



RAJRAS NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

FAST REVISION MODULE

December 2016 – March 2017

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IMPORTANT DAYS

December 2016: Important Days

December 1: World AIDS Day

- Why Celebrate: To provide an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died.
- Theme 2016: Hands up for #HIVprevention.
- AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

December 3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)

- Why celebrate: to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. It also seeks to increase awareness of gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.
- Theme 2016: 2016: "Achieving [17 Goals](#) for the future we want".

December 4: Navy Day

- The Indian Navy Day is observed annually on 4 December to celebrate the magnificence, achievements and role of the naval force of the country.
- The observance of the day commemorates the launch of Operation Trident by the Indian Navy against Pakistan on 4th December, 1971.

December 9: International Anti-Corruption Day

- Why celebrate: To raise public awareness of corruption and what people can do to fight it.
- 2016 Theme: "United against corruption for development, peace and security".
- Why on 9th: The UN General Assembly (UNGA) had designated December 9 as International Anti-Corruption Day by passing resolution 58/4 of October 31, 2003.

December 10: World Human Rights Day

- Aim: To commemorate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Why on 10th: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was formally adopted and proclaimed by UNGA on 10 December 1948.
- 2016 Theme or campaign: “Stand up for someone’s rights today”. It aims to re-emphasise how important it is to live in peace and harmony, compassion and concern for each other’s rights with respect towards the idea of mutual co-existence.

December 22: National Mathematics Day

- Why: To celebrate birth anniversary of great Indian autodidact Mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- The National Mathematics Day was instituted in 2011 by the Union Government to celebrate Ramanujan’s 125th birth anniversary.
- This year, it is 129th birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan.

December 24: National Consumer Day

- Why Celebrate: To highlight the importance of the consumer movement and promote the basic rights and responsibilities of all consumers.
- Why 24th: On this day the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 had received the assent of the President.
- Note: The World Consumer Rights Day is observed on 15th March.

December 25: National Good Governance Day

- Why 25: To celebrate birth anniversary of former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna recipient Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- Good Governance Day was established in 2014

January 2017: Important Days

January 4: World Braille Day

- The World Braille Day is observed every year across the world on 4 January to mark the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, inventor of Braille script or Braille code.

January 10: World Hindi Day

- The World Hindi Day is observed annually on 10 January. On this occasion, Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has conducted special events to spread the greatness of the language through its missions abroad.
- Besides, the Department of Official Language (Rajbhasha) also organises several events to mark this day.

January 12: National Youth Day

- The National Youth Day is observed every year on 12 January to mark the birth anniversary of social reformer, philosopher and thinker Swami Vivekananda.
- To celebrate, the 21st National Youth Festival was held in Rohtak, Haryana.
- The theme this Festival was 'Youth for Digital India'.

February 2017: Important Days

February 2: World Wetlands Day

- To raise awareness about the value of wetlands for humanity and the planet.
- Significance of Day: This day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands also called as Ramsar Convention on 2 February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar.
- 2017 Theme: "Wetlands for Disaster Risk Reduction".

February 4: World Cancer Day

- To raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment.
- The theme between 2016 and 2018 WCD is "We can. I can".

- It reflects on what everyone can do to raise awareness of cancer and asks to take pledge and action in fight against cancer.

February 6: International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation

- To raise awareness of the practice of FGM and work towards its elimination.
- It is sponsored by UN.
- 2017 Theme: “Building a solid and interactive bridge between Africa and the world to accelerate ending FGM by 2030”.

February 10: National Deworming Day

- Main objective to combat parasitic worm infections among preschool and school-age children across India.
- This year it is third edition of the observance of this day, after it was launched in 2015, by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).
- On this day, Albendazole tablets are given to all targeted children. This year for the first time, deworming tablets were given to the private schools children also.

February 12: National Productivity Day

- The main observance of day is organised by National Productivity Council (NPC) for encouraging all stakeholders in implementation of productivity tools and techniques with contemporary relevant themes.
- 2017 Theme of National Productivity Week: “From Waste to Profits-through Reduce, Recycle and Reuse”.

February 20: World Day of Social Justice

- To recognize the need to promote efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, exclusion and unemployment.
- To mark this occasion, UN and International Labour Office had organised several organisations to spread importance of social justice for people.
- 2017 Theme: “Preventing conflict and sustaining peace through decent work”

February 21: International Mother Language Day

- To promote awareness of linguistic, multilingualism and cultural diversity.
- This year it is the 17th anniversary of IMLD.
- The observance of this day signifies importance of mother language as the greatest weapon to express one's feeling.
- Mother Language of one country is the sign of independence of that country.
- 2017 Theme: "Towards Sustainable Futures through Multilingual Education".

February 28: National Science Day

- The National Science Day (NSD) i.e. Rashtriya Vigyan Diwas is celebrated every year on February 28 in India.
- The 2017 theme is "Science and Technology for Specially Abled Persons".
- This day marks the epoch-making discovery of Raman Effect by Indian physicist Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman (CV Raman) on February 28, 1928. This discovery was awarded with the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930.

March 2017: Important Days**March 3: World Wildlife Day**

- The World Wildlife Day is observed on 3rd March every year to celebrate and raise awareness about the world's wild fauna and flora.
- It is celebrated to mark the signing of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) on this day in 1973.

March 15: World Consumer Rights Day

- The World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) is celebrated every year on March 15 to pay solidarity with the international consumer movement and give more attention to promote basic rights of consumers.

- Significance of Day: It provides an opportunity to promote the basic rights of all consumers demand those rights that must be respected and protected and for those protesting against the market abuses and social injustices.
- 2017 Theme: 'Building a Digital World Consumers can Trust'.

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. The Union Cabinet has approved Central Assistance of 2000 crore rupees for 36,384 displaced families from Pakistan occupied areas of Jammu & Kashmir (POJK) and Chhamb. It was approved following an announcement of Prime Minister's Development Package for Jammu & Kashmir 2015 announced in November, 2015
2. The Supreme Court has ordered cinema halls to mandatorily play the national anthem before every screening and all those present in cinema halls have to "stand up to show respect."

Important things to Remember:

- Article 51 (A) of the Constitution provides that it was the duty of every person to show respect when the anthem is played.
 - Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 – prohibits desecration of or insult to the country's national symbols, including the National Flag, The Constitution, Indian map and the National Anthem.
3. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Affected Areas to improve rural road connectivity in worst LWE affected districts critical from security and communication point of view. The project will be implemented under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) to provide all weather road connectivity in 44 worst affected LWE districts and adjoining districts.
 4. The Union Cabinet gave its approval to the proposal of Union Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) for ratification of International Solar Alliance (ISA) Framework Agreement by India. The Agreement was opened for signature on the sidelines of 22nd Conference of Parties (CoP) meeting United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at Marrakesh, Morocco.
 5. As many as 6,117 Kuchipudi dancers set a new Guinness World Record by performing together in a single event in Vijayawada district of Andhra Pradesh. The Guinness World Record adjudicated for the 12-minute "Jayamu Jayamu" item as the 'Largest Kuchipudi dance' performance.
 6. The Union Government has launched 'Smart Consumer' mobile App and an 'Online Consumer Mediation Centre (OCMC)' to provide speedy redressal of consumer grievances. Apart from this, a helpline 14404 was also launched for consumer related grievances on the occasion of National Consumer Day (24th December).

7. Google India has partnered with the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs to launch nationwide Digitally Safe Consumer campaign to raise awareness among consumers about online safety and better protect consumer interest online.
8. ICICI Bank, India's largest private sector bank has launched EazyPay mobile application for merchants that allows all-in-one acceptance payments platform. This app consolidates all digital wallets, QR code, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), and credit & debit cards modes of payments. With this, ICICI Bank became first bank in the country to roll out all-in-one payments platform.
9. Union Cabinet gave its approval to the Cadre review and formation of a new service in the name of Indian Enterprise Development Services (IEDS). The IEDS will be created in the Office of Development Commissioner (MSME), Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME). Its creation will help to strengthen the organization and to achieve the vision of Startup India, Stand-up India and Make in India.
10. According to report published in Forbes magazine, India has surpassed its colonial masters United Kingdom to become world's sixth-largest economy in GDP terms for first time after nearly 150 years. Following the change in the rankings, India's economy now stands behind the United States, China, Japan, Germany and France.
11. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of the country's first Indian Institute of Skills (IIS) in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh to make India the Skill Capital of the World.
12. The Madras High Court has banned all unauthorised Sharia courts in mosques across Tamil Nadu, saying centres of worship were only to be used for religious purposes.
13. The Union Government has decided to set up a single permanent Tribunal to adjudicate all inter-State river water disputes. This single body will subsume all existing tribunals for resolving grievances of inter-State water disputes in a speedy manner. It will be headed by a retired Supreme Court judge.
14. Union Power Ministry is going to launch new mobile application GARV-II to provide real time data of all six lakh villages of the country. The purpose of the mobile application is to ensure transparency in implementation of rural electrification programme.
15. Department of Telecom (DoT) will soon launch 'Tarang Sanchar' portal that will let users check radiation compliance status of mobile towers and transmitters across country.
16. National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) and aluminium producer National Aluminium Co. Ltd (NALCO) have signed MoU to establish a 2.4 giga watt (GW) Coal based power project at Gajmara, Odisha.

17. Assam government has launched 'Sustainable Action for Climate Resilient Development in Majuli' (SACReD, Majuli) to make river island Majuli country's first ever Carbon Neutral district by 2020.
18. Supreme Court ordered that Indian Airforce (IAF) personnel cannot keep beard. It held that Central Government's decision to ban beards in the IAF does not infringe upon fundamental rights.
19. Supreme Court has ordered a ban on all liquor shops on national as well as state highways to reduce drink driving and road accidents that claim thousands of lives every year across the country. The three-judge SC bench headed by Chief Justice T S Thakur gave its order on a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by an NGO called 'Arrive Safe'.
20. Union Cabinet has approved MoU between Ministry of Rural Development and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to improve effectiveness of rural development programmes in country.
21. Software giant Microsoft India has launched its first full-scale Cybersecurity Engagement Centre (CSEC) in New Delhi.
22. Punjab Government has launched country's first amphibious bus project at the Harike wetland near Amritsar. The amphibious bus named as "Harike Cruise" travels on land and as well as in water.
23. Madhya Pradesh Government has launched five months long Narmada Seva Yatra to turn the Narmada river pollution free.
24. President Pranab Mukherjee launched a '100 Million for 100 Million' Campaign at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The campaign was conceptualized by Nobel peace prize winner Kailash Satyarthi and was organized by the Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation. The campaign aims to mobilise 100 million youth and children for 100 million underprivileged children across the world.
25. The Union Government has waived the import duty on wheat to zero from 10 per cent for an indefinite period. This move aims to improve domestic availability in the wake of rising prices and concerns about the wheat crop in 2016-17.
26. Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has launched a TV channel named 'DigiShala' to promote cashless transactions. The channel was launched as part of the 'Digidhan' campaign which aims to spread awareness about digital transactions.

27. The Allahabad High Court has ruled that the practice of triple talaq (Talaq-e-bidat) among Muslims is unconstitutional and violates the rights of women enshrined in constitution. The order was passed by HC Justice Suneet Kumar while hearing a petition filed by a woman who claimed her husband arbitrarily divorced her
28. Union Cabinet has approved Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Afghanistan on cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.
29. Union Government is going to observe birth anniversary of the father of Indian Constitution B R Ambedkar (April 14) as “Water Day” in the country.
30. E-commerce giant Amazon has launched its global startup program ‘Launchpad’ in India. The program will enable Indian startups to sell their products overseas.
31. Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram launched ‘Stanpan Suraksha’ mobile application to promote breastfeeding and keep a tab on “inappropriate” promotion of baby food items. The mobile application has been developed by the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI)
32. Hailakandi district of Assam has become the first district to pay wages to tea garden workers through individual bank accounts.
33. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is going to issue new currency notes of Twenty and Fifty rupees denomination in the Mahatma Gandhi Series-2005.
34. Google launched two new initiatives My Business and Digital Unlocked to train and help small and medium businesses (SMBs) in India capitalise on the digitisation wave faster.
35. India’s first integrated heliport was inaugurated at Rohini in North Delhi. This heliport has been developed by Pawan Hans Limited.
36. Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched SAATHIYA Resource Kit and SAATHIYA SALAH mobile app for adolescents as part of the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) programme. The kit and app will help Peer Educators (Saathiyas) who are introduced under the RKSK programme. The Saathiyas act as catalyst for generating demand for adolescent health services and also impart age appropriate knowledge on key adolescent health issues to their peer groups.
37. Ministry of Mines has launched Transparency, Auction Monitoring and Resource Augmentation (TAMRA) Portal and Mobile Application to ensure transparent award of statutory Clearances for mining operations The TAMRA platform was simultaneously launched across 12 mineral rich states as a part of the Ease of Doing Business in the Mining sector and to double mining contribution to GDP.

38. Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved establishment of Food Legumes Research Platform (FLRP) at Amlaha in Sehore, Madhya Pradesh with Satellite Hubs in West Bengal and Rajasthan.
39. The Income Tax Department (ITD) launched Operation Clean Money (Swachh Dhan Abhiyan), an e-platform to analyse large cash deposits made during the demonetisation window (9 November to 30 December 2016). Under it, e-verification of large cash has been done using data analytics for comparing the demonetisation data with information in ITD databases.
40. The Hornbill Festival began in the Naga Heritage village of Kisama. The festival coincides with the Statehood Day of Nagaland which is observed on December 1.
41. Union Government has decided to observe birth anniversary of the father of Indian Constitution B R Ambedkar (April 14) as “Water Day” in the country.
42. As many as 6,117 Kuchipudi dancers set a new Guinness World Record by performing together in a single event in Vijayawada district of Andhra Pradesh.
43. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has found an ancient camping site used by pre-historic man, at an altitude of about 4,200 metres near Saser La in Nubra Valley, Ladakh. The carbon dating of these charcoal pieces reveals that, the site dates back to circa 8500 BCE.
44. The Supreme Court has ruled that horse racing per se is not animal cruelty. It held that it is different from Jallikattu, which metes out specific methods of torture to bulls.
45. The Supreme Court in its latest verdict has held that election candidates cannot seek votes on the grounds of the religion, caste, creed, community or language of voters. The ruling was given by a 4-3 majority of the seven-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice TS Thakur. It held that if the candidate is found violating the order will result into call for his disqualification.
46. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India’s first international exchange India INX at the International Financial Service Centre (IFSC) of GIFT (Gujarat International Financial Tech) City Gandhinagar, Gujarat. India INX is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). It will enable Indian firms to compete on equal footing with offshore firms.
47. Union Cabinet has approved the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bill, 2017, under which the IIMs will be declared as Institutions of National Importance. It will also enable IIMs to grant degrees rather than diplomas to their students. At present IIMs are not authorised to award degrees as they registered as societies. Hence, they are awarding Post Graduate Diploma and Fellow Programme in Management.

48. The 14th edition of Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) began in the country's IT hub Bengaluru, Karnataka. The theme of this edition is "Redefining Engagement with the Indian Diaspora". It is held annually on 9 January to mark the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India i.e. on 9 January, 1915.
49. IndiaPost under Department of Posts (Union Ministry of Communications and Information Technology) received final payments bank licence from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). With this, India Post became the third entity after Bharti Airtel and Paytm to receive final payments bank licence to roll-out of banking operations commercially under the permit.
50. Union Government has launched nationwide "Sparsh Leprosy Awareness Campaign (SLAC)" on the occasion of Anti-Leprosy Day (observed on the last Sunday of January). The day is observed every year on January 30 in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi who attained martyrdom on this day in 1948, to remember his selfless efforts and care for the people affected with Leprosy.
51. The Supreme Court has described side effects of Endosulfan, a highly toxic agrochemical (pesticide) as devastating. It has directed Kerala government to release entire Rs. 500 crore compensation to over 5,000 victims in three months who have suffered from various deformities and health complications due to use of Endosulfan in the state. It also asked the state to consider setting up a centre to provide lifelong medical treatment to all the victims.
52. The major numbers of victims were reported to be affected in Kasargode (Kerala) after Endosulfan was aerially sprayed by state owned company on cashew plantations adjoining habitats where the victims are located. The apex court in 2011 had passed order to ban the production, distribution and use of endosulfan.

53. Inequality in India:

According to study conducted by rights group Oxfam, India's richest 1% now hold a huge 58% of the country's total wealth, indicating rise income inequality. It is higher than the global figure of about 50%. It shows that 57 billionaires in India now have same wealth (\$216 billion) as that of the bottom 70% population of the country. Globally, just 8 billionaires have the wealth as the poorest 50 % of the world population.

54. Union Government launched a dedicated web portal ShaGun (<http://ssashagun.nic.in>) for monitoring the progress of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The portal was developed by World Bank in collaboration with Union Ministry of Human Resource Development. Its name has been derived from the words Shala (means schools) and Gun (i.e. Gunvatta meaning Quality).
55. According to recently released Jones Lang LaSalle's City Momentum Index (CMI), Bengaluru (capital of Karnatak) has emerged as the most dynamic city in the world. The index tracks the

speed of change of a city's economy and commercial real estate market. It covers 134 major established and emerging business hubs and ranks them on parameters like technology, connectivity, population, education and real estate investments.

56. The World Economic Forum (WEF), NITI Aayog, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and Cornell University will work to develop an India Innovation Index to provide impetus to states to drive innovative spirit. Based on the WIPO's GII (Global Innovation Index), the India Innovation Index will be tailored to better reflect of India's ground reality and include metrics well suited to the Indian context for innovation.
57. A group of Hindi professors have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting not to add dialects of Hindi, like Bhojpuri and Rajasthani, in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution as full-fledged Indian languages. This development comes months after Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal had announced that Rajasthani will be added to 8th Schedule. In December 2016, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar also had raised a similar demand for Bhojpuri.
58. Union Health Ministry will soon launch population based prevention, screening and control programme for five common non-communicable diseases (NCDs) on the occasion of World Cancer Day (4th February). They are Hypertension, Diabetes, and Cancers of oral cavity, breast and cervix. This programme will be launched as part of the National Health Mission.
59. According to Status of Education Report (ASER) 2016, students of Himachal Pradesh stand ahead of Kerala and all other states in terms of learning outcomes. The 2016 ASER was the largest annual household survey of the children in India in the field of education. It focused on status of schooling and basic learning.
60. India has been ranked 79th out of 176 countries in the recently released Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for the year 2016 by the Berlin-based corruption watchdog Transparency International (TI).
61. Union Finance Ministry has announced that the General Anti Avoidance Rule (GAAR) will be effective from the 1 April, 2017. In this regard Income Tax (IT) department has issued a slew of clarifications on implementation of GAAR, seeking to address concerns of foreign investors over implementation of the anti-evasion measure.
62. Union Government has shifted the responsibility of promoting digital transactions in the country to the Union Ministry of IT and Electronics (MEITY) from NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog. In this regard, Government already has changed the business transaction rules to enable MEITY to promote digital transactions, including digital payments.

63. Union Government has signed a Financing Agreement with World Bank for IDA credit of \$63 million for the Tejaswini Socio-Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) Project. It is World Bank's first project in India solely focused on the welfare of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) aged between 14 and 24 to complete their secondary level education and provide relevant skills for job market. About Tejaswini Project:
- a. It seeks to empower adolescent girls with basic life skills to acquire market driven skill training or completion of secondary education, depending on the inclination of the beneficiary.
64. Thiruvananthapuram, capital of Kerala has topped in city governance ranking of the Annual Survey of India's City Systems (ASICS) 2016 conducted by Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy.
65. According to Mercer's Quality of Living index rankings 2017, for the third consecutive time, Hyderabad (Telangana) has emerged as the best Indian city in terms of quality of living. Globally, Vienna (Austria) for the fourth time in a row has emerged as world's best city for overall quality of living for the eighth year running.
66. West Bengal Government has given official language status to endangered tribal language Kurukh, mother tongue belonging to the Dravidian family.
67. According to recent report tabled in the Lok Sabha, West Bengal has the highest number of arsenic-affected people in the country. State's 83 blocks in eight districts have ground water affected by arsenic contamination.
68. India's longest surface tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district is complete. It will be open to traffic soon, following successful completion of trial runs for peak and off-peak hours.
- The 9-km-long tunnel at Chenani passes through the lower Himalayan mountain range on Jammu- Srinagar National Highway.
69. Union Finance Ministry has given permission to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to conduct field trials of plastic (polymer-based) currency notes of Rs 10 denominations.
70. According to recent survey released by Transparency International (TI), India had highest bribery rate among the 16 Asia-Pacific countries surveyed between July 2015 and January 2017.
71. Union Government has launched Bharat QR code, a quick response (QR) code to enable digital payments without card swiping machines. It is world's first interoperable payment acceptance solution launched by Indian Government to move towards less-cash economy. Key facts:

- a. Bharat QR code has been developed by jointly by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), Visa, MasterCard and American Express under instructions from Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
72. Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has launched Cyber Swachhta Kendra in New Delhi for Botnet cleaning and Malware analysis. Some cyber security tools are:
- a. USB Pratirodh: It is a desktop security solution to protect from USB mass storage device threats.
 - b. AppSamvid: It is a desktop solution to protect systems by allowing installation of genuine applications through white listing. It helps in preventing threats from malicious applications.
 - c. M-Kavach: It is an indigenously developed mobile application to address the security threats in mobiles.
73. Arunachal Pradesh became the first state in the northeast to implement e-Cabinet solution for the state cabinet members.
74. The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) jointly launched India Innovation Index. Besides country's first innovation index portal was also launched.
- The index has been jointly developed by NITI Aayog, DIPP and CII in consultation with World Economic Forum (WEF), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Cornell University, UNIDO, ILO, OECD, UNESCO, ITU etc.
75. Haryana became the first state in the country to launch Mahila Police Volunteer (MPV) initiative for safety of women.

SCHEMES

The Union Ministry for Petroleum & Natural Gas has met the 1.5-crore target for LPG connections that were to be added under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) in the 2016-17 financial year. This Target was achieved within a span of less than eight months since the launch of the scheme which is implemented across 35 States/UTs.

Top five States with highest number of LPG connections are: Uttar Pradesh (46 lakh), West Bengal (19 lakh), Bihar (19 lakh), Madhya Pradesh (17 lakh) and Rajasthan (14 lakh). These states constitute nearly 75% of the total connections released.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

- The scheme provides free LPG connection with financial assistance of Rs. 1600/- per connection to an adult woman member of BPL family identified through Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data.
- It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May 2016 from Balia, Uttar Pradesh.
- PMUY is the first welfare scheme being implemented by the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- The tagline of scheme is *Swachh Indhan, Behtar Jeevan*.
- It seeks to empower women and protect their health by shifting them from traditional cooking based on unclean cooking fuels or fossil fuels to clean cooking gas.
- It is being implemented over three years' time frame i.e. in the FY 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 with budgetary allocation of allocated Rs, 8,000 crore announced in the Union Budget 2016.

Swachh Swasth Sarvatra

Union Government launched Swachh Swasth Sarvatra initiative to strengthen health centres in open defecation-free (ODF) blocks. The objective of this initiative is to strengthen community health centres in 708 ODF blocks across the country to enable them to achieve higher levels of cleanliness and hygiene.

National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently launched National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) during his recent visit to Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. The scheme aims to provide apprenticeship training to over 50 lakh youngsters in order to create more jobs. It has budgetary outlay of Rs 10000 crore.

Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY), a skill development program targeted at Indian youth seeking overseas employment to make India the Skill Capital of the World.

PKVY will provide training and certify Indians who are seeking overseas employment in selected sectors that have high demand in the global labour market in line with international standards. It will be implemented by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) through its training partners and in consultation with the Union Ministry of External Affairs and the Union Skill Development Ministry.

Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana 2017

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for launching of Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana 2017 (VPBY 2017). The scheme will be launched as part of Government's commitment for financial inclusion and social security.

The scheme will be implemented through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) during the current financial year i.e. FY 2016-17. It will be open for subscription for a period of one year from the date of launch. Features of Scheme:

- The purpose of the scheme is to provide social security during old age and protect elderly persons aged 60 years and above against future fall in their interest income due to uncertain market conditions.
- It will provide an assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8% per annum for ten years, with an option to opt for pension on a monthly, quarterly, half yearly and annual basis.

Rubber Soil Information System (RubSIS)

Union Government has launched Rubber Soil Information System (RubSIS), an online system for recommending appropriate mix of fertilizers to plantations of rubber growers depending upon their soil nature. It was launched for Kottayam (Kerela), the largest rubber growing district of India which will be extended to the entire traditional rubber growing region i.e. the states of Kerela and Tamilnadu.

Mission Fingerling

Union Ministry of Agriculture has launched Mission Fingerling, a programme to enable holistic development and management of fisheries sector in India with a total expenditure of about Rs. 52000 lakh. The mission aims to achieve the target to enhance fisheries production from 10.79 mmt (2014-15) to 15 mmt by 2020-21 under the Blue Revolution.

Middle Income Group Scheme

Supreme Court has introduced Middle Income Group Scheme, (MIGS) a self-supporting scheme for providing legal services to the middle and relatively lower income groups. Under this scheme, middle class people who cannot afford the expensive litigation in the apex can avail the services of the society for a nominal amount.

Indradhanush 2.0

Union Government is planning to come out with 'Indradhanush 2.0', a comprehensive plan for recapitalisation of public sector lenders. Indradhanush 2.0 will be finalised by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) after completion of Asset Quality Review (AQR) which is likely to be completed by end of March 2017. It aims to clean up the balance sheets of PSBs to ensure banks remain solvent and fully comply with global capital adequacy norms, Basel-III. Besides, revised programme of capitalisation will be also issued as part of it.

Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan

Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (PMGDISHA) to make 6 crore rural households digitally literate by March 2019. PMGDISHA is expected to be one of the largest digital literacy programmes in the world. This approval comes in line with the announcement made by Union Finance Minister in the Union Budget 2016-17.

Swachh Survekshan 2017

Union Ministry of Urban Development launched Swachh Survekshan 2017 to rank 500 cities/towns across the country on cleanliness with a population of 1 lakh and above. The survey will be conducted by Quality Council of India (QCI) under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in a bid to encourage competition to improve sanitation.

Street Light Replacement Programme

Union Ministry of Power unveiled world's largest street light replacement programme in South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) area. It is implemented under LED based Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) by the Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture under the Union Ministry of Power.

IRCTC Rail Connect app

Union Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu launched new passenger mobile application named 'IRCTC Rail Connect app' to promote ease of ticketing through digital transactions. The new mobile-based application will replace the old existing IRCTC connect app. It has been developed for reserved booking and to increase the ease to users.

Student startup and innovation policy

Gujarat government launched India's first student startup and innovation policy with an aim to provide Rs 200 crore in the form of grants to ideas developed by students/ The policy aims to support over 1,000 innovation per year in the state and create pre-incubation support in all universities of the state.

Mission 41K

Union Railway Ministry has unveiled 'Mission 41K' to save Rs. 41,000 crore on the Indian Railways' expenditure on energy consumption over the next 10 years. The launch of this programme was announced at a Roundtable Discussion on Energy Initiatives of Indian Railways with external stakeholders headed by Union Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu.

Mahila Shakti Kendras

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his Budget Speech 2017-18 announced corpus of Rs 500 crore for setting up Mahila Shakti Kendras in the 14 lakh ICDS Anganwadi Centres at village level. These kendras will provide one stop convergent support services for empowering rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, health, nutrition and digital literacy.

Swasthya Raksha Programme

The Union AYUSH Ministry has launched 'Swasthya Raksha Programme' to promote health and health education in villages.

SCIENCE CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. Scientists from Ireland have claimed discovery of a new human organ named the mesentery that exists in the digestive system. It will be human body's 79th organ. Mesentery connects the intestine to the abdomen. The organ was previously thought to consist of fragmented and disparate structures.
2. India formally became an associate member of CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research) with the government completing the internal approval procedures for the agreement it signed in November 2016.
3. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has approved a mission to explore 16 Psyche, an iron-rich asteroid. As part of the mission, NASA craft will be launched in 2023, and will arrive at Psyche in 2030. The mineral contents on the asteroids are worth over 100-thousand times the value of the entire world economy.
4. TeamIndus, a private aerospace startup company is planning to send a spacecraft to the moon aboard an Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) rocket on December 28, 2017.
5. Scientists from Israel have created the world's first 'water-wave laser' that emits a beam through the interaction of light and water waves.
6. Scientists from Russia have developed a new unique, low-cost method for producing high-quality nuclear fuel using electricity. It is alternative novel method that forms the basis of powder metallurgy and involves electric pulse sintering under pressure.
7. The 7th World Ayurveda Congress (WAC) was held from December 2 to 4, 2016 at Science City in Kolkata, West Bengal.
8. A team of international astronomers has discovered Vela super cluster, one of the biggest super galaxy clusters near the Milky Way.
9. Scientists from Canada have developed the first functional pacemaker cells using human pluripotent stem cells. The cells can regulate heart beats with electrical impulses. It paves the way for alternate biological pacemaker therapy.
10. The World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed confidence that a prototype vaccine for Ebola called rVSV-ZEBOV may be 100% effective in protecting against the deadly virus.
11. Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) has successfully launched a solid fuel rocket named Epsilon-2 from the Uchinoura Space Center in southern Japan.

12. China successfully launched TanSat, a global carbon dioxide (CO₂) monitoring satellite to understand the effects of climate change.
 13. Scientists for the first time have discovered the so-called molten jet stream within the Earth's molten iron core using latest data obtained from three European satellites called Swarm.
 14. India ranked 4th in the Global Wind Power Installed Capacity index with cumulative installed wind power generation capacity of 25,088 MW in 2015.
 15. The world's first cloned goat bearing superfine Cashmere wool was born in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.
 16. NASA has successfully launched constellation of eight mini-satellites as part Cyclone Global Navigation Satellite System (CYGNSS) into space to improve hurricane forecasting.
 17. China has launched its first fully-owned overseas satellite ground station near the North Pole enabling it to collect satellite data anywhere on the Earth at fastest speed in the world. It is formally known as China Remote Sensing Satellite North Pole Ground Station. It is located about 200 kms north of the Arctic Circle in Sweden.
 18. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is building a robotic spacecraft dubbed as 'Restore-L Spacecraft' to refuel, repair satellites currently in orbit. In this regard, NASA has awarded a \$127 million contract to California-based satellite company Space Systems/Loral to build Restore-L Spacecraft.
 19. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully launched remote sensing satellite Resourcesat-2A into its dedicated orbit.
 20. It carries three payloads viz. high resolution Linear Imaging Self Scanner (LISS-4) camera, medium resolution LISS-3 camera, and coarse resolution Advanced Wide Field Sensor (AWiFS) camera. These three cameras of different resolution.
 21. These cameras will give regular micro and macro information on land and water bodies below, forests, farm lands and crop extent, coastal information, mineral deposits, rural and urban spreads besides helping in disaster management.
 22. Atomic clock at National Physical Laboratory (NPL) in New Delhi added 'leap second' (extra one second) to the Indian Standard Time (IST) at 5:29.59 hours on 1 January 2017 to synchronise with the Earth's rotational clock.
- Paris based International Earth Rotation and Reference System Service (IERS) tells when to add leap seconds on the basis of difference between UTC and UT1.

23. Scientists from Botanical Survey of India (BSI) have discovered a new species of Zingiber (commonly referred as ginger) from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The new species has been named as Zingiber pseudosquarrosus and belongs to genus Zingiber. It is used for its medicinal values by the local Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of the Andamans.
24. China successfully launched first commercial mission using an updated version of the low-cost Kuaizhou-1A rocket. As part of the mission three satellites JL-1, CubeSats XY-S1 and Caton-1 were launched into space.
25. Researchers from Midwestern University have identified the function of the human appendix, often viewed as a vestigial organ with little-known use.

It was found that species with appendix have higher concentrations of immune (lymphoid) tissue in cecum (part of the large intestines), thereby suggesting that appendix could serve as a secondary immune organ. The appendix might also function as a “safe house” for helpful gut bacteria as lymphatic tissue can stimulate the growth of beneficial gut bacteria. Thus, fulfilling an important role in our bodies.
26. Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare will roll out measles-rubella (MR) vaccine in the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) in February 2017. In addition, Pneumococcal conjugate (pneumococcal pneumonia) vaccine will also become a part of the UIP basket in three other states from March 2017.
27. The UIP program consists of vaccination for 10 diseases- Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (whooping cough), Poliomyelitis, measles, Hepatitis B, Diarrhoea, Japanese Encephalitis and Pneumonia.
28. Outdoor caged trials of genetically modified mosquitoes were launched in Dawalwadi, Badnapur in Jalna district of Maharashtra to demonstrate the efficiency of this technique to suppress wild female mosquito populations that transmit dengue, chikungunya and Zika. The trials are conducted by Oxitec and use the Release of Insects carrying Dominant Lethal genes (RIDL) technology.
29. Scientists have claimed that they have discovered oldest fossils on Earth in rocks from Quebec, Canada. Carbon dating techniques suggest that these rocks are at least 3.8 billion years old and might even be 4.3 billion years old.
30. Scientists using Large Hadron Collider accelerator (LHC) at CERN (European Organisation for Nuclear Research) have discovered a new system of five particles all in a single analysis. This discovery is unique as observing five new states all at once is very rare. According to the standard

convention, these particle states were named Oc(3000)0, Oc(3050)0, Oc(3066)0, Oc(3090)0 b Oc(3119)0.

31. Geologists have claimed discovery of new geological continent named Zealandia submerged beneath the south-west Pacific Ocean. Zealandia is around 4.5-million square km land mass and is 94% under water. Only its highest points — New Zealand and New Caledonia are visible.
32. Scientists from Tohoku University in Japan have claimed that Silicon (Si) is the 'missing element' in the Earth's core. This discovery could help us to better understand how our world formed.
33. Astronomers from NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) for the first time have discovered seven new Earth-sized exoplanets that may be able to sustain life. The planets were detected using NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope and several ground-based observatories including Trappist robotic telescope at La Silla, Chile. Key Facts These exoplanets are orbiting dwarf star named Trappist-1, which at 39 light years away. They could have some liquid water and maybe supporting life.

ENVIRONMENT CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has given its clearance for the Ken-Betwa inter-linking of rivers (ILR) project, paving the way to begin work for linking two rivers. The clearance of NBWL was required since the project requires diversion of forest land from core area of Panna Tiger Reserve. However NBWL has set some conditions. They are:
 - a. Integration of nearby sanctuaries including Ranipur and Rani Durgavati with the Panna Tiger Reserve to compensate loss of tiger habitat and complete ban of fresh mining lease in the area.
 - b. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) will take care of the landscape plan for the area with the help of Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and state forest departments.
2. National Green Tribunal (NGT) imposed a complete ban on burning of waste in open places across the country and announced a fine of Rs. 25,000 on each incident of bulk waste burning.
3. Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has issued the draft notification for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Pet Shop) Rules, 2016 to regulate pet shops. The objective of these proposed new rules is to make pet shops accountable and to prevent cruelty inflicted on animals kept in such pet shops.
4. Hope Island in Andhra Pradesh has become graveyard for Olive Ridleys turtles after 54 carcasses of this species were spotted on the shores of island. This indicates that the breeding cycle of this species got severe blow due to mechanised fishing boats scouring in the Bay of Bengal coastline. These boats crush most of these turtles under it leading to their death.
5. Madurai bench of the Madras High Court has ordered Tamil Nadu government to enact a law with prohibitory and penal clauses to eradicate Seemai Karuvelam (prosopis juliflora) trees within two months. Seemai Karuvelam is invasive species of tree harmful to the environment as it sucks lot of water ultimately affect the environment and agricultural activities.
6. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has successfully coordinated Operation Thunder Bird from January 30 to February 19, 2017 in its fight to end poaching of India's wildlife animals. It also had convened Operation Save Kurma, a species specific operation on turtles between 15 December 2016 and 30 January 2017. Key Facts:
 - a. Operation Thunderbird: It is code-name of INTERPOL's (International Criminal Police Organization) multi-national and multi-species enforcement operation for wildlife

protection. It has resulted in huge seizures of 2, 524 Live species of scheduled animals, 9 wild animal carcasses, 19.2 kg elephant ivory, 1 tiger skin, 1 organ pipe coral, 1 jar snake venom, 8 leopard skins and 1 Indian Mujtac skin.

- b. Operation Save Kurma: It was species specific operation on turtles. Under it total of 15,739 live turtles were recovered from 45 suspects, having inter-state linkages.
7. Scientists have discovered four new species of miniature night frogs no bigger than a human thumbnail in Western Ghats, a global biodiversity hotspot. Four new species of miniature night frogs are:
- a. Athirappilly Night Frog: It was discovered close to the Athirappilly waterfalls.
 - b. Sabarimala Night Frog: It was discovered near the Sabarimala hill shrine.
 - c. (The Radcliffe's Night frog and
 - d. Kadalar Night Frog: They were reported from plantation areas.
8. According to scientists from Goa based National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), India's only live volcano at Barren Island in the Andaman and Nicobar has become active again. After lying dormant for 150 years, Barren Island volcano had erupted in 1991 and since then it is showing sporadic activity. Now it is erupting in small episodes of five to 10 minutes.
9. Kerala's Nilambur teak known internationally for its superior timber quality and elegant appearance will be added to the list of Kerala produces with the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

DEFENCE CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. India has signed government-to-government (G2G) deal with the United States (US) to buy 145 M-777 Ultra-Light Howitzers worth \$750 million under the Foreign Military Sales programme.
India has successfully test-fired Agni-V:
 - a. Surface-to-surface
 - b. Nuclear capable ballistic missile
 - c. Launched from Integrated Test Range from the Abdul Kalam Wheeler Island off Odisha coast.
 - d. Three-stage solid propellant ICBM
 - e. Range > 5,000 Kms.
2. India successfully test-fired its home-grown long range intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) Agni-IV from the Abdul Kalam Wheeler Island off Odisha coast. It can carry a one-tonne nuclear warhead over a distance of 4,000 kilometres.
3. Indian Army has successfully conducted 'user-validation' trials of indigenous Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) Dhanush in the Himalayas.
 - a. Dhanush 155 MM/52 calibre towed artillery gun is based on the 1980s' Bofors FH-77B/39 Calibre artillery gun design.
 - b. Its indigenous development is aided by the transfer of technology (ToT) clause signed with the Swedish company.
 - c. It is developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in collaboration with the private sector companies.
 - d. It was designed by the DRDO's Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE).
 - e. It boasts a range of 45 km with accuracy and precision and provides greater fire power, depending on the type of ammunition used. It also has night firing capability in direct fire mode.
4. INS Khanderi, the second Scorpene class submarine was launched at the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It is the second of the six submarines being built at MDL in collaboration with France's DCNS as part of Project 75 of Indian Navy.

- a. Under Project 75, six Scorpene submarines are being built with assistance and technology transfer from DCNS of France under deal signed in October 2005.
 - b. The first of the series INS Kalvari is completing sea trials and will be commissioned shortly. The other four submarines are expected to be launched at nine-month intervals after the INS Khanderi.
 - c. At Present, the Indian Navy operates only 13 conventionally powered submarines and two nuclear submarines.
5. The Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) has delivered ICGS AYUSH, the 20th Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) to the Indian Coast Guard. With this, CSL has completed construction of 20 FPVs for the Indian Coast Guard.
6. China has successfully tested the latest version of its fifth-generation stealth fighter jet J-31 (now renamed the FC-31 Gyr Falcon). It is considered as China's answer to the US F-35, the world's most technically advanced fighter.
7. The Defence and Research Development Organization (DRDO) successfully flight tested Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW) from Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft at integrated test range in Chandipur, Odisha.
8. Long range nuclear-capable subsonic cruise missile Nirbhay was testfired from the launch complex 3 of the Integrated Missile Test Range in Balasore, Odisha. About Nirbhay Missile:
 - a. Nirbhay is a long range surface-to-surface nuclear-capable subsonic cruise missile developed indigenously by the DRDO.
 - b. It is a two stage missile. In its first stage, it tilts horizontally. In the second stage it will cruise horizontally like an aircraft with a turbo-jet engine at a subsonic speed of 0.7 Mach.
 - c. It is capable of carrying multiple payloads including nuclear warheads.
 - d. It has strike range of 700 km to 1000km, giving India the capability to strike deep into enemy territory.
 - e. It is considered as India's answer to US's Tomahawk and Pakistan's Babur missile.
9. DRDO) successfully test-fired the Pinaka Rocket converted to a Guided Pinaka from Launch Complex-III, ITR, Chandipur (Odisha).
 - a. Pinaka is an unguided rocket weapon area system (WAS) with a range of 40 km. It meant to neutralise large areas with rapid salvos.

- b. It can fire a salvo of 12 rockets in 44 seconds with 1.2 tonnes of high explosives.
 - c. The battery of six launchers can neutralise at a time a target area of 3.9 sq km.
10. Pakistan Army has successfully test fired an enhanced version of an indigenously-designed Babur cruise missile. It can hit targets located at 700 km with all kinds of warheads.
 11. Pakistan also successfully test-fired its first Submarine-Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM) Babur-3 capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. This launch gives Pakistan a “credible” second-strike capability.
 12. The seventh edition of India, Maldives bilateral EKVVERIN Exercise 2016 began at Kadhdhoo, Laamu Atoll, Maldives.
 13. The ninth edition of exercise INDRA NAVY, an annual bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Navy began in the Bay of Bengal.
 14. The annual bilateral maritime exercise Konkan 16 between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy (British Navy) started in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
 15. Indian Navy’s Annual Theatre Readiness Operational Exercise (TROPEX) 2017 is being conducted off the Western Seaboard. The month long exercise will see participation of ships and aircraft of both the Western and Eastern Naval Command and also assets from the Indian Air Force, Indian Army and the Indian Coast Guard.
 16. The eleventh edition of joint military exercise ‘Surya Kiran 2017’ between India and Nepal was held in Pithoragarh area of Uttarakhand.
 17. The joint military exercise Al-Nagah-II 2017 between India and Oman began in the Dhauladhar Ranges in Bakloh belt of Himachal Pradesh to strengthen the military ties between the two countries.
 18. India has agreed to train Vietnam’s Sukhoi-30 fighter pilots, boosting growing defence ties between both countries.
 19. According to the recently released 2016 IHS Jane’s Defence Budgets report, India has become the world’s fourth largest defence spender. In this edition of report published by US research firm IHS Inc, India has surpassed Russia, France, Japan and Saudi Arabia to become the world’s fourth largest defence spender.
 20. Pakistan successfully conducted the first flight test of Ababeel surface-to-surface medium range ballistic missile. The test flight was aimed at validating various design and technical parameters of missile’s weapon system. It is claimed that Ababeel missile has the capability to carry nuclear as well as conventional warheads and engage multiple targets with high precision by defeating the

enemy's hostile radars. Key Facts Ababeel missile is capable of delivering multiple warheads, using Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology, first of its kind in Pakistan's missile arsenal. It has a maximum range of 2,200 kilometres.

21. Japan has successfully launched its first military communications satellite Kirameki-2 (kee-RAH-meh-kee 2) satellite. It was launched on board of H-2A rocket that lifted off from the Tanegashima Space Center in southern Japan. The satellite separated from the rocket and entered a designated orbit.
22. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved a deal to jointly develop a medium range surface-to-air missile (MR-SAM) system for Army with help of Israel. The deal will be executed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI).
23. The Indian Airforce (IAG) has formally inducted the first indigenously built Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEW&C) dubbed as NETRA. The AEW&C NETRA has been indigenously developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It was unveiled at the 2017 Aero India exhibition held in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
24. Indian Navy's survey vessel INS Sarvekshak, based at the Southern Naval Command in Kochi became the first naval ship to go green by installing a solar power system on board.
25. The Pakistan Navy has kicked off its biannually-held multinational AMAN 2017 naval exercise in Karachi, Pakistan. 37 countries are participating in the international event.
26. Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) formally handed over an indigenously developed Weapon Locating Radar (WLR) system dubbed as 'SWATHI' to Indian Army.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has declared the year 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. The declaration recalls the potential of tourism sector to advance the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has formally inscribed Yoga in its representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
3. The South American economic bloc Mercosur has suspended Venezuela from it for violating the bloc's democratic principles and failing to meet its basic standards. The membership was revoked by the Foreign Ministers of the four founding members of Mercosur — Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay.
4. Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has launched Twitter Seva to directly engage with citizens in country and abroad, tourists and business travellers for speedy resolution of their visa and passport queries.
5. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has formally inscribed Yoga in its representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
6. Colombia's Congress passed a law granting amnesty to Marxist FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) rebels as part of historic peace deal reached between rebels and Government. Remember: FARC – Columbia
7. China's top legislature has passed Environment Tax to levy environment tax on polluters, especially on heavy industries. It will enter into force on January 1, 2018. The law aims to improve taxpayers' environmental awareness, force companies to upgrade technology and shift to cleaner production.
8. Hong Kong, a China-administered special territory has decided to withdraw visa-free facility for Indians from January 23, 2017. This decision was taken on the ground to prevent illegal immigration as number of Indian asylum seekers was on the rise. Over half a million Indians visit Hong Kong for business, trade and holidays.
9. Oxford English Dictionary (OED) has officially added word 'Brexit' in it. It is among 1,500 new words added to the OED.
10. UN cultural body UNESCO has accorded world heritage status to Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro (nicknamed as Marvelous City).

11. The fifth edition of the India-Arab Partnership Conference was held in Muscat, Oman from December 14 to 15, 2016. Theme of the conference was 'Partnership towards innovation and cooperation in IT'.
12. The famed Gotthard Base Tunnel (GBT) has started regular commercial rail service in Switzerland. The first regular train to use GBT ferried passenger from Zurich to Lugano. The twin-bore GBT is world's longest and deepest railway tunnel with length of 57-kilometer.
13. India has offered tsunami early warning-system to South China Sea (SCS) countries like Vietnam, Malaysia and Philippines as part of soft-diplomacy. India already provides earthquake and tsunami-warning alerts to several countries in the Indian Ocean neighbourhood, as do Japan and Australia.
14. The sixth edition of 'Heart of Asia- Istanbul Process of Afghanistan' conference, an annual regional gathering of Asian and other countries was held in Amritsar, Punjab (India). It was inaugurated jointly by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. It concluded with adaptation of Amritsar Declaration with its prime focus on terrorism.
15. According to the 2016 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) India was ranked 7th among 163 countries in the list of most impacted by terrorism in 2015. The fourth edition of the index was released by Sydney-based think-tank Institute for Economics & Peace. India is one of six Asian countries ranked in the top 10 nations most impacted by terrorism.
16. India has been designated as a major defence partner of the United States. It puts India on a par with the closest allies and partners of the US.
17. China launched its first freight train to London (Britain) with an aim to improve China-Britain trade ties, strengthen connectivity with Western Europe.
18. India ranked 60th among the 79 developing countries in 2017 Inclusive Development Index (IDI) released in World Economic Forum's (WEF) 'Inclusive Growth and Development Report'. The index is based on 12 performance indicators and countries are ranked on IDI scores based on a scale of 1-7. It has three pillars Growth and Development, Inclusion and Intergenerational Equity, and Sustainability in order to provide a more complete measure of economic development than GDP growth alone.
19. The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) was officially launched at World Economic Forum (WEF) Davos after it received \$460-million to develop vaccines against 3 emerging highly-contagious and fatal diseases. These three diseases are Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)-coronavirus, Lassa fever, and Nipah virus. CEPI will use this fund to contain outbreaks these 3 diseases before they become global health emergencies.

20. US President Donald Trump signed an executive order to formally pull US out of the negotiating process of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a mega trade deal of 12 Pacific Rim countries. During the Presidential election campaign, Trump had vowed to withdraw the US from the TPP which he argued was harmful to American workers and manufacturing.
21. Seven new countries Lithuania, Gabon, Hungary, Indonesia, Malta, Mauritius and Russia – have signed Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement for Country-by-Country Reporting (CbC MCAA). With this, the total number of signatories has increased to 57 including India (signed in May 2015). CbC MCAA is a tax co-operation agreement to enable automatic sharing of country-by-country information.
22. India along with other countries in the South East Asian Region have signed World Health Organisation's (WHO) Call To end Tuberculosis (TB) by 2030 in the region.
23. The 89th Academy Awards commonly referred to as Oscars was held at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles. Winners are:
 - a. Best Picture: Moonlight.
 - b. Best Actress: Emma Stone (La La Land).
 - c. Best Actor: Casey Affleck (Manchester By The Sea).
 - d. Best Director: Damien Chazelle (La La Land). At 32, he became youngest director to win oscar.
24. India and Bangladesh have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the sustainable development of Sylhet, a metropolitan city in northeastern Bangladesh with financial aid from India.
25. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has opened a first-of-its-kind South Asia Training and Technical Assistance Centre (SARTTAC) in New Delhi for economic capacity building in South Asia. It will work to support local member countries of South Asia viz. India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka to build human and institutional capacity and implement policies for growth and poverty reduction.

PERSON IN NEWS

1. The Union Government has given senior IPS officer **Rakesh Asthana** additional charge of the post of Director, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
2. UAE based Indian environmental activist **Kehkashan Basu** (16) has won 2016 prestigious International Children's Peace Prize.
3. President Pranab Mukherjee appointed **Anil Baijal**, former bureaucrat, as the 21st Lieutenant Governor of Delhi.
4. The Union Government has appointed **Viral V Acharya** as new Deputy Governor at the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
5. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed **Surekha Marandi** as its Executive Director (ED). She was appointed in place of U S Paliwal who retired on December 31, 2016.
6. **Edappadi K Palaniswamy** was sworn in as the 13th chief minister of Tamil Nadu.
7. Eminent Rajasthani litterateur **Dr Satya Narayan** was chosen for the 26th Bihari Puraskar 2016 by the K K Birla Foundation. He was been chosen for his Hindi book titled Yeh Ek Dunia published in 2010.
8. Eminent modern Bengali poet **Shankha Ghosh** was chosen for the prestigious Jnanpith Award for the year 2016.
9. **Kaisa Matomaki and Maksym Radziwill** have been jointly won the 2016 SASTRA-Ramanujan award for mathematics for their 'revolutionary' collaborative work on short intervals in number theory.
10. Union Government has appointed senior IPS officer **Anil Dhasmana** as new chief of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's external intelligence agency.
11. Union Government has appointed **Lt. Gen. Bipin Rawat** as new Chief of Army Staff (CoAS). He succeeds Army Chief General Dalbir Singh who retires on December 31, 2016.
12. Union government has appointed senior IPS officer **Rajiv Jain** as the new chief of Intelligence Bureau (IB).
13. Union Government has appointed Air Marshal **Birender Singh Dhanoa** as the next Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force (IAF).
14. Former **Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres** was sworn in as the 9th UN Secretary-General.

15. Real Madrid forward **Cristiano Ronaldo** from Portugal has won the prestigious 2016 FIFA Ballon d'Or Award. He has earned this title of world's best football player for fourth time. Earlier he had won the Ballon d'Or in 2008, 2013 and 2014.
16. Justice **Jagdish Singh Khehar** (64) will be the next Chief Justice of India (CJI). He is the 44th CJI and shall succeed Chief Justice TS Thakur who retired on January 3, 2017.
17. Sprint king **Usain Bolt** from Jamaica has been awarded the 2016 IAAF World Athlete of the Year award in male category for sixth time.
18. Indian-origin British professor of chemistry and DNA expert at Cambridge University **Shankar Balasubramanian** received Knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II for their contributions. He was recognised for his work as a co-inventor of Next Generation DNA sequencing (also known as Solexa sequencing), described as the most transformational advance in biology and medicine for decades.
19. President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed Prof **David R Syiemlieh** as the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) as per Article 316 of Constitution.
20. Delhi Police Commissioner and Senior IPS officer **Alok Kumar Verma** was appointed as new Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation. He will have tenure of two years.
21. President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed **Dr Vijay Bhatkar**, architect of India's first supercomputer the Param series, as the chancellor of Nalanda University.
22. Union Government has appointed **Narendra Kumar** as the new chairman of the Central Water Commission (CWC).
23. Eminent Konkani writer **Mahabaleshwar Sail** was selected for the prestigious Saraswati Samman 2016 for his novel Hawthian.
24. Senior tribal leader from Chhattisgarh and ex-parliamentarian **Nand Kumar Sai** took charge as Chairperson of National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) in Delhi.
25. **Shurhozelie Liezitsu** was sworn-in as the 17th Chief Minister of Nagaland.
26. Grandmaster **Magnus Carlsen** of Norway has won the 2016 World Chess Championship for the third consecutive time.
27. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed senior bureaucrat **Ajay Tyagi** as the new chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS

1. The Union Ministry of Law and Justice has constituted a High Level Committee (HLC) to review institutionalisation of *arbitration mechanism* in India. The committee will be headed by Justice **B N Srikrishna**, the retired Judge of Supreme Court.
2. The Union Government has proposed setting up Financial Data Management Centre (FDMC) based on recommendation of a committee set up under the Department of Economic Affairs (DEC). The Committee was headed by **Ajay Tyagi**, Additional Secretary in Union Finance Ministry and has submitted its report and a draft bill titled The Financial Data Management Centre Bill, 2016.
3. Union Water Resources Ministry has reconstituted a committee that was tasked with assisting the *Krishna River Management Board* (KRMB). The new committee will be headed by **A.K. Bajaj**, former chairman of the Central Water Commission (CWC)
4. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has opposed a move to establish a separate entity to regulate payments and settlements as recommended by **Ratan Watal Committee** for *Digital Payments*.
5. Union Sports Ministry has constituted committee to frame comprehensive *National Sports Development Code* across sports disciplines. It will be headed by **Injeti Srinivas**, Sports Secretary. The committee will study the existing sports governance frame work, issues relating to sports governance in the country, recent developments related to sports governance.
6. Union Ministry of Minority Affairs has decided to set up a six-member committee to look into the *Hajj subsidy* issue. The decision has been taken in light of a 2012 Supreme Court order on gradually reducing and abolishing subsidy given to pilgrims by 2022
7. The Expert Group set up to prepare *Socio Economic and Caste Census* (SECC) has submitted its report to the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). The expert group was headed by former Finance Secretary **Sumit Bose**.
8. The sub-committee under chairmanship of professor **Timothy Gonsalves** has recommended reservation for girl students in IITs to address the issue of slump in number of female students entering the prestigious institutes.
9. Union Ministry of Water Resources has constituted negotiations committee to assess availability and utilisation of waters of *Mahanadi and its tributaries* to resolve disputes over sharing of river waters among five states. These five states are Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh,

Maharashtra and Jharkhand. The committee will be chaired by member (water planning and projects) of the Central Water Commission (CWC). It will have 11 other members comprising representatives from the state governments.

10. Union Government has constituted committee (Working Group) to frame uniform rules for the states to avoid delay in proper implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 across the country. The Committee will be headed by Secretary from Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD). It will submit its report within three months.
11. The *Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Committee* has submitted its 4 volume report on changes in FRBM Act, 2013 to the Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley. The 5 member committee was headed by **N.K. Singh**, former Revenue and Expenditure Secretary and former MP. Its member included RBI Governor Urjit Patel, Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian, former Finance Secretary Sumit Bose, and National Institute of Public Finance and Policy Director Rathin Roy.
12. Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has reconstituted *TOP committee* with objective of identifying and supporting potential medal prospects for 2020 and 2024 Olympic Games under Target Olympic Podium (TOP) scheme. The committee will be headed by **Abhinav Bindra**, Olympic Gold Medalist. Its members are Anil Khanna, Prakash Padukone, Karnam Malleshwari, P. T. Usha, Murlidhar Raja, Anjali Bhagwat, Rekha Yadav, Dr. S.S. Roy and Inder Dhamija.
13. Supreme Court has appointed former Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) **Vinod Rai** as head of four-member *Committee of Administrators* to run Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). Other three members of the committee are noted historian Ramachandra Guha, former Indian women's cricket team captain Diana Edulji and managing director of IDFC Limited Vikram Limaye. They will function as the interim bosses of the BCCI and run the day-to-day administration of cricket body till the Lodha Committee reforms are fully implemented and elections held.

Committee of Administrators' first task will be to find out how much the BCCI has complied with the recommendations made by the Justice R.M. Lodha Committee.

14. Government appointed '*Working Group on Migration*' headed by **Partha Mukhopadhyay** has recommended necessary legal and policy framework to protect the interests of the migrants in the country. The panel in its report stated that the migrant population makes substantial contribution to economic growth and so it is necessary to secure their Constitutional rights. The 18-member Working Group was constituted by Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA) in 2015.

15. The **Madhukar Gupta Committee** on border protection has submitted its report to the Union Government to strengthen *border protection and address vulnerabilities* in fencing along the Indo-Pakistan border.
16. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up of an inter-disciplinary standing committee on cyber security to review the threats inherent in the existing and emerging technology. The 11-member committee will be headed by **Meena Hemchandra**, RBI Executive Director. It can co-opt more experts and also operate through a framework of sub-committees to examine specific issues.
17. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has constituted a Panel on Food Fortification and Nutrition to identify critical nutritional gaps in the Indian diet in general and also in specific target groups. The 11 member panel will frame final regulations on fortification of foods and prepare strategies to address malnutrition problem.
18. Union Government has constituted inter-departmental task force comprising members of various regulatory Ministries and enforcement agencies to crack down on benami firms. It is first major post-demonetisation move undertaken by Government for unearthing black money from shell companies used for large-scale money laundering and tax evasion. The task force will be headed by Revenue Secretary and Corporate Affairs Secretary to monitor the actions taken by various agencies.
19. Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry has constituted a sub-committee of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) to look into issues of girl's education. It will be headed by Telangana's Deputy Chief Minister and Education Minister Kadiyam Srihari. It will submit its report to the Union government within one year.

IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL SUMMITS

Summits	Comment
BRICS Summit	<p>Countries (5)- Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8th BRICS Summit 2016 – Benaulim, Goa, India
East Asia Summit (EAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The East Asia Summit (EAS) is a forum held annually in Starting 16 countries in the East Asian, Southeast Asian and South Asian regions. • Membership expanded to 18 countries including the United States and Russia at the Sixth EAS in 2011. • EAS meetings are held after annual ASEAN leaders' meetings. • The first summit was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 14 December 2005. • 11th East Asia Summit 2016 – Vientiane, Laos
APEC Summits (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Countries– 21 • HQ– Singapore • 28th APEC Summit 2016 – Peru, Lima • 29th APEC Summit 2017 – Vietnam, Hanoi
SAARC Summit (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HQ– Nepal • Secretary General– Arjun Bahadur Thapa • Indian Representative at SAARC– Lakshmi Savithri • Countries (8)– Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka • 19th SAARC Summit 2016 – Islamabad, Pakistan • 20th SAARC Summit 2018- Bangaluru – India

ASEAN Summits (Association of South East Asian Nation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HQ- Jakarta, Indonesia • Total Countries– 10 • Secretary General– Le Luong Minh (Vietnam) • <i>INDIA IS NOT IN ASEAN COUNTRIES.</i> • 28th ASEAN Summit 2016 (April) – Vientiane – Laos • 29th ASEAN Summit 2016 (November)-Vientiane- Laos
IBSA Summits (2003)	<p>IBSA Dialogue Forum – India, Brazil, South Africa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7th IBSA Summit 2015 – New Delhi, India
BIMSTEC Summits (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an international organisation involving a group of countries in South Asia and South East Asia. • These are: Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal. • 4th BIMSTEC Summit 2015 – Nepal
G-7 Annual Summits (Earlier it was G8, Now Russia suspended Temporarily)	<p>Group of Seven Countries – France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42nd G8 Summit 2016 – Shima, Japan • 43rd G8 Summit 2017 – Italy
G-20 Summit	<p>The Group of Twenty Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors is a group of finance ministers and central bank governors from 20 major economies: 19 countries plus the European Union, which is represented by the President of the European Council and by the European Central Bank.</p> <p>Chairperson- Tony Abbott, Total Countries- 20 Countries= BRICS + G7 + Argentina, Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Turkey</p>

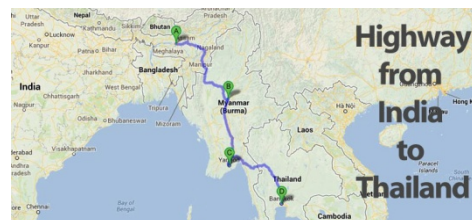
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11th G 20 Meeting 2016 – Hangzhou, China • 12th G 20 Meeting 2017 – Germany • 13th G 20 Meeting 2018 – India
OPEC International Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPEC – Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries • 6th International OPEC – Vienna , Austria
NATO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATO – North Atlantic treaty Organization • HQ- Brussels ,Belgium • Members -28 • Secretary General – Jens Stoltenberg • NATO Summit 2016 – Warsaw, Poland
Earth Hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global earth hour 2016- Australia
NAM Summit 2016	<p>NAM Summit Full Form – Non Allied Moment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has 120+2 (Two nations namely Azerbaijan Republic and Fiji) members. • 17th NAM summit 2016 was held in Caracas, Venezuela . • This Time Vice president Of India Hamid Ansari represented India In NAM 2016
CHOGM Summit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CHOGM Full Form – Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting • Held After Gap of Every Two years • Next CHOGM Will held In Britain 2018 • In 2015 CHOGM Meeting Was held In – Malta

Regional Connectivity in South-East Asia:

Connectivity:

1. IMT Trilateral Highway

- India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway
- B/w Moreh (India) to Mae Sot (Thailand)
- Possible extensions to Laos and Vietnam



2. Mekong Ganga Economic Corridor

- Chennai (India) – Dawei (Myanmar) – Bangkok (Thailand). (sea/land corridor)
- Involves India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam

3. Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Facility

- Haldia/Kolkata Port => Sittwe Port (Myanmar) => Kaladan River => Road transport to Mizoram.



4. BCIM corridor

- Connect Kunming (SW China)– Mandalay (Myanmar) – Dhaka | Chittagong (Bangladesh) - Kolkata (India)



Andaman Nicobar islands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development to Trans-shipment hub.
ASEAN Master Plan for Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the “ASEAN community” [Similar to European Union. will be setup in 2015.]

New Maritime Silk Road

The Maritime Silk Road refers to revival of the route from ports in south China, to the Southeast Asia, India, Arabia.

Objectives

1. Connect 12 inland Chinese regions with 14 neighbouring countries. (revive ancient silk road)
2. Get new export markets
3. Secure lanes to import raw material.
4. Counter the influence of USA (TPP) and Russia

Implementation:

1. Develop port cities along the silk route
 - a. above the wind region: Indian Ocean
 - b. Below the wind region: Malacca, South China Sea, Java Sea and Far East.
2. Via these port cities, link Asia and Africa with Chinese hinterland.

This will be implemented via 2 (Consensus) + 7 (Proposals) cooperation framework

