral Gorshkov.
- **BrahMos** supersonic cruise missile was successfully test fired from on board of guided missile destroyer INS Kochi off the western coast.
- **Brahmos Fact file:**
  - Stage: 2 Stage (1: Solid Propellant, 2: Liquid ramjet)
  - Range: Upto 290 Km
  - Operates on Fire & Forget principle: Once target is set & fired, it searches its own route to hit target.
  - Operation Altitude: 10 meter to 1 Km
  - Warhead: Conventional (Other is Nuclear) 200- 300 Kgs.
  - Speed: Supersonic (2.8 Mach -3 Mach)
  - Accuracy: 1m
- The **fast patrol vessel** (FPV) of Aadesh-Class of Indian Coast Guard, **ICGS Arinjay** was commissioned in Kochi, Kerala.
  - Shall be used for guarding coastline.
- Indigenously developed supersonic **Advanced Air Defence** (AAD) interceptor missile was successfully test fired from the **Abdul Kalam Island** off the Odisha coast.
  - Abdul Kalam Island formerly Wheeler Island.
  - Advanced Air Defence interceptor also called as Ashwini (probable) Ballistic Missile Interceptor Single Stage, Solid fuel
  - Range : 150 -200 KM
  - Modified Surface to Air Missile
  - Defence system as used to destroy incoming missile

- The nuclear-capable **Dhanush ballistic missile** was successfully test fired from warship Subhadra, off the Puri coast of Odisha in the Bay of Bengal.
  - Dhanush is, surface-to-surface missile and is a naval variant of Prithvi-II missile. It can carry both conventional as well as a nuclear payload of 500 kg.
- Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LRSAM) co-developed by India and Israel was successfully test-fired for the first time from an Israeli Naval Platform.
  - Also called as BARAK-8

### INTERNATIONAL:

- India has signed two keys Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with **Indonesia**
  - MOU 1: New and Renewable Energy sector:
  - MOU 2: Cultural Exchange programme for three years from 2015 to 2018.
- International **Indigenous Terra Madre- 2015** kicked off in **Shillong, Meghalaya** with theme The Future We Want: Indigenous Perspectives and Actions.
  - What it is about: 100 tribes from 58 countries will participate and share their songs, folklores, dance, dress and food systems.
- President of **Maldives Abdulla Yameen** has declared state of emergency for 30 days on grounds of threat to national security.
  - Why: The former President of Maldives Mohamed Nasheed, who belongs to the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) was convicted of charges of using the military to arrest a senior judge when in office and was sentenced for 13 years of jail term. Now his supporters organize mass rally and disrupt peace.
  - In Nov itself:
  - Maldivian Parliament **Majlis** has voted overwhelmingly to impeach Vice President **Ahmed Adeeb Abdul Ghafoor**.

- Why: Charged with plotting to assassinate the President Yameen Abdul Gayoom
- Justin Trudeau of Liberal Party has sworn in as 23rd Prime Minister of Canada ending 10 years of Conservative rule. 4 Indians in Cabinet:
- Harjit Sajjan: Defence Minister Amarjeet Sohi: Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.
- Navdeep Bains: Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. Bardish Chagger (lady): Minister for Small Business and Tourism.
- Union cabinet approved Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with Belgium for cooperation in development of new and renewable energy technologies.
- Union Cabinet approved signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Colombia to strengthening cooperation in the field of Tourism.
- France is set to deploy its largest warship (aircraft carrier) named Charles de Gaulle (R91) in order further boost its operations against Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq.
- The seventh edition **India-Russia Joint Military Exercise 'Indra-2015'** has begun in Bikaner district of Rajasthan.
- World Health Organization (WHO), a U.N. health agency has officially declared Sierra Leone Ebola-free.
- Every year **10<sup>th</sup> November** is being observed as **World Science Day (WSD)** for Peace and Development to demonstrate the importance of science in our daily life.
  - The theme of 2015 WSD is *Science for a Sustainable Future*.
  - **India Science day is 28<sup>th</sup> February**. Why 28<sup>th</sup> Feb: Sir C.V. Raman discovered Raman effect on 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 1928. The theme of the year 2016 is on "*Scientific Issues for Development of the Nation*".

- The 68th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has declared year **2016** as the **International Year of Pulses (IYP)**. It was launched under the slogan 'nutritious seeds for a sustainable future'.
- India and China have signed two agreements including one in the field of water resources on sharing hydrological data on Sutlej River and other on cultural agreement.
- RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan has been appointed as vice-chairman of the board of directors of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).
  - BIS: International Financial Organization with BIS 60 central banks as its members, accounting for 95% of world gdp. Head Office: Basel, Switzerland
- Pakistan and China kicked off their ambitious 46 billion US Dollar **China- Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC)** project.
  - Connect: Xinjiang region in China to the Gwadar port in Pakistan by means of highways, airways and railways and also deploy pipeline to transport oil and gas.
  - Passes through PoK.
- Economist **Subir Gokaran** has been appointed as an Executive Director on the board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the recently acquired Ambedkar memorial by Maharashtra Government at King Henry's Road in London, United Kingdom.
- India and Australia have sealed Nuclear-deal procedures for supply of uranium fuel to India.
- Senior Indian diplomat **Syed Akbaruddin** has been appointed as India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations at New York.

- 2015: G-20 Summit at Antalya, Turkey.
- Russia's newest defence satellite dubbed as EKS Kosmos-2510 was successfully launched into space. It is an early warning system and will detect enemy missile heading towards Russian territory.
- China's Tianhe-2 supercomputer has emerged as the world's most powerful supercomputer system for the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive time.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: US Energy Department – **Titan**
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Sequoia** from IBM
  - Update in June 2016: the fastest supercomputer in the world is the **Sunway TaihuLight**, with a Linpack benchmark of 93 petaFLOPS(PFLOPS).
  - Speed of Super Computer is measured in PetaFlops/ Second (PFlops/S). where FLOPS is floating-point operations per second.
- Syrian woman journalist **Zaina Erhaim** won the prestigious 2015 Reporters without Borders Prize for her defence of press freedom.
- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has unanimously adopted a **Resolution 2249 (2015)**, calling on all nations to re-double and co-ordinate action to prevent further attacks by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and other extremist groups.
- 10 day state of emergency was declared in the **Mali** by President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita following terrorist attack in country's **capital city Bamako**.
- India-born **Swati Dandekar** has been appointed as the United States director of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**) leaders have signed a declaration for launching ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) which would be similar to European Union (EU)-style regional economic bloc.
  - Kaula Lumpur declaration signed.
  - ASEAN: 10 Members: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.
  - Motto: “One Vision, One Identity, One Community”
- China is building the world’s biggest animal cloning factory to recreate sniffer dogs, racehorses, pets and beef cattle in Tianjin, north-eastern China
- US drugs giant Pfizer Inc. has finalized a deal to buy Ireland based Allergan for 160 billion dollars making it the biggest pharmaceuticals merger deal in history of healthcare sector.
- India and Singapore have signed a joint declaration envisaging a **Strategic Partnership** to elevate bilateral relations of both countries.
- Securities and Exchange Board of India (**SEBI**) and Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) have signed a MoU on bilateral cooperation and technical assistance.
- SEBI Chairman: UK Sinha
- India was ranked 141 on a Global Peace Index (GPI) for year 2016 out of 163 countries. Published by the Sydney (Australia) based Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) since 2007
- Saudi Arabia has allowed women to vote and become candidates in local elections for the first time in the history of male dominated country.

- **Nikita Sergeyevich Mikhalkov**, the world renowned film maker from Russia will be conferred upon, the Lifetime Achievement Award during the closing ceremony of the 46th International Film Festival of India.
- Government of Nepal and Government of India have entered into an MoU on 24.8.2015 for the construction of **Raxaul (India)-Amlekhgunj (Nepal)** Petroleum Products Pipeline to provide efficient supply of petroleum products.