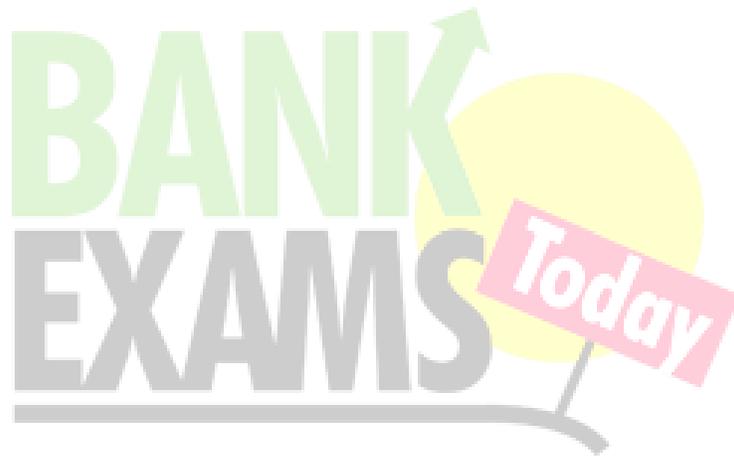


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GK Digest – June 2017

Contains Current Affairs of June 2017



Important Days

World Environment Day: 5 June 2017

- June 5 is World Environment Day, the largest, most globally celebrated day for positive environmental action.
- Theme 2017: Connecting People to Nature.
- That means encouraging people to get outdoors and appreciate the beauty of the planet in a bid to show people the importance of protecting it for future generations.
- The theme was chosen by this year's host country – Canada – which will be the centre of World Environment Day activities.

World Oceans Day: June 8

- World Oceans Day is a global day of ocean celebration and collaboration for a better future.
- This site serves as the central coordinating platform for World Oceans Day, with free resources and ideas for everyone – no matter where you live – to help expand the reach and impact of World Oceans Day on June 8 and year-round.
- **Overall theme for World Oceans Day 2017: Our Oceans, Our Future**

World Day Against Child Labour: 12 June

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) launched the World Day Against Child Labour in 2002 to focus attention on the global extent of child labour and the action and efforts needed to eliminate it.
- Each year on 12 June, the World Day brings together governments, employers and workers organizations, civil society, as well as millions of people from around the world to highlight the plight of child labourers and what can be done to help them.
- **Theme 2017: "In conflicts and disasters, protect children from child labour"**

World Blood Donor Day: 14 June 2017

- World Blood Donor Day is celebrated every year by the people in many countries around the world on 14th of June.

- World Blood Donor Day is celebrated every year on the day of birthday anniversary of Karl Landsteiner on 14th of June in 1868.
- This event celebration was first started in the year 2004 aiming to raise the public awareness about the need for safe blood donation (including its products) voluntarily and unpaid by the healthy person.
- Blood donors are the key role player at this day as they donate life-saving gifts of blood to the needed person.
- **Theme 2017: Giving blood in a time of crisis**



International Day of Family Remittances: 16 June 2017

- The International Day of Family Remittances (IDFR), celebrated on 16 June, is aimed at recognizing the significant financial contribution migrant workers make to the wellbeing of their families back home and to the sustainable development of their countries of origin.
- It is also aimed at encouraging the public and private sectors, as well as the civil society, to do more and collaborate to maximize the impact of these funds in the developing world.
- The first IDFR was celebrated on 16 June 2015 by more than 400 policy-makers, private sector representatives and civil society leaders at the opening of the Fifth Global Forum on Remittances and Development in Milan.
- Patron of the first IDFR was Her Excellency Queen Máxima of the Netherlands in her capacity as United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development (UNSGSA).

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought: 17 June 2017

- The World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is observed every year to promote public awareness of international efforts to combat desertification.
- The day is a unique moment to remind everyone that land degradation neutrality is achievable through problem-solving, strong community involvement and co-operation at all levels
- This year the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought examine the important link between land degradation and migration.
- Among others, environmental degradation, food insecurity and poverty are causes of migration and development challenges.

International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict: 19 June

- On 19 June 2015, the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/69/293) proclaimed 19 June of each year the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, in order to raise awareness of the need to put an end to conflict-related sexual violence, to honour the victims and survivors of sexual violence around the world and to pay tribute to all those who have courageously devoted their lives to and lost their lives in standing up for the eradication of these crimes.
- The date was chosen to commemorate the adoption on 19 June 2008 of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), in which the Council condemned sexual violence as a tactic of war and an impediment to peacebuilding.
- **2017 Theme: "Preventing Sexual Violence Crimes through Justice and Deterrence"**
- A panel discussion to commemorate the second annual International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict will be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York

World Refugee Day: 20 June

- On World Refugee Day, held every year on June 20th to commemorate the strength, courage and perseverance of millions of refugees.
- This year, World Refugee Day also marks a key moment for the public to show support for families forced to flee.
- In a world where violence forces thousands of families to flee for their lives each day, the time is now to show that the global public stands with refugees.

International Yoga Day: 21 June 2017

- Yoga in India is considered to be an around 5,000-year-old mental, physical and spiritual practice.

- The practice has turned into a rage across the world and on 11th December 2014, the United Nations General Assembly decided to observe one common day in the year as International Yoga day or World Yoga Day.
- United Nations General Assembly declared 21st of June as International Yoga Day.

World Music Day: 21 June 2017

- World Music Day 2017 (not to be confused with International Music Day) is being celebrated today, June 21, marking the beginning of summer solstice, i.e., the longest day of the year.
- Initiated by France in 1982, World Music day has been adopted by over 120 nations across the world, including India.
- Musicians from all genres and all ages, amateurs and experienced performers, gather together to perform at various public places.

United Nations Public Service Day: 23 June

- The United Nations Public Service Day is celebrated on June 23 of every year.
- The prestigious UN Public Service Awards are given away on this day.
- The UN Public Service Day was designated by the United Nations General Assembly's resolution to "celebrate the value and virtue of public service to the community".
- The United Nations Economic and Social Council established that the United Nations Public Service Awards be bestowed on Public Service Day for contributions made to the cause of enhancing the role, prestige, and visibility of public service.

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking: 26 June

- By resolution 42/112 of 7 December 1987, the General Assembly decided to observe 26 June as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking as an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse.
- Supported each year by individuals, communities and various organisations all over the world, this global observance aims to raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent to society
- Building on the success of last year, the theme for 2017 is: **"Listen First - Listening to children and youth is the first step to help them grow healthy and safe."** It is an initiative to increase

support for prevention of drug use that is based on science and is thus an effective investment in the well-being of children and youth, their families and their communities.

Day of the Seafarer: 25 June 2017

- This year, once again, 25 June will mark the annual Day of the Seafarer (DotS). DotS was established in a resolution adopted by the 2010 Diplomatic Conference in Manila to adopt the revised STCW Convention.
- Its stated purpose is to recognize the unique contribution made by seafarers from all over the world to international seaborne trade, the world economy and civil society as a whole.
- The resolution "encourages Governments, shipping organisations, companies, shipowners and all other parties concerned to duly and appropriately promote the Day of the Seafarer and take action to celebrate it meaningfully".
- **This year our theme is "Seafarers Matter".**

Govt to observe anti-Emergency day on June 25-26

- The government has decided to observe anti-Emergency day on June 25-26 and asked all its ministers to hold programmes across the country to remind people how Emergency was clamped by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975.
- Terming the Emergency as a "black day" in the constitutional democracy of independent India, Union information and broadcasting minister M Venkaiah Naidu has written to all ministers, asking them to make themselves available to the requests of the presidents of state units of the BJP to demonstrate how the party values democracy.

Small Business – Big Impact: ITC celebrated first ever International MSME Day on June 27

- The International Trade Centre (ITC) celebrated the first International MSME Day on June 27, 2017.
- ITC is the joint agency of the UN and the WTO supporting SMEs in developing countries and transition economies for sustainable and inclusive trade
- June 27, after being marked as the MSME Day, is being celebrated globally to recognise the importance of the role that the sector plays in generating employment and in a country's economy.

- ITC said more than 90% of world's businesses are micro, small and medium enterprises. There are 500 million MSMEs in the world and they represent 90 percent of all goods exporters.

National Statistics Day: 29 June

- On June 29, every year, National Statistics Day is celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of Prof. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, a renowned and eminent statistician.
- The Government of India, in 2007 decided to acknowledge the outstanding contributions made by Prof. P.C. Mahalanobis in the fields of economic planning and statistical development and hence designated 29th June as the National Statistics Day to celebrate Prof. Mahalanobis's birth anniversary.
- The very first National Statistics Day was celebrated on 29th June, 2007 and this year 29th June 2016, marks its 10th anniversary.

National Events

India becomes 3rd largest aviation market in domestic traffic

- India has become the third largest aviation market in terms of domestic passenger traffic, beating Japan, an industry report has said.
- India's domestic air passenger traffic stood at 100 million in 2016 and was behind only the US (719 million) and China (436 million), Sydney-based aviation think-tank Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) said in its latest report.
- India acquired the third spot globally by unseating Japan, which flew 97 million domestic passengers in 2016,
- Domestic air traffic has shown a consistent growth of 20 -25 per cent throughout 2015 and 2016, peaking in January this year at 25.13 percent.

Skill development centre named after Nitin Gadkari inaugurated

- Shri Nitin Gadkari Agricultural and Skill Development Centre was inaugurated at the hands of Assam governor Banwarilal Purohit

- The ceremony took place at Thadipawani, 100 kms from Nagpur city where the development centre is being established.
- Built by the Krushi Vikas Pratishthan, the centre will be utilized for agricultural research and training for farmers in the region.
- The skill development centre is spread across 2.5 acres land, situated on the border of Amravti, Wardha and Nagpur district. Residential arrangement for 102 farmers, skill development session for 170 farmers can also be arranged here. Many well equipped offices and conference rooms are also made available here for discussion and debate purposes. The skill development centre is hoped to be a great workshop point for farmers.

Indian Railways introduces Buy Now, Pay Later service for Ticket bookings

- The Indian Railways introduced 'Buy Now, Pay Later' service for passengers to book tickets online first and make payment for the reservations within a window of 15 days.
- The facility, which allows passengers to travel after five days of booking the ticket, is available for confirmed, waitlisted, and Reservation Against Cancellation (RAC) berths.
- The new Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) feature is being enabled in partnership with the Mumbai-based ePaylater company.

Delhi Police Launches Bicycle Patrols For Better Policing

- The Delhi Police launched a bicycle patrol scheme to increase police presence in congested areas of the city.
- The bicycle patrol, for which 65 high-end bicycles have been acquired, was flagged off by Union Minister of State for Home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir from the Yamuna Sports Complex in east Delhi.
- One of the main areas of focus of these bicycle patrols will be parks where people, including senior citizens and women, go for walks.
- The bicycle patrols will also be introduced near schools and campus so that officers can have a friendly interaction with student community,"
- The bicycle patrols will move around in pairs and each patrol will cover a distance of two to five kilometres, police said.
- The patrolling officers will have standard police communication equipment and will function like mobile police posts of the local police station.
- The scheme will be extended to other areas of Delhi in due course.

Union Ministry to launch 'Deep Ocean Mission'

- The Union Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is all set to launch 'Deep Ocean Mission' by January 2018, which is expected to improve India's position in ocean research field
- The program on polymetallic nodules was initiated at CSIR-NIO with the collection of the first nodule sample from Arabian Sea on board the first research vessel Gaveshani on January 26,1981. India was the first country in the world to have been given the pioneer area for exploration of deep-sea mineral, namely, polymetallic nodules in the Central Indian Ocean Basin in 1987.
- Based on the resource evaluation, India has now retained an area of 75,000 sq km with an estimated resource of about 100 million tons of strategic metals such copper, nickel, cobalt besides manganese and iron.
- A FGM (First Generation Mine-site) with an area of 18,000 sq km has been identified. Latest technologies for extraction of metals from the minerals have also been developed.

Job portal 'Mahaswayam' introduced for job seekers and employers

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis launched a web portal 'Mahaswayam' that will cater to job seekers, employers, entrepreneurs, and training institutes who can avail details regarding skill development and employment.
- Earlier, the state government ran three different portals- Maharashtra State Skill Development Society (MSSDS) portal for Skill Development, 'Maharogjar' for employment and 'Mahaswayamrojar' for entrepreneurship.
- These three have now been merged into 'Mahaswayam', making it easier for all beneficiaries as well as the state to keep a track of the demand and supply of workforce.
- At 'Mahaswayam', job seekers will be able to register themselves, search as well as apply for jobs, inquire for training, get information on self-employment and get details of job fairs.
- Besides, training institutes can also register, get details on participation in the state skill development programme, get training fee receipts, and can also receive training fee through ECS

India to have its own GPS system from 2018

- Come next year, you won't have to rely on a heavily accented lady for directions on Google Maps. Instead India will be having its own GPS system. 'NavIC' will be operational early 2018.
- The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) with an operational name of NavIC is currently being tested for its accuracy and is most likely to be available in the market for public use early next year,
- NavIC or 'Navigation with Indian Constellation' the name given by PM Narendra Modi after the launch of IRNSS-1G, is designed to provide accurate position information to users within the country.

Odisha to have first automatic coastal warning for disasters in India

- Come July, Odisha can warn the vast population residing along its 480 km-long coast by pressing a single button from a control room in the State capital in the event of the occurrence of natural disasters like a tsunami or a cyclone.
- The State government is all set to commission the ambitious Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS) that would enable loud sirens go off simultaneously from towers at 122 locations by July.
- Odisha is the first State in India to have developed an automatic public address system that can be activated along its entire coast.
- Neighbouring Andhra Pradesh is also building up such capability to face natural calamities.
- The new system will also enable authorities to alert people in smaller pockets, depending on the severity of the disaster

Telangana launches T-Wallet for people with and without mobile phones

- The Telangana Government has launched a digital wallet, named T-Wallet, which doesn't charge transaction fee from consumers.
- The government is planning to use the wallet, available in Google Play, for remittances under job guarantee scheme MNREGA and scholarships for students.
- T-Wallet is a bi-directional.
- While consumers use it for public and private transactions, the government can use it to make payments to various beneficiaries
- It also can be used over the web version. One can top up the wallet using credit or debit cards, Internet banking or through cash at Mee Seva centres.

- It allows a maximum transaction of Rs. 1 lakh for e-KYC (know your customer) users. For non-KYC users, the limit is set to Rs. 20,000. The government has picked Transaction Analysts (TA), which secured an RBI licence to run mobile wallets, to run the wallet.
- Vijaya Bank, a banking partner for the initiative, will provide an escrow account facility for Transaction Analysts.
- The settlement process and merchant settlement of T-Wallet will also be handled by the bank. The wallet supports, presently available in Android version, supports English, Telugu and Urdu.

Kiran Kher releases 'Stamp on Prof. Balwant Gargi '

- A stamp on noted playwright and theatre director late Balwant Gargi was released
- BJP leader and Chandigarh MP Kirron Kher released the stamp on the commemoration of Balwant Gargi centenary by the Panjab University,
- Gargi was the founder-director of the Indian Theatre Department, Panjab University, Chandigarh. His students include actors like Anupam Kher, Kirron Kher, Poonam Dhillon director Satish Kaushik, and others.
- Gargi, who was born in 1916 in Bathinda, was awarded the Sahitya Akademi award, the highest Indian literary award, in 1962 for his book 'Rang Manch'. This was followed by the Padma Shri (1972), and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in Punjabi Playwriting in 1998.

Inauguration of MITS Mega Food Park at Rayagada, Odisha

- The first Mega Food Park in the state of Odisha M/s MITS Mega Food Park Pvt. Ltd. at Rayagada has been inaugurated today the 1st June, 2017 by Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Honble Minister of Food Processing Industries
- . This is the 7th Mega Food Park operationalized in the last 3 years by the present government.
- To give a major boost to the food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage at each stage of the supply chain with particular focus on perishables, Ministry of Food Processing Industries is implementing Mega Food Park Scheme in the country.
- Mega Food Parks create modern infrastructure facilities for food processing along the value chain from farm to market with strong forward and backward linkages through a cluster based approach.

- Common facilities and enabling infrastructure is created at Central Processing Centre and facilities for primary processing and storage is created near the farm in the form of Primary Processing Centers (PPCs) and Collection Centers (CCs).
- Under the Scheme, Government of India provides financial assistance upto Rs. 50.00 Crore per Mega Food Park project.

Nuclear-Capable Prithvi-II Missile Test-Fired Successfully From Odisha's Chandipur

- India today successfully test-fired its indigenously developed nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missile from a test range in Odisha as part of a user trial by the Army.
- The trial of the surface-to-surface missile, which has a strike range of a 350 km, was carried out from a mobile launcher from launch complex-3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur near Balasore at around 9:50 am
- The Prithvi-II missile is capable of carrying a 500 kg to 1,000 kg warhead and is thrusted by liquid propulsion twin engines. It uses advanced inertial guidance system with manoeuvring trajectory to hit its target with precision and accuracy.
- The state-of-the-art missile was randomly chosen from the production stock and the entire launch activities were carried out by the specially formed strategic force command (SFC) and monitored by the scientists of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) as part of training exercise

Road ministry launches online platform INAM PRO+ for infra raw material

- Minister for road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari on Thursday launched INAM PRO+— an e-commerce platform for construction and infrastructure raw material for government and private procurement.
- The website inampro.nic.in launched by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation (NHIDCL), a road ministry public sector undertaking, will act as a repository of all raw materials suppliers and manufacturers in the country from where people and construction companies, along with public sector companies, can buy construction material at competitive rates.
- INAM PRO+ is an updated version of the INAM portal, which was launched by the ministry of road transport and highways in 2015, to procure cement.

- The portal has several features like the ability to track orders, adds more products (grade/type), and a payment gateway is incorporated for security purposes and swift cashless transfer of payments.
- The INAM portal has already done sales worth Rs32 crore in two years.

Varanasi to get India's 1st freight village

- Varanasi will get the country's first 'freight village' spread over around 100 acres.
- The plan to set up this project close to the upcoming multi-mode terminal along the Ganga has attracted major players including Dubai Port World and IL&FS.
- A 'Freight Village' is a specialised industrial estate which attracts companies that require logistics services and can cluster to improve their competitiveness.
- This will allow relocation of retailers, warehouse operators and logistics service providers supplying the regional FMCG market.
- World Bank has taken the lead to put in place the project which will provide connectivity to the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor, the country's longest waterway, and the national highway as well.

Haryana renames HUDA as 'it rhymes with ex-CM Hooda's name'

- The Haryana government has changed the name of Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA) to Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP).
- The state's Health Minister Anil Vij said HUDA was often misunderstood as it rhymed with the name of former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda.
- Congress leader Hooda is facing CBI investigation in an industrial plot allotment case, among others.

Samsung India to set up 2 more tech schools

- Samsung India signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), renewing its partnership and setting up two new Samsung Technical Schools in Bengaluru and Jamshedpur.
- On the occasion, the Korean multinational's Indian arm also announced the MSME-Samsung Technical School Scholarship programme, under which 1,000 girls and differently-abled trainees will be given a grant of up to Rs. 20,000,

- Samsung already runs 10 such schools in collaboration with Departments of Technical Education, in States such as Rajasthan, Kerala, Bihar, Delhi and West Bengal.

Pension for single-women launched in Telangana

- The Telangana government was the only government in the country to launch welfare schemes such as pension for single women for the betterment of society
- Following petitions on the plight of single women deserted by their husbands and relatives, the government decided to distribute pension of Rs.1,000 per month to such women on humanitarian grounds.
- The women, who received pensions, were praising the State government for recognising them and honouring them with pension. They urged the government to accord priority in providing employment to single women.

India launches first bicycle share scheme

- India's first bike sharing scheme launched this weekend in the southern city of Mysuru.
- The bikes, of which 450 will be available to the city's 1.2 million inhabitants, will be hireable from 48 docking stations across the city.
- The scheme, which is being run by bike sharing company Trin Trin, was launched with a fair amount of fanfare in the city of Mysuru which is already known as India's cleanest city.
- Alongside the physical launch, an app has been released and several videos have been published detailing how the system works.
- Registered users will be able to access the bikes with an NFC-capable card. Registration costs 350 rupees, which is just over £4, and includes a refundable deposit for the activation cards.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu launches mobile veterinary clinic

- Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu launched 'Sexed Semen for Cows Supply Scheme (SSCSS) and inaugurated mobile veterinary clinic under Sanchara Pasu Vaidya Seva Kendram (SPVSK) with grant-in-aid under PPP
- The main aim was to provide veterinary service at the doorstep of farmers in uncovered areas.

- The government identified 810 villages under 45 divisions and 45 vehicles would be in operation.
- SPVSK mobile veterinary clinic would help in general medical attendance, minor surgical interventions, A.I. Services, reproductive management, input supply services and lab investigations.
- The new mobile veterinary service would provide emergency services round the clock.
- This service would act as a link between the livestock farmers and Animal Husbandry Department and facilitate disease diagnosis, prompt treatment of sick animals at the doorstep, alert the farmers and public authorities concerned of village about the incidence of diseases, render extension services to increase the productivity per unit of livestock.

Women to man parking lots in Chandigarh

- Chandigarh will become India's first city to have only women manage all public parking lots under a 'smart parking system' later this month.
- This will be part of a joint initiative of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation and Mumbai-based Arya Toll Infra Limited that has been allotted the Rs 14.78 crore parking contract.
- Women attendants will man all parking lots from 7.30 am to 9 pm before men will take over.
- Women bouncers will be deployed at each parking lot for their safety.
- The parking attendants will be taught self-defense techniques as well.
- Municipal Commissioner Baldeo Purushartha confirmed the scheme that will be of the launched around June 15.
- There will also be designated 'pink parking spots' reserved for women drivers and free valet parking for them.

TRAI launches three new apps

- Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Monday has launched three new apps to help customers rate quality of services, speed and performance.
- The three new apps -- Mycall app, MySpeed app and 'Do not disturb (DND 2.0)' app -- are being launched so that there is more transparency between the consumers and the service providers.
- For instance, the MyCall app, is an Android application for crowdsourced voice call quality monitoring. The application will help mobile phone users rate their experience about voice

call quality in real time and help TRAI gather customer experience data along with Network data.

- Callers can also provide additional details such as noise or audio delay or mark a call-drop, if they believe that is how the call got terminated
- Similarly, MySpeed app will enable TRAI to obtain test-data from users in all service areas, without any action by the users.
- The crowdsourced data so collected can be viewed in aggregated form on the interactive map-based portal.



Venkaiah Naidu launches 'Segregation of Municipal Waste at Source Initiative for NCR'

- On the occasion of World Environment Day, the Union Minister of Urban Development Shri M.Venkaiah Naidu launched a campaign on source segregation of municipal waste for National Capital Region (NCR)
- The Minister pointed that the incorrect disposal and burning of solid waste results in emission of climate change causing Greenhouse gases like Methane and Carbon Dioxide to the tune of 12.69 million tonnes of Carbon Dioxide in the country per year. He also said that a recent study has revealed 15 diseases, such as Hepatitis, Cholera and Malaria, caused due to the improper solid waste management.
- During the occasion, the Minister released a special edition of Diamond Toons Comic titled 'Chacha Chaudhary & Swachh Bharat'. The comic book depicts cartoons with a message

pertaining to solid waste management.

India's first 'private' railway station Habibganj to come up near Bhopal

- Habibganj in the suburbs of Bhopal will redefine the concept of a railway station in India. The country's first railway station to be redeveloped as a public-private partnership (PPP), Habibganj is set to become a swanky commercial hub with shops, offices and hotels, all in a span of three years.
- The operation and maintenance responsibilities for the station have been given to Bhopal-based Bansal Group for a period of eight years. It has also received four land parcels on a 45-year lease. The group, which operates in the infrastructure and construction sector, also runs a television channel and educational institutions. It won the bid in 2016.
- Bansal Group will invest Rs100 crore to overhaul the station which was opened in 1979, and around Rs350 crore to develop four commercial land parcels adding up to 17,245 sq. m.
- The Habibganj railway station will be designed as a world-class transit hub, with a central concourse equipped with amenities for waiting passengers; arriving and departing passengers will be segregated. The environment-friendly station will be powered by solar energy and has facilities for the differently-abled. The station will have six lifts, 11 escalators and three travelators, along with two underpasses of 4m each provided for arriving passengers.
- The station will have parking space for 300 cars, 850 two-wheelers, rickshaws, taxis and buses. In case of an emergency, the premises can be evacuated in four minutes and passengers can reach designated points of safety in six minutes.

First rural LED street lighting project to take off in Andhra Pradesh

- After cities, energy efficient LED lights will now light up the rural areas of the country. To start with, the Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), under the Ministry of Power, is going to retrofit 10 lakh conventional street lights with LED lamp in village panchayats in Andhra Pradesh which is the first project for rural LED street lighting in the country under the Government of India's Street Lighting National Project (SLNP).
- According to an official release, the project will yield energy savings of approximately 147 million units of electricity annually and lead to a reduction of 12 crore tonnes of CO₂.
- The upfront capital cost of this project is being funded by French development agency Agence Francaise de Developpement (AFD). EESL will carry out the entire annual maintenance and do the warranty replacement for a period of 10 years.

NSE launched international exchange at GIFT city

- Leading bourse NSE launched its international exchange in the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City
- NSE IFSC Ltd, the global exchange promoted by National Stock Exchange, will remain operational for a longer period than NSE during a trading day.
- All the trades will be cleared and settled through NSE IFSC Clearing Corporations Ltd.
- Several products from the currency, commodity and equity segments are expected to get listed on the new exchange which may also introduce other innovative products in line with Sebi regulations.
- Markets regulator Sebi has recently issued norms allowing international exchanges to operate up to 23 hours in GIFT and settle trades at least twice a day.
- NSE's rival BSE has already operationalised its global exchange India International Exchange (INX) at international financial services centre (IFSC).
- Earlier in December, NSE in partnership with Association of National Exchanges Members of India (ANMI) held roadshows to showcase the products, membership schemes and technology solutions, among others, to be offered on its international exchange.

Kerala Government Implements 'Green Protocol' For Weddings

- With the implementation of the protocol, plastic and other non-degradable articles including disposable glasses and plates and thermocol decorations will be kept at bay from marriage functions.
- Inspections will be held at marriage halls, convention centres and hotels and other venues of the wedding ceremony in this regard and action would be taken if the protocol is violated, they said.

Human Milk Bank Inaugurated At Lady Hardinge Medical College in New Delhi

- A national human milk bank was inaugurated at Lady Hardinge Medical College (LHMC) in New Delhi today to provide breast milk to newborns who cannot be nursed by their own mothers.
- The human milk bank and lactation counselling centre, 'Vatsalya - Maatri Amrit Kosh', will collect, pasteurise, test and store milk donated by lactating mothers and make it available for infants in need.
- The 'Vatsalya - Maatri Amrit Kosh' has been set up in collaboration with the Norwegian government, Oslo University and Norway India Partnership Initiative (NIPI).

- It will also act as a dedicated centre to support and promote breastfeeding to improve survival of infants, besides acting as the teaching, training and demonstration site for other milk banks to be established under the ambit of the health ministry.

Dr Jitendra Singh announced Hill Area Development Programme" for Northeast

- The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh announced the launch of, Hill Area Development Programme" (HADP) for Northeast in Imphal (Manipur)
- the hilly areas of Manipur, Tripura and Assam have a distinct geo-physical entity and are lagging in socio-economic development.
- As a result of peculiar topography, he said, there is a wide gap between the hill and valley districts in terms of infrastructure, quality of roads, health and education etc.
- The Hill Development Programme, he said, is inspired with a serious research and deliberation of all these factors.

War memorial inaugurated in Arunachal Pradesh

- General officer commanding of Gajraj Corps Lt General Amarjeet Singh Bedi has inaugurated a war memorial at Thembang village in Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The memorial, constructed by the scout battalion of the Indian Army, has been dedicated to the men of 5 Guards, who fought during the Indo-China war in Thembang village on november 16 and 17, 1962.
- The battle brought to the fore the resolute courage and indomitable fighting spirit shown by the brave hearts of 5 Guards pitted against a numerically superior strength of the Chinese

Shri J P Nadda launches Skill for Life, Save a Life initiative

- Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare launched the 'Skill for Life, Save a Life' initiative
- India enjoys a demographic dividend as more than 65% youth are below the age of 35 years and the Government is determined to seize this opportunity by providing adequate skills and employability to the youth for a strong foundation for continued and sustainable growth.

- 'Skills for Life, Save a Life' Initiative' aims to upscale the quantity and quality of trained professionals in the healthcare system.
- Under this initiative various courses are planned to be initiated targeting specific competencies for healthcare professionals as well as for general public.

National Level Conference on "Capacity Building of SDRFs-2017" concludes

- The two-day National Level Conference on "Capacity Building of SDRFs-2017" concluded.
- The conference was organised by National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to develop a synergy and to highlight way ahead to strengthen the response capabilities of State Disaster Response Forces (SDRFs).
- On the second day of National level conference on capacity building of SDRF-2017 today, the Union Home Secretary, Shri Rajiv Mehrishi addressed the delegates from the states. He emphasized that NDRF and SDRFs to work together on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) by educating the community and adopt new technologies to tackle the new emerging challenges besides their primary role.

Centre clears kambala Bill

- The Union Ministry of Law and Justice has cleared the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Bill 2017, legalising kambala — the traditional slush track buffalo race — and will send it to the President for his assent,
- Following protests by people and kambala organisers in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts, the State government on February 13, 2017 passed the Bill to exempt kambala and bullock-cart racing from the ambit of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.
- In the meeting held on April 13, 2017 in New Delhi, the Additional Secretary of the Union Home Ministry suggested to the government to modify or omit the phrase "subject to such other conditions as may be prescribed" in the sub-section 2 of section 3 of the Bill.
- This phrase opened the window for inclusion of more sports involving animals through government notifications in the future. The State government made the modification and sent it to the Centre.

Madhya Pradesh government launches farmers' debt relief scheme

- Madhya Pradesh government launched a new debt relief scheme – Krishi Rin Samadhan Yojana — for farmers. The cabinet also allocated Rs 1,000 crore for the scheme,
- under the scheme, the interest rate on loans would be less, which would in turn also help defaulting farmers get loans.
- Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan has announced a compensation of Rs 1 crore for the kin of the dead and Rs 5 Lakh to those who were injured. He has also appealed the farmers to maintain peace and harmony in the state.
- Beside loan waivers, farmers are also demanding Rs 50 per litre of milk as they claim that Rs 37 is spent by them for every litre.

Yogi Adityanath govt to name Mughalsarai railway station after RSS ideologue Upadhaya

- The Yogi Adityanath cabinet in Uttar Pradesh decided to rename Mughalsarai railway station near Varanasi after RSS ideologue Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya.
- A meeting of state cabinet was held under the chairmanship of chief minister Adityanath Yogi that gave its approval for the renaming of the station.
- Upadhyay had died under mysterious circumstances while travelling in a train at Mughalsarai station on February 11, 1968. Mughalsarai is one of the busiest stations of the Eastern Railway.
- The BJP government is celebrating the birth centenary of Upadhyaya and several programmes are being organised across the state.
- Earlier in April, the Yogi Adityanath government had decided to name the Agra airport after Upadhyay.

UGC and AICTE to be replaced with one higher education regulator named Heera

- The Narendra Modi led-government is all set to scrap the University Grants Commission and the All India Council for Technical Education and replace them with one higher education regulator, tentatively being called the Higher Education Empowerment Regulation Agency or Heera.
- The new law is being worked out by the Human Resource Development Ministry and the Niti Aayog. A committee, comprising Niti Aayog's Amitabh Kant and higher education secretary KK Sharma among others, is also working on the details.

Shri Venkaiah Naidu inaugurates "Saath Hai Viswaas Hai, Ho Raha Vikas Hai" Exhibition

- The Minister inaugurated the “Saath Hai Viswaas Hai, Ho Raha Vikas Hai” Exhibition at Indira Niketan Park, Sarojini Nagar. Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore, Minister of State for I&B was also present on the occasion.
- The Exhibition comprises of 90 panels which covers various themes such as Prosperous Farmers Prosperous Nation, Government for the People, of the People, by the People, Visionary Government – Securing India’s Future, India’s Rise in the Global Order,
- Harnessing Yuva Shakti for New India, Decisive & Bold Government, Empowering Gaon & Garib for New India, Empowering Women, Reform to Transform and Government that cares.

‘Chief Minister Scholarship Scheme’ scheme launched

- Punjab government has launched a unique ‘Chief Minister Scholarship Scheme’ with a resolve to provide cheaper and quality technical education to the meritorious and poor students of the state.
- All the students who are residents of Punjab and studying in government polytechnic and engineering colleges, Maharaja Ranjit Singh University, Bathinda and IKGPTU, Jalandhar would benefit from the scheme.
- The Technical Education Minister informed that under the scheme, the students of Punjab would get the fee waiver as per the percentage of marks obtained in Class X.
- He said 70 per cent fee waiver will be for the students scoring 60 to 70 per cent marks, 80 per cent fee waiver for students scoring 70 to 80 per cent marks, 90 per cent fee waiver for students scoring 80 to 90 per cent and students scoring 90 to 100 per cent marks would get the full fee waiver.

AYUSH Minister to inaugurate the second edition of National Health Editors’ Conference on Yoga

- The second National Health Editors’ Conference on Yoga was inaugurated by Minister of State for AYUSH (Independent Charge), Shri Shripad Yesso Naik at National Media Centre in New Delhi.
- The conference is being organized by Ministry of AYUSH in association with Press Information Bureau (PIB), M/o Information & Broadcasting and Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy (M/o AYUSH) as a part of celebrations of the 3rd International Day of Yoga on 21st June, 2017.
- The theme of this year’s conference is “Yoga for Health and Harmony”.
- The aim of the conference is to give insight to the journalists about the scientific aspects of yoga & its benefits for human health.

- More than 150 Health Editors and media persons from National, Regional and International media organizations are expected to attend the conference. Senior officers of PIB and Ministry of AYUSH will also remain present on the occasion.

Aadhaar linkage with PAN mandatory

- The Supreme Court on Friday upheld the government's decision to link Aadhaar with the permanent account number (PAN) for the filing of income tax returns, but ruled that non-compliance with the law will carry no retrospective criminal consequences.
- Under the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016, the unique identity number is mandatory only to receive social welfare benefits.
- But according to the provisions of the Finance Act 2017, the Aadhaar number or Aadhaar enrolment number will be mandatory to file income tax returns and to apply for a new PAN.
- An existing PAN can be declared void if the taxpayer does not link it with Aadhaar by 31 July,
- Aadhaar is also mandatory to obtain or retain PAN. However, permanent account numbers of those without Aadhaar will not be invalidated for the time being.

SATH program launched by NITI Aayog

- Furthering the agenda for cooperative federalism, NITI Aayog has launched SATH, a program providing 'Sustainable Action for Transforming Human capital' with the State Governments.
- The vision of the program is to initiate transformation in the education and health sectors. The program addresses the need expressed by many states for technical support from NITI .
- SATH aims to identify and build three future 'role model' states for health systems.
- NITI will work in close collaboration with their state machinery to design a robust roadmap of intervention, develop a program governance structure, set up monitoring and tracking mechanisms, hand-hold state institutions through the execution stage and provide support on a range of institutional measures to achieve the end objectives.
- The program will be implemented by NITI along with McKinsey & Company and IPE Global consortium, who were selected through a competitive bidding process.
- To select the three model states, NITI defined a three-stage process – expression of interest, presentations by the states and assessment of commitment to health sector reforms.

Indian Railway conducts first HR Round Table conference

- Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu said that Human Resource (HR) policy of the railways ought to be revisited as most often wrong people have been assigned with the wrong jobs.
- Mr Prabhu today inaugurated the first HR Round Table Conference of the Indian Railways while senior officials including Chairman of the Railway Board AK Mittal, Staff member Pradeep Kumar and other Board Members were present on the occasion.
- This initiative is focused towards providing the Indian Railway with exposure to the management practices in accordance with the current times so that the vast organisation can incorporate required measures and cover up the gap that it has been lagging behind its global competitors.
- The people in the organisation need to take a decision of change,' the technology keeps changing and unless we keep up with the changing technology different practices and environment we cannot progress' the minister said emphasizing on the fact that the people within the organisation need to take the initiative of continuous introspection and identifying own shortcomings

President Pranab Mukherjee launches 'Selfie with Daughter' mobile app

- President Pranab Mukherjee today launched the 'Selfie with Daughter' mobile application, aimed at raising awareness about female foeticide and sex selection.
- Mukherjee urged people to take photographs with their daughters and upload them to make the campaign a success.
- " 'Selfie with Daughter' has become a worldwide movement against female foeticide and sex selection,"
- The aim of the campaign is to motivate society to feel proud to be parents of a girl child, which, in turn, will result in improving child sex ratio.

From June 16, Petrol, Diesel Prices Will Be Revised Daily

- State-run fuel retailers will revise petrol and diesel prices daily from June 16,
- Daily revision of petrol and diesel prices has already been implemented on a pilot basis in five cities - Udaipur, Jamshedpur, Visakhapatnam, Chandigarh, and Puducherry - from May 1. "After its successful implementation, public sector oil companies have now decided to start

daily revision in retail selling prices of petrol and diesel in the entire country with effect from 16th June, 2017,"

- Indian Oil said daily revision in oil prices will make retail prices more reflective of the current market conditions, besides leading to increased transparency in the system.
- This, country's biggest fuel retailer said, will enable smoother flow of products from refinery/depots to the retailers.

DigiYatra: A new digital experience for air travellers

- DigiYatra' initiative aims to bring together the entire industry to develop a digital ecosystem that will deliver Indian customers a seamless, consistent and paperless service experience at every touch point of their journey.
- DigiYatra initiative envisages providing airline travellers in India a pioneering 'digitally unified flying experience' across all stages of their journey.
- All aviation stakeholders – airlines, airport operators, security and immigration agencies, cab operators, retail establishment and others – are working to devise digital standards which can enable seamless exchange of data and information.
- He said that these standards can power unique applications which can deliver a delightful experience for air travellers.

GST Council lowers tax rate for 66 items

- Tax rates for as many as 66 items including kitchen staples like pickles and mustard sauce under the ensuing GST regime have been cut to meet demands from various quarters as the country prepares for rollout of one- nation-one-tax regime in less than three weeks.
- Within weeks of the all-powerful GST Council fitting over 1,200 items into one of the 5, 12, 18 and 28 percent tax slabs, there were complaints from various quarters about high tax incidence on various goods and services.
- The Council also increased the threshold of turnover for businesses which can opt for composition scheme to Rs 75 lakh, from Rs 50 lakh proposed earlier.
- Now traders, manufacturers and restaurant owners with turnover below Rs 75 lakh can opt for the composition scheme and pay taxes at 1, 2, and 5 percent rates respectively.

Kolkata to get India's first underwater Metro

- Kolkata will soon have an underwater Metro which will pass through tunnels several feet under the Hooghly.

- The first underwater transportation tunnel of India is ready with the second one nearing completion.
- The Kolkata Metro transportation tunnel is unique to India because never before in the history of the country has a tunnel been made under a flowing river.
- The tunnel has been constructed 30 metres below riverbed, just a few metres away from the famous Howrah Bridge, built in the last century to connect Howrah and Kolkata.

Arunachal wants separate time zone to improve efficiency, work hours

- Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu reiterated northeastern states' decades old demand for a separate time zone.
- Leaders from the region argue that a separate time zone would increase daylight savings and efficiency.
- One of the arguments that the states advance is that the early sunrise means that by the time they start their day, almost half the day has passed.
- This means an early sunset which requires extra use of lights in both homes, offices and public places.
- The longitudinal difference between India's easternmost point Kibithu in Arunachal Pradesh and the westernmost point in Gujarat is almost 30 degrees — a time difference of two hours.

Meghalaya passes resolution opposing Centre's notification on cattle sale

- The Meghalaya assembly unanimously passed a resolution opposing the Centre's notification banning the sale and purchase of cattle at animal markets for slaughter
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had issued the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Regulation of Livestock Markets) Rules, 2017 on May 23.
- Sangma told the House that to balance the demand and supply of beef, the government had put in place the Meghalaya State Livestock Mission for 2017-2022 to augment the livestock production.
- The prohibition on the sale and purchase of cattle at animal markets for the purpose of slaughter would affect the livelihood of over 5.7 lakh (79%) households, which were currently involved in cattle-rearing

Government launches Tele-Law initiative

- With an aim to make legal aid easily accessible to the marginalised communities and citizens living in rural areas, the government has launched the 'Tele-Law' initiative of the Ministry of Law and Justice partnered with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- It anchors the Digital India programme, to provide legal aid services through its Common Service Centres (CSC) at the panchayat level, spread across the country.
- Under the scheme, a portal called 'Tele-Law' will be launched, which will be available across the CSC network. This will connect the citizens to legal service providers with the help of technology-enabled platforms.
- 'Tele-Law' will enable people to seek legal advice from lawyers through video conferencing available at the CSC.

Borrow a human for 30 minutes at Delhi's first Human Library

- The concept of 'Human Library' is about to make its way to Delhi on June 18 which will allow readers to borrow real people and learn from their life experiences over a 30-minute meaningful conversation.
- This unique concept allows you to borrow a 'human book', ask any number of questions to that would help dispel misconceptions, provide more information and provide participants with better knowledge of a subject or idea.
- Anybody can be a book, as long as they have interesting experiences and stories to share.
- Delhi will be the fourth city to host the human library community in India after Indore, Hyderabad and Mumbai. The first Human Library event in India was held at Indore in 2016 at the IIM Indore campus.

India's first canal top solar PV system at NTPC Mouda

- State-run power giant NTPC has energised 150 kWp canal top solar PV System on cooling water (CW) channel inside power station premises at its 2,320 MW, Mouda Thermal Power Project, near Nagpur in Maharashtra.
- This novel Solar PV system makes use of side walls of CW channels as load bearing structure thereby significantly decreasing cost of civil and mounting structure,
- It also has several other unique advantages such as land and water conservation due to reduced evaporation, increased PV generation due to cooling and reduction in dirt, leaves thereby reducing chemicals for water treatment

MHA panel to study rules on people's movement along India-Myanmar border

- The Centre set up an expert committee to examine the rules which allow free movement of Indian and Myanmar citizens within 16 kms of the border, but are exploited by militants for smuggling arms, drugs, and fake Indian currency.
- The decision was taken at a meeting of chief ministers of the northeastern states which share a porous border with Myanmar.
- Home Minister Rajnath Singh decided to constitute the committee, headed by the special secretary (Internal Security) in the Ministry of Home Affairs, which will examine the rules and regulations adopted by the border states for free movement of the people, an official release said.
- The committee will give its report for uniform and effective implementation of free movement regime within three months, it said.
- India's 1,643-km border with Myanmar touches four states: Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.

Railways to induct 40,000 refurbished coaches

- The Indian Railways is planning to induct about 40,000 coaches with improved interiors and upgraded facilities at an estimated cost of Rs 8,000 crore to provide world-class comfort to passengers.
- According to the plan, coaches will be retrofitted with refurbished interiors, improved seating arrangement and newly designed bio-toilets among other facilities.
- The retrofitting would cost about Rs 30 lakh per coach.
- The target is to complete the process of refurbishing of coaches with improved interiors and 2023 in the next five years.
- Railways is also focusing on the safety front by equipping all conventional coaches with centre buffler couplers (CBC), a strong coupler system.
- The CBC system prevents coaches from capsizing.

Telangana government launches website for online sale of cattle

- Farmers in the state will be able to sell and purchase cattle online.
- The state government on Monday launched a website to facilitate this service.
- The online sale or purchase of cattle through pashubazar.telangana.gov.in website will help farmers as the cattle need not be brought to shandies every time and farmers can save on transportation cost on cattle.

- Animal Husbandry assistant director V Jagannatha Chary said the website was intended for sale or purchase of cattle among farmers.
- He said that the new cattle rules issued by the Central government were under study and the rules would be applicable to online sale too.
- Farmer can keep maximum five registrations for sale at any time.

Anuyatra campaign launched in Thiruvananthapuram

- A group of differently-abled children who received special training in magic, have become brand ambassadors of Anuyatra, a campaign of the state government for persons with special needs, which was launched by Vice-President Hamid Ansari
- The innovative initiative is aimed at transforming the state to a disabled-friendly one and empower differently-abled children by bringing them to the forefront of the mainstream society.
- The MPower programme managed by the Kerala Social Security Mission (KSSM) under the social justice department is being implemented in collaboration with the Magic Academy.

With 2.5 lakh Child labourers, Uttar Pradesh ranks first

- Over 8 lakh children in India between the age group 5 and 6 years are engaged in child labour. A large percentage, over 5 lakh of these children do not attend school.
- Majority of these kids are engaged in family based employments, states a CRY report.
- According to the report, Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of 2,50,672 children engaged in labour, followed by Bihar with 1,28,087 children and Maharashtra where the number stands at 82,847.

Cabinet approves proposal to introduce the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill 2017

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal to introduce a Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017.
- The Bill would provide for a comprehensive resolution framework for specified financial sector entities to deal with bankruptcy situation in banks, insurance companies and financial sector entities.
- The Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance, Bill 2017 when enacted, will pave the way for setting up of the Resolution Corporation.
- It would lead to repeal or amendment of resolution-related provisions in sectoral Acts as listed in Schedules of the Bill.

- It will also result in the repealing of the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961 to transfer the deposit insurance powers and responsibilities to the Resolution Corporation.

CSO to change GDP base year to 2017-18 from 2011-12

- The Statistics Ministry is set to change the base year of national accounts to 2017-18 from 2011-12 after completion of the household consumer expenditure survey and labour force data by the end of 2018.
- The new labour force survey and household consumer expenditure survey will be available by 2018.
- Earlier in 2015, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) under the Statistics Ministry had changed the base year for tabulating the Gross Domestic Product or size of economy to 2011-12 from 2004-05.
- Last month, the CSO has changed the base of Index of Industrial Production (IIP), which measures factory output, to 2011-12 from 2004-05. Besides, the base year of Wholesale Price Index (WPI) has also been changed to 2011-12 from 2004-05.
- In 2017—18, NSSO will undertake surveys on household consumer expenditure and household consumer expenditure on education and health

India to be Co-Partner Country in ANUGA 2017

- Minister of Food Processing Industries Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal has signed the Memorandum of Understanding for Participation in the ANUGA Exhibition with Ms Katharina C Hamma, Chief Operating Officer, Koelnmesse GmbH (Organizers of ANUGA).
- Government has started nine Mega Food Parks; strengthening cold chain infrastructure; implementing Kisan-SAMPADA scheme with allocation of Rs 6000 crore; creation of corpus of Rs. 2000 Crore with NABARD for priority lending to the food processing industries; rationalising taxes; allowing 100% FDI in retail market for Food sector, etc.
- These steps will help the Government in achieving its vision of making India a Global Food Factory rather than being a market place only. "Brand India will be standing parallel with Brand ANUGA in Cologne, Germany"
- ANUGA - an acronym for Allgemeine Nahrungs Und Genußmittel Ausstellung (General Food and Non essential Provisions Exhibition) is the world's biggest and most important trade fair for Food and beverage trade. It takes place biennially (every 2 years). ANUGA 2017 is the 34th edition.

- ANUGA offers an extensive supporting programme with Lectures, Special exhibition and attractive industry events
- ANUGA is the leading export platform with 7,189 exhibitors from 109 countries with over 85% of Exhibitors from abroad.
- 1,60,000 decision makers from the retail and out-of-home market from 192 countries visited during last ANUGA. 66% of the industry visitors are foreigners

India ratifies key global conventions to combat child labour

- India ratified on Tuesday two fundamental global conventions on combating child labour which a top ILO official described as a "positive step" on the country's path towards full respect for fundamental rights at work.
- The Indian government deposited with the International Labour Office (ILO) the instruments of ratification of the two fundamental ILO Conventions concerning the elimination of child labour -- the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).
- India is the 170th ILO member state to ratify Convention No 138, which requires states party to set a minimum age under which no one shall be admitted to employment or work in any occupation, except for light work and artistic performances.

Centre extends interest subsidy on farm loans

- Farmers will continue to get short-term farm loans up to Rs. 3 lakh at an interest rate of 4 per cent as the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved an interest subvention scheme and earmarked a sum of Rs. 20,339 crore for it.
- Under the scheme, which has been in place since 2006, the Centre will provide an interest subvention of 5 per cent per annum to those farmers who repay the short-term crop loan up to one year for a maximum of Rs.3 lakh.
- The interest subsidy, however, would be only 2 per cent for farmers who do not repay on time, it said.
- The scheme, however, would not give any additional succour to farmers who are in distress as it is just a continuation of an existing scheme.
- This scheme comes at a time when farmers in many States are clamouring for farm loan waiver

- Interest subvention scheme will continue for a year and will be implemented jointly by Nabard and the RBI. The interest subvention will be given to public sector banks (PSBs), private sector banks, cooperative banks and regional rural banks (RRBs) on use of own funds and to Nabard for refinance to RRBs and cooperative banks,
- Small and marginal farmers who borrow at 9 per cent for the post harvest storage of their produce will get an interest subvention of 2 per cent, bringing down the interest burden to 7 per cent per annum,

Health Ministry launches Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDCF)

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched the Intensified Diarrhea Control Fortnight (IDCF) in order to intensify efforts to reduce child deaths due to diarrhoea.
- The Ministry has made it a national priority to bring health outcomes among children to a level equitable with the rest of the world.
- Through this initiative, the Ministry will mobilize health personnel, State Governments and other stakeholders to prioritize investment in control of diarrhea, one of the most common childhood illnesses.
- It aims to create mass awareness about the most effective and low-cost diarrhoea treatment— a combination of Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) solution and Zinc tablets.
- During the fortnight, intensified community awareness campaigns on hygiene and promotion of ORS and Zinc therapy will be conducted at state, district and village levels.
- Nearly 12 crore under 5-children will be covered during the program across the country.
- Increased access to immunization and child healthcare services during this period have greatly contributed to this decline. Yet, an estimated 1.1 million children die each year in India, including approximately 1.1 lakh deaths due to diarrhoea.

Haryana's open defecation-free village to be named after Donald Trump

- Sulabh International founder and chief Bindeshwar Pathak has announced that an open defecation-free (ODF) village in Mewat will be named after the US President Donald Trump.
- Sulabh believes the move will help draw the attention of the world towards India's cleanliness campaign.
- The organisation is currently working in some villages of Mewat to make them ODF, one of which will be named after Trump

India top remittance-receiving country in 2016

- Indians working across the globe sent home USD 62.7 billion last year, making India the top remittance-receiving country surpassing China, according to a UN report.
- The 'One Family at a Time' study by the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) said about 200 million migrants globally sent more than \$445 billion in 2016 as remittances to their families, helping to lift millions out of poverty.
- 80 per cent of remittances are received by 23 countries, led by India, China, the Philippines, Mexico and Pakistan.
- The top 10 sending countries account for almost half of annual flows, led by the US, Saudi Arabia and Russia.
- The study said India was the top receiving country for remittances in 2016 at \$62.7 billion, followed by China (\$61 billion), the Philippines (\$30 billion) and Pakistan (\$20 billion).

India ranks 75th on environment impact survey

- India came in 75th in a list of 102 countries ranked from best to last in terms of the human impact on environment per person.
- It gauges the impact of citizens on the environment by taking into account the share of renewable energy sources in the energy mix, the energy consumption per capita, the carbon dioxide emissions per capita, wastewater treatment capacity, municipal solid waste generated, air pollution and tree cover loss.
- The ranking was done by MoneySuperMarket, a UK-based financial services website, gave the most weight to Carbon dioxide emissions, municipal solid waste and energy consumption.
- With its reliance on clean energy sources even lower than India at 12.56%, the U.S. was placed second last on the list at the 101 position.
- Trinidad and Tobago ranks last because it hardly relies on any green energy sources. Mozambique tops the list as the most green nation because it uses 100% green energy.

Goa Marathi Film Festival raises curtain on 10th edition

- The 10th edition of the Marathi Film Festival was inaugurated in Panaji
- Marathi actor Sai Tamhankar will be awarded the 'Face of the Year' award while veteran actor Sachin Pilgaonkar will be honoured with the 'Krutadnyata award'.

- Nagesh Bhosle's Sanchar, and Girish Joshi's Take Care, Good Night will premiere at the festival. Marathi films like Ventilator, Muramba, Oli ki Suki, Chi va Chi Sau Ka, Disha, Kasav will be screened over next three days. Mahesh Manjrekar's F.U. will also have two shows during the festival.

Lok Sabha Speaker to inaugurate NERCPA conference in Imphal

- Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan will inaugurate the 16th North East Region Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (NERCPA) Conference
- The conference will deliberate on themes such as 'North East and Look East Policy', 'Special plan for development of railways and airways for speedy economic development of North East region', and 'Setting up of a chapter of Speaker's Research Initiative (SRI) in the region'.
- It will be held at the assembly premises here till June 18.
- The SRI has conducted several meetings and workshops with stakeholders in democracy and eminent domain experts for members of Parliament during sessions, specifically on subjects listed before Parliament.

ClearTax launches free GST bill book software

- To help small and medium businesses (SMEs) in the country get GST-ready, ClearTax, has launched a Bill book software.
- ClearTax's GST Bill Book is a free software platform for preparing GST-compliant invoices. With this platform for small businesses in India, ClearTax plans to reach out to about 10 lakh SMEs across the country.
- The Bill book is a ready-to-use software platform that works both online and offline
- The GSTbillbook will automatically identify IGST vs SGST in the invoice. GST Bill book will help in curbing the tedious task of uploading to GSTN every month
- The GST bill book supports features such as creating a sales invoice, recording of discount, freight, insurance, & package handling charges.
- In addition to creating sales bills, it can be used to record purchases and expenses under GST regime. It will also support other documents mandated by GST such as delivery challan, e-way bill, advance payment receipts etc.
- ClearTax was founded by Archit Gupta along with his father Raja Ram Gupta, Srivatsan Chari, and Ankit Solanki. ClearTax is Y-Combinator's first India focused investment.

India to host AIIB's 3rd annual meeting in 2018

- India will host the third annual meeting of the China-initiated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in 2018
- The third annual meeting of the AIIB's board of governors will be held in Mumbai, India, in June 2018. India is AIIB's second-largest shareholder,
- Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley noted that his country would be honoured to become the host country for the third AIIB annual meeting.
- The first annual meeting was held in Beijing last year. The second meeting, which would last for two days was launched in South Korea's southern resort island of Jeju.
- Officially launched in January 2016, the Beijing-based AIIB is a multilateral development bank initiated by China and supported by a wide range of countries and regions, which will provide financing for infrastructure improvement in Asia.

Current account deficit narrows in 2016-17: RBI

- India's current account deficit (CAD) narrowed during last fiscal due to a contraction in the country's trade deficit.
- According to data furnished by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the CAD for last fiscal narrowed to 0.7 per cent of the GDP from 1.1 per cent in 2015-16 on the back of the contraction in trade deficit.
- India's trade deficit during the fiscal under review narrowed to \$112.4 billion in 2016-17 from \$130.1 billion in 2015-16.

Government announces 149 new post office passport kendras, aims a centre every 50 km

- The government came up with a plan to open passport centres within a radius of 50 km, while announcing that nearly 150 post offices would start doubling as passport kendras soon.
- These will be in addition to 86 POPSs announced by the Ministry of External Affairs in the first phase, an initiative undertaken jointly by the MEA and the Department of Post.
- Since coming to power, the NDA government has also opened 16 PSs, with a priority given to the northeastern states, Swaraj said.

- Thus, the NDA government has altogether opened or announced 251 PSKs and POPSKs since coming to power in May 2014

Sushma Swaraj inaugurates KIP for young overseas Indians

- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj inaugurated Know India Programme, KIP, for young overseas Indians at a function in New Delhi.
- Mrs Swaraj said, the programme is aimed at promoting awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields such as economic and education.
- The Know India Programme is a three-week orientation programme for the Indian diaspora.
- It provides a unique forum for students and young professionals of Indian origin to visit India, share their views, expectations and experiences and develop closer bonds with the contemporary India.
- On the occasion, the External Affairs Minister announced opening of new 149 post office passport seva kendras in the country soon.
- This will take the total number of such Kendras to 251. She also said that government is making all out efforts that a person should not travel more than 50 kilometres to get his/her passport.

GST return filing rules relaxed for Jul-Aug, July 1 rollout

- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council at its 17th meeting decided to increase the room tariff threshold, above which the luxury rate of 28% will apply, to Rs.7,500 from the Rs. 5,000 decided earlier.
- The Council also decided to defer the dates of filing the detailed return for July and August.
- The Council decided that State-run lotteries will fall in the 12% tax bracket, while all others will be taxed at 28%.

Centre to help for scheme for beautification of Aravalis

- Union minister Harsh Vardhan assured that the central government will extend all possible support to any scheme for enhancing the beauty and ecology of the Aravali range.

- He also announced that the forest around Bhondsi area had been renamed as 'Chandra Shekhar Smriti Van' in the memory of former prime minister Chandra Shekhar.
- Khattar exhorted the people to plant trees equal to the population of the village and to plant 2 crore trees in the next one year for protection of the environment.

Atal Pension Yojana (APY) can now be subscribed digitally

- Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has now introduced "APY@eNPS" which involves a complete digital enrolment process.
- This is the latest in the series of various initiatives taken by PFRDA for expansion of outreach of Atal Pension Yojana (APY), to give additional push to cover the as yet unreached population at greater ease.
- PFRDA has conducted meetings with Banks and Deptt of Post at Kolkata, Bengaluru & Mumbai respectively for the earliest roll out of the facility call.
- The APY was launched by the Prime Minister of India on 9th May, 2015 and became operational from 1st June, 2015.
- APY is available for all citizens of India in the age group of 18-40 years.
- Under the APY, the subscribers would receive a minimum guaranteed pension of Rs. 1000 per month, Rs. 2000 per month, Rs. 3000 per month, Rs. 4000 per month, Rs. 5000 per month, at the age of 60 years, depending on their contributions, which itself would vary on the age of joining the APY.

CRPF launched 24X7 helpline Madadgaar

- The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), deployed in the Kashmir valley, has launched a helpline, "Madadgaar", with a toll-free number 14411, the first of its kind in the Valley which has already started getting distressed calls.
- The toll-free helpline is to serve the citizens of Kashmir located all over the country.
- The helpline will render assistance in case of women and public safety, medical emergencies, disruption of civic amenities and natural and man-made calamities.
- The round-the-clock helpline, Madadgar, had become operational and not just limited to the Kashmir valley.

- Anyone could dial the helpline, from girls being harassed by road Romeos to people in need of emergency ambulance services and those getting threat calls from militants.
- The paramilitary force would use its fleet of ambulances and doctors to provide medical help

Punjab to get mohalla clinics, health insurance for all citizens

- Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh has announced his government's decision to establish wellness mohalla (ward) clinics across the state.
- Government had initiated the process of providing health insurance to all the citizens so that they can get quality healthcare facilities at affordable cost
- The School Health Programme has also been reinforced to ensure regular health check-up of all school children.
- The government has given an incentive of 30% marks to PCMS doctors in the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET) for post-graduation.

Govt appointed Amitabh Bachchan to promote GST

- The government has roped in Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan to promote Goods and Services Tax (GST), ahead of the sweeping tax reform's implementation scheduled from July 1.
- The Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) will be making the 74-year-old Bachchan brand ambassador for GST.
- A 40-second video featuring him has already been shot and is being circulated.
- A four-rate structure that exempts or imposes a low rate of tax 5 per cent on essential items and top rate of 28 per cent on cars and consumer durables has been finalised.
- The other slabs of tax are 12 and 18 per cent.
- GST also represents an unprecedented exercise in fiscal federalism. The GST Council, that brings together the central and state governments, has met 17 times to thrash out how the tax will work.

Vedanta to set up steel plant in Jharkhand in JV with JSMDC

- A steel plant would soon come up at Manoharpur in West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand
- The Vedanta group and Jharkhand Mineral Development Corporation (JSMDC) would jointly set up the plant.

- Claiming that investors were being attracted towards the mineral-rich state, the chief minister said that the state government had signed Rs 3 lakh crore worth of long-term and mid-term MoUs with the investors during the Momentum Jharkhand investors meet in February.
- Priority would be given to mid-term MoUs that could start production within three years of implementation and generate employment

India ratifies United Nations TIR Convention

- India became the 71st country to ratify the United Nations TIR (Transports Internationaux Routiers) Convention, a move that will help boost trade through smoother movement of goods across territories.
- The ratification is a part of India's multi-modal transport strategy that aims to integrate the economy with global and regional production networks through better connectivity.
- The TIR Convention will also facilitate India's current national and multilateral connectivity-related initiatives to improve cross border road transport, facilitating overland trade integration with both eastern and western neighbours.
- It will also help India in implementing the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement, which entered into force this year.

Government launches new Energy Conservation Building Code

- The government launched the Energy Conservation Building Code 2017 (ECBC)
- The updated version of code provides current as well as futuristic advancements in building technology to further reduce building energy consumption and promote low-carbon growth
- The earlier Energy Conservation Building Code has been adopted by 10 states in the country.
- And states such as Haryana offer up to 25 per cent additional Floor Area Ratio while Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation offers up to 50 per cent discount on premium amount of building permission charges.

Government Starts 'Talent Hunt' to Give Forgotten Artists a National Stage

- Minister of culture and tourism Mahesh Sharma on Saturday launched the National Mission on Cultural Mapping of India in the city.

- Under the mission, the government will hold a “talent hunt” for artists of various genres and give them a platform to showcase their talent on the national stage.
- Officials said that artists can register themselves on the cultural mapping portal, after which they will be given a unique ID.
- Their development as an artist and their work will then be tracked and promoted by the ministry. The government is targeting those artists whose genres are not very well known and they never got a stage for their work.
- Once the artists are identified, competitions will be held and the winners will be given cash prizes. The government will also provide them other security benefits like insurance.

Anti-profiteering panel to levy penalty

- A five-member anti-profiteering authority will be set up to decide on levying penalty if businesses do not pass on the benefit of price reduction to consumers under the goods and services tax regime.
- The authority, to be headed by a retired secretary-level officer, can take suo motu action, besides acting on complaints of profiteering.
- The GST Council, chaired by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and comprising state finance ministers as members, today approved the anti-profiteering rules.
- As per the norms, the authority will have a sunset date of two years and will decide on penalty to be levied. It would ask the businesses to refund the price reduction on a proportionate basis to consumers.
- Besides the chairman, the four other members of the authority will be joint secretary-level officers who have been commissioners in central excise and service tax either at the Centre or states.
- As per the structure, the complaints of profiteering would first come to the Standing Committee comprising tax officials from states and the Centre.
- It would forward the complaint to the Directorate of Safeguards (DGS) for investigation, which is likely to take about 2-3 months to complete the inquiry.

Centre Launches App For Sharing International Yoga Day Experience

- Government today launched a mobile application via which people can share their experience about participating in yoga and related activities.

- Union Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan launched the application, 'Celebrating Yoga'.
- the mobile application will help in capturing big events organised at public places, and schools and offices across the country on International Yoga Day on June 21.
- The application can be used even after International Yoga Day. The application is connected to Google Map, where shared information can be seen users
- The information will subsequently be visible on the website of the Department of Science and Technology.
- The department also runs a programme called 'Science and Technology of Yoga and Meditation' under which research is being carried out by top institutes to scientifically validate the benefits of yoga.
- The application will also give information to users about studies conducted on yoga under the department's programme.

114-year-old Taj Palace becomes first Indian building to get trademark

- The iconic Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai has just got itself trademarked. This makes the 114-year-old building the first in the country to get such a registration.
- The hotel, which has been a defining structure of Mumbai's skyline, has joined the elite and small club of trademarked properties in the world which includes the Empire State Building in New York, the Eiffel Tower in Paris and Sydney Opera House.
- Usually, logos, brand names, combination of colours, numerals and even sounds are trademarked but the registration of an architectural design has never been attempted since the Trademark Act came into force in 1999.
- The Taj Mahal Palace which was built in 1903 even before the Gateway of India, acted as a triangulation point for the Indian Navy to show way towards the harbour.
- With IHCL trademarking the building, nobody can now use Taj Mahal Palace's images for commercial purposes without paying the company a licensing fee.

India's First Indigenously Built Floating Dock Goes On Stream

- The country's first indigenously built floating dock FDN-2 for the Indian Navy, was formally launched at the L&T Shipbuilding Yard at Kattupalli near Chennai.
- The floating dock, awarded to Larsen and Toubro by the Ministry of Defence in May 2015, was to design and build at an order value of Rs. 468 crore.

- The floating dock will be delivered to Indian Navy, Port Blair in the coming months after undergoing a series of "harbour trials,"
- The floating dock was launched by Anjali Deshpande, the wife of Vice Admiral D M Deshpande, Controller of Warship Production and Acquisition at a function.
- The Floating Dock is an indigenously built designed and built platform with state-of-the-art machinery and control systems capable of docking ships of upto 8,000 tonne displacement.
- The dock covers facilitate "repair" and "refit" activities even in inclement weather conditions.
- The company had invested in building state-of-the-art facilities at Kattupalli and look keen to continue service to the Indian Navy, Larsen and Toubro

Meghalaya Govt signs two MoUs with SBI for digital transaction

- Meghalaya government today signed two MoUs with the State Bank of India as a part of an initiative towards migrating government transactions to digital mode.
- With implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), these MoUs are expected to give dealers and other citizens the desired platform for conducting financial transactions with the state government on a digital platform
- The state government has already established a new treasury called as Cyber Treasury, which dedicatedly handles all online transactions of government receipts across the state centrally for a few selected departments
- The state government will now escalate its transactions for collection of tax and non-tax revenue through the online system - Government Receipt Accounting System (GRAS) covering all departments in a phased manner
- SBI CMP will help the state government to make its payments online and will reduce paper work and manual reconciliation of government transactions

Punjab Announced Free Education For Girls From Nursery To PhD

- The Captain Amarinder Singh-led government in Punjab has announced free education for girls in government schools and colleges from Nursery to PhD.
- free textbooks will be provided to all students in government schools from the next academic session.

- Nursery and LKG classes will be reintroduced in government schools from next year. Fulfilling another election promise Singh also announced free Wi-Fi for 13,000 primary schools and all 48 government colleges.

Government of India and the ADB Sign \$275 Million Loan for Upgrading Urban Services in 64 Small Towns in Madhya Pradesh

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$275 million loan on 19th June, 2017 for improving urban services in 64 small towns in the State of Madhya Pradesh.
- Madhya Pradesh needs substantial investments to keep pace with rapid urbanization. Availability of continuous piped water supply is vital for improving the urban infrastructure, and it will facilitate improved access to safe drinking water for residents in the project area
- ADB's continued support to the State's urban development, through this project, will improve further the quality, coverage, efficiency, and sustainability of urban service delivery, stabilize and deepen institutional capacity, and improve long term water service management

Indore installs India's 1st 14-foot robot to control traffic

- In what is being considered as a first for India, Indore has installed a 14-foot-tall robot to control traffic.
- It's equipped with a public address system and can take photos of traffic violators to generate e-challans when connected to police control room.
- Developed by Shri Venkateshwar Institute of Technology, the robot reportedly took two years and Rs.20 lakh to complete.

Bengaluru firm 1st in India to deliver diesel at home

- The 'dieselwallah' is here.
- Bengaluru has become the country's first city where one can have fuel delivered at one's doorstep, just like milk and newspapers, only weeks after oil ministry announced that the Centre was thinking of rolling out such a system.
- On June 15, Mypetrolpump, a one-year-old startup, conducted a soft launch with three delivery vehicles -each with a capacity of 950 litres.

- It has already delivered more than 5,000 litres of diesel. Diesel is delivered at the day's running price with a fixed delivery charge.
- For up to 100 litres, the one-time delivery charge is ₹99.
- Above 100 litres, one needs to pay the diesel price plus one additional rupee per litre. The startup has got 20 odd customers, including 16 schools (which have 250-300 buses) and a few apartments. One can place orders online, through a phone call or by downloading the free app.

First unit of 100 MW Sainj hydropower project commissioned

- The first 50 MW unit of 100 MW Sainj Hydro Power project of Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (HPPCL) commissioned and synchronised with northern grid through Parvati-Kol Dam transmission line.
- The impounding of water in the reservoir was started on February 2 this year and mechanical testing was done successfully on April 25.
- The second unit of 50 MW would also be commissioned soon and the project would produce 322 million units of electricity every year accruing an income of Rs 100 crore to the state government.
- Sainj Hydro Power Project has been constructed on Sainj River, a tributary of Beas river and its barrage has been constructed near village Niharini while the underground power house was located on the right bank of Sainj at Siund village.

Axis Bank and Kochi Metro Join Hands to Launch India's First Single-Wallet Contactless, Open Loop Metro Card

- Axis Bank, India's third largest private sector bank in association with Kochi Metro Rail Corporation (KMRL) has launched KMRL Axis Bank 'Kochi1' Card, India's first open loop EMV contactless metro card that would make travel a convenient and hassle free experience for commuters in Kochi. Axis Bank has partnered with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in developing this transit EMV contactless specification on interoperable open standards.
- The prepaid card has integrated benefits and offers a plethora of services to commuters such as:
- Shopping experience at merchant outlets: No hassle of carrying multiple cards.

- Instant issuance of Personalized Cards: The commuter will receive a completely personalized (with name) KMRL Axis Bank 'Kochi1' Card across the counter in a matter of minutes.
- Convenience of recharge: The commuter can easily top up the card through cash or debit or credit card.

Mumbai continues to be most expensive city for expatriates in India

- Mumbai is the most expensive city for expatriates in India and is ranked higher than major global cities such as Paris, Canberra, Seattle and Vienna, says a report.
- According to Mercer's 23rd annual Cost of Living Survey, Mumbai is placed 57th on the list while New Delhi was placed at 99. Chennai (135), Bangalore (166) and Kolkata (184) were the other Indian cities on the list.
- Luanda, the capital of Angola, was the costliest city, driven by cost of goods and security, followed by Hong Kong and Tokyo at the second and third places, respectively.

Nirmala Sitharaman Launches Startup India Virtual Hub

- India is the world's third largest startup ecosystem in the world, and to further cement that position, Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched the Startup India Virtual Hub.
- The Hub is an online platform for entrepreneurs to discover, connect and engage with each other.
- The government is claiming that the platform will attempt to solve the problem of information asymmetry and lack of access to knowledge, tools and experts, especially in the nascent ecosystems across Tier-II and Tier-III towns
- Startup India Virtual Hub is an effort to create a marketplace where all the stakeholders can interact, exchange knowledge, and enable each other to grow.
- It will streamline the lifecycle of existing and potential startups, helping them access the right resources at the right time

Uttarakhand, Haryana become Open Defecation Free states

- Uttarakhand and Haryana have become the fourth and fifth Open Defecation Free (ODF) states of India under the Swachh Bharat Mission

- The two states joined the league of Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala, which were the first three states to be declared ODF.
- Uttarakhand's 13 districts, 95 blocks, 7,256 gram panchayats and 1,5751 villages, while Haryana has 21 districts, 124 blocks, and 6,083 gram panchayats, all of which have declared themselves as ODF in formal declarations in Dehradun and Chandigarh, respectively.

EPFO signs MoU with HUDCO under new Housing Scheme of EPF & MP Act-1952

- Retirement fund body EPFO signed a pact with the Housing and Urban Development Corp (HUDCO) to enable members of its housing scheme to avail subsidy and interest subvention under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.
- Under the housing scheme, the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) allows its subscribers from societies for withdrawing up to 90 per cent of their EPF accumulations to buy homes.
- The agreement is regarding coverage of EPFO subscribers under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana by providing them various benefits like cheaper loans for buying homes.

India's biggest municipal bonds programme launched in Maharashtra

- To finance its 24x7 water supply project, the Pune Municipal Corporation on Thursday launched India's biggest municipal bonds programme.
- The project looks to raise Rs 2,264 crore in five years.
- Pune's bond programme is the first since the publication of the Issue and Listing of Debt Securities by Municipalities Regulations, 2015, by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- In its first part, the corporation raised Rs200 crore through the Bombay Stock Exchange's bond trading platform at a coupon rate (a fixed security amount) of 7.59% for 10 years. The issue received a good response with bonds being over-subscribed by six times.
- Municipal bonds are debt instruments through which a corporation or municipality raises money from individuals or institutions.
- The civic body floating the bonds returns the principal amount on a maturity date with a specific amount of interest.
- There are usually two kinds of bonds – general bonds, where money is raised without mentioning the cause in particular, and revenue bonds, where funds are raised for income-

generating projects and revenue from the projects is used to repay the buyers.

Rajdhani, Shatabdi trains set for revamping under 'Operation Swarn'

- Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express were started to move people who could afford to pay more for a somewhat luxurious travel.
- But after years of service, the trains have lost their sheen. The service has deteriorated, the cleanliness is missing, quality of food has suffered.
- After years of complaints by the travelling public, the premium trains are now set for a makeover. The Railway Ministry is to launch "Operation Swarn" to improve services in Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express train
- In the first phase, the Mumbai-Delhi Rajdhani Express and Mumbai-Ahmedabad Shatabdi Express have been selected for upgradation. Work will start from September 26. More trains will be identified in a phased manner.

Centre Launches Index To Rank 116 Cities On Quality Of Life

- The Centre today launched a **liveability index** which will rank the country's 116 major cities on the basis of the quality of life they offer. Launching the first 'City Liveability Index', Urban Development Minister Venkaiah Naidu said, it will cover cities with the population above one million, including the capital cities.
- The first-of-its-kind index will enable the cities know where they stand in terms of the quality of life and the interventions required to improve it.
- The cities will be assessed on a comprehensive set of 79 parameters, including availability of roads, education, healthcare, mobility, employment opportunities, emergency response, grievance redressal, pollution, availability of open and green spaces, cultural and entertainment opportunities.
- Meanwhile, Mr Naidu disbursed Rs. 500 crore as an incentive to 16 states that performed well in implementing urban reforms during 2016-17.
- Andhra Pradesh topped the list with the highest score in implementing urban schemes, followed by Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.

Passport fee reduced for applicants under age of 8 years and over 60

- External Affairs minister Sushma Swaraj announced that the passport application fee for applicants under the age of eight and over the age of 60 had been reduced by 10 per cent.
- Swaraj also informed that from now onwards, all new passports issued will be in Hindi and in English both.
- It was also decided in December, that all applicants can submit any one of the following documents - Matriculation Certificate, PAN card, Aadhaar Card or E-Aadhaar - that have the date of birth of the applicant.
- Applicants now can also provide a copy of the extract of their service record, driving licence, Election Photo Identity Card or LIC policy bond.

Uttarakhand HC bans state govt from buying cars, cellphones

- Taking a stern view of the state government's failure to provide basic minimum amenities to children in the state-run schools, the Uttarakhand High Court today put a ban on purchase of cars, mobile phones and other luxury items by the government.
- In furtherance of the previous court orders, justices Rajiv Sharma and Alok Singh said that the state government has miserably failed to provide bare minimum facilities to students in the government-run schools.
- Keeping this in view the division bench restrained the state government from buying items such as luxury cars, furniture, air conditioners etc. till further orders.
- The high court observed that the government that cannot provide basic amenities to children has no moral right to spend money on luxuries.
- The mandatory directions were given by the High Court on a plea by Deepak Rana.

Trivandrum tops Govt's new list of 30 Smart Cities; 20 cities to contest for remaining 10 slots

- Kerala's capital Trivandrum has topped the government's latest list of 30 Smart Cities selected under its Smart City mission.
- Following Trivandrum, Naya Raipur in Chattisgarh came in at the second spot while Rajkot in Gujarat came at the third city to be taken up for development by the government under the Smart City mission.

- Other cities like Amaravati, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru, Pimpri Chinchwad, Dehradun, Jammu, Jhansi, etc., have been selected in the new 30 Smart Cities list.
- With the addition of 30 new cities, the total cities taken up for Smart Cities Mission total to 90.

Maharashtra government to launch 'My Plant' mobile app on tree plantation

- Maharashtra forest minister Sudhir Mungantiwar announced that a mobile app named 'My Plant', which would help in recording data about tree plantations in the state, would be launched on July 1.
- Using this app, people and organisations can feed the data about the saplings they have planted with the forest department, which would help it in creating a database of trees.
- The forest department has set a target of planting four crore saplings through public participation between July 1 and 7.

Government launches VAJRA scheme to attract Indian scientists abroad

- In a bid to bring together the Indian scientists abroad and India-based researchers for conducting joint researches in India, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) launched a scheme named 'Visiting Advanced Joint Research Faculty' (VAJRA).
- The endowments for faculties would be US \$15,000 in the first month of residency and US \$10,000, for the remaining months, said Harsh Vardhan, adding that the central government had been stressing upon converting brain-drain into brain-gain.

Commemorative Stamp Released On 50th Anniversary Of Passport Act 1967

- The Ministry of External Affairs celebrated the completion of 50 years of the Passport Act 1967 as the 5th Passport Seva Divas and held a conference of regional passport officers in New Delhi
- The Passport Act came into effect on June 24, 1967
- Senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs and other government departments, besides 38 passport officers and officials of service provider TCS, attended the function where awards of excellence were presented to the best performing passport officers and

police officers for best passport and verification services.

Shri Piyush Goyal launches POSOCO-IMD Weather Portal for Power Sector & Web Portal 'MERIT'

- Shri Piyush Goyal Union Minister of State (IC) for Power, Coal , New & Renewable Energy and Mines launched Weather Portal for Power Sector in association with POSOCO and IMD at the meeting of the Forum of Regulators
- The information available in the Portal regarding weather forecast shall help State Discoms to take pro-active steps regarding short term and medium term management processes and supply planning requirements and also for better planning for infrastructure availability to ensure cost effective and reliable supply.
- Another portal 'MERIT' (Merit Order Despatch of Electricity for Rejuvenation of Income and Transparency). This has been developed by Ministry of Power in association with POSOCO and Central Electricity Authority.
- The MERIT Web portal displays extensive array of information regarding the merit order of Electricity procured by State(s) such as daily state-wise marginal variable costs of all generators, daily source-wise power purchases of respective states/UTs with source-wise fixed and variable costs, energy volumes and purchase prices.
- The web-portal also give information regarding reasons for deviation from merit order such as must run conditions, transmission constraints etc.

Incubation centre for biotech start-ups to be set up at CCMB, Hyderabad

- An incubation centre for biotechnology start-ups is to be set up at the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology in Hyderabad.
- To be supported by the NITI Aayog, it will create facilities and bring in stakeholders to ensure the success of innovative ideas.
- The CCMB is one of the 10 organisations identified to host the 'Atal Incubation Centre', according to Rakesh Mishra, its Director. Under this, the government will release funds of Rs. 10 crore in the coming five years.
- The Centre has set up the Atal Incubation Centre in the NITI Aayog to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

- The incubation centre would engage with all the stakeholders of a biotechnology translational journey, including intellectual property agencies, regulators, seed funders, business developers, successful businessmen and research institutions.

For the first time in the history of Manipur, 24/7 helpline '181' launched for women

- To battle the ever increasing crimes against women in Manipur, the Biren Singh-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government has launched a toll free 24/7 helpline number 181 for women in the state.
- This is first time in the history of Manipur. A helpline just for women was launched at Kuranga Nayani Hall, D C office complex of Lamphel by Manipur State Commission for Women (MSCW) and department of social welfare.
- The helpline will provide a 24-hour telecom service to women affected by violence, seeking support and information.
- The helpline will also facilitate crisis and non-crisis intervention through referral to the appropriate agencies such as police, hospitals, ambulance services, District Legal Service Authority (DLSA), protection officer (PO)/OSC.
- The helpline will also provide information about the appropriate support services, government schemes and programmes available to the women affected by violence, in her particular situation within the local area in which she resides or is employed.

Survey for world's highest rail track to commence in Leh

- The Railways will kick off the final location survey of the 498 km long Bilaspur-Manali-Leh line at Leh in Jammu and Kashmir this week.
- Coming up at a high of 3,300 metres, the strategically important rail project is touted to become the highest rail track in the world, overtaking China's Qinghai-Tibet Railway.
- The all-weather Leh rail network is one of the four important railway connectivities identified by the defence ministry along the China border.
- The proposed new rail line will connect all important locations between Bilaspur and Leh namely Sunder Nagar Mandi, Manali, Tandi, Keylong, Koksar, Darcha, Upshi and Karu.
- The Bilaspur-Manali-Leh line is along Himachal-J&K border and the last three lines along Assam-Arunachal border.
- Once the Bilaspur-Manali-Leh railway line is completed, Leh will be directly connected to Himachal Pradesh and the rest of India by railway

World Bank clears \$250 million loans for Skill India mission

- The World Bank has cleared a \$250 million loan for making Indian youth more employable through reskilling, in a move that is seen to aid the Skill India mission.
- The multi-lateral lender is keen to support the Indian government in its efforts to better equip the young workforce with employable skills. It said the support will help the youth contribute to India's economic growth and prosperity.
- The \$250 million Skill India Mission Operation (SIMO), approved by the World Bank board of executive directors, will increase the market relevance of short-term skill development programmes (3-12 months or up to 600 hours) at the national and state level,
- Under the programme, adults in 15-59 years of age, underemployed or unemployed, will get the skill training.
- It will also include the 1.2 crore youngsters in the age group of 15-29 years who are entering the labour market every year.
- The programme has a mandate to provide placement and entrepreneurship opportunities to women and increase their exposure to skill training.
- The Washington-headquartered World Bank's SIMO is a six- year programme in support of the Indian government's National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (2017-23).
- SIMO will be implemented through the National Skill Development Mission and will specifically target labour market entrants.

Delhi govt makes Aadhaar mandatory for granting subsidy on e-rickshaws

- The Delhi government has made Aadhaar card mandatory for those seeking subsidy on e-rickshaws registered in the city.
- A notice issued by the transport department this week said that the registered owners of e-rickshaws in Delhi will be considered for a subsidy of Rs30,000 only after they provide their Aadhaar card details.
- It is not the first time that the Kejriwal government has made Aadhaar card mandatory for a facility. Prior to this, it had made Aadhaar compulsory for ration card holders to claim subsidised items at fair price shops. This is despite the Supreme Court's orders against the move.
- The move is aimed "to check the problem of duplication in grant of financial assistance".

Indian Army rethinking on Sahayak system may induct civilians in peace stations

- The Army is now actively considering recruiting civilian staff in peace stations to do away with the colonial-era Sahayak system, in the wake of rising cases of jawans coming out openly against it.
- Sahayaks or buddy system – whereby a soldier is attached to officers — will continue be deployed in key bases and field areas as they have defined military duties.
- In March, the government had strongly defended the Sahayak system in the Army, saying it provides an "essential support" to officers in "fully" attending to their duties in times of peace and war.
- At the same time, the government had said Sahayaks or orderlies are combatants and exhaustive instructions have been issued to not make them perform menial tasks which are not in conformity with the dignity of a soldier.

Maharashtra doctors become first Indians to finish Race Across America as solo riders

- Nashik's army doctor Srinivas Gokulnath and Nagpur's doctor Amit Samarth made history as they became first solo finishers from the country in the Race Across America (RAAM), one of the most esteemed ultra-endurance cycling events in the world.
- In the solo 18-59 age category, the 36-year-old Gokulnath finished the distance of 3070 miles (4941kms) in 11 days and 18 hours.
- Samarth was slightly behind him and took 11 days and 21 hours to finish the race. The riders were expected to finish the distance in 288 hours. Gokulnath finished overall 7th while Samarth was placed 8th.
- RAAM is about 30 per cent longer than the Tour de France. Moreover, racers must complete the distance in roughly half the time, with no rest days. Racers must cycle 3070 miles, across 12 states, and climb over 1,70,000 vertical feet.
- The route travels west to east, traversing three major mountain ranges (Sierra, Rocky and Appalachian), crosses four of America's longest rivers (Colorado, Mississippi, Missouri and Ohio) and the Great Plains.
- Also, passing through such iconic American landmarks as the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts, Monument Valley, Great Plains and Gettysburg.

- For India, only the Mahajan brothers, Mahendra and Hitendra have managed to be successful in the relay category in 2015. Whereas the solo category is considered, India has been represented by Samim Rizvi (3) and Sumit Patil (1) in the past

Andhra Pradesh State Government Employees retirement age raised

- Andhra Pradesh State Government Employees will be working until they attain 60 years as their Retirement has been raised from 58 to 60 Years. Bill to this effect was passed by AP Assembly this week.
- Chief Minister, Mr. N. Chandrababu Naidu, informed after moving the Andhra Pradesh Public Employment (Regulation of age of superannuation) Amendment Bill, that the government had taken into account various factors, including the increased life expectancy, for raising the retirement age.
- There was a significant improvement in the average life expectancy as compared to 1984. As per the World Health Organisation, the global average life expectancy in the year 2009 was 68 while it was 65 years in India.

Kalraj Mishra launches Digital MSME scheme

- Union Minister of MSME Kalraj Mishra launched a new scheme, 'Digital MSME' Scheme for the micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector
- On the occasion of MSME day, the MSME minister launched Digital MSME Scheme and exchanged Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with SAP India, Intel and HMT.
- Mishra said that the MoU with SAP was signed to encourage ERP in MSMEs.
- The event also felicitated successful MSME entrepreneurs through National MSME Awards.
- Organised by the Ministry of MSME, the programme was inaugurated by Mishra, along with Ministers of State for MSME, Giriraj Singh and Haribhai Parthibhai.

India switches to liberal regime for oil, gas exploration

- India has joined a select league of nations that offer areas for exploration and production of oil and gas round the year on liberal fiscal terms including marketing and pricing freedom.

- Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan today inaugurated India's maiden National Data Repository (NDR), which stocks information on hydrocarbons prospects of 3.14 million sq km of sedimentary basins.
- With this, India has switched over to the Open Acreage Licensing (OAL) regime where companies can choose areas they want to explore,
- Under OAL, companies can visit NDR and look at vast seismic data of currently producing fields and explored areas as also those of unexplored areas.
- From the areas that are not under any licensee, they can then carve out an area suitable to them and evince interest in doing exploration and production.
- Once an area is selected, the government will put it up for bidding and any firm offering the maximum share of oil or gas produced from the area would be awarded the block, he said.
- Till now, the government has been selecting and demarcating areas it feels can be offered for bidding in an exploration licensing round.

EC joins hands with Facebook for new voter registration

- The Election Commission will launch a special drive to enrol new electors, and has collaborated with Facebook to launch a 'voter registration reminder' on July 1.
- According to an official release, a notification of the 'voter registration reminder' will be sent on July 1 to people who are eligible to vote on Facebook.
- The reminder will be sent out in 13 Indian languages – English, Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Punjabi, Bengali, Urdu, Assamese, Marathi and Oriya.
- By clicking on the 'register now' button, people will be directed to the national voters' services portal (www.nvsp.in) which will guide them through the registration process.

NPPA announces ceiling price for 761 medicines

- Country's drug price regulator, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) on Tuesday announced provisional ceiling prices for 761 medicines, including HIV, diabetes, anti-cancer and antibiotic. Prices for a majority of drug are being reduced as the GST regime is nearing its implementation deadline of July 1.
- According to NPPA Chairman Bhupendra Singh, the actual increase or decrease in drug prices post-GST is expected to be in the range of 2-3% depending on states.

- The ceiling price of HIV combination drug of Tenofovir (300mg), Lamivudine (300mg) and Efavirenz (600mg) has been fixed at Rs 89.69 per tablet, down from Rs 93.52 per tablet.
- Price of one tablet of HIV treatment drug Darunavir has been fixed at Rs 151.4, down from Rs 157.93.
- Besides, cost of one tablet of Lamivudine and Zidovudine combination has been reduced to Rs 18.20 from Rs 18.98 currently

'War room' set up to deal with GST crises

- Equipped with multiple phone lines and computer systems and manned by tech-savvy youngsters, a "mini war room" has been set up in the finance ministry to deal with crises related to the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- t the unit will act as a quick resource centre for Central and State government officials to address their queries on the historic tax reform scheduled to be implemented from July 1.

Odisha to set up blood bank for cattle

- Odisha is all set to become the first state in the country to have a blood bank for the cattle.
- First of its kind blood bank would be established on the premises of OUAT at an estimated cost of Rs. 3.25 crore.
- The cattle farmers will provide blood voluntarily. The blood bank will also go and collect blood from centres.
- Blood transfusion facility for cattle blood will also be done at the proposed blood bank. This will prevent death of cattle during deliveries and other ailments

Govt. unveils new hydrocarbon policy

- Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Wednesday introduced a new oil and gas block licensing policy that is expected to open up 2.8 million square kilometres of sedimentary basins to exploration and production activities.

- The lack of seismic sedimentary basin data has been hampering the oil and gas exploration and production sector and that 52% of India's sedimentary basins have not been appraised yet.
- The National Data Repository is expected to improve this situation
- The OALP, a part of the government's Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP), gives exploration companies the option to select the exploration blocks on their own, without having to wait for the formal bid round from the Government. The company then submits an application to the government, which puts that block up for bid.
- The new policy will open up 2.8 million square kilometres of sedimentary basins for exploration and eventual production. Mr Pradhan said that initially the applications and related bids for the blocks would be held twice a year —in January and July

NALSA Launches Web Application For Free Legal Services To Prisoners

- The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) on Wednesday launched a Web Application for free Legal Services to prisoners, and the Legal Services Management System developed through the NIC.
- Through the Web Application, the information regarding legal representation of individual prison inmates will be fed by the State Legal Services Authorities and District Legal Services Authorities.
- The software will, therefore, be able to generate reports showing total number of inmates, number of inmates unrepresented, number of inmates represented by legal services lawyers, and number of inmates represented by private lawyers
- Further, the Information is capable of being sorted State-wise, District-wise and jail-wise. Reports can also be generated by entering the period of incarceration, which will in turn generate information with regard to prisoners eligible for bail under Section 436-A Cr.P.C

Dr Jitendra Singh launches new training programme COMMIT

- Dr. Jitendra Singh launched a new training programme Comprehensive Online Modified Modules on Induction Training (COMMIT) for State Government officials, here today. The objective of this training programme is to improve the public service delivery mechanism and provide citizen centric administration through capacity building of officials who interact with the citizens on day-to-day basis.

- The new training programme will supplement the earlier training programme and the advantage of COMMIT is that it is cost effective and has the potential to cover about 3.3 lakh officials annually, compared to 10,000 officials under existing 12-Day Induction Training Programme (ITP).
- The COMMIT programme, developed by DoPT in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), will supplement the existing 12-Day ITP launched in 2014-15 for newly recruited state Government officials to develop in them Generic & Domain specific competencies. The programme will cover approximately 74,000 State Government officials in the financial year 2017-18. It will be of 28 hours duration which will include e-Modules for 20 hours and face-to-face training for 8 hours.
- The 20 hours e-training would be imparted through specifically developed 12 Generic and 3 Domain specific e-Modules. The modules on soft skills will be delivered as e-Modules & through face-to-face training and the domain modules will be covered through e-Modules only.
- The programme will be implemented through State Administrative Training Institutes (ATIs).



International Events

India and Spain sign seven MoUs: Cybersecurity and renewable energy prime areas of cooperation

- India and Spain on Wednesday signed seven agreements, including on cooperation in cyber security and renewable energy, following talks in Madrid between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Spanish counterpart Mariano Rajoy
- A second MoU was signed on cooperation in renewable energy.
- Three other MoUs were signed on cooperation in organ transplantation, technical cooperation in civil aviation, and between the Foreign Service Institute of India and the Diplomatic Academy of Spain.
- Two agreements were also signed on transfer of sentenced persons and waiving of visas for diplomatic passport holders.

India, Russia ink key pact for two nuclear power units in Kudankulam

- In a big boost for the country's clean energy requirements, India and Russia signed an agreement for setting up of Units 5 and 6 of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin inked five pacts on wide ranging issues like trade, technology and regional cooperation, but the deal to build the last two units of India's largest nuclear power plant is the highlight of the annual summit.
- The reactors will be built by India's Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) and Russia's Atomstroyexport company, a subsidiary of Rosatom, the regulatory body of the Russian nuclear complex.
- Each of the two units will have a capacity to produce 1,000 MW of power.
- India and Russia also decided to "upgrade and intensify" bilateral defence cooperation through joint manufacture, co-production and co-development of key military hardware and equipment.

India, Pakistan to become full SCO members at Astana summit: China

- India and Pakistan's admission as full members to the Beijing-backed Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will be formalised at the political and security grouping's summit in Kazakhstan next week,
- The political and security grouping — headquartered in Beijing — was founded in 2001 and comprises Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, besides China as full

members. It is mainly aimed at military cooperation between the members and involves intelligence-sharing, counter-terrorism operations in Central Asia.

- Afghanistan, Belarus, India, Iran, Mongolia and Pakistan have observer status.
- During the 2015 summit in Ufa, Russia, the SCO formally adopted a resolution starting the process to admit India and Pakistan into the organisation as full members.

Indian film Ralang Road to compete for top spot at Karlovy Vary Film Festival

- Nepali-Hindi film Ralang Road will represent India at the 52nd Karlovy Vary International Film Festival at Karlovy Vary in the Czech Republic. Directed by Karma Takapa and produced by HumanTrail Pictures, Ralang Road has been nominated for the Crystal Globe Award along with 11 other films from around the world.
- It will be after 13 years that an Indian film will compete with other international films at this film festival
- Shot in Rabong town in Sikkim, Ralang Road is based on a day in the small hill town where a series of coincidences, related to a mysterious robbery, bring four people together. As the day surrenders itself to the darkness of the night, these seemingly mundane events become increasingly dramatic, as the characters coincide with their impending consequences.
- The film explores cultural immigration and lifestyles in a complex social setup.

Trump abandons global climate pact

- President Donald Trump said he would withdraw the United States from the landmark 2015 global agreement to fight climate change, a move that fulfilled a major campaign pledge but drew condemnation from U.S. allies and business leaders.
- Supporters of the accord, including some leading U.S. business figures, called Trump's move a blow to international efforts to curb the warming of the planet that threatens far-reaching consequences for this century and beyond.
- Former Democratic President Barack Obama expressed regret over the pullout from a deal he was instrumental in brokering.
- The United States was one of 195 nations that agreed to the accord in Paris in December 2015. Under the pact, which was years in the making, countries both rich and poor committed to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases generated by burning fossils fuels and blamed by scientists for warming the planet.

Arun Jaitley to attend AIIB annual meet in Korea

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley will attend the annual meeting of China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to be held in mid-June in South Korea.
- AIIB aims to promote economic development of the region by supporting major infrastructure projects. India is the second largest shareholder of AIIB with 7.5 per cent stake after China which has 26.06 per cent voting shares. Russia and Germany have 5.93 per cent, 4.5 per cent stake respectively.
- The Finance Minister is scheduled to attend Board of Governors meeting on June 14-15, sources said. This year's meeting is being co-hosted by the Bank and Korea, and will be held in Jeju Island.
- The AIIB board had its first annual meeting in Beijing on June 25, 2016. The governors representing the Bank's 46 founding members including India took stock of the progress that the bank has made since opening its doors on January 16, 2016.
- Jaitley had attended the first meeting and had apprised the bank about massive infrastructure programme being undertaken by the country.

Vucic sworn in as Serbia's new president

- Populist leader Aleksandar Vucic was sworn in as Serbia's president on Wednesday, pledging to work for peace and stability in the war-weary Balkans while strengthening the country's armed forces.
- Hours before the oath in parliament, Vucic's supporters clashed with opposition groups that were prevented from protesting in downtown Belgrade. Opposition groups said there were no injuries.
- Vucic, a former ultranationalist turned self-declared pro-European Union reformer, formally stepped down on Wednesday from his prime minister's post after winning the presidential election by a landslide in April.

Indian-Origin Gay Minister Leo Varadkar Set To Be Ireland's Youngest PM

- Leo Varadkar's father is set to become the once-staunchly Catholic country's first openly gay prime minister, its first of Indian descent and the youngest person ever to hold the office.
- Varadkar's election as leader of the governing Fine Gael party on Friday means he will almost certainly succeed Enda Kenny as prime minister in the coming weeks, marking another symbolic moment for Ireland.
- The fact the milestone of electing a gay premier is barely mentioned in local media and has taken place -- in the words of one former government minister -- "without anybody batting an eyelid" shows just how far Ireland has come.
- Instead, after six years of Kenny's steady stewardship, the focus has been on the stark change of style likely to follow the election of a minister known as a straight talker. Colleagues giddily proclaim that their new leader has the 'X Factor'.

Denmark revokes 334-year-old blasphemy law

- A blasphemy law dating back to the 17th century in Denmark has been repealed by lawmakers. The law prohibited public insults of a religion, such as the burning of holy books.
- In the past 80 years, only a handful of blasphemy trials have taken place and several high-profile cases have been dropped, including one involving a caricature of the prophet Muhammad published in the Jyllands-Posten newspaper in 2005.
- Denmark was the only Scandinavian country with a blasphemy law, which called for up to four months in prison upon conviction, although most people were fined instead.
- Politicians who wanted to repeal the 334-year-old law "do not believe that there should be special rules protecting religions against expressions",

Sher Bahadur Deuba elected as 40th Prime Minister of Nepal

- Nepalese politician Sher Bahadur Deuba was on Tuesday elected as Nepal's prime minister for the fourth time after the main opposition party decided to end the obstruction of parliament.
- Deuba has served as Nepal's prime minister for three terms from 1995 to 1997, from 2001 to 2002, and from 2004 to 2005. In 2005, during his third term he was sacked by the then King Gyanendra Shah in 2005 over his failure to hold elections and bring Maoist rebels to negotiations

China launches first World Pest Day

- The first World Pest Day was today launched in the Chinese capital with an aim to eventually reduce and eliminate pest-borne diseases.
- The inaugural World Pest Day is a milestone in the global pest management industry, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.
- Initiated by the Chinese Pest Control Association (CPCA), international organisations and associations, it was proposed to increase awareness of pest-borne diseases and safeguard public health through scientific and professional pest control methods

US, China, India to be top prospective destinations for FDI: UNCTAD

- The US, China and India are considered to be the most prospective destinations for foreign direct investment (FDI), predicted the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in its annual report on investment.
- According to the report, with a surge of outflows, China also becomes last year the second largest investing country.
- In 2017, the global FDI is expected to rise by 5 per cent, to almost \$1.8 trillion, attributed to higher economic growth expectations across major regions, a resumption of growth in trade and a recovery in corporate profits.

India, Lanka sign pact for \$318 million line of credit

- India today signed an agreement with Sri Lanka to provide USD 318 million as line of credit to develop the island nation's railway sector, officials said.
- The agreement was signed by RHS Samaratunga, Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Mass media, and David Rasquinha, Managing Director of India's Export0Import Bank in Colombo.
- During his first visit to Sri Lanka as prime minister in 2015, Narendra Modi had declared a line of credit of USD 318 million for the development of Sri Lanka's railway sector.
- That visit, the first standalone bilateral visit by an Indian prime minister since 1987, had come in the backdrop of increasing Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean nation.

- China has been investing heavily in Sri Lanka, developing mainly ports that could potentially be used as a base for its navy, though Beijing says the investments are part of its Belt and Road Initiative that aims to link it with Europe and Africa via the Indian Ocean.
- India has provided four lines of credit to Sri Lanka to develop its railway sector, amounting to USD 966 million.
- These credit facilities have been utilised to improve the southern and northern railway lines and for the procurement of rolling stocks for the Sri Lanka Railways.

India among top five consumer markets in Asia: BMI Research

- India is among the top five consumer markets in Asia offering retailers consumer spending growth of an average of 6.1 per cent over the next five years, says a report.
- According to BMI Research, a Fitch group company, China, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, India and Indonesia represent five favourite consumer markets in Asia, offering retailers the strongest consumer spending growth over its forecast period to 2021.
- Some of the key factors responsible for increase in consumer spending include, increasing access to consumer credit, lower inflation, and a more favourable regulatory environment for foreign-owned retailers bodes well for India's consumer sectors over the coming years.

WHO revises antibiotics protocol

- In an effort to curb antibiotic resistance, the World Health Organization (WHO) has divided the drugs into three categories — access, watch and reserve — specifying which are to be used for common ailments and which are to be kept for complicated diseases.
- Commonly used antibiotics will be under the 'access' category; the second line of antibiotics, slightly more potent, have been categorised under "watch" and potent drugs to be used only as a "last resort" fall under the 'reserve' category. This is the biggest revision of the antibiotics section in the 40-year history of the essential medicines list (EML).
- The WHO has now recommended that antibiotics in the 'access' group be available at all times as treatment for a wide range of common infections. This includes amoxicillin, a widely-used antibiotic to treat infections such as pneumonia.
- The 'watch' group covers antibiotics that are recommended as first or second choice treatment for a small number of infections.

Indian Railways to offer 20 stations to Malaysia for redevelopment

- The Indian Railways is firming up plans to join hands with Malaysia to redevelop about 20 stations in Tier-II cities across the country.
- Aimed at attracting nearly Rs 1 lakh crore private investment, the station redevelopment project envisages infrastructure revamp at platforms and circulating areas.
- It also entails commercial exploitation of station areas for constructing hotels, eateries, multiplexes, shopping malls and office complex among others for the use of developers for a period of 45 years.
- For facilitating growth of Tier II cities, the Centre, state and local governments provide a lot of support to transform these not so big cities into business havens and making them India's fastest growing cities.
- While cities like Delhi and Mumbai are in Tier-I category, cities such as Faridabad, Cuttack, Amritsar, Jamshedpur, Kochi, Jammu, and Bikaner are considered Tier-II cities.
- In the first phase, 23 railway stations including the iconic Howrah station, Mumbai Central and Chennai Central have been selected for the project which aims to make the best use of the assets of the stations.

BRICS media forum opens in Beijing

- The first media forum of BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) opened in Beijing
- The role and status of BRICS countries has been consistently strengthening and increasing. The contacts between media are an important basis for friendship, trust and mutual cultural exchange between the countries,
- During an inaugural session of the BRICS Media Forum in the Chinese capital, Cai Mingzhao, president of Xinhua News Agency and executive president of the Forum, announced that the news agency will invest \$1 million for boosting media cooperation in the five-nation grouping.
- The plan will promote six objectives, including “balanced reporting”— a view shared by several speakers at the forum, who called for alternative media narrative, which did not take the cue from Washington or London.

Digital India takes hit as India ranks 74 in internet data speed

- India's ranking in terms of data speed also dropped to 74th, below Pakistan and Sri Lanka, as download speed dropped more than one megabit per second in the last six months as traffic has surged post Reliance Jio launch.
- With a significant decline in internet data speed, government Digital India initiative took a back seat.
- According to a report by OpenSignal, a London-headquartered company that specialises in wireless coverage mapping, users faced problem in relation to data speed following a surge of wireless broadband services.
- According to data released by TRAI, India had 217.95 million data subscribers at the end of 2016 while average data usage has risen from 236 MB a month in September to 884 MB in December 2016.
- While Bharti Airtel tops in download speed, Reliance Jio helped India to rank 15 among 75 countries in the State of LTE report

UK Election results 2017

- Latest general election results from the UK's 650 constituencies.
- Theresa May's gamble has failed; the Conservatives have lost their parliamentary majority and have turned to the DUP to support them in forming a new government. Search for your own seat by name or postcode and find out your local result
- Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party increased its tally by 31 seats. But an anti-Tory coalition is still not viable without the DUP. One constituency is still to declare.
- The count was suspended in Kensington after three recounts failed to establish a winner.

UK election: 2 Sikh MPs add to record Indian set in House of Commons

- There is much delight in Britain's Sikh community over the election of Preet Kaur Gill – the first Sikh woman MP – and Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi – the first turban-wearing Sikh MP – whose presence in the House of Commons increases the Indian-origin group from 10 to a record 12.
- All 10 Indian-origin lawmakers in the previous Parliament expectedly retained their seats, with Dhesi (Slough) and Gill (Birmingham Edbaston) – both Labour – taking forward the "Indian" participation in British politics that began with Dadabhai Naoroji being elected in Finsbury Central in 1892

Wal-Mart Tops Fortune 500 List

- Fortune magazine is out with its annual list of America's top 500 companies. The list has been a measure of the country's most valuable businesses since it first came out in 1955. This year, the combined total revenue of all 500 companies reaches \$12.1 trillion, 65 percent of the U.S. GDP.
- . Walmart came in first this year again, holding the spot for five years in a row.
- Competitors like Amazon, ranked 12th by revenue
- These companies ranked in the top 5 on the Fortune 500 list:
 - 1. Walmart Stores: Revenue (2016): \$485.9 billion
 - 2. Berkshire Hathaway: Revenue: \$223.6 billion
 - 3. Apple: Revenue: \$215.6 billion
 - 4. ExxonMobil: Revenue: \$205 billion
 - 5. McKesson: Revenue: \$192.5 billion

SCO Summit begins in Astana

- The 17th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit began in Kazakhstan capital Astana
- The leaders of India, China, Russia and Central Asian countries will discuss ways to combat terrorism and boost trade, including peace and security in the region at the SCO Summit in the wake of the terror strikes in many countries.
- India is set to join as full member of the SCO comprising China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- The highlight of this year's summit is the accession of India and Pakistan to the SCO. With their induction, the SCO will expand its geographical coverage to South Asia and become one of the biggest regional organisations.

United Nations holds first-ever 'Ocean Conference'

- The United Nations held its first-ever Ocean Conference to renew member nations' commitment to combatting rising sea levels, pollution, and harmful fishing practices for the protection of world's waterways.

- The conference ended on Friday with the adoption by consensus of a '14-point Call for Action' to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

India drags US to WTO over duties on steel

- India has complained to the World Trade Organization (WTO) that the US has failed to drop anti-subsidy duties on certain Indian steel products after losing an earlier ruling,
- India said the US had failed to meet an April 2016 deadline to comply with a WTO ruling that faulted it for imposing countervailing duties on hotrolled carbon steel flat products from India.
- The non-compliance complaint, effectively a new trade dispute, could lead to India asking to impose trade sanctions if the US is found not to have complied.
- India brought the original complaint to WTO in April 2012, after the US commerce department set an import duty of nearly 286% on a circular welded carbon-quality steel pipe from India to offset government subsidies.
- The US commerce department did this after a petition from Allied Tube and Conduit, JMC Steel Group, Wheatland Tube and United States Steel Corp.
- In the extremely complex case, India argued that the price of the steel pipe was set by the market, but the US said the iron ore used to make it came from a state-run mining company, NMDC Ltd, effectively subsidizing Indian exporters.
- India's complaint alleging US non-compliance listed 14 areas where it said the US was in breach of the international trade rules.

22nd edition of European Union Film Festival begins

- The 22nd European Union Film Festival (EUFF) premiered at Siri Fort auditorium with the screening of Estonian film Cherry Tobacco.
- The five-day event is being organised by the Delegation of the EU and Embassies of EU Members in collaboration with Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- Award winning movies from countries like Austria, Cyprus, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Finland, Denmark, Czech Republic, Spain , Greece, Sweden, Italy, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia among others, will be shown during the festival.

EU, France grant 3.5m euros to curb emissions in India

- Aiming to reduce emissions and promote sustainability to help India's smart city programme, France and the European Union on Friday extended a grant of 3.5 million euros under the 'Mobilise Your City' (MYC) initiative.
- Three Indian cities -- Nagpur, Kochi and Ahmedabad -- will get the grant as part of the EU's commitment under the Paris Climate agreement, French Development Agency (AFD) officials said.
- More funds would be provided to India as loan to take forward the smart city and sustainable transport initiatives in the three cities on pilot basis.
- AFD has been associated with several projects in India and conservation of biodiversity, and is currently also funding the Vijayawada, Lucknow, Bengaluru, Kochi and Nagpur metro rail projects.

China launches world's largest floating solar farm

- World's largest floating solar farm is launched in China's central Anhui province
- The impressive array, which consists of 160,000 panels, is buoyant upon a lake that emerged after the collapse of a coal mine.
- It's an appropriate symbol for China's changing energy policies; the nation is projected to get 20 percent of its power consumption from low-emission energy, including nuclear, by 2030.
- It also comes at an ominous time, after the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement.
- China already leads the world in clean energy investment, and now it has the chance to take up the top leadership position in the fight against climate change.
- At least, it's an opportunity that China has been given an open door to seize.

Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Akshay Kumar Make It to Forbes World's Highest-Paid Celebrities List

- Bollywood actors Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan and Akshay Kumar are among the 'World's Highest-Paid Celebrities' list, according to Forbes magazine.
- In the list which was released by Forbes magazine on Monday, Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh, the top-ranked Indian, has bagged the 65th position with his earnings of \$38 million.

- Salman Khan made it to the 71st position with earnings of \$37 million, Akshay (had 3 releases Airlift, Rustom, Housefull 3) was on rank 80, with earnings of \$35.5 million.
- American rapper, singer and songwriter Sean Combs leads the Forbes list

Two persons of India origin in Queen Elizabeth's Birthday Honours list

- Two Indian-origin men are among 900 Australians who have been recognised by British Queen Elizabeth II in her annual Birthday Honours list for their contributions to the community.
- The Queensland-based Professor Rajiv Khanna was honoured with Order of the Companion of Australia for distinguished service to medicine in the field of immunology, through contributions to the development of cellular immunotherapies for the treatment of cancer, infectious complications and chronic diseases.
- Unnikrishnan Velayudhan Pilla from Queensland was awarded the medal of the Order of Australia in the general division (OAM) for service to the Malayalee community in the state.
- The list for this year released yesterday recognised a diverse range of people including scientists, entertainers, lawyers, designers, community workers, performers and a psephologist.

G7 Environment Ministers met over Paris pact

- G7 Environment Ministers geared up for a gathering in the Italian city of Bologna where they face the challenges of defending and implementing the Paris climate accord following withdrawal from the pact by the US.
- The two-day Environment Ministerial Meeting of the G7 saw participants from the seven nations seeking to clarify what US President Donald Trump intended to do in order to curb climate change, in light of his decision.
- The G7 meeting would be important as the US would have to clarify its position on the matter,

Google ranked as the world's most valuable brand in 2017

- Technology giant Google has topped the 2017 BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands list, with a brand value of over \$245 billion. Further, US tech giants Apple, Microsoft, and Facebook were also among the five most valuable brands.
- Notably, Amazon rose three places after achieving the highest dollar value growth, increasing by \$40.3 billion to \$139.3 billion.

Panama breaks off from Taiwan, ties up with China

- In a major blow to Taiwan, Panama today broke off diplomatic ties with it and established relations with China as cash-rich Beijing exerted its economic clout to wean away handful of allies of Taipei.
- Regarded as a diplomatic coup for Beijing, China and Panama signed a joint communique here formally establishing diplomatic relations.
- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held a meeting with Isabel Saint Malo de Alvarado, Panama's vice president and foreign minister, signed the joint communique in which Panama has recognised One China, meaning that Taiwan is part of the Chinese mainland.

AUSINDEX-17: India, Australia to Participate in Joint Maritime Exercise

- Navies of India and Australia will participate in bilateral maritime exercise AUSINDEX-17 this week with an aim to enhancing interoperability and cooperation between the two forces.
- Indian naval ships Jyoti, Shivalik and Kamorta are on a port visit to Freemantle, Australia from June 13 to 17 and will join the exercise
- In pursuance of India's 'Act East' policy, the ships under the command of Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet Rear Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta are on an overseas deployment to the South East Asia and southern Indian Ocean regions.
- INS Shivalik, a multi-role stealth frigate, INS Kamorta, an anti-submarine warfare corvette, and INS Jyoti, the fleet replenishment tanker, are a part of this venture

MoS External Affairs VK Singh to attend BRICS Foreign Ministers meet

- Minister of State for External Affairs Gen VK Singh will attend the two-day BRICS Foreign Ministers Meet beginning in Beijing on June 18.
- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will chair the meet, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lu Kang

- Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, South African Foreign Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, and Brazilian Foreign Minister Aloysio Nunes will be present at the meeting.

Government imposes anti-dumping duty on Chinese ceramic items

- India has imposed anti-dumping duty on import of ceramic table and kitchenware items from China to protect domestic industry against goods being sold at below normal value.
- The anti-dumping duty of \$1.04 per kg will be imposed on import of ceramic tableware and kitchenware, excluding knives and toilet items from China
- The anti-dumping duty imposed shall be levied for a period not exceeding six months
- The anti-dumping duty on import of plain gypsum plaster boards was first imposed in 2013 and the DGAD has recommended extension of the same.
- The same will now "remain in force up to and inclusive of the June 6, 2018"

India moves up six places to 60th on Global Innovation Index

- India has moved up six places to 60th among 130 nations on the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2017, emerging as the top-ranked economy in Central and South Asia.
- The improvement in India's rankings come after five continuous years of slide even as Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands, the US and UK retained their top spots as the most-innovative countries.
- The index, co-authored by Cornell University, INSEAD and World Intellectual Property Organisation shows India's rise as an emerging innovation centre in Asia
- Among India's neighbours, Sri Lanka took the 90th spot whereas Nepal was at 109th. Pakistan came in at 113 followed by Bangladesh at 114.

AIIB commits \$150 million for India infrastructure fund

- The China and India-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) announced its first equity investment, a \$150 million commitment to a fund aimed at pushing infrastructure projects in India.
- Its first equity investment of US\$150 million will help to attract much needed private investment capital for infrastructure projects in India".

- The \$150 million investment will support an infrastructure fund that the bank says "aims to invest in mid-cap infrastructure companies in India, and to expand the Bank's equity and loan deal sourcing pipelines in the private sector through its equity participation in this Fund".
- The idea is to boost private capital inflows from global long-term investors, such as public pension funds, endowments and insurance companies.
- China is the \$100 billion bank's biggest shareholder with around 30 per cent of stock, with India the second-biggest with around 8 per cent.

India, South Korea agree to more investments, fight protectionism

- India and Korea on Wednesday decided to stimulate investments to push infrastructure development and bilateral trade as they sought to ward off threats of rising protectionism.
- The two countries also signed agreements to establish \$9 billion in concessional credit and \$1 billion in Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding for infrastructure development projects in India.
- As the world's fastest growing major economy, India offers Korea important opportunities to deploy its capital and technologies in India, the Finance Ministry said in a statement.
- The signing of the credit and ODA agreement was to implement a decision taken during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to South Korea in May 2015.

UN General Assembly approves creation of new counter-terrorism office

- The UN General Assembly has approved the establishment of a new office to coordinate counter-terrorism efforts, a move welcomed by India as a "much awaited first step" that will align the world body with needs of the global community in the fight against the menace.
- India welcomed the creation of the new UN counter-terrorism office, saying it demonstrates the importance member states place on collective and coordinated action on terrorism, which remains the most complex threat faced by the international community.
- The main functions of the new office would include enhancing coordination and coherence across the 38 Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force entities, strengthening the delivery of UN counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to Member States, improving visibility, advocacy and resource mobilization for UN counter-terrorism efforts and ensuring that due priority is given to counterterrorism across the United Nations system and that the

important work on preventing violent extremism is firmly rooted in the strategy.

India re-elected to UN body on economic, social issues; Pakistan loses out

- India has been re-elected to the UN's principal organ on economic, social and environmental issues for another three-year term.
- India was among 18 nations to win election to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). India obtained 183 votes, the second highest after Japan in the Asia Pacific category.
- Pakistan, whose term on the Council is expiring this year, was seeking re-election to the UN body but lost as it got only one vote.
- ECOSOC, one of the six main organs of the United Nations, is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as for implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.

China, ADB launch green financing platform to fight pollution

- China and the Asia Development Bank (ADB) have launched a green financing platform to support efforts by small- and medium-sized enterprises to cut pollution in the smog-hit Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region
- The area, home to six of China's 10 smoggiest cities in the first quarter of this year, has promised to upgrade or shut vast swathes of polluting industry as it tries to meet 2017 air quality targets.
- But financing the transition to cleaner energy has proved one of its biggest challenges, especially in poorer rural regions of Hebei, where the switch from coal to natural gas is expected to cost at least 300 billion yuan (\$44.04 billion) over the 2016-2020 period.
- The financing platform was launched by the ADB and the China National Investment and Guaranty Corporation (I&G), the State Development and Investment Corporation (SDIC), as well as China's finance ministry and National Development and Reform Commission.
- The bank late last year approved a loan of 458 million euros (\$510.58 million) for the platform, which it says will leverage 3.6 billion euros in domestic commercial financing.

India-Afghan air freight corridor to start soon

- Undeterred by Pakistan's concerted attempt to block road access to Afghanistan, New Delhi and Kabul will operationalise their first air-freight corridor
- The flight to be operated by Ariana Afghan Airlines — Afghanistan's national carrier — will carry commodities from Kabul to Delhi and then return with Indian goods to Kabul.
- Initially, the plane will operate once or twice in a month, depending on the demand and supply needs.
- The corridor is aimed at providing the private sector in Afghanistan with a platform to increase their exports to India.
- The project was also envisaged to enable traders to export Afghan products to the vast Indian market by air with minimum costs while circumventing the obstacles faced in the land route, which was denied by Pakistan.

No Indian university in world's top-100 list

- Indian universities yet again missed a spot on the Times Higher Education (THE) World Reputation Rankings 2017.
- The list is compiled through research insight, from leading academics across the world. No Indian university made it to the top-100 list, which Harvard University topped.
- Asian universities, however, improved their performance, with 28 of them on the list.
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Stanford University retained their second and third positions that they had secured last year. Oxford and Cambridge came in a joint fourth.
- University of California, Berkeley, Princeton University, Yale University, University of Chicago and California Institute of Technology followed, making up the top-10 list.

Connaught Place India's most expensive office market ranks 9th globally

- New Delhi's Connaught Place is India's most expensive prime office market and the ninth most expensive in the world with an occupancy cost of \$153.89 per sq. ft per annum, surging ahead of Dubai, Downtown Boston and Shanghai.
- As per the latest biannual Global Prime Office Occupancy Costs Survey by CBRE Group Inc., a global real estate consulting firm, Connaught Place, despite its limited supply of prime

office space, is the choicest destination for its central location in the national capital, great infrastructure and connectivity.

- Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) is ranked second in India and 20th in the global list while the central business district (CBD) of Nariman Point comes third in India and is ranked 33rd in the list of top 50 most expensive office markets around the world.
- Hong Kong (Central) and London's West End continue to be the two most expensive markets in the world.

Australia Announces Online Visa Application Facility For Indians

- The Australian government today announced that Indian nationals can apply for a visitor visa online starting July 1.
- The online application option would make applying for the country's visitor visas easier and enhance the experience for Indians. There has been a significant increase in demand for Australian visas in India with the rising popularity of Australia as a holiday destination
- It will offer benefits like 24/7 accessibility, electronic payment of the visa application charge and the ability to check the status of applications lodged online, all through the department's ImmiAccount portal

AIIB Approves Argentina, Madagascar and Tonga as New Members

- The board of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved the applications of Argentina, Madagascar and Tonga to be members
- The three prospective members will officially join once they complete the required domestic processes and deposit the first instalment of capital with the bank,

Saudi Arabia's Mohammed bin Salman appointed Crown Prince

- Saudi Arabia's King Salman on Wednesday appointed his 31-year-old son Mohammed bin Salman as crown prince, placing him firmly as first-in-line to the throne and removing the country's counterterrorism czar and a figure well-known to Washington from the royal line of succession.

- According to a royal decree, Mohammed bin Salman, 31, was also named deputy prime minister, and maintains his post as minister of defence.
- The newly announced Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman heads an economic council tasked with overhauling the country's economy.
- He had previously been the second-in-line to the throne as deputy crown prince, though royal watchers had long suspected his rise to power under his father's reign might also accelerate his ascension to the throne.

India and Portugal Sign A Historical agreement to promote Cooperation in The Field of Archives

- A Protocol of Cooperation was signed between the National Archives of India and the Minister of Culture of the Portuguese Republic in the field of archives
- As a first step under this agreement, the Torre do Tombo (National Archives of Portugal) handed over to the National Archives of India digital copies of 62 volumes of the collection known as 'Moncoes do Reino' (Monsoon correspondence).
- These volumes were originally part of over 456 volumes that cover the period from 1568 to 1914 and form the largest of all record collections in the Goa State Archives.
- The collection consists of direct correspondence from Lisbon to Goa and is important primary source for the study of the Portuguese expansion in Asia, their trade rivalries with the Arabs and European powers and their relations with neighbourings Kings in South Asia and East Asia.

Reliance Defence inks pact with Serbia's Yugoimport

- Anil Ambani Group company Reliance Defence Ammunition has entered a strategic partnership with Serbia's state-run defence major Yugoimport
- to manufacture ammunition in India and target business opportunities of Rs 20,000 crore over the next 10 years.
- Two companies will work together in the field of ammunition amongst others, with projected minimum requirement of Rs 20,000 crore over next 10 years from Indian armed forces
- There is also an option for exporting ammunition, adding the proposal envisages transfer of technology by the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and indigenous manufacturing in India.

- Yugoimport, a state-owned enterprise, is a market leader in the field of ammunition production and has offered a fully compliant technical solution to meet the Make in India requirements of the Indian government, as per RDL.
- RDL has proposed to set up a greenfield facility for the production of ammunition.

UN says world population will reach 9.8 billion in 2050

- India's population is expected to surpass China's in about seven years and Nigeria is projected to overtake the United States and become the third most populous country in the world shortly before 2050, according to a U.N. report
- The report by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs' Population Division forecasts that the current world population of nearly 7.6 billion will increase to 8.6 billion by 2030, 9.8 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion in 2100.
- The UN agency forecasts that from now through 2050 half the world's population growth will be concentrated in just 10 countries _ India, Nigeria, Congo, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Tanzania, United States, Uganda and Indonesia.

Pakistan tightens business, work visas for Chinese nationals

- Pakistan has announced new rules to tighten visa issuance - especially business and work visas - for Chinese nationals
- The tightening comes in the form of extra layers of security, through requirements like endorsed letters from chambers of commerce, as well as through clearances required even from Chinese authorities, in some cases.
- Chinese nationals seeking business visas for Pakistan would have to show an invitation from a body recognized by Pakistani missions in China
- That invitation has to then be certified and endorsed by a recognised chambers of commerce and industry.
- Further, Chinese nationals will need a letter from commercial attaches and other designated officers of Pakistan who are posted abroad for the promotion of business activities
- In addition, Pakistani embassies and missions in China would be authorised to issue only one-year multiple-entry work visas for Chinese nationals coming to Pakistan to work on projects.

- Even those will be issued only after the Pakistani mission receives security clearance from Chinese authorities.

China unveils train that runs on virtual tracks

- China has unveiled a track-less train that runs on virtual rails in a bid to speed up public transportation in major cities.
- The new trains were announced on June 2 in Zhuzhou, China's Hunan province and are said to be non-polluting
- The transit system uses rubber wheels on a plastic core and has new technology copyrighted by the Chinese rail corporation.
- It means that the trains can be automatically guided without rails.
- It is set to be launched in the city of Zhuzhou in a bid to help traffic numbers in the area.
- According to reports, the new train is set to cost around the fifth of the price of a traditional subway system which usually costs around 400 million yuan to 700 yuan (£45.6 - £79 million).
- The track-less train is also said to have a life-span of around 25 years.

Uganda and UN to convene 'solidarity summit' amid fast-growing refugee emergency

- Facing a fast-growing refugee crisis, Uganda is set to host in its capital, Kampala, a 'Solidarity Summit' with the support of the United Nations, to rally international support for refugees and host communities in the form of donations, investments and innovative programmes.
- The two-day Summit, which opens Thursday, 22 June, comes as the UN estimates that in just one year, largely due to an influx of people fleeing violence and instability in South Sudan, the refugee population in Uganda has more than doubled – from 500,000 to more than 1.25 million – making the country host to the world's fastest growing refugee emergency.
- Hosted by President Yoweri Museveni and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the event, which is expecting 30 Heads of State and international donors, looks to raise \$2 billion to meet the humanitarian needs of refugees and to support the hosting communities over the next four years.

BIO International Convention 2017

- San Diego Convention Center will host the 2017 BIO International Convention featuring the latest trends, technology, companies, and breakthrough ideas in biotech and pharma.
- The BIO International Convention is scheduled to have 16,000+ attendees from 5,000+ companies which include leading biotech and pharma companies and more than 300 academic institutions including the major research labs and government agencies of the world.

US approves sale of 22 Guardian drones to India

- The US has cleared the sale of 22 unmanned Guardian drones to India a deal being termed as a "game changer" ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington for his maiden meeting with President Donald Trump.
- The deal, estimated to be worth \$2 to 3 billion, has been approved by the State Department,
- The designation of India being a "major defence partner" was decided by the previous Obama Administration, and formally approved by the Congress.
- The Indian Navy had made the request for this intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) platform last year.

Qatar in landmark first Indian football league deal

- Qatar has made its first leap into the growing Indian football market by announcing, on Thursday, a "technical partnership" between Doha's Aspire Academy and Delhi Dynamos FC.
- The deal will allow for Aspire to share its expertise in areas such as scouting, training and sports science with the Indian Super League (ISL) club.
- In return, youth players from the Dynamos will join the "Aspire Residential Programme", which gives young footballers the chance to train and learn at the Doha academy.
- The tie-up brings together two of the most ambitious "young" footballing nations, pairing the 2022 World Cup hosts with a country which has potentially one of the sport's largest audiences in the world.

Saudi imposes family tax

- Saudi government's plan to introduce an 'expat levy' from July 2017, with charges of up to SR800 per worker to be phased in by 2020, is going to cost them heavily, which many of them may be unable to bear.
- In 2017 itself, each dependent of expats will incur a monthly fee of Saudi Riyal (SR) 100 (about Rs 1700) from July onwards, which will increase every year until 2020.
- The levy on expat workers will also be gradually revised upwards from next year, providing an additional impetus for employers to hire more Saudis.
- Dependents of expats will each incur a monthly fee of SR100, from July onwards

World Bank sanctions 44 million dollars for ASPIRe

- World Bank's Board of Executive Directors has approved a loan assistance of 44 million dollars for the Assam State Public Finance Institutional Reforms (ASPIRe) Project.
- Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal expressed his gratitude towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi for supporting the ambitious project and facilitating the approval.
- The project aims at improving predictability and transparency in budget execution and efficiency in tax administration in Assam.
- All government departments and functionaries - specially finance, taxation and excise departments - will benefit immensely from this project while the citizens of Assam will see transformative benefits accruing to them through efficient processes, better service delivery such as electronic payments and collections for services.
- ASPIRe project is based on three important components that act as pillars for institutional reforms - strengthening public finance institutional capacity, strengthening expenditure and revenue information systems and on-project management, monitoring and evaluation, and coordination.

India and Portugal sign 11 pacts on science, tech, education, research, commerce

- India and Portugal announced a four million euros joint fund to bolster research in science and technology as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held in-depth talks with his Portuguese counterpart on cooperation in areas like counter-terrorism, space and climate studies.
- The agreements signed included cooperation in outer space, double taxation avoidance, nano technology, improving cultural ties, youth and sports, higher education and scientific

research, and Portugal-India business hub and Indian Chamber of Commerce.

India, Russia Sign 'Military Cooperation Roadmap'

- Indian Defense Minister Arun Jaitley and his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu signed a military cooperation roadmap during the 17th meeting of the Russian-Indian inter-governmental commission for military-technical cooperation, which took place in Moscow, Russia
- The roadmap is to become the basic document in planning bilateral contacts, but Shoigu did not provide details on the contents.
- India and Russia are also set to upgrade joint military exercises. "Military cooperation is a major component and platform of Russian-Indian strategic interaction.

Aadhaar not valid for travel to Nepal, Bhutan

- Aadhaar is not a valid identification document for Indians travelling to Nepal and Bhutan
- Indians can travel to Nepal and Bhutan--both countries for which they don't need visas--if they possess a valid national passport or election ID card issued by the Election Commission.
- Moreover, to ease travel, persons over 65 and below 15 years can show documents with photographs to confirm their age and identity. These include PAN card, driving licence, Central Government Health Service (CGHS) card and ration card but not Aadhaar.
- In another development, Indians flying abroad will not be required to fill departure cards from next month.
- However, those going out of the country via rail, seaport and land immigration check posts will have to fill the embarkation card.

China develops world's most powerful submarine detector

- Chinese scientists have claimed a major breakthrough in magnetic detection technology which could find hidden metallic objects, including minerals and submarines.
- The Chinese Academy of Sciences, China's largest research institute, said in an article this week that a "superconductive magnetic anomaly detection array" has been developed in Shanghai and passed inspection by an expert panel

- The device, which works from the air, could be used to pinpoint the location of minerals buried deep beneath the earth in Inner Mongolia, for example, with a level of precision as high as anything currently available around the world, the experts were quoted as saying by the report.
- The device could also be used on civilian and military aircraft as a “high-performance equipment and technical solution to resources mapping, civil engineering, archaeology and national defence

China's fastest bullet train 'Fuxing' debuts

- China's indigenous next-generation bullet train, with a maximum speed of 400 kmph, made its debut today on the country's busiest Beijing-Shanghai line.
- 'Fuxing', or rejuvenation, a CR400AF model, departed Beijing South Railway Station at 11:05 AM for Shanghai. At the same time, a CR400AF model left Shanghai Hongqiao Railway Station for Beijing.
- The train took about five hours and 45 minutes to reach Shanghai. On its way, it stopped at 10 stations, including Jinan, Shandong province and Tianjin.
- The new bullet trains, also known as electric multiple units (EMU), boast a top speed of 400 kilometres per hour and a consistent speed of 350 kilometres an hour



Mihai Tudose designated Romania's new prime minister

- Mihai Tudose, the outgoing economy minister of Romania, has been appointed as prime minister, days after the ruling Social Democrat Party (PSD) removed its own government following an internal power row.
- The 50-year-old Tudose now has 10 days to gain the vote of confidence in his government and his programme.

US Lists China Among Worst Human Trafficking Offenders

- President Donald Trump's administration hit China Tuesday over its rights record, listing the country alongside Sudan and North Korea on a list of the world's worst human trafficking offenders.
- The State Department downgraded China in its annual "Trafficking in Persons Report," saying Beijing is doing little to combat the phenomenon or protect its victims.
- The agency's 2017 report on human trafficking upgraded the statuses of Myanmar, Afghanistan, Malaysia and Qatar, while leaving those of Russia, Cuba and Thailand unchanged.
- The department dropped Iraq and Myanmar from a list of countries that recruit and use child soldiers, a change from 2016.



USA designates Hizbul chief Syed Salahuddin as global terrorist

- Dispelling Pakistan's longstanding contention that the Hizbul Mujahideen was a homegrown Kashmiri resistance force, the US on Monday designated Hizbul chief Syed Salahuddin as a global terrorist.
- The designation happened hours before Prime Minister Narendra Modi met US President Donald Trump, signalling the new administration's commitment to stamping out Pak-sponsored terror. The Summit meeting had not started at the time of going to press.

EU slaps Google with record-breaking 2.42 billion euros fine for rigging search results

- The European Union's antitrust regulator fined Alphabet Inc.'s Google a record €2.42 billion (\$2.71 billion), saying its search engine stacks the deck in favor of its own comparison-shopping service.
- The move, which follows more than seven years of investigations, threatens far-reaching ramifications not just for Google, but for the design of products and services from other increasingly dominant tech giants.

Indians become second largest group of migrants in Australia

- Indians have become the second largest group of migrants living in Australia since 2011 at 1,63,000, following people of Chinese origin, according to the latest census data.
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) released the latest figures of the country's fast changing population and demographics that has recorded 1.3 million new migrants settled in Australia since 2011 from around 180 countries, including India and China.
- According to official data, Census 2016 recorded new migrants from India at 1,63,000, emerging as the most common country of birth of new arrivals after China at 1,91,000 new migrants.
- The census updated the Australian population to 24.4 million people in 2016 from over 21.5 million in 2011.



ATM celebrates 50th birthday, first-ever cash machine goes golden to mark occasion

- The automated teller machine (ATM) marked its 50th anniversary on Tuesday, with a British bank decorating the site of the world's first cashpoint in gold to mark the occasion.
- The first ATM was unveiled by Barclays at their Enfield branch in north London on 27 June, 1967. The invention of the ATM was a historical moment that completely changed the way the world thought about and used cash,"
- The original cash machine was the brainchild of John Shepherd-Barron, who was commissioned by the bank to create six cash dispensers.
- They were based on vending machines. Customers could access their money outside of banking hours — a mini-revolution on the high street. The first person to use the inaugural ATM was actor Reg Varney

Unesco announces Sharjah as World Book Capital 2019

- Signalling a groundbreaking achievement for the UAE and the Arab world, Sharjah has been crowned with the prestigious 'World Book Capital' title for 2019 by Unesco.
- The honour is a recognition of the emirate's pioneering role in supporting and expanding the local and regional publishing industries, promoting reading to become an intrinsic cultural practice, as well as embracing intercultural, knowledge-based dialogue.
- The accolade is an important addition to Sharjah's existing portfolio of milestones like, Capital of Arab Culture (1998), Capital of Islamic Culture (2014), and Capital of Arab Tourism (2015). More so, the emirate is the first in the GCC and third in the Arab world and Middle East to have received this recognition.
- An international committee of Unesco experts reached the decision at a meeting held at the headquarters of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) at La Haye. Sharjah has been chosen for the quality of its literary and cultural activities, and for its unflinching efforts to make books accessible to the entire population of the nation.
- Sharjah is the 19th city to become World Book Capital. It was preceded by Madrid (2001), Alexandria (2002), New Delhi (2003), Antwerp (2004), Montreal (2005), Turin (2006), Bogota (2007), Amsterdam (2008), Beirut (2009), Ljubljana (2010), Buenos Aires (2011), Yerevan (2012), Bangkok (2013), Port Harcourt (2014), Incheon (2015), Wroclaw (2016), Conakry (2017) and Athens (2018).

India, Netherlands sign 3 agreements

- India and the Netherlands on Tuesday signed three agreements, including a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on water cooperation, following a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Dutch Premier Mark Rutte
- Focusing on trade, technology and investment, Modi interacted with CEOs of major Dutch companies after holding bilateral talks with his Dutch counterpart Mark Rutte. The two countries signed three MoUs in the fields of social security, water cooperation and cultural cooperation.

China launches new class of naval destroyer

- China's military on Wednesday launched a new type of domestically-built destroyer, the latest addition to the country's rapidly expanding navy.
- The 10,000-tonne warship was launched at the Jiangnan Shipyard in Shanghai, the official Xinhua news agency said, making it the first of the People's Liberation Army Navy's "new generation" destroyers.
- The ship was believed to be the first Type 055 destroyer, which is considered to be a successor class to the smaller Type 052D guided missile destroyers.

Alibaba And Tencent Among The World's Smartest Companies In 2017

- China's companies are joining the world's smartest companies. That's according to the recently published MIT Technology Review's annual listing of the 50 smartest companies, which surveys both small and large companies based on their ability to innovate and execute.
- Overall, seven Chinese companies made it to the list
- Two of these companies that made it to the list this year are Tencent (8th position) and Alibaba 41th. That's the second time the two companies appear on the list, Tencent (TCEHY) occupied the 15th position in 2015, while Alibaba (BABA) occupied the 4th position.
- Nvidia is the world's smartest company in 2017.

US to sell \$366.2 million C-17 Globemaster aircraft to India

- The Trump administration's decision to sell one C-17 transport aircraft to India by the US will improve its capability to meet current and future strategic airlift requirements
- The proposed sale of C-17 transport aircraft by Boeing at an estimated cost of is USD 366.2 million includes one missile Warning System, one Countermeasures Dispensing System, one Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) Transponder and precision navigation equipment.
- Boeing C-17A Globemaster III military airlift aircraft is the most flexible cargo aircraft to enter the US Air Force fleet.
- The C-17 is capable of strategic delivery of up to 170,900 pounds of personnel and/or equipment to main operating bases or forward operating locations.

India contributes \$100,000 to UN tax fund

- India has contributed USD 100,000 to a UN fund to help developing countries actively participate in the discussion of tax issues, becoming the first country to make the contribution
- The UN Trust Fund for International Cooperation in Tax Matters (the UN Tax Fund) received its first financial voluntary contribution from India, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Office for Financing for Development Office announced.
- The UN Tax Trust Fund aims to support the work of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (the UN Tax Committee).
- Voluntary contributions for the fund have been called for by the UN and the committee since its establishment in 2006.
- The call for contributions was also emphasised in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted at the third International Conference on Financing for Development in 2015, the UN Department said.
- India became the first country to respond to the call with an initial contribution of USD 100,000 that will be dedicated for ensuring greater support for developing countries' participation in the sub-committee meetings of the UN Tax Committee, which are currently unfunded.

US sets new visa rules for 6 mainly Muslim nations, refugees

- The Trump administration on Wednesday set new criteria for visa applicants from six mainly Muslim nations and all refugees that require a "close" family or business tie to the United States.
- Visas that have already been approved will not be revoked, but instructions issued by the State Department say that new applicants from Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Iran and Yemen must prove a relationship with a parent, spouse, child, adult son or daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law or sibling already in the United States to be eligible.
- The same requirement, with some exceptions, holds for would-be refugees from all nations who are still awaiting approval for admission to the U.S.
- Grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, fiancées or other extended family members are not considered to be close

relationships, according to the guidelines that were issued in a cable sent to all U.S. embassies and consulates

Sports

Mouma-Manika make history at World TT Championships

- Manika Batra and Mouma Das made history by becoming the first Indian pair to reach the quarterfinals of the World Table Tennis Championships
- In the men's singles, top-ranked Indian Sharath Kamal stormed into the round of 32 beating Ukraine's Kou Lei in straight games of 11-3, 11-9, 14-12, 11-3.
- Mouma and Manika created history with luck on their side as they got a walkover from the Netherlands and Polish combination of Li Jie and Li Quian, the latter reportedly was hospitalized last night after falling sick.
- Sharath, ranked 43 in the world, defeated the Ukrainian, ranked 24, rather easily without wasting much time.

West Indies cricket team officially renamed as 'WINDIES'

- The West Indies cricket team has been officially renamed as 'WINDIES' while the West Indies Cricket Board has rebranded itself as 'Cricket West Indies' on its 90th anniversary.
- The new name will apply to all teams representing the Board and will be used on all team playing shirts. In a statement, the Board said its new name was more inclusive.

Real Madrid become the first team to ever win back-to-back Champions League titles

- Never in the history of the UEFA Champions League had a team won the title in consecutive seasons. That is until now — Real Madrid have done it. The Merengues throttled Juventus, 4-1, in Saturday's Champions League final, 361 days after they prevailed over Atletico Madrid on penalties in Europe's ultimate match. Now,

they stand alone as the only team in the history of the competition to win back-to-back titles.

Unsurprisingly, it was Cristiano Ronaldo who found himself at the center of attention in both wins. A year ago, he buried the winning penalty kick to set off the wild celebrations.

- This time around, he scored a brace to lead Real Madrid to not just their second straight Champions League title, but their third in four seasons.

Real Madrid now have 12 European titles, the most ever. And they're also the first ever Champions League repeat winners

Ramkumar wins ITF Futures title in Singapore

- Top seed Ramkumar Ramanathan outplayed second seed Raymond Sarmiento of the U.S. 6-2, 6-2 in the final of the USD 15,000 ITF men's Futures tennis tournament in Singapore.
- It was the first title of the season and 15th of his career for Ramkumar, who had competed in the qualifying event of the French Open before deciding to use the time on hand fruitfully.

Nitin, Mihika win Asian junior titles

- Wild-card entrant Nitin Sinha and Mihika Yadav emerged champions in the boys' and girls' events in the HCL Asian junior tennis championship at the MSLTA school of tennis courts in the Shri Shiv Chhatrapati Sports City.
- Nitin, the India No. 2, rallied past Chin Christian Didier of Malaysia 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 in two hours and 20 minutes.
- Second seed Mihika, on the other hand, had little trouble in overpowering Mahak Jain with a 6-3, 6-3 win.

Shuttler Sai Praneeth wins Thailand Grand Prix Gold title

- Indian shuttler B Sai Praneeth lifted his maiden Grand Prix gold title by posting a come-from-behind victory over Indonesian Jonatan Christie in the men's singles final of the USD 1,20,000 Thailand Open here on Sunday.
- The third seeded Indian prevailed 17-21 21-18 21-19 over the fourth seeded Indonesian in a contest that lasted an hour and 11 minutes.

- This is Praneeth's second consecutive title win, following the Singapore Open victory. He had reached the finals of Syed Modi International in January at Hyderabad, where he lost to Sameer Verma.

Sachin among stars in the "Super Dads" campaign by UN to highlight fathers' critical role

- The UNICEF initiative 'Super Dads' highlights fathers' critical role in children's early development.
- The campaign, which features stars from the world of entertainment and sport including Tendulkar, Beckham, Djokovic, Academy Award winning American actor Mahershala Ali, British Formula One racing driver Lewis Hamilton and Australian actor Hugh Jackman.

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3 Indian male players make it into top 15 for the first time

- In a first, three Indian male shuttlers - Ajay Jayaram, Kidambi Srikanth and B Sai Praneeth - were in the top 15 of the latest Badminton World Federation Rankings released on Thursday as they occupied the 13th, 14th and 15th spot respectively.
- Sameer Verma and HS Prannoy found spots in the top 30 at 28th and 30th place respectively.
- Sai Praneeth's has been the most meteoric rise in the rankings as he moved nine places up after winning the men's singles title at the Thailand Open on Sunday and beating compatriot Kidambi Srikanth to the Singapore Super Series title in April.
- In the women's singles ranking, PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal maintained their 3rd and 11th places respectively.
- In the mixed doubles category, Pranaav Jerry Chopra and N Sikki Reddy also moved up one place to make into the top 15.

Rohan Bopanna wins French Open mixed doubles title to clinch maiden Grand Slam

- Indian tennis ace Rohan Bopanna and Canadian partner Gabriela Dabrowski produced a fighting performance to beat their German-Colombian opponents Anna-Lena Groenefeld and Robert Farah in the final to clinch their maiden French Open mixed doubles title in Paris

- Bopanna has become only the fourth Indian to win a Grand Slam crown, after Leander Paes, Mahesh Bhupathi and Sania Mirza. Indians have accounted for 20 Grand Slam mixed doubles titles.
- Two of those victories belong solely to India with Sania Mirza partnering Mahesh Bhupathi.
- Bopanna is also the fourth Indian to win a mixed doubles crown at the world's premier clay court tournament. Bhupathi won India's first Grand Slam title in 1997 when he partnered Japan's Rika Hiraki to claim the French Open.

Stan Wawrinka oldest French Open finalist in 44 years

- Stan Wawrinka became the oldest French Open finalist in 44 years on Friday with an epic 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 5-7, 7-6 (7/3), 6-1 win over world number one Andy Murray.
- The 2015 champion will face nine-time winner Rafael Nadal, who defeated Dominic Thiem 6-3, 6-4, 6-0 in the second semis, for the title after avenging his loss to Murray at the same stage in Paris last year.
- US Open champion Wawrinka, 32, triumphed in a pulsating four hour 34 minute battle of shotmaking and endurance and will target a fourth Slam title on Sunday.
- For Murray, his wait to become Britain's first men's champion in Paris since Fred Perry in 1935 goes on.

Unseeded Jelena Ostapenko wins French Open women's crown

- Unseeded Jelena Ostapenko of Latvia beat Simona Halep 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 at Roland Garros on Sunday to win the 2017 French Open Women's Singles crown and her first ever Grand Slam title. Ostapenko, 20, is the first unseeded woman to win the French Open since Britain's Margaret Scriven in 1933.
- Ostapenko is also the first player of Latvian origin - men or women - to win a Grand Slam event.
- This is Ostapenko's eighth career major.

Dhanya-Sanmay win U-14 Asian junior tennis title

- Dhanya Shah and Sanmay Gandhi clinched the Under-14 doubles title of the Asian Junior Tennis Championships at the Balewadi Stadium.
- Second seeded Dhanya and Sanmay defeated Vishesh Patel and Shashidhar Kota 6-4, 7-6(4) in the final.

IOC approves new events for Tokyo Olympics

- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) approved new events for the 2020 Tokyo Games, including a number of mixed-gender competitions
- The additions include a mixed team event for judo. Each team will consist of 3 men and 3 women, all representing different weight classes.
- Table Tennis will also get a mixed doubles competition.
- Three-on-three basketball is an example of the IOC's focus on youth and urban sports. The 10-minute match on a half-sized court is known for its speed.

Rafael Nadal wins historic 10th French Open title

- Nadal, 31 years old, dominated 32-year-old Stan Wawrinka to win the French Open for the first time since 2014.
- He's the first player—man or woman—in tennis's Open era to win the same major title 10 times.
- The 6-2, 6-3, 6-1 victory means Nadal lost a mere 35 games in the entire tournament, the least in all his years playing at Roland Garros.
- Nadal now has 15 Grand Slam titles in his career, trailing only Roger Federer, who has 18.
- The victory lifts Nadal's tennis ranking back up to No. 2 in the world. Wawrinka will be ranked third. Novak Djokovic, who has struggled since winning the French Open last year, will fall down to No. 4 in the rankings, his lowest since 2009.

Kutwal wins gold at world chess championship for differently-abled

- Shashikant Kutwal, a railway employee with Pune Division, has won the gold medal at the 17th World Individual Chess Championship for differently-abled, held in Slovakia

- Kutwal, who hails from a village in Baramati tehsil, was appointed with the Central Railway through sports quota in 2000.
- Since then, he has been representing Central Railway, Indian Railways and India at various chess competitions

Ramkumar Ramanathan wins ITF Futures title in Singapore

- Indian player Ramkumar Ramanathan lifted the \$15,000 ITF men's Futures tennis title after outplaying Raymond Sarmiento of the USA in straight sets.
- The top seeded Indian hardly broke a sweat on his way to a 6-2, 6-2 win over the second seeded player from USA in the final of event last night.
- It was the first title of the season for Ramkumar and 15th of his career.

French Open 2017: Michael Venus, Ryan Harrison win men's doubles title

- Michael Venus became New Zealand's first Grand Slam champion since 1974 when he partnered American Ryan Harrison to the French Open men's doubles title.
- Venus and Harrison defeated Santiago Gonzalez of Mexico and American Donald Young 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (4/7), 6-3 in the final at Roland Garros.
- The 29-year-old is just New Zealand's second Grand Slam winner in the modern era, after Onny Parun teamed up with Australian Dick Crealy to win the men's doubles crown in Paris 43 years ago.

Vietnam GM Nguyen bags Mumbai Mayor Chess title

- Vietnam Grand Master Nguyen Duc Hoa clinched a decisive win against Indian GM Neelotpal Das in the 10th and concluding round to finish with 8.5 points and emerge champion of the 10th Mumbai Mayor's Cup International Open Chess Tournament
- The champion went home richer with the top prize of Rs 3 lakhs, while top-ranked Tajikistan GM Farrukh Amonatov (ELO 2635) took home a cheque of Rs 2 lakhs by finishing runner-up.
- Amonatov finished with 8 points following his triumph over Russian GM Deviatkin Andrei (2481) to claim the second spot.

Lewis Hamilton wins in Canada for sixth time

- Lewis Hamilton won the Canadian Grand Prix by slashing Sebastian Vettel'
- After watching Ferrari sweep to a one-two finish two weeks ago in Monaco, Mercedes hit back with a dominating display as Hamilton cruised to his 56th career win, a leisurely 19.7 seconds in front of team mate Valtteri Bottas.
- It was Hamilton's third victory of the season and also his third in a row at the sun-bathed but windswept Circuit Gilles Villeneuve.

Jitu Rai-Heena Sidhu pair wins gold in ISSF World Cup

- India's Jitu Rai and Heena Sidhu combined to clinch the gold medal in mixed team 10m air pistol event of the ISSF World Cup, beating Russia 7-6 in the final
- France beat Iran to win the bronze in the event.
- China has been leading the medal tally at Gabala with six medals, including three gold.

Virat Kohli reclaims top spot in ICC ODI rankings for batsmen

- India captain Virat Kohli today reclaimed the top spot in the latest ICC ODI rankings for batsmen following the conclusion of the last round of league matches in the Champions Trophy.
- Kohli had entered the tournament 22 points behind number-one ranked AB de Villiers of South Africa, who had been No.1 since 25 February this year, and 19 points behind Australia's David Warner.
- Indian opener Shikhar Dhawan secured a position in the top 10.

Unseeded Jelena Ostapenko wins French Open women's crown

- Unseeded Jelena Ostapenko of Latvia beat Simona Halep 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 at Roland Garros on Sunday to win the 2017 French Open Women's Singles crown and her first ever Grand Slam title.
- Ostapenko, 20, is the first unseeded woman to win the French Open since Britain's Margaret Scriven in 1933.
- Ostapenko is also the first player of Latvian origin - men or women - to win a Grand Slam event.
- This is Ostapenko's eighth career major.

Pune girl wins bronze in Archery World Cup

- Pune girl Divya Dhayal won the bronze medal at the Archery World Cup, held at Antalya, Turkey from June 6 to June 11.
- In the compound mixed team event, the Indian team, comprising Divya Dhayal and Abhishek Verma, defeated Italy 154-153 in a nail biting match to win the bronze.
- Indian compound men and compound women teams had also reached semifinals, but both the teams stood fourth and missed the medal.
- However, the mixed team saved the day for the Indian contingent by winning the match. Dhayal, being one of the youngest player at 15 years, stole the show by keeping her cool under pressure and shooting perfect shots.

India go second on ICC ODI ranking, Virat Kohli retains top spot among batsmen

- India gained a spot in the latest ICC ODI rankings, climbing up to second with 118 points while Virat Kohli retained the top spot in ODI Player rankings for batsmen.
- Team India are now just a point behind South Africa who still sit atop the table with 119 points
- Australia are third on the table with 117 points while England are fourth with 113.
- Despite playing a long home season of Test cricket, India's rise in ODI rankings can be attributed to their series victories over New Zealand and England as well as their performance in the ICC Champions Trophy.
- Virat Kohli consistent display in the ongoing Champions Trophy helped him stay on top of the rankings for batsmen.

- After scoring an 81 not out against Pakistan in the tournament opener, Kohli got out on a rare duck in the match against Sri Lanka.
- The Indian captain came back with renewed vigour against South Africa hitting 76 not out at a strike rate of 75.25. Kohli was at his fluent best against Bangladesh on Thursday where he scored 96 not out and hit the winning four.

Virat Kohli becomes the fastest to 8,000 ODI runs

- Indian captain Virat Kohli created a world record in the semi-final of the ICC Champions Trophy 2017 against Bangladesh as he became the fastest batsman to reach 8,000 ODI runs.
- The 28-year-old batsman got to the milestone in just 175 innings (183 matches) and in the process broke the record that was previously held by South African ODI captain AB de Villiers.
- The Indian batsman also became just the second batsman to have scored 8,000 ODI runs in under 200 innings after AB de Villiers, who took 182 innings to get to the milestone.
- The record was held by Sourav Ganguly for 13 years before AB de Villiers broke it against New Zealand in 2015 but the Proteas batsman's record lasted less than two years as it was broken by his Royal Challengers Bangalore teammate.
- Having lost the world record for the fastest to 7,000 ODI runs to Hashim Amla, Kohl has stepped on the accelerator in the Champions Trophy where he has scored three fifties in the four matches he has played.

Pakistan beat India by 180 runs, win ICC Champions Trophy 2017

- Pakistan clinched their maiden ICC Champion Trophy beating India by a massive 180-run margin in the final on Sunday at The Oval.
- After being put in to bat, Pakistan put up 338 for four on the board buoyed by opener Fakhar Zaman's maiden international century and fifties from Azhar Ali and Mohammad Hafeez.
- Mohammad Amir then tore into India's top-order claiming three for 16 as India were bundled out for 158 in 30.3 overs.

No ICC World T20 in 2018, India to host next Champions Trophy in 2021

- Twenty20 cricket may be a lucrative business around the world but the International Cricket Council has decided not to host the 2018 World T20 due to a cramped schedule and lack of sponsors' interest.
- India hosted the 2016 edition, won by West Indies, but the World T20 will become a quadrennial event as per the original plans. Australia will host the next championship in 2020.
- India will host the next ICC Champions Trophy in 2021. This will be the second time India will be hosting this eight-team event played on a group league-cum-knockout basis.

Kidambi Srikanth wins Indonesian Open Super Series title

- Kidambi Srikanth notched-up a comprehensive performance against Kazumasa Sakai of Japan, won his first ever Indonesia Open Superseries title, in Jakarta
- The Indian shuttler, who had defeated world no 1 Son Wan Ho of South Korea in the semifinals, took just 37 minutes to overcome Sakai's challenge 21-11, 21-19.

Sarfraz Ahmed Named Captain Of ICC Team of Champions Trophy

- Virat Kohli along with three Indians were named in the ICC Team of the Champions Trophy 2017, with Pakistan's Sarfraz Ahmed named its captain
- The ICC Team of the Champions Trophy 2017 includes seven players from the two finalists - India and Pakistan.
- India opener Shikhar Dhawan and Pakistan's Hassan Ali had already won the Golden Bat and Gold Ball trophies for finishing as the most successful batsman and bowler, respectively
- Bhuvneshwar Kumar also secured a position in the list.

India win 6 medals in wushu

- The Indian wushu team bagged six medals, including two gold, at the BRICS Games
- They also won two silver and as many bronze medals.
- Indian Wushu players gave tough competition to wushu strongholds China and Russia.

- M Gyandas won gold medal in Taijiquan/Taijijian, M Bidheswari Devi won silver and L Sanatgombhi Chanu won bronze in Taijiquan/Taijijian event.
- Anjul Namdev clinched the gold medal in changquan overall event, Ng. Toshibala won silver in women's changquan event, and Sajan Lama settled for bronze medal in nanquan allround event.

Jinder Mahal beats Randy Orton to retain WWE Championship

- Jinder Mahal made his first successful defence of the WWE Championship, getting the better of the hometown hero Randy Orton at St Louis, Missouri in the WWE SmackDown Live exclusive pay-per-view Money in the Bank.

Luke Ronchi announces international retirement

- New Zealand wicketkeeper-batsman Luke Ronchi has announced his retirement from international cricket.
- The 36-year-old started his career at the highest stage with Australia in 2008, featuring in four ODIs and three T20Is, before moving back to the country of his birth - New Zealand in 2012.
- In a year, he earned a spot in the national side there and ended up featuring in four Tests, 81 ODIs and 29 T20Is for them.
- Ronchi's last outing in New Zealand colours came in the recently-concluded Champions Trophy.

Kuldeep 1st male Chinaman bowler to represent India in ODIs

- Kuldeep Yadav became the first male Chinaman bowler to represent India in ODIs, making his debut in the first ODI against West Indies.
- Yadav, who made his Test debut against Australia in March this year, is the 217th ODI cricketer to represent India. The 22-year-old was part of the Indian team at the 2014 ICC U-19 World Cup.

ICC announces two new Test nations

- Ireland and Afghanistan were awarded Test match status taking the number of countries playing at the pinnacle of cricket from 10 to 12 in a decision described as "fantastic" and "remarkable".
- Both countries were confirmed as full members after a unanimous vote at an International Cricket Council (ICC) meeting during its annual conference in London.
- Now the Ireland and Afghanistan's men's teams will be eligible to play five-day Test cricket, widely regarded as the sport's supreme format.
- Afghanistan and Ireland have joined an exclusive club that also includes founder members Australia and England, who played the first Test match at Melbourne in 1877, South Africa, New Zealand, the West Indies, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe.

Kavita Devi becomes first Indian woman wrestler to compete in WWE

- Former competitive powerlifter Kavita Devi will become the first Indian woman to compete in the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) when she takes part in the company's first ever tournament for women next month
- The South Asian Games gold medal winner, who was a part of the WWE Dubai tryout earlier this year, will be among the 32 participants who will compete at the Mae Young Classic tournament.
- The Mae Young Classic (July 13-14) will feature 32 of the top female competitors from around the world participating in a single-elimination tournament.

Junior Shooting World Championship: Anish wins gold with world record score

- Pistol shooter Anish shone bright as India bagged a gold and a silver on the opening day of the ISSF Junior World Championship Rifle/Pistol campaign in Suhl, Germany
- The 15-year old from Haryana won gold in the Junior Men's 25m Standard Pistol competition, with a world record score of 579, which helped India also bag the Team Silver in the event and prop it to second in the overall standings.

- Anish's score was seven points clear of second-placed German Florian Peter who shot 572, while Ukraine's Pablo Korostylov won the bronze in the event shooting a score of 570.
- Anhad Jawanda shot 561 while Sambhaji Zanzan Patil shot 547 -- a combined score of 1678 winning them the team silver.
- India's Shirin Godara shot 615.9 to finish 21st in the Junior Women's 50m Rifle Prone competition.
- Prasiddhi Mahant and Ayushi Podder in the same event ended 41st and 57th with scores of 609.8 and 605.4 respectively.
- In the Junior Men's 50m Rifle Prone, Fateh Singh Dhillon finished 23rd on a score of 617.3, while Subhankar Pramanick shot 615.9 to end in 29th position.
- India's third competitor in the event, Syed Araib Pervez was placed 66th with a score of 606.

World Taekwondo Federation changes name

- The World Taekwondo Federation changed its name to World Taekwondo because of 'negative connotations' that came with its acronym WTF.
- The federation's original name was used since its establishment in 1973. However their president Choue Chung-won felt that it was important to rebrand the organisation
- The change was made before the start of the 2017 World Taekwondo Championships.

K. Srikanth clinches Australian Open Superseries title

- Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth notched up his second successive Super Series title with a stunning straight-game triumph over reigning Olympic champion Chen Long in the Australian Open summit clash in Sydney
- The world No.11 Srikanth won 22-20 21-16 in a 45-minute clash against the world No.6 Chinese, who is also the current All England champion.
- Srikanth, who had reached the summit clash in Singapore and Indonesia before this tournament, is only the fifth player in the world to contest three successive Super Series finals.

Ankush Dahiya Makes India Proud, Wins Gold Medal At Ulaanbaatar Cup In Mongolia

- This is no ordinary day for Indian boxing. Two Indian boxers made India proud - one bagged gold, the other silver.
- Ankush Dahiya (60 kg) clinched gold while the experienced L Devendro Singh (52kg) settled for a silver medal on the final day of the Ulaanbaatar Cup boxing tournament in Mongolia.
- 19-year-old Ankush, who is a former Asian youth silver medallist, defeated Korean Man Choe Chol in a split verdict, while Devendro lost to Indonesia's Aldoms Suguro, again a split decision.

Leander Paes and Adil Shamasdin clinch Aegon Ilkey Challenger title

- Veteran tennis star Leander Paes and his Canadian partner Adil Shamasdin clinched the men's doubles title at the Aegon Ilkey Challenger Trophy
- The top seeds defeated local wild card entrants Brydan Klein and Joe Salisbury 2-6, 6-2, 10-8 to clinch the trophy.
- The match was evenly poised till the end with the UK pair outclassing the Indo-Canadian duo in the first set.
- The second set though looked like a comeback for the 44-year Indian and his teammate -- which they won as easily as their opponents did in the first set.
- The third and decisive set went to the wire, with both the pairs trying hard to take the lead. But the duo of Paes and Shamsdin took a slender lead to clinch the set and the trophy.

Roger Federer wins 100th career title one week before Wimbledon

- Roger Federer's 6-1 6-3 win over Alexander Zverev was nothing short of historic as records tumbled left, right and centre.
- The Halle Open win was the hundredth title of his long and illustrious career, 92 of which are singles crowns while eight have come in doubles.
- He is 10th to reach this landmark in the history of professional Tennis.
- With the Grass season truly underway and Wimbledon just around the corner, the Swiss racked in his 16th grass title, nine of which have come at the Halle Open itself. He won the title in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2012 are the years he won the Wimbledon Grand Slam.

- Halle Open also tops the list of most titles for Federer at a single completion with Wimbledon, Cincinnati Masters, Basel and Dubai Opens (all at seven titles) coming in a close second.
- He is also third on the list of most singles titles and quickly closing in on second placed Ivan Lendl (who has 94 titles) and the leader -- Jimmy Connors, who has 109 titles to his name.

Yashaswini Singh Deswal wins Gold in 10m Air Pistol

- Pistol shooter Yashaswini Singh Deswal put up a bright performance to bag a gold in the 10m Air Pistol Women in Germany.
- Deswal bagged the gold in the ISSF Junior World Championship which is being held in Germany. She fired 235.9 points to clinch the gold.
- This was a world record in itself.
- Behind her was Woori Kim of Korea who hit 231.8 to come second. At third spot was Giulia Campostrini with 212.1 points.
- Anish Bhanwala also won gold in the Junior Men's 25m Standard Pistol competition, with a world record score of 579, which helped India also bag the Team Silver in the event and prop it to second in the overall standings.

Indian men's and women's throwball teams create history

- The Indian men's and women's throwball teams scripted history by bagging a gold medal each in the World Games, held at Kathmandu, Nepal.
- The women's team defeated arch-rivals Pakistan 15-13, 15-12 in a nail-biting final to clinch the title, while the men posted a 15-13, 15-12 win over Bangladesh in their final match to finish at the top of the podium.
- The World Games, organised by the International Sports Council (Canada), saw participation from 11 countries, competing in 42 different categories.

Kidambi Srikanth climbs up three spots to re-enter top-10 of badminton rankings

- India's ace shuttler Kidambi Srikanth broke back into the top-10 at eighth in the latest world rankings released yesterday.

- The 24-year-old from Guntur, who clinched successive titles at Indonesian Open and Australian Open, now has 58,583 points in his kitty.
- Among other Indian male shuttlers, B Sai Praneeth has moved up a position to be 15th, while Ajay Jayaram lost a spot to be 16th.
- HS Prannoy also dropped two places to be 23rd.

Awards & Achievements

Kapil Sharma to receive the Dadasaheb Phalke award this year

- Kapil has been chosen for the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke award this year along with the other celebrities, as per the reports of DNA. Earlier, also Kapil for his extraordinary comedy skills awarded with this award in 2014.
- Along with Kapil, Priyanka Chopra, Vivek Oberoi, Gulshan Grover will also be awarded with the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke award under various categories.
- According to, the reports a new category has been created by makers especially for Priyanka Chopra. The Baywatch star will be given the award under the newly introduced 'Internationally Acclaimed Actress' category at a ceremony

Dr Sushil awarded Double Helical National Health Award 2017

- With an aim to acknowledge the extraordinary contribution of doctors and allied professionals hailing from all over the country, Double Helical, India's leading health magazine, has awarded Dr Sushil Kumar Sharma, renowned cardiologist and social worker of the state, with the Double Helical National Health Award in the category of Excellence in delivery of Cardiology Services across the state.
- Dr Sushil Kumar Sharma renowned cardiologist has been awarded with the Double Helical National Health Award in the category of Excellence in delivery of Cardiology Services across the state.
- He is credited with the establishment of Intervention Programme in GMC, Jammu, and performed more than 10,000 simple and complex procedures.

Raveena Tandon gets Dadasaheb Phalke Award

- The actress was awarded the Phalke Best Critic award for her performance in Maatr at the 148th Dadasaheb Phalke Jayanti Celebration.
- The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is India's highest award in cinema. It is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals, an organisation set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Prestigious APQN Quality Award to NAAC for International Co-operation in Quality Assurance

- APQN Quality Award are among the most prestigious International Awards in quality assurance of higher education. In the past, reputed organisations like QAA, UK, European Network - ENQA, HKCAVQ from Hong Kong, etc have received this award.
- NAAC faculty have held important position of presidency in Governing boards of Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), Asia Pacific Quality Register (APQR) and International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) highlighting the acclaimed status of NAAC in International QA circle.
- Bengaluru Statement 2016 on Next - Generation Quality Assurance of Higher Education facilitated by NAAC together with APQN and 16 global quality assurance bodies re-enforced global role of India in higher education quality assurance scenario.

Ananya Vinay wins National Spelling Bee

- Ananya Vinay of Fresno, California won the Scripps National Spelling Bee, taking home a \$40,000 cash prize after 12 hours of picking her way along a precarious lifeline of consonants and vowels.
- She correctly spelled the word marocain, a dress fabric made of warp of silk or rayon and a filling of other yarns, to win the 25-word championship round of the spelling bee held at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in suburban Washington.
- Marlene Schaff, 14, was ousted by misspelling cleidoic, which means to be enclosed in a relatively impervious shell, like an egg.

Vizianagaram bags MGNREGA national award

- The Ministry of Rural Development has selected Vizianagaram as one among the 17 districts across the nation for the MGNREGA annual award for effective implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act during 2015-16.
- The award would be presented at the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA Sammelan to the district programme coordinator and District Collector on June 19 in New Delhi.

Filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar to receive Bharat Gaurav Award by NRI community of US

- Madhur Bhandarkar, known for his path-breaking films was honoured with the Padma Shri award by the Government of India last year.
- The filmmaker already has the National Awards for Best Feature Film and Best Director for Page 3 and Traffic Signal respectively.
- Now, the ace director is being conferred with the Bharat Gaurav Award on June 9 at the United Nations Hall, New York.
- The 48 year old will be conferred with Bharat Gaurav Award along with spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Late Kalpana Chawla, Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak (who is behind Shulabh Shauchalayas in the country), Acharya Lokesh Muni and few others prominent personalities on June 9, 2017.

Bollywood actress Dia Mirza appointed Wildlife Trust of India's brand ambassador

- Bollywood actress Dia Mirza was appointed brand ambassador for the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) on World Environment Day, which is on held on June 5 each year worldwide, on Monday.
- Using her celebrity status, the actress has been an ardent advocate for nature conservation in India to bring conservation issues before a wider, more mainstream audience.
- Dia has lent her support to WTI's wildlife conservation endeavours for several years now and is a founder-member of the organisation's Club Nature initiative

Manisha Koirala bagged Dadasaheb Phalke Award

- Manisha Koirala, who recently made a comeback to silver screens with 'Dear Maya' bagged the much coveted Dadasaheb Phalke Award. She was honoured with the special Phalke Brave and Beautiful award at the ceremony.
- The actress was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2012 and later went on for the extensive treatment and chemotherapy to a hospital in New York.

Bengaluru FC honoured with special AFC award

- Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) general secretary Dato Windsor handed a special award for Bengaluru FC for being the South Zonal Champions in the AFC Cup 2016-17 season.
- Mandar Tamhane, the Chief Technical Officer (CTO) of Bengaluru FC, was in attendance at the AFC Workshop for clubs who have made it into the knockout stages of the Asian Champions League (ACL) and AFC Cup respectively.
- The AFC Cup West Zone finalists, namely Air Force Club (Iraq) and Al Wahda (Syria), alongside ASEAN Zone finalists, Ceres Negros (Philippines) and Home United (Singapore) were also present at the workshop.

Nadda conferred WHO Director-General's Spl Recognition Award for global tobacco control

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda was conferred the WHO Director-General's Special Recognition Award for global tobacco control,
- The global recognition was presented to him by Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia at the 'National Consultation on Accelerating Implementation of WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) for achievement of SDGs'.
- Conferring the award, Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia said, "Mr Nadda has accelerated India's tobacco control initiatives and taken bold measures to protect people against multiple health, economic, social and development hazards of tobacco use."

Indian student receives prestigious 'Diana Legacy Award' from Prince William and Prince Harry

- Nikhiya Shamsher, a student at Greenwood High International School, Bengaluru recently received 'The Diana Legacy Award' from The Duke of Cambridge, Prince William and Prince of Wales, Prince Harry for her exemplary achievement of providing quality education to the underprivileged.
- She was awarded at a grand event at St James Palace in London recently, and was the only Indian to win the award from amongst 12,000 nominations received from all over the world.
- At 14, Nikhiya already has a registered NGO; she has spearheaded campaigns like 'Bags, Books and Blessings' and 'Yearn to Learn Labs'.
- She set up the NGO to ensure that every child has equal opportunities to learn and become successful in life and be provided with basic necessities.
- 'The Diana Legacy Award' celebrates the achievements of outstanding young leaders, visionaries and role models from across the world who are selflessly transforming the lives of others, as Princess Diana believed they could.

Jeje Lalpekhlua, Sasmita Malik clinch top honours at first ever AIFF Awards

- Jeje Lalpekhlua and Sasmita Malik were awarded 2016 AIFF Player of the Year and the AIFF Women's Player of the Year respectively at the first ever All India Football Federation (AIFF) Awards
- Sasmita Malik was adjudged the 2016 AIFF Women's player of the year for her immense contribution to the success and growth of the Indian women's football team, ever since she was included in the Senior National Team in 2007. She was part of the 2010 South Asian Games and back to back SAFF Women's Championship winning squads.
- Sunil Chettri, India's most prolific goal scorer ever with 53 goals from 93 matches, received a Special Award for surpassing the milestone over the last year. Sunil is also currently the top Indian scorer in NFL (National Football League) and I-League matches taken together.
- India goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu was awarded the All India Football Federation's Special Recognition Award of the Year

Muttiah Muralitharan to be inducted into ICC Hall of Fame during Champions Trophy

- Legendary off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan, the first cricketer from his country to be voted into the ICC Hall of Fame, will be formally inducted during the ICC Champions Trophy in England later this year
- He will also be joined by former Australia captain Karen Rolton, Arthur Morris and Englishman George Lohmann, who were voted by ICC Cricket Hall of Famers and a section of the media.

RedInk Awards recognise India's best journalists

- The Mumbai Press Club's RedInk Awards for Excellence in Indian Journalism, 2017, were presented on Wednesday evening at a glittering awards ceremony at the National Centre for Performing Arts. With 15 categories, they are the biggest journalism awards in India where winners are chosen by their peers.
- Veteran journalist Vinod Dua was recognised with the Lifetime Achievement Award and Raj Kamal Jha was presented the Journalist of the Year award.
- Raj Kamal Jha, Chief Editor of the Indian Express, was named Journalist of the Year
- In the Politics category, R.K. Radhakrishnan of Frontline won the print award, and NDTV's Sreenivasan Jain won for television.
- The Mumbai Press Club introduced a new award this year, Mumbai's Star Reporter. Govind Tupe of Sakal won it for his dogged work helping empower civil society.

Richard Ford, US novelist, wins top Spanish award

- US writer Richard Ford, author of such novels as Independence Day and The Lay of the Land, has won the 2016 Princess of Asturias award for literature.
- The 50,000 euro (£39,500) award is one of eight handed out yearly.
- Previous recipients include US writer Philip Roth, playwright Arthur Miller and the Irish novelist John Banville.
- Born in 1944, Ford published his first novel, A Piece of My Heart, in 1976 before becoming a journalist for a New York sports paper.

Soumitra Chatterjee to be honoured with Legion of Honor, France's highest civilian award

- Soumitra Chatterjee has been chosen for France's highest civilian award, the coveted Legion of Honour.
- The award comes to the octogenarian Bengali screen legend exactly 30 years after Satyajit Ray got the honour.
- Ray was awarded the Legion of Honour by then French President Francois Mitterrand in 1987.

Authors Neelakantan, Satpathy to be honoured with Kalinga Awards

- Popular writer Anand Neelakantan, Odia poet Haraprasad Das and author Paramita Satpathy were announced winners of the Kalinga Literary Awards.
- The Kalinga International Literary Award, Kalinga Literary Youth Award and Kalinga Karubaki Award will be conferred upon Neelakantan, Das and Satpathy respectively.
- The theme of this year's award ceremony is 'Literature for Peace and Harmony'.

Indian girl bags Little Miss Universe Internet 2017 crown at Little Miss Universe in Georgia

- 12 year old Padmalaya Nanda from Odisha has created history by becoming the youngest girl to bag the "Little Miss Universe Internet 2017" and "Little Miss Actress" crowns at the Little Miss Universe 2017 at port city of Batumi in Georgia.
- Padmalaya Nanda, who studies in the 8th standard at a school in Cuttack, Odisha, bagged the crowns at the finale of the Little Miss Universe 2017, held at port city of Batumi in Georgia
- She will now participate in the "Little Miss World 2017" competition that will be held at Greece from Sept 25 to Oct 1, 2017.
- The silver crown was won by Thailand.
- The award received by the girl was a golden crown which is valid only for a year and will be returned for the Little Miss Universe 2018 competition.

Nalanda model of water conservation chosen for national award

- A model of water conservation adopted successfully by the authorities in Nalanda district of south central Bihar, has been selected for the national award for excellence in the Mahatma

Gandhi national rural employment guarantee programme (MGNREGP), by the ministry of rural development.

- The award for excellence will be conferred on 'Project Jal Sanchay', the water conservation model developed in chief minister Nitish Kumar's native district
- It was under these conditions that 'project jal sanchay' was launched under MGRNREGP, to offer farmers a wide spectrum of solutions to their water crisis

Israel's David Grossman wins Man Booker Prize for 'A Horse Walks Into a Bar'

- Israeli author David Grossman has won the Man Booker International Prize for his novel 'A Horse Walks Into a Bar'.
- Grossman beat out five other finalists, including fellow Israeli author Amos Oz for the counterpart to Britain's prestigious Booker Prize. Grossman's novel is about a failing standup comic and his final performance.
- The award has a prize of 50,000 pounds (\$64,000) that is split evenly between Grossman and translator Jessica Cohen.

Ariana Grande Slated to Become First Honorary Citizen of Manchester

- Ariana Grande is set to become the first honorary citizen of Manchester after her contributions to the city following the deadly Manchester Arena attack, which killed people and left many more injured.
- In light of her One Love Manchester benefit concert in early June, which reportedly raised millions for the victims of the attack, Manchester town hall officials have announced plans to recognize the "great many selfless acts and demonstrations of community spirit" in the aftermath of the attack with an event and granting honorary citizenship to the star

E. Sreedharan selected for Nanniyode Rajan Award

- Delhi Metro Railway Corporation (DMRC) Principal Adviser E. Sreedharan has been selected for the year's Nanniyode Rajan Memorial Award, instituted by the Milma Thiruvananthapuram Regional Cooperative Milk Producers' Union (TRCMPU) in memory of its former chairman.

- The previous recipients of the award, instituted in 2008, included E. Chandrasekharan Nair, Prayar Gopalakrishnan, V. Kurian, M.S. Swaminathan, P.J. Joseph, Vakkom B. Purushothaman, K.C. Joseph, and C. Divakaran.
- The Koyivila Vijayan Memorial trophy and cash award for the best milk producers' cooperative society will be presented to the Vechuchira milk producers' cooperative society in Pathanamthitta.

Women in Film Awards: Mira Nair wins

- Mira Nair wins Directors Award at Women In Film Awards
- Indian-American filmmaker Mira Nair won the Dorothy Arzner Directors Award for the film Queen of Katwe at this year's Women In Film Crystal + Lucy Awards.
- Queen of Katwe's lead actress Lupita Nyong'o presented the award.
- Further, Elizabeth Banks won the Crystal Award for Excellence in Film and Tracee Ellis Ross won the Lucy Award for Excellence in Television.

'Sultan' to be screened at Shanghai film fest

- Bollywood superstar Salman Khan's 'Sultan' has been lined up for a showcase at the 20th Shanghai International Film Festival.
- The gala is to be held from June 17-26.
- Director Ali Abbas Zafar tweeted on Thursday: "'Sultan' will be showcased at 20th Shanghai International Film Festival." A sports drama, the movie features Salman in the role of a wrestler and he is paired with Anushka Sharma.
- For now, Zafar is busy working on his new film 'Tiger Zinda Hai', which again features Salman.

Kannada poet Shivaprakash honoured

- Noted Kannada poet and playwright H S Shivaprakash was presented with the Kusumagraja Rashtriya Puraskar 2017.

- Maharashtra and Karnataka despite both states being at loggerheads over a border dispute. Kusumagraj, after whom the award is named, was a pen-name of Marathi litterateur V V Shirwadkar, a Jnanpith awardee.
- Shivaprakash, who writes in Kannada and English, has nine compilations of poems and 15 dramas.
- The award, constituted by Nashik-based Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University's (YCMOU) Kusumagraja Adhyasan (Chair), carries a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh, a memento and citation. It was presented to Shivaprakash by Akshaykumar Kale, president, 90th Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan.

Bhupen Hazarika Award conferred to Yeshe Dorjee Thongshi

- The Fifth Bhupen Hazarika National Award 2017 awarded to an eminent writer from Arunachal Pradesh Yeshe Dorjee Thongshi.
- This award is presented to honour whose outstanding literary work at National and International level.
- The award has been instituted by Sarhad, a Maharashtra-based organisation.
- His famous novel includes Mauna Onth Mukhar Hriday (Silent lips, murmuring hearts) which won the Sahitya Akademi award in 2005.

Syama wins Kerala's 1st beauty pageant for transgenders

- Syama Sanju was declared the Queen of Dhwayah, the winner at Kerala's first ever beauty pageant for transgender women.
- Jaz D'souza was crowned the first runner-up while Harini Chandana came third from among fifteen participants.
- Celebrities including Madhoo, Remya Nambeeshan and Pearle Maaney attended the pageant while former Miss World runners-up Parvathy Omanakuttan was one of the judges.

2017 Orwell Prize awarded to John Bew

- The 2017 Orwell Prize, Britain's most prestigious prize for political writing, was announced in London. The £3,000 2017 Orwell Prize for books was bestowed upon John Bew for his

"extraordinary biography" Citizen Clem , which is about Clement Attlee, the founder of the NHS.

- The award, named after the author of the cult classic dystopian-political fiction Nineteen Eighty-Four and Animal Farm , is awarded annually by the Orwell Foundation to a book that comes closest to the George Orwell's ambition "to make political writing into an art".
- The winners of the Orwell prize for journalism and the Orwell prize for Exposing Britain's Social Evils were awarded to Fintan O'Toole and Felicity Lawrence respectively.
- O'Toole of The Irish Times for applauded for his commentary on the ramifications of Brexit, while The Guardian's Felicity Lawrence was acclaimed for exposing social evils that revealed how criminal gangs were forcing migrants to work for them in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire.

Madhavan, Ritika Singh bag Best Actors

- Madhavan and Ritika Singh's Irudhi Suttru, the Tamil version of Hindi film Saala Khadoss, has walked away with three honours at 64th Jio Filmfare South Awards
- It bagged the awards in categories like Best Director (Sudha Kongara Prasad), Best Male Actor (Madhavan) Best Female Actor (Ritika Singh).Best Film SR Prabhu Joker
- Best Director: Sudha K Prasad for Irudhi Suttru
- Best Supporting Actor (Male): Samuthirakani Visaaranai
- Best Supporting Actor (Female): Sai Dhanshika Kabali

Passport office, Cochin, awarded best passport office in the country

- Regional Passport Office, Cochin, has won the award for the best passport office in India for the year 2016-17, amongst the big passport offices in the country that falls in category A.
- This is for the fourth consecutive year that RPO Cochin is selected for the Passport Seva Puraskar constituted by the Ministry of External Affairs.
- This year, RPO Cochin had a score of 9.85 out of 10, which is highest among all passport offices in India, irrespective of the category.
- The second in this category is Jalandhar with 9.75 score and Ahmedabad at number three with 9.30 score.
- The Ministry of External Affairs had constituted a working group cum assessment committee on Passport Seva Puraskar to deliberate upon and recommend the methodology of assessment for the award in 2016-17.

- The committee recommended the candidature for the award in various discipline that was approved by the ministry.

Rural Development Ministry gives away 144 awards

- The Rural Development Ministry today gave away 144 awards under various categories to states and other organisations.
- Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Bihar was awarded for constructing the highest number of rural roads while Madhya Pradesh got the award for use of non-conventional construction material in constructing roads.
- Haryana, Gujarat and Karnataka received a special prize for completing more than 95 per cent of their targets
- Under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin) PMAY-G, Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee was awarded for providing technical vetting of housing typologies and the NIC team of the ministry for its technical support.

Ramamani Iyengar Memorial to be awarded for contribution in Yoga

- The Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute has been selected as the first recipient of the Prime Minister's Award, for outstanding contribution for promotion and development of Yoga.
- The selection was done among 85 nominations out of which 15 were recommended by the screening committee.
- On June 21, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra had announced the institution for the award for its promotion and development of Yoga.
- The Ministry of AYUSH developed the guidelines for the awards after which two committees were constituted namely, the Screening Committee for preliminary evaluation and Evaluation Committee (Jury), to ensure a transparent process while finalising the awards.

Deepika Padukone nominated for Teen Choice Awards

- Hindi cinema actor Deepika Padukone has been nominated in Teen Choice Awards for her breakthrough role in xXx: Return of Xander Cage and the actor will compete with Wonder Woman Gal Gadot for the trophy.
- Deepika, 31, has been nominated in the Choice Action Movie Actress category for essaying the role of xXx agent Serena Unger, who helps Xander Cage in saving the world in the DJ Caruso directed film.

Annabel Mehta, renowned social activist will get MBE

- Annabel Mehta has been a known social activist for a long time.
- She is also the mother of Anjali Tendulkar, cricket great Sachin Tendulkar's wife. Annabel who is a British national and is married to an Indian has been confirmed to get an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) later this year.
- She will get the award in her capacity as a social worker for her tireless work with the underprivileged in Mumbai

Francis Spufford wins 2017 Desmond Elliott prize

- Francis Spufford has been awarded the 2017 Desmond Elliott Prize for his "miraculously constructed" debut fiction, Golden Hill .
- Set in New York in 1746, when the Big Apple was just a small town on the island of Manhattan, Golden Hill follows the story of Mr Smith, a mysterious young man who steps off a boat from England with an order for a huge sum of money.
- The book was chosen as the best debut novel of 2017 from a shortlist which also included acclaimed books such as, My Name is Leon by Kit de Waal, and Harmless Like You by Rowan Hisayo Buchanan.
- The Desmond Elliott Prize is an annual award for the best debut novel written in English and published in the UK.
- The winning novel can be from any genre of fiction and must exhibit depth and breadth with a compelling narrative.
- The winner receives £10,000. The prize is named in honour of the distinguished late publisher and literary agent, Desmond Elliott.

Ferrari clinches 2017 International Engine of the Year award

- Ferrari's 3.9-litre V8 from the 488 GTB has won the 2017 International Engine of the Year award for the second consecutive year.
- The twin-turbo V8 fended off close competition from Porsche's 3.0-litre six-cylinder turbo powering the 911 Carrera.
- Apart from the overall prize, the 3.9-litre V8 won top honours in the 'Performance Engine' and the '3.0 to 4.0-litre' categories.
- With its win, Ferrari's V8 joins four other powertrains such as BMW M's V10, BMW's 3.0-litre twin-turbo six, Volkswagen's 1.4-litre 'Twincharged' TSI and Ford's 1.0-litre EcoBoost that have won the award at least twice.

Indian agri microbiologist given environment award in Japan

- Indian agricultural microbiologist Shrihari Chandraghatgi has been conferred the Ministry of Environment Award for 2017 in Japan for developing cutting edge technologies to address burning environmental problems.
- Chandraghatgi, who is President and CEO of EcoCycle Corporation, is the first foreigner to be given the Ministry of Environment Award, the highest award in environmental sector in Japan
- Chandraghatgi, hailing from Siddapura in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka, has been residing in Tokyo for almost two decades.
- He has over a dozen patents against his name. These patented technologies have been applied over 400 sites in Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, India, China and the US

Indian Anti-Hunger Activist To Be Honoured by Queen Elizabeth II

- Anti-hunger activist Ankit Kawatra, who has been committed to solving hunger and malnutrition in India, is all set to receive the prestigious Queen's Young Leaders Award with 60 others from all 53 Commonwealth countries.
- Ankit Kawatra, 25, will be honoured by Queen Elizabeth II at a ceremony to be held in the Buckingham Palace on June 29.
- In 2014, Mr Kawatra quit his corporate business job and founded a not for profit organisation Feeding India that works towards solving problems of hunger, malnutrition and food wastage, mainly by redistributing extra food from restaurants, canteens, households, corporates etc. to help people in need.

- He started working for the cause after witnessing massive amount of extra food being thrown away in a wedding and feels that his mission is to end hunger in his lifetime.

International Dublin Literary Award goes to José Eduardo Agualusa

- This year's International Dublin Literary Award has been awarded to the Angolan writer Jose Eduardo Agualusa for his 14th novel, A General Theory of Oblivion , translated into English by Daniel Hahn. The 100,000 prize is divided between author and translator, with Agualusa receiving 75,000 and Hahn 25,000.
- A General Theory of Oblivion tells the story of a traumatised woman Luanda, who retreats from the world and history and stays in an apartment while Angola endures a civil war and a sequence of horrors.
- Her isolation is shared with an albino dog Phantom, whose spirit continues to sustain her after he dies.
- The Dublin Literary Award is the world's largest prize for a single novel published in English

Awards for Bengal in rural development

- Bengal has received five state-level and two district-level excellence awards for implementation of flagship programmes of the ministry of rural development during 2016-17.
- In the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Bengal has received a gold memento and a certificate for outstanding performance in convergence and livelihood augmentation.
- Among districts, Nadia was awarded for the progress made in strengthening river dam as well as building greenhouse for cultivation of flowers and vegetables. Cooch Behar was also awarded for implementation of Geo-MGNREGA, which comprises the geo-tagging of assets.

Indian-origin doctor appointed honorary VP of UK medical body

- A veteran Indian-origin doctor in the UK has been appointed as honorary vice-president of the country's prominent medical body, becoming the first professional from the community to be appointed to the post.

- Kailash Chand, a general practitioner (GP), has been associated with the British Medical Association (BMA), for nearly 25 years.
- Chand has been regularly named as being among one of Britain's top 50 most influential GPs in the annual 'National Pulse Power' list.

World's top 10 airlines of 2017

- The Skytrax World Airline Awards are generally considered to be the 'Oscars of the aviation industry
- The award winners have been ranked based on traveller-voting across the world as part of Skytrax's annual passenger survey.
- Indigo and Jet Airways were on 57th and 73rd positions respectively.
- Qatar Airways, the national airline of Gulf nation Qatar, has been rated the Best Airline of 2017 by aviation website Skytrax.
- The airline, which topped the list for the fourth time in 10 years, was followed by Singapore Airlines.

Radio Mirchi bags Gold at 2017 NYF Radio Awards

- New York Festivals International Radio Program Awards announced this year's award-winning programmes at the annual Radio Awards gala last week at New York City's Manhattan Penthouse.
- India won nine metals (one Gold, four Silver and four Bronze) and bagged 22 finalist certificates.
- Radio Mirchi bagged a Gold Radio for 'Five years of Nirbhaya,' under the Public Service Announcement Promotion category. The player also bagged a Bronze Radio for 'Ha ja ba ra la' under the Best Audio Book Fiction category.
- Reliance Broadcast Network Limited (RBNL) won two Silver Radio and seven finalist certificates.

'Baahubali 2' to be screened at Moscow Int'l Film Festival

- Yet another feather in the cap of 'Baahubali 2: The Conclusion.

- The blockbuster movie will be screened at the 39th edition of the Moscow International Film Festival.
- The special screening at the film festival is part of a series of events to celebrate the 70 years of bilateral relations between India and Russia.
- The festival, which is to be held from June 22 to June 29, will also include screening of films like 'Badman', 'A Death In the Gunj', 'BeyYaar', 'U Turn' and 'Kothandi',

Sahitya awards for 2 Goan writers

- Two Konkani literary personalities — Vincy Quadros and Amey Naik — from Goa have been chosen for awards by the the country's highest literary body - the Sahitya Akademi.
- While Quadros is being awarded Sahitya Akademi's Bal Sahitya Puraskar for his book 'Jaduche Petul' for children in Konkani, Amey Naik has been selected for Yuva Puraskar 2017 for his Konkani poetry collection 'Mog Dot Com'.

Sonam Kapoor's fashion label Rheson wins PETA award

- Actress Sonam Kapoor and her producer-sister Rhea Kapoor's fashion label -- Rheson has bagged the Compassionate Business Award from the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India for a line of bags made exclusively of vegan materials.
- This is not the first time that Sonam, who was crowned PETA's Hottest Vegetarian Celebrity of 2016, has stood for animals.

CM Naveen Patnaik confers Biju Patnaik Award on scientist Lalit Mohan Das

- The prestigious Biju Patnaik Award for Scientific Excellence, 2014 was conferred on scientist Lalit Mohan Das for his outstanding contribution to science.
- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik gave away the award to Das at a function organised by Odisha Bigyan Academy (OBA) here. The award carries a cash prize of `2 lakh.
- Similarly, the CM awarded scientists Pradeep Kumar Chand, Swati Mohanty and Ajay Parida with the Samanta Chandra Sekhar Award. The award carries a cash prize of `1 lakh.
- Biswaranjan Paital, Sasmita Mohapatra, Milan Kumar Biswal and Swarup Kumar Parida were awarded in the young scientist category which carries a cash prize of `25,000. Besides, the CM felicitated Jibanananda Mohanty, Khageswar Pradhan and Dhruba Raj Nayak as senior

scientists.

Intellicap CEO Nisha Dutt gets social entrepreneur of year award

- Nisha Dutt, Chief Executive Officer of Hyderabad-based Intellicap has been honoured with the "Social Entrepreneur of the Year" award at The 7th Asian Awards in London.
- She is the first Indian woman leader to have been conferred with this recognition.
- This award has been presented to her for leading Intellicap to become a globally known enterprise that focuses on social capital and impacts the under served communities.
- The Asian Awards function held recently is an annual awards ceremony, was founded by businessman and philanthropist Paul Sagoo through his Lemon Group Company. The awards is presented in 14 categories.
- Earlier winners from India include Ratan Tata, Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan and singers Asha Bhosle and Zayn Malik to name a few. In the Social Entrepreneur category, personalities such as Professor Muhammad Yunus, Masa Kogure and Vikram Patel have been honored over the years.
- As CEO, Nisha guides the global positioning of Intellicap business. Her key contribution has been integrating technology with challenges of healthcare, financial services, incubation and conceptualising programs such as Innovations Labs and Credit-tree

Azim Premji honoured with Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy

- Wipro Chairman Azim Premji is among the honorees of this years Carnegie Medal, considered the most prestigious prize in Philanthropy, for his efforts to reform Indias public school system.
- Premji, 70, who founded the Azim Premji Foundation, is among the nine philanthropists named recipients of the 2017 Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy in "recognition of their outstanding and innovative leadership in philanthropy."
- The foundation went on to establish the Azim Premji University in 2011, with a focus on school education and related fields of human development.
- Forty-six per cent of the university's student body comes from villages and small towns, with a majority committing to work in the social sector after graduation.

UN honours Mamata Banerjee with highest public service award for girl child project Kanyashree

- In a major boost to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's pet project 'Kanyashree', the United Nations today accorded its highest award for public service to the West Bengal government for the scheme initiated to empower the girl child with education.
- The project was launched in 2011 soon after Mamata Banerjee came to power and has helped more than 40 lakh female students in the state.
- 'Kanyashree' was ranked the best among 552 such social sector schemes from across 62 countries that were nominated for the coveted award. The award was presented at the World Public Service Forum by UN Assistant Secretary General at a ceremony in Hague in Netherlands.
- Kanyashree Prakalpa' is a targeted conditional cash transfer scheme aimed at retaining girls in schools and other educational and skill development institutions along with preventing child marriage.

PV Sindhu, Indian junior hockey team win SJFI annual awards

- The Sports Journalists Federation of India, at its annual general meeting decided to confer the best Sportsperson of the Year Award on the ace shuttler and Rio Olympics silver medallist P V Sindhu.
- The Best Team of the Year award was bagged by the Indian junior hockey squad which won the World Cup in Lucknow last December.
- Both the awards would be presented at the 40th convention of the SJFI to be held in Indore in September.

Haryana girl Manushi Chhillar is Femina Miss India World 2017

- The 54th Femina Miss India World 2017 winner is Manushi Chhillar from Haryana, while the first runner-up is Sana Dua from Jammu and Kashmir and the second runner-up is Priyanka Kumari from Bihar.
- The event was held at Yash Raj Studios in Mumbai
- Manushi, whose parents are doctors, studied at St. Thomas School in Delhi and Bhagat Phool Singh Government Medical College for Women in Sonapat.

Azim Premji honoured with Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy

- Wipro Chairman Azim Premji is among the honorees of this year's Carnegie Medal, considered the most prestigious prize in Philanthropy. The award has been given to him for his efforts to reform public school system in India.
- Premji, 70, who founded the Azim Premji Foundation, is among the nine philanthropists named recipients of the 2017 Medal of Philanthropy. Carnegie Corporation in a statement said that an extraordinary undertaking is driven by the Azim Premji Foundation's direct field work, currently serving seven states and over three lakh schools to reform public school system of the country.
- The Carnegie institutions will award the medals during a formal ceremony in October.

Vijaya Bank bags nine Skoch Awards

- Vijaya Bank has bagged nine Skoch Awards.
- The bank received awards in the following categories -- Best Bank in Public Sector; Best Bank for NPA Management – Organization Category; Retail Lending; Inclusive Wallet – VPAYQWIK; Digital Inclusion; IT Security; e-Surveillance of ATMs and branches; and 100 Digital Villages – Financial Inclusion.
- The bank's Executive Director B. S. Rama Rao received the NPA Management Award (individual category) from Sameer Kochhar, Chairman, Skoch Group at Mumbai.

Bhumika Sharma is Miss World From India

- The 21-year-old Doon girl wins the Miss World Bodybuilding title
- Dehradun girl Bhumika Sharma is a girl with muscle power who ruled at the World Bodybuilding Championship in Venice.
- She made India proud after acing all the important rounds. She gained the maximum number of points in body posing, individual posing and fall category.
- She bagged the Miss World Bodybuilding title and the gold medal at the world championship which was held in Venice last week. Bhumika Sharma is only 21-years-old and defeated 50 contestants from around the world.

- She was one of the 27 Indians who participated in the tournament but she was the lone woman bodybuilder.

Dhanraj Pillay to be awarded Bharat Gaurav – East Bengal's highest honour

- Former India hockey captain Dhanraj Pillay will be awarded East Bengal football club's highest honour – Bharat Gaurav on their foundation day.
- The ceremony will be held on August 1.
- Pillay has played a huge role in reviving the Indian team and performed brilliantly during his 15-year career, representing the country in four Olympics, World Cups, Champions Trophy and Asian Games. He played total 339 matches for India, scoring 170 goals.
- He made his international hockey debut in 1989 in Allwyn Asia Cup. He led India to Asian Games glory in 1998 and also won the Asia Cup in 2003.
- Pillay also received the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award for his remarkable performance in 1999-2000 and was later awarded the Padma Shri and civilian award in 2000.
- India's hockey team won the Asian Games in 2002 under Pillay's captaincy

Adi Godrej, Andrew Liveris bag USIBC Global Leadership Awards

- Godrej Group Chairman Adi Godrej and Dow Chemical CEO Andrew Liveries have been awarded the Global Leadership Awards of the US-India Business Council for their role in integrating India in the global supply chain.
- Liveris and Godrej were presented with the prestigious annual award yesterday at the USIBCs annual gala.
- Both were honored for creating inclusive business environments, integrating India in the global supply chain and advancing core values such as manufacturing, innovation and scale in tough market conditions

Hyderabad-based TS Vineeth Bhatt conferred with the 'best astrologer of world' award

- Hyderabad based astrologer and numerologist TS Vineeth Bhatt has been conferred with the 'Best astrologer of the world' award at the 'Russian-Indian economic dialogue' round-table meet held in Moscow

- Bhatt, 37, is from Kerala and lives in Bowenpally. Three generations of his family have been practising astrology.
- He is a personal astrologer to ministers, ambassadors, senators across the globe.

Oxford poet honoured by Indian President for Hindi works

- AN Oxford poet has been honoured with a national award by the Indian Government for promoting Hindi literature abroad.
- Dr Padmesh Gupta, who is also the director of Oxford Business College, was given the Padmabhushan Moturi Satyanarayana award from the President of India last month.
- It recognises his commitment to promoting and propagating his native Hindi with poetry he has published.
- He was given the award at a special ceremony at the Sevi Samman Awards at Rashtrapati Bhavan, the official home of the President of India in New Delhi, on May 30.

U'khand gets award of excellence at international meet

- Uttarakhand was conferred with the award of excellence at the 2nd Global Skill Development Summit held in Paris recently for innovations and extensive use of IT for skilling the state's youth.
- Project Director of Uttarakhand Skill Development Committee Pankaj Kumar Pandey received the honour
- A new initiative is being taken to impart high quality job oriented training to the state's youth so that they could avail of employment opportunities in the tourism, beauty and wellness, agriculture, health and security sectors,



Appointments

Sanjiv Singh appointed as new chairman of Indian Oil Corporation

- Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) has appointed Sanjiv Singh as the new chairman of the company with immediate effect.
- Singh was earlier a director of Refineries at IOCL. Singh will be replacing B Ashok, who superannuated from the services of the company on May 31 and ceased to be the chairman of the company from June 1.

Citi appoints Shinjini Kumar as Head of Consumer Banking, India

- Citi announced the appointment of Shinjini Kumar as Consumer Business Manager, Global Consumer Banking, India, effective June 24.
- Shinjini will manage all of Citi's consumer businesses including retail banking, wealth management, cards and mortgages in India.
- Shinjini joins Citi India from Paytm, where she served as Chief Executive Officer.
- She succeeds Kartik Kaushik, who was appointed Global Consumer Head of Credit Initiation, Core Operations and Branch Operations based in the US.

Nirupama Rao Appointed Public Policy Fellow to US Think-tank

- Former Indian Ambassador to the US Nirupama Rao has been appointed public policy fellow to a Washington-based think-tank where she will work on a project on the Sino-India ties
- She will be affiliated with the Wilson Centre's Asia programme and spend three months in residence at the Wilson Centre, a key non-partisan policy forum for tackling global issues, beginning in June 2017.
- The 66-year-old former Indian diplomat was India's first woman ambassador to China and its first woman spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She also served as India's foreign secretary from 2009 to 2011.

Slovakia's Lajcak elected UN General Assembly president

- The United Nations General Assembly yesterday (31 May) picked Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajčák to be its next president.
- He will succeed Fiji's former ambassador to the United Nations, Peter Thomson, in September and chair the assembly's 72nd session that month.
- The sole candidate for the position, Lajčák was elected by an overwhelming majority. He will be the first Slovak in the job.
- Under the current rotation system, regional groups in the Assembly put forward consensus candidates for president.

Shashi Shekhar Vempati named CEO of public broadcaster Prasar Bharati

- Shashi Shekhar Vempati, a former principal architect of Infosys Technologies, has been appointed the new chief executive officer (CEO) of public broadcaster Prasar Bharati.
- The appointment announced on Friday comes seven months after the last CEO, Jawhar Sircar, resigned from the post.
- Vempanti, a technocrat, had been on the board of Prasar Bharati as a part-time member. His appointment as CEO was made on the recommendation of a three-member committee headed by vice-president Hamid Ansari, Press Council of India chairman Justice CK Prasad and the secretary of the Information and Broadcasting ministry who is also the President's nominee.

- An IIT Bombay alumnus, Vempati's tenure will be for five years from the date of assumption of office.
- With the appointment of Vempati, the government broke away from the tradition of appointing former bureaucrats to the position.

RBI appoints S. Ganesh Kumar as new Executive Director

- The Reserve Bank has appointed Ganesh Kumar as Executive Director (ED) after the voluntary retirement of Chandan Sinha.
- Kumar took charge from today.
- As Executive Director, Kumar will look after the departments of Information Technology, Payment and Settlement Systems and External Investments and Operations.
- Kumar had joined the Reserve Bank in 1984 and as a career central banker, has served in the areas of payment systems, supervision, foreign exchange, information technology and Government and Bank Accounts in the Bank.

Ganeshan Neelakanta Iyer first Indian to be inducted in ITTF URC

- Ganeshan Neelakanta Iyer, the only assigned competition manager of International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF), has become the first Indian to be nominated as a member of the Umpires and Referees Committee (URC).
- Following the AGM of the world table tennis body early this week, the Board of Directors of various committees met on the sidelines of the ongoing World Championships and handpicked the best in the business for the job. Ganeshan's term as URC member is for a period of two years and can be extended.
- In another first, Ganeshan has also been recommended as the Technical Commissioner from the Asian Continent to ITTF and his term will be for a period of four years.
- Ganeshan is also the chairman of the South Asian Federation technical committee and a member of the Technical Committee of the Commonwealth Table Tennis Federation.

Ruchira Kamboj appointed as next High Commissioner of India to South Africa

- Ruchira Kamboj (IFS: 1987), presently Ambassador/PR to Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO, Paris has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of South Africa.
- She is expected to take up her assignment shortly.

Sharad Jain appointed NWDA director

- Sharad Jain appointed NWDA director general 3 months after clearing Ken-Betwa river link project
- Sharad Jain, the chairman of the panel which cleared the Ken-Betwa river link project of the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) was appointed as the director general of NWDA only three months after clearing project.

Rahul Mishra appointed CEO of Rays Future Energy

- Rays Power Infra today said it has appointment Rahul Mishra as CEO to lead new business initiatives under Rays Future Energy India.
- The new company will focus on distributed solar generation including rooftop solutions, energy storage, e- vehicles & associated infrastructure and solar energy based products
- Mishra was earlier working with Nereus Capital, a private equity fund focused on investing in the Indian renewable energy sector.
- He was also involved in setting up operations of GE Energy Financial Services (EFS) in India and South East Asia region

Hoshiar Singh appointed chief of copyrights office

- Senior bureaucrat Hoshiar Singh has been appointed as Registrar of Copyrights.
- The Office of Copyrights, under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, is mandated to protect the music and film industry besides addressing its concerns, among others.
- The competent authority has approved the appointment of Singh, a 1994 batch officer of the Indian Telecom Service, as Registrar, Copyrights Office, for a period of five years, an

order issued recently by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) said.

K G Karmakar, Gauri Shankar appointed directors of IPPB

- K G Karmakar and Gauri Shankar were today appointed as Independent Directors of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB).
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved their appointment to the post on the board of directors of the bank for a period of three years, an order issued by Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) said, without giving any detail of these two persons.
- The IPPB has been incorporated as a public sector bank under the Department of Posts with 100 per cent equity of the government of India.

Lakshmi Vilas Bank appoints B K Manjunath as part-time chairman for 3 years

- Lakshmi Vilas Bank informed the stock exchange that subsequent to an approval granted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Board of Directors of the bank at their meeting have co-opted B K Manjunath as additional director in the category of Non-Executive and Independent Director.
- At its meeting held on June 6, the board of directors also appointed B K Manjunath as part-time chairman for a tenure of three years.
- Manjunath is a member of Institute of Chartered Accountants of India and a practicing chartered accountant for the last 25 years.

SEBI clears Limaye as NSE chief

- Capital market regulator SEBI has given conditional approval for the appointment of Vikram Limaye as the MD and CEO of the NSE.
In February, Limaye, MD and CEO of infrastructure financing company IDFC, was selected to head NSE after its incumbent chief Chitra Ramakrishna put in her papers in December.
- SEBI had delayed clearing his appointment as he was also part of the four-member Supreme Court-appointed panel managing the affairs of the Board of Control for Cricket in India.
- His term with the BCCI ends in August.
NSE said SEBI has approved the appointment of Vikram Limaye as MD and CEO of the

National Stock Exchange of India, subject, to his being relieved from his BCCI assignment, among other things.

- The appointment will take effect from the date of joining, it added.

Paytm names vice-president Amit Sinha as COO of Paytm Mall

- Amit Sinha, a vice-president overlooking business and human resources at One97 Communications Ltd, the company behind the Paytm app, has been appointed as the chief operating officer (COO) of its e-commerce business Paytm Mall,
- Sinha has been associated with Paytm since December 2007 and has served in several key business roles. At Paytm Mall, he will be responsible for overall operations, hiring, category management and logistics.
- Last year, Paytm de-merged its three-year old e-commerce business into a separate unit— Paytm Mall, under the legal entity Paytm E-Commerce Pvt Ltd. The company launched a dedicated online portal and mobile app for Paytm Mall on 27 February.

IRDA appoints administrator to manage Sahara Life Insurance

- Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDA) appointed an administrator to manage Sahara India Life Insurance Company, saying Subrata Roy-run insurer was “acting in manner” prejudicial to interest of subscribers.
- The regulator has asked the directors, management, and staff of the insurer to extend all possible assistance and cooperation to the administrator to manage the affairs of Sahara Life Insurance Company.

Kajal Singh appointed as Executive Vice President, GSTN

- Senior bureaucrat Kajal Singh was appointed as Executive Vice President (Services) in Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN).
- Singh, a 1992 batch officer of Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise), has been appointed to the post for a period of three years,
- The GSTN is a special purpose vehicle set up to provide Information Technology infrastructure for implementation of the GST.

Govt announces Indian envoys to European Union, Italy, Denmark

- India has announced a number of new diplomatic appointments in its missions abroad, including envoys to the European Union, Italy and Denmark.
- Gaitri Issar Kumar, joint secretary in the President's Secretariat and a 1986 batch IFS officer, was named as India's Ambassador to Belgium and the European Union which has its headquarters in the Belgian capital of Brussels.
- Reenat Sandhu was named as India's new Ambassador to Italy.
- Ajit Vinayak Gupte, joint secretary in the external affairs ministry, has been named India's Ambassador to Denmark.

Fairoz Khan appointed new President of NSUI

- Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Vice President Rahul Gandhi on Monday approved appointment of Fairoz Khan as the new President of the National Students Union of India (NSUI), the students wing of the party.
- This was announced by AICC General Secretary Janardan Dwivedi in a statement. Khan has been appointed NSUI President for two years.

Law Expert Neeru Chadha Becomes First Indian Woman Judge At International Sea Tribunal

- In a significant victory for India at the United Nations or the UN, international law expert Neeru Chadha has won a crucial election to a top UN judicial body that deals with disputes related to the law of the sea, becoming the first Indian woman to be appointed as a judge at the tribunal.
- Ms Chadha, an eminent lawyer and the first Indian woman to become the chief legal adviser in the ministry of external affairs, won the election yesterday to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) for a nine-year term from 2017 to 2026.
- All three candidates went to a second round of voting in which Thailand won the other seat in the Asia Pacific group.
- Ms Chadha has extensive international arbitration and litigation experience, having served as an agent for the Indian government in its maritime delimitation case with Bangladesh.
- She was also India's agent for the case filed by Italy in ITLOS involving two Italian marines accused of shooting two Indian fishermen off the coast of Kerala in 2012.

TCS executive to head Atal mission under NITI Aayog

- The government has appointed a senior executive of Tata Consultancy Services to head Atal Innovation Mission, its initiative to promote entrepreneurship in the country, in perhaps the first initiative to bring in best of private minds to drive innovation in governance.
- Ramanathan Ramanan, senior vice president at TCS, has been appointed as mission director of Atal Innovation Mission, under the government's premier think tank NITI Aayog

Serbia Appoints First Gay and Female Prime Minister

- Forty-one-year-old Ana Brnabić is set to become both the first gay and first female prime minister of Serbia following her nomination by the nation's president, Aleksandar Vučić
- Vučić said he would be giving Brnabić a mandate to form a new government—a decision that is unlikely to be contested in parliament, where the president's Serbian Progressive Party maintains a firm majority. Although Brnabić is nonpartisan, she is considered loyal to Vučić.
- Brnabić's lack of political experience also makes her an ideal choice for Vučić, who was reportedly keen on appointing someone to promote his own agenda. Indeed, Vučić is likely to remain the most powerful figure in Serbian politics, with Brnabić acquiring a more symbolic authority.

Ayurveda specialist appointed special secretary in Ayush ministry

- Ayurvedaphysician 'Vaidya' Rajesh Kotecha has been appointed as special secretary in Ayush ministry.
- Usually a senior bureaucrat is appointed to such a post.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved Kotecha's appointment for three years on a contract basis
- Vaidya (meaning physician) Kotecha is chief consultant of Chakrapani Ayurveda Clinic, Jaipur.
- The appointment is in line with the Centre's efforts to bring in specialists from the private sector in the government.

UNICEF appoints 19-year-old Syrian refugee as goodwill ambassador

- The UN children's agency has announced the appointment of its youngest goodwill ambassador, 19-year-old Syrian refugee and education activist Muzoon Almellehan. UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Justin Forsyth said Monday that Muzoon is the first goodwill envoy with official refugee status.
- Muzoon fled the conflict in Syria along with her family in 2013, living as refugee for three years in Jordan before being resettled in the United Kingdom.
- It was during her 18 months in the Za'atari camp that she began advocating for children's access to education, particularly for girls.

Rajiv Gauba to be next Union home secretary

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved a major reshuffle of top bureaucrats, with the Urban Development Secretary, Rajiv Gauba, being named as the next home secretary.

Other Major Shuffles

- Durga Shanker Mishra will be the next urban development secretary.
- Mehrishi is likely to be appointed the next chief election commissioner
- NK Sinha will be the I&B secretary.
- Ajay Mittal will take over as the secretary, Department of Personnel & Training.
- Aruna Sundararajan, secretary will take over as secretary, Department of Telecommunications in the existing vacancy.
- Yudhvir Singh Malik will take over as secretary, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.
- Deepak Kumar will take over as Chairman, National Highways Authority of India.
- Avinash K Srivastava has been appointed as the secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs,
- Jagdish Prasad Meena has been moved to Ministry of Food Processing Industries.
- Subash C Garg has been appointed as secretary, Department of Economic Affairs,
- Rajeev Kapoor will be the secretary of Ministry of New & Renewable Energy.
- Sanjeevane Kuty will be Secretary, Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare.
- Arun Kumar Panda will take over as secretary, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
- Ravi Kan will take over as secretary, Ministry of Shipping.
- Anand Kumar will take over as secretary, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy
- Ajay Prakash Sawhney will take over as secretary, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.
- Ajay Kumar Bhalla director general, Foreign Trade, will be the next power secretary.

Manappuram Home Finance announces appointments of MD, CEO

- Manappuram Finance announced the appointment of Jeevandas Narayan as the Managing Director and Subhash Samant as CEO of its fully-owned home loans subsidiary, Manappuram Home Finance.
- Prior to this Narayan, who has more than 37 years of experience in the financial services industry, was Managing Director of State Bank of Travancore
- Kenneth Juster to be new US ambassador to India
- Kenneth I Juster, a top aide of US President Donald Trump, is set to be America's new ambassador to India
- Juster, 62, who is the deputy assistant to the US president for International Economic Affairs and deputy director of his National Economic Council, would replace Richard Verma if nominated and confirmed by the Senate.
- The move has been welcomed by widely respected Ashley Telis, the top India expert in the US.

UN chief appoints Lebanese official as head of operations in Libya

- A Lebanese political science professor and political advisor to the United Nations in Iraq has been appointed as the Organization's top official in Libya.
- UN Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Ghassan Salamé as his Special Representative and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), which is working to facilitate a Libyan-led political solution to the challenges facing the country.
- Mr. Salamé will succeed Martin Kobler of Germany, whom the UN spokesperson said that Mr. Guterres is grateful for his dedication and service, as well as for his effective leadership of UNSMIL.

Russian diplomat appointed to lead new UN counter-terror unit

- The United Nations has appointed veteran Russian diplomat Vladimir Voronkov to head a newly-established counter-terrorism division, despite growing tensions between the US and Russia.

- It will oversee the counter-terrorism efforts of 36 UN-funded programmes currently housed under a variety of UN agencies, 12 inter-agency working groups, as well as Interpol, and the World Customs Organisation.
- The existing Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force is under the political affairs division. There are also two related offices under the Security Council, which will remain in place.

Subhash C Garg appointed as new DEA Secretary

- Subhash C Garg, a 1983 batch Rajasthan cadre IAS officer, has been appointed as Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Finance Ministry.
- This was part of the major secretary level reshuffle and appointments announced by the Centre
- The committee also gave its nod for the appointment of Rajiv Gauba, a Jharkhand cadre IAS officer, as the next Home Secretary.
- He will take over from Rajiv Mehrishi on August 30. Until then Gauba will serve as Officer on Special Duty in the Home Ministry.
- Meanwhile, Ajay Prakash Sawhney, an Andhra Pradesh cadre IAS officer, will be the new Electronics & IT Secretary.
- He was earlier Additional Secretary in the Petroleum Ministry. Yudhvir Singh Malik, a 1983 Haryana batch IAS officer, will be the new Road Transport and Highways Secretary. He was earlier NHAI's Chairman.

Reserve Bank of India expands oversight committee

- RBI has expanded the oversight committee by appointing three more members to the high-level panel that will vet the process to resolve mounting bad loans bogging down the banking sector.
- Former chief vigilance commissioner Pradeep Kumar will head the now 5-member panel that will work through multiple benches
- Besides Kumar, the other members of the committee are former SBI Chairman Janki Ballabh, former Canara Bank Chairman and Managing Director M B N Rao, former Chairman and Managing of L&T Finance Y M Deosthalee and S Raman, member Sebi.

- Raman would be inducted into the panel from September 7, 2017 after he completes the term at Sebi.

Imran Khawaja appointed as ICC deputy chairman

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has appointed Chairman of Associates Imran Khawaja as its deputy chairman.
- Khawaja, a veteran administrator from Singapore, was unanimously elected for the post created following the constitutional change approved at the ICC Full Council.
- Khawaja will deputise in ICC meetings in case the chairman Shashank Manohar is absent.
- Khawaja was part of the five-man ICC working group, led by Manohar, that had drafted the new constitution last year.
- Khawaja will be one of the frontrunners for the role of ICC chairman with Manohar's term coming to an end next June.

Dr Taraprasad Das appointed as President of Vision 2020 India

- Dr Taraprasad Das, Vice Chair, L V Prasad Eye Institute, and Regional Chair, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, South East Asia (IAPB, SEA), has been elected as the President of Vision 2020 India.
- The mission of Vision 2020 – The Right to Sight – India is to reduce the cases of avoidable visual impairment by the year 2020.
- It is part of a global initiative of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB).
- Every quarter, the board of Vision 2020 India discusses the progress of the strategic plan and issues related to eye health.
- Some of the other members elected on the board of Vision 2020 India are Dr Santosh Moses, Regional Manager - South Asia, Operation Eyesight Universal (India) as Vice President; Govind Hari, Chairman, Administration, Pushpagiri Vitreo Retina Institute as Secretary; and Dr Rahul Ali, Country Director, India, Orbis International as Treasurer.

Indian professor named Harvard B-school Dean

- An India-born professor and IIT alumnus who has long championed a pledge for organisational leaders and managers on the lines of the Hippocratic Oath for doctors to enhance accountability in the corporate world has been named Dean of the prestigious Harvard Business School.
- Nitin Nohria, who is currently the Richard P. Chapman Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School (HBS), will become the School's 10th dean
- Nohria is the first Indian, and indeed the first non-white, to become the dean of the 102-year old institution that typically ranks among the top three business-schools in the world.
- Nohria, who will take up his new role on July 1, succeeds Jay Light, who in December announced his plans to retire at the end of the 2009-10 academic year after five years as dean.

IDFC Bank elevates Sunil Kakar as CEO

- Private sector lender IDFC Bank announced the elevation of its CFO Sunil Kakar as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the company with effect from July 17 for three years.
- Kakar has also been appointed as additional director. Both the appointments are subject to shareholders' approval at the annual general meeting (AGM).
- Besides, the bank announced that the Board has approved the resignation of veteran banker Vikram Limaye from the post of MD and CEO who is set to join leading stock exchange NSE as its new Managing Director and CEO.
- The Board of Directors has approved appointment of Sunil Kakar as the Managing Director and CEO of the company for 3 years with effect from July 17, 2017,

Sikh Woman Palbinder Kaur Shergill Becomes First Turbaned Supreme Court Judge In Canada

- Indian-origin Sikh human rights advocate Palbinder Kaur Shergill has been appointed a judge at the Supreme Court of British Columbia in New Westminster. Ms Shergill is the first turbaned Sikh to be appointed to the judiciary in Canada.
- Jody Wilson-Raybould, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, announced the appointment under the new judicial application process announced on October 20 last year.
- The appointment was made with immediate effect as Justice Shergill replaces Justice EA Arnold-Bailey, who retired on May 31

- Prior to her appointment to the bench, Ms Shergill practised as a lawyer and mediator with her law firm, Shergill & Company, Trial Lawyers.
- She has extensive trial and appellate experience and has appeared before courts and tribunals across the country, including the Supreme Court of Canada.

Priyanka Chopra appointed as ambassador for Government's Skill India campaign

- Actress Priyanka Chopra will soon be seen endorsing government's flagship Skill India campaign, with the National Skill Development Corporation roping in the Bollywood celebrity as an ambassador for the initiative.
- Earlier, Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli, batting legend Sachin Tendulkar, Bollywood actors Sidharth Malhotra and Shabana Azmi and singer Mohit Chauhan had also become goodwill envoys for Skill India.
- The Skill India campaign was launched by Prime Minister Modi in July 2015. The government aims to train 40 crore people by 2022 through its skilling initiatives.

J-K Governor NN Vohra is new IIC president

- Jammu and Kashmir governor NN Vohra became the president of the India International Centre (IIC) — a prestigious cultural hub in the national capital — replacing eminent jurist Soli Sorabjee, who stepped down after an intense power struggle.
- The India International Centre (IIC) is a well known non-official organisation situated in New Delhi, India. Its foundation stone was laid in 1960 by Japanese prince Akihito, future Emperor, who had come for his honeymoon, and it was inaugurated in 1962.
- It is a unique establishment in that it serves as a meeting place for the various cultural and intellectual offerings the city has to offer, while maintaining its non-official character, non-aligned motivations and remains uncommitted to any particular form of governmental, political, economic or religious affiliation.

K. Kasturirangan to head panel on National Education Policy

- Eminent scientist and Padma Vibhushan awardee K. Kasturirangan has been appointed the Chairman of the committee to prepare the final draft of the National Education Policy.
- The Chairperson apart, the committee has eight members.
- These include the Vice-Chancellor of SNDP University, Mumbai, and educationist Vasudha Kamat; retired bureaucrat K.J. Alphonse; Princeton University Mathematics professor Manjul Bhargava; Baba Saheb Ambedkar University of Social Sciences, Mhau, Vice-Chancellor Ram Shankar Kureel who has written on inclusion of the marginal in mainstream education; Vice-Chancellor of Tribal University, Amarkantak, TV Kattamani; KM Tripathy from Uttar Pradesh; Gauhati University Persian language professor Mahzar Asif, and CABE member M.K. Shridhar.
- Dr. Bhargava was awarded the field medal in mathematics for his contribution to Gauss number theory.

Kaushik Basu takes over as IEA president

- Former chief economic advisor Kaushik Basu has taken over as president of the International Economic Association (IEA).
- Basu's three-year term started from June 23.
- Basu has also served as senior vice-president and chief economist at the World Bank from 2012 to 2016 and as the chief economic adviser to the Government of India from 2009 to 2012.
- He is currently the C. Marks Professor of International Studies at Cornell.
- The IEA is a leading organisation for professional economists and it seeks to shape global economic policy and research. Among IEA's past presidents are Nobel laureates Kenneth Arrow, Robert Solow, Amartya Sen and Joseph Stiglitz.

Rajeev Shukla to head BCCI Special Committee

- Rajeev Shukla, a former vice-president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), will head a newly-formed seven-member Special Committee, as decided at Special General Meeting (SGM), to suggest a way forward for implementing the administrative overhaul prescribed in the Supreme Court order on July 18 last year.
- Besides Shukla and BCCI acting secretary Amitabh Choudhary, who will be the convener of the meeting, the committee will include former India captain Sourav Ganguly (Bengal), T.C.

Mathew (Kerala), Naba Bhattacharjee (Meghalaya), Jay Shah (Gujarat) and BCCI treasurer Anirudh Chaudhry.

- The formation of the committee is, in a way, a first step by the BCCI for almost a year since the Supreme Court pronounced the judgement. However, the composition was far from being unanimous.
- A section within the Board pressed hard for committee to be chaired by BCCI acting president C.K. Khanna.

Trump appoints Indian-American as US Ambassador to Peru

- U.S. President Donald Trump has appointed Indian-American Krishna R Urs as the new US Ambassador to Peru.
- A career service American diplomat since 1986, Mr. Urs is currently Charge d' Affaires of the US Embassy in Madrid, Spain, where he was also the Deputy Chief of Mission.
- During his three decades of State Department service, Mr. Urs has specialised in economic issues and developed extensive policy experience in the Andean region of South America.
- He has served at seven US embassies as well in senior leadership positions in Washington, DC, a media release said.
- Mr. Urs earned a MS from the University of Texas and a BS from Georgetown University. He speaks fluent Spanish as well as some Hindi and Telugu.

Dr. Manoj Soni takes Oath as Member, UPSC

- Dr. Manoj Soni, former Vice Chancellor of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, took the Oath of Office and Secrecy as Member, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) here today. The Oath was administered by the UPSC Chairman Prof. David R. Syiemlieh.
- Born on 17th February, 1965, Dr. Soni, a scholar of Political Science with specialization in International Relation Studies, earned his doctorate in "Post-Cold War International Systemic Transition and Indo-US Relations" from Sardar Patel University.
- Dr. Manoj Soni has been the youngest-ever Vice Chancellor in independent (India).

Vidya Balan On Being Ambassador Of The Indian Film Festival Of Melbourne

- The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM), which is supported by the Victorian Government, will run from August 10 to August 22 this year. This year the theme is diversity. Over 60 films from India, indie films and short films in 20 different languages will be screened - these films will be from India and the subcontinent.
- This year, Vidya Balan returns as the ambassador of the festival.

Vijay Keshav Gokhale appointed economic relations secy in MEA

- Senior diplomat Vijay Keshav Gokhale was tonight appointed as the economic relations secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment, an order issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) said.
- Gokhale, a 1981-batch officer of Indian Foreign Service (IFS), is at present India's envoy to China.
- He was the High Commissioner of India to Malaysia from January 2010 to October 2013.
- From October 2013 to January 2016, Gokhale was the Ambassador of India to Germany.

Union Government appoints NIFT Chairperson

- The Union Government has appointed Shri Rajesh V. Shah as Chairperson on the Board of Governors of the National Institute of Fashion Technology up to 31.03.2019 in place of Shri Chetan Chauhan as per the provisions of the National Institute of Fashion Technology Act, 2006.



Banking & Finance

Sebi bars Cypress Money from acting as investment advisor

- Markets regulator Sebi barred Cypress Money Investment Advisor and its three partners from acting as investment advisors and research analyst after finding them guilty of providing unauthorised trading tips to investors.
- Sebi found that the entities were acting as investment advisors and research analyst without securing registration from the regulator.
- By indulging in such activities, they have violated the regulator's investment advisors as well as research analyst services norms.
- Accordingly, these entities have been ordered "to cease and desist" from acting as an investment advisor or research analyst as well as undertaking such activities in the securities market, directly or indirectly.

PNB gets \$100 mn from ADB for solar rooftop fund

- State-owned Punjab National Bank has received USD 100 million (about Rs.645 crore) as the first tranche of ADB's multi—million dollar funding for installation of rooftop solar systems in India.

- The USD 100 million loan agreement signed between the Asian Development Bank and PNB is backed by a guarantee from the central government.
- PNB will deploy this fund as loan to various developers and end users to install large solar rooftop systems on industrial and commercial buildings throughout India
- As much as USD 330 million of this funding will come from ADB's ordinary capital resources and USD 170 million from the multi—donor Clean Technology Fund (CTF). The first tranche loan comes from CTF.
- The entire cost of SRIP is estimated at USD 1 billion and it aims to install solar rooftop system of around 1 gigawatt capacity in India.
- This will contribute to the climate change goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by about 11 million tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent over the typical 25-year lifetime of rooftop solar systems,
- India's solar rooftop market is expanding fast with an estimated total capacity potential of 124 gigawatt

Bank of India conducts 'Star Mahotsav'

- Bank of India conducted a Star Mahotsav across its branch network in the country.
- The thrust was on contacting every customer at their door step either for recovery of bad loans, disbursement of retail loans including housing and vehicle loan, disbursement under MSME and agriculture and promotion of its products, including debit and credit card, POS machine, and internet banking service.
- In Coimbatore zone, the bank's zonal head, T Raveendran, inaugurated the campaign.
- The response was good in this zone. We disbursed about Rs. 46 crore under retail, MSME and agriculture advances and could recover close to Rs. 3 crore from borrowers,"

SEBI forms committee on corporate governance led by Uday Kotak

- Markets regulator SEBI has set up a committee on corporate governance under the Chairmanship of Uday Kotak, Managing Director of Kotak Mahindra Bank.
- Other members of the committee are the representatives of Corporate India, stock exchanges, professional bodies, Investor groups, Chambers of commerce, law firms, academicians and research professionals, the regulator said in a statement.

- The committee shall make recommendations to SEBI with the aim of improving standards of corporate governance of listed companies in India.
- The recommendations will be largely based on issues such as maintaining the independence of directors, improving safeguards and related party disclosures and accounting and auditing practices of listed firms.
- The committee shall endeavour to submit the report within a period of four months

RCom-Aircel merged company to be called Aircom

- Reliance Communications' executive Punit Garg said that the merged wireless company with Aircel will be called Aircom.
- RCom can monetize 49 percent tower co stake in future through sale or a listing process, while further debt reduction options will include sale of direct-to-home business.
- The executive said that the company can also look at strategic transaction in global or Indian enterprise business.
- Reliance Communications on Friday said that it has received time till December 2017 to close its transactions with Aircel and Brookfield and reduce debt from Rs 45000 crore to Rs 20000 crore, aiming at a reduction of 60% or Rs 25000 crore.
- RCom has been engaged in discussions with its lenders in order to finalise a debt resolution plan. The lenders on Friday constituted a Joint Lenders' Forum (JLF) to consider and approve the company's plans in this regard as part of which there will be a standstill on company's debt servicing for next 7 months.

HDFC Bank introduces charges for UPI transactions

- HDFC Bank has introduced charges on UPI. These charges make small value payments over UPI more expensive than those on national electronic fund transfer (NEFT).
- all UPI outward transactions will be charged from July 10. Transactions from Rs 1 to Rs 25,000 will be charged Rs 3 plus taxes while those above Rs 25,000 to Rs 1 lakh will be charged Rs 5. As against this the NEFT charges are Rs 2.5 for transactions up to Rs 10,000 and Rs 5 for transactions above Rs 10,000.

- For small value (upto Rs 100) the bank charges are more in UPI than on card payments. However, in the case of card payments the charges are borne by the merchant and not the remitter.
- The charges on UPI however continue to be lower than Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), which attracts a fee of Rs 5 for remittances up to Rs 1 lakh and Rs 15 for transfers above Rs 1 lakh.

State Bank of India to organise mega farmers' meet on June 8

- Ahead of the kharif season, country's largest lender State Bank of India today said it will meet nearly 10 lakh farmers to understand their credit need and provide finance.
- The meeting will be organised at the bank's 15,500 rural and semi-urban branches across the country on June 8. During the meet, branches will receive applications for fresh loans as well as for renewal or enhancement of existing loan

Axis Bank to issue biodegradable prepaid gift cards

- Axis Bank Ltd announced biodegradable prepaid gift cards
- The card made of biodegradable plastic will help spread awareness about the benefits of such products, Singh added. The cards will be acceptable at all domestic merchant outlets and online portals.
- Biodegradable plastics can break down safely into their raw materials and do not release harmful substances. They can also be recycled.
- The maximum validity of pre-paid gift instruments is three years.

State Bank of India opens up APIs for hackathon

- State Bank of India has opened up their APIs (Application program interface) for a hackathon, Code for Bank, to tap into the larger developer talent pool for new tech innovations.
- This hackathon, supported by online platform for hackers HackerEarth, is open to developers and startups from India with the idea of taking the platform to global

developers in the near future.

The competition has two phases.

- The first phase invited ideas from applicants wherein, around 3071 participants had registered, out of which 603 women had submitted their ideas. Currently, 481 ideas are being taken forward for the final hackathon rounds.

SBI Cuts Home Loan Interest Rate

- State Bank of India on Friday announced a reduction in interest rate on new home loan above Rs. 75 lakh. Effective June 15, 2017, SBI home loans above Rs. 75 lakhs will be cheaper by 10 basis points or 0.1 per cent. The revised interest rates will be 8.55 per cent for salaried women borrowers. For others, the rate of interest will be 8.60 per cent, India's largest home loan provider said.
- This is the second reduction in interest rates in two months, SBI said, adding that home loan rates offered are "lowest in the industry".
- For new home loans for up to Rs. 30 lakh, SBI had last month reduced interest rate to 8.35 per cent.

TCS launches BaNCS app development kit to help banks create apps

- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has announced the launch of the BaNCS app development kit that will help financial institutions develop their own apps and deploy it across devices.
- The project was driven by the need for banks to have an App Development Environment where they can carry out business processes, products and services as a series of applications connected to its core functions.
- While the application comes with its own presets, it can also be modified by the user banks to launch their own designed widgets in the app and utilise them for publishing.
- TCS BaNCS aims to expand to become a chief deliverer of core systems for banking, insurance and capital markets industries worldwide.

Canara Bank, New India tie up

- Canara Bank and the New India Assurance Company have entered into a corporate agency arrangement for distribution of insurance products.

- The pact allows Canara Bank to offer non-life insurance products to its customers across metros and tier II and III cities through the bank's extensive network of over 6,000 branches.
- The pact also strengthens distribution network of New India Assurance.
- Under the agreement, New India Assurance will make offer a bouquet of products — such as motor, home, health, travel, fire, marine, and engineering insurance policies — through branches of Canara Bank.

IOB launches retail mart in Thiruvananthapuram

- Indian Overseas Bank (IOB), the Lead Bank for Thiruvananthapuram district, has launched the Retail Mart, a retail lending concept, in Kerala's capital city.
- The exclusive facility that handles retail products has started functioning at the main branch of the bank at Statue Junction in Thiruvananthapuram.
- The Retail Mart has been designed with an aim to complete all the pre-release formalities at the customer's door step and sanction quality retail loans at a competitive rate of interest with a minimum turnaround time.
- The bank has identified Thiruvananthapuram city as an area with potential business opportunity.
- It is planning to disburse an additional Rs 100 crore in retail loans during the current financial year, he added.

GST Council cuts tax rate on gold jewellery making charges to 5%

- Goods and Service Tax (GST) Council reduced the applicable rate on making charges from 18 per cent to just 5 per cent.
- The GST Council has reduced the tax levels in 66 out these 133 cases. The diamond processing and others would attract a levy of five per cent now,
- The GST Council has reduced the tax levels in 66 out these 133 cases. The diamond processing and others would attract a levy of five per cent now,

RBI to issue new batch of Rs 500 notes

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday said it is launching a new batch of Rs 500 notes.

- In continuation of issuing of Rs 500 denomination banknotes in Mahatma Gandhi (new) series from time to time which are currently legal tender, a new batch of banknotes with inset letter "A" in both the number panels, bearing the signature of Dr. Urjit R. Patel Governor, Reserve Bank of India; with the year of printing '2017' on the reverse, are being issued,"
- The new series earlier released and currently in circulation has the inset letter "E". They will continue to be valid.

12 accounts with 25% of bank bad loans identified for bankruptcy proceedings

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said 12 accounts representing about 25% of the gross bad loans in the banking system would be eligible for immediate reference for bankruptcy proceedings.
- An internal panel of the central bank has suggested that accounts with outstanding amounts of more than Rs5,000 crore, of which at least 60% was classified as non-performing by banks as of 31 March 2016, can be referred for bankruptcy proceedings.
- For accounts that don't meet the criterion set by the advisory panel, the IAC suggested that banks should finalize a resolution plan within six months. In cases where a viable plan is not agreed within six months, banks have to file for insolvency proceedings, the RBI statement said.
- The details of the resolution framework for these other non-performing accounts will be released in the coming days

Verizon completes Yahoo acquisition in over \$4 billion deal

- Verizon completed its acquisition of Yahoo in a deal worth \$4.48 billion (nearly ₹29,000 crore).
- Following this, Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer has resigned and Yahoo Internet operations will be now integrated into a new unit called Oath, which also includes brands like AOL and Huffington Post.
- The new unit will be overseen by former AOL CEO Tim Armstrong.

RBI places restrictions on banking activities of Central Bank of India

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has placed Central Bank of India under prompt corrective action which puts restricts on banking activities such as from lending, hiring and expanding branches.
- PCA has been triggered in view of negative return on assets and high ratio of bad loans. So far, RBI has triggered PCAs for four banks – IDBI BankBSE, UCO Bank Dena Bank and Indian Overseas Bank.
- The PCA was initiated on Central Bank of India since it reported losses for two consecutive years, had negative return on assets and its share of bad loans has crossed 6%.
- Central Bank has reported loss of Rs 2439 crore for fiscal year 2016-17 against losses of Rs 1418 crore a year ago. Its share of gross non-performing loans rose to 17.88% against 11.9% a year ago. Return on capital moved to a negative territory for the last two years to 0.80% from 0.48% in 2015-16.

Sebi allows options trading in commodities

- Capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) allowed commodity derivative exchanges to launch options contracts for trading with the aim of increasing liquidity and attracting more investors to the commodities market.
- Commodity options will facilitate hedging by market participants and help deepen the commodity derivatives market.
- The exchanges have been allowed to trade in options following a recommendation by the Commodity Derivatives Advisory Committee (CDAC)
- At present, only futures contracts based on individual commodities are traded on commodity bourses.
- Every exchange will need prior approval from Sebi for launching options trading for which detailed norms will be released later, according to the circular.
- The move comes exactly a year after the erstwhile commodity markets regulator, the Forward Markets Commission, was merged with Sebi.
- At present, the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) and Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) are the two main nationwide commodity exchanges.
- NCDEX, which is dominated by larger rival MCX, has around 10.61% of average monthly turnover.

IDBI Bank only PSB to get 'high' rating for code compliance

- According to the Code Compliance Rating of banks done by the Banking Codes and Standards Board of India (BCSBI) 2017, only one (unchanged from the previous survey conducted in 2015) out of 26 public sector banks and eight (nine in the previous survey) out of 17 private sector banks got 'high' rating for their adherence to code compliance.
- IDBI Bank was the only public sector bank that got 'high (H)' (85 and above score out of 100) rating in two successive surveys.
- The eight private sector banks that got 'high' rating are — Axis Bank, DCB Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, IndusInd Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, RBL Bank and YES Bank.
- The three foreign banks — Citibank, HSBC and Standard Chartered Bank — that were surveyed got 'high' ranking.
- The code compliance rating, which is based on five parameters — information dissemination, transparency, grievance redressal, customer-centricity, and customer feedback — may be considered an indicator of the level of implementation of important code provisions at the grassroots level of a bank.
- A total of 51 banks (46 banks in 2015) were surveyed for code compliance in 2017. In the latest round, five urban co-operative banks were included. The survey is based on a sample size of 2.5 per cent of the branch network of 51 major banks.

SEBI asks commodity bourses to set up investor service fund

- Commodity derivatives exchanges have to set up Investor Service Fund (ISF) for providing minimum facilities at various investor service centres.
- Sebi said the Investor Protection Fund (IPF) of an exchange should have a maximum of five trustees.
- Three of the five should be public interest directors and a representative from Sebi-recognised any investor association. Besides, the exchange's compliance officer will be part of the trust.
- Commodity exchanges have to compulsorily set up investor protection and service funds
- However, the amount of compensation available against a single claim of an investor arising out of defaulter by a member broker should be at least Rs. 1 lakh.
- While the bourses can utilise the income earned on the IPF corpus towards promotion of investor education and awareness programmes, the supervision of utilisation of interest on IPF will be with the trust.

Yes Bank partners with TerraPay for faster international remittance

- Private sector lender Yes Bank has partnered with mobile payments switch TerraPay to enable real time money transfer to bank accounts in India. Powered by TerraPay's global clearing and settlement service, the partnership will make it faster and convenient for consumers to send money to any bank account.
- TerraPay has partnered with Yes Bank in a Rupee Drawing Arrangement which enables TerraPay's network partners to make instant cross-border money transfer to bank accounts in India.
- This means that Indian migrants worldwide can walk into TerraPay's partner outlet anytime and send money to their family and friends back home, instantly in their bank account.
- For bank accounts other than Yes Bank accounts, Yes Bank will disburse funds using the immediate payment service, popularly known as IMPS.
- The service is available 24X7.

IOC, BPCL, HPCL Sign Agreement To Set Up \$30 Billion Refinery

- State-owned oil firms IOC, BPCL and HPCL signed an agreement to jointly set up India's biggest refinery at Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra at a cost of USD 30 billion or Rs. 2 lakh crore.
- Indian Oil Corp (IOC) will be the lead partner with 50 per cent stake while Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) will take 25 per cent stake each.
- The three oil refining and marketing companies signed the joint venture agreement here this evening. The pact was signed by IOC Chairman Sanjiv Singh, HPCL Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Kumar Surana and BPCL Chairman and Managing Director D Rajkumar.
- The three oil refining and marketing companies have signed the joint venture agreement.
- The 60 million tonnes capacity refinery at Babulwadi, Taluka Rajapur in Ratnagiri district is being set up keeping in mind the future fuel demand and the export potential of the country.
- The refinery and the accompanying mega petrochemical complex will be set up in two phases. Phase-1 will be 40 million tonnes together with an aromatic complex, naphtha cracker and polymer complex.

- Phase-1 will cost Rs. 1.2-1.5 lakh crore and will come up in five-six years from the date of land acquisition
- The entire refinery will include three crude units of 20 million tonnes each -- first of these will be part of phase-1. The second phase will cost Rs. 50,000-60,000 crore

DCB bank launches Aadhaar based iris eye scan customer verification service

- DCB Bank, a new generation private sector bank has launched new services - India's first Aadhaar based iris eye scan customer verification and fingerprint operated ATM in Telangana
- These services utilise a customer's Aadhaar number, eye scan and fingerprint impression.
- The DCB ATM also can be used with the usual ATM/ Debit Card.
- This launch coincides with the inauguration of 3 new branches in Mancherial, Mothe and Narsapur in the state
- DCB Bank branches in Telangana provide a range of banking products for farmers, agri-business, micro business, small business and individuals.
- The Bank provides loans for tractors, dairy, crop, land development, agri processing activities as well as for high-tech farming such as greenhouses.

Aadhaar now mandatory for bank accounts, link it by Dec 31

- Government has made Aadhaar mandatory for opening new accounts. It has noted that all existing bank accounts will have to be linked with Aadhaar number by December 31, 2017 or else they will be declared invalid.
- More significantly, not only Aadhaar has been mandatory for opening new accounts but also for carrying out high-value transactions.
- The government has said that transactions worth Rs 50,000 or more will now require Aadhaar number.
- This is similar to how PAN number was required for high-value transactions. But now instead of PAN, consumers will have to quote Aadhaar number.
- The government move to link all bank accounts with Aadhaar number comes days after the Supreme Court partially struck down the government proposal to make Aadhaar mandatory for filing of tax returns.

Amazon to Acquire Whole Foods Market

- Amazon and Whole Foods Market, Inc. announced that they have entered into a definitive merger agreement under which Amazon will acquire Whole Foods Market for \$42 per share in an all-cash transaction valued at approximately \$13.7 billion, including Whole Foods Market's net debt.
- Whole Foods Market will continue to operate stores under the Whole Foods Market brand and source from trusted vendors and partners around the world. John Mackey will remain as CEO of Whole Foods Market and Whole Foods Market's headquarters will stay in Austin, Texas.
- Completion of the transaction is subject to approval by Whole Foods Market's shareholders, regulatory approvals and other customary closing conditions.
- The parties expect to close the transaction during the second half of 2017.

Flipkart-eBay India deal gets CCI nod

- E-commerce major Flipkart's proposed acquisition of eBay India has received approval from the Competition Commission.
- Besides, the fair trade regulator has given nod to eBay Singapore's subscription of compulsorily convertible preference shares (CCPS) issued by Flipkart.
- As per the notice submitted to the regulator, the transaction relates to the acquisition of 100 per cent share capital of eBay India by Bangalore based e-commerce firm Flipkart.
- The transaction also involves the acquisition of certain compulsorily convertible preference shares of Flipkart by eBay Singapore
- eBay will invest \$500 million in Flipkart as the two firms will merge their operations in the country. As part of the deal, Flipkart will own and operate eBay's business in India.

20 Indian firms in top 100 companies in Asia 300 ranking

- 20 Indian firms have been named in the top 100 of Nikkei Asian Review's Asia300 companies list, which was topped by taiwan's Largan Precision.

- According to the Nikkei Asian Review's second annual Asia 300 Power Performers Ranking -- a compilation of the most powerful and valuable listed companies in Asia, as many as three Indian companies have made it to the top 10 list,
- Indian IT service provider HCL Technologies came in at the second place, followed by Zee Entertainment Enterprises and Tata Consultancy Services at the third and fourth place respectively.
- Others in the top ten include, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co at the 5th position, Alibaba Group Holding (6th), ECLAT TEXTILE (7th), Vietnam Dairy Products (VINAMILK) (8th), Tencent Holdings, (9th) and Airports of thailand at the 10th place.
- Other Indian companies named among top 100 include Sun Pharmaceutical Industries at the 11th place, infosys (15), ITC (16), MARUTI SUZUKI INDIA (17), Lupin (18), Dabur India (24), Asian Paints (28), Power Grid Corporation of India (40), Godrej Consumer Products (41), Bajaj Auto (43), Wipro (48), Hero MotoCorp (57), Hindustan unilever (62), Housing Development Finance Corp (71), Motherson Sumi Systems (72) and Vedanta at 93rd place.

RBI directs IDBI Bank to start insolvency for Lanco Infra

- Lanco Infratech said the Reserve Bank has directed its lead lender IDBI Bank to initiate insolvency proceedings for the company under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
- Lanco Infratech Limited (LITL) intimated under Regulation 30 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, that Reserve Bank of India directed IDBI Bank Limited, the lead bank of LITL to initiate Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) for LITL under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016
- The company is among 12 firms identified by the central bank with a combined debt of over Rs 1,50,000 crore, a quarter of the total NPAs, for proceedings under the newly enacted Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

RBI initiates PCA against Bank of Maharashtra as bad loans mount

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has initiated prompt corrective action (PCA) against Pune-based Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) in view of a high level of bad loans and negative return on assets.
- BoM has become the sixth state-owned lender to be put under the PCA.

- For the year ended March 2017, the net non-performing assets (NPAs) of the bank rose to 11.76%, while return on assets declined to (-) 1.09%.
- At the same time, the bank reported a loss of Rs 455.4 crore for the fourth quarter, while for entire fiscal 2016-17 booked loss of Rs1,372 crore.
- It is to be noted that IDBI Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, UCO Bank, Dena Bank and the Central Bank of India have already come under the PCA initiated by the RBI

Paytm Payments Bank set to join UPI platform by August

- Electronic payment and e-commerce portal, Paytm, will soon launch its payments bank on the unified payment interface. The launch will enable an easier transaction process for its customers and is reported to happen by August this year.
- The Paytm Payments bank was introduced last month. In the first year alone, it targets to open 31 branches and 3,000 customer service points in a bid to attract 500 million customers by 2020.
- Customers who open an account with Paytm Payments bank are allowed to deposit sums up to Rs 1 lakh.

BankBazaar.com opens office in Malaysia

- Online financial services marketplace BankBazaar today said it is beginning operations in Malaysia, strengthening its presence in South East Asia.
- Further, to scale and steer its international operations, BankBazaar has appointed former Visa employee Vipin Kalra to lead the business growth internationally.
- In line with this vision to expand its foothold across south east Asia, last month, BankBazaar announced an investment of Rs. 5 crore in the Malaysian market and an additional Rs. 10 crore in its Singapore business.
- As part of its international expansion strategy, the company also plans to begin its operations across Australia, Hong Kong, UAE and the Philippines over the next couple of year

CBDT notifies secondary adjustment transfer pricing rules

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has notified the rules for operationalising the provisions of secondary adjustment in the arena of transfer pricing.
- The Finance Act, 2017, had introduced the concept of secondary adjustment.
- In simple words, if there is an upward transfer pricing adjustment made to the income of an Indian company that has earned such revenue through transactions with its parent or group companies (known as related parties), then the quantum of such addition needs to be brought back to India within a stipulated time.
- Else, it will be treated as a loan given by the Indian company, which will attract a notional interest charge and a tax on such interest income.
- Now, CBDT has notified Rule 10CB, which prescribes the time limit for repatriation of the excess money from the overseas group company and the rate of interest which would apply for failure to repatriate within the prescribed time.

Hike, Yes Bank tie up for UPI payments

- Hike — the Indian WhatsApp rival — will offer payment facilities to its 10 crore users through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) by partnering with Yes Bank.
- According to Hike CEO Kavin Bharti Mittal, the partnership will make Hike Messenger the largest UPI-based platform in India.
- It will empower over 10 crore of our users to transact seamlessly on the revolutionary UPI platform, which was launched by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to accelerate the adoption of digital payments in the country
- This development will revolutionise the way P2P and P2M payments are done within the chat platform, including mobile top-ups, among others
- Yes Bank has been one of the early movers on the UPI platform, partnering Flipkart's PhonePe to enable UPI payments through the latter's app.
- As a result, the private lender is currently responsible for close to 35% all UPI transactions in the country, and over 80% of merchant transactions done on the UPI ecosystem.

IDBI Federal Life partners with SunTec for GST rollout

- IDBI Federal Life Insurance today said it has partnered with SunTec, which will help facilitate in computing and invoicing of debit tax and credit tax that will be GST compliant.

- Under the agreement, for the debit tax mandate SunTec will help in analysing data from various sources for computation and invoicing purposes
- MetLife announced the appointment of Sanjeev Kapur as senior vice-president and chief marketing officer (CMO) of Asia.
- Kapur will report to Esther Lee, MetLife executive vice-president and global chief marketing officer, and Chris Townsend, president of Asia, the company said in a release here.
- He will also join the Asia leadership team of the private insurer.

State Bank of India gets mandate to take three steel companies to bankruptcy court

- State Bank of India the country's biggest bank, has been authorised to refer Essar Steel Bhushan Steel and Electrosteel to the bankruptcy court raising the possibility that some of these companies could be merged in an effort to return them to health.
- The three companies between them owe banks nearly Rs 1 lakh crore. By early next week, SBI will file applications at the National Company Law Tribunal for these three companies under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.
- The lenders, and the management and promoters of these companies will have 270 days to resolve the problem after the NCLT admits the applications.
- The reorganisation could involve a restructuring of the debt or a consolidation with two companies merging.

Amazon ties-up with ClearTax to make e-sellers GST ready

- E-commerce giant Amazon has tied up with ClearTax to help sellers on their platform make a seamless transition to the GST regime and help them file their tax returns with ease, the company said in a statement.
- ClearTax Biz and Cleartax Biz+, two softwares launched by ClearTax, will be available to the sellers free of cost for the first two months after sign-up.
- Subsequently, the software will be provided at a 30 per cent discount for sellers registered with Amazon India
- The product aims to be a one-stop GST solution for sellers on Amazon's marketplace through seamless integration with the Amazon platform as well as offline channels.
- Sellers can create GST-compliant sales and purchase invoices from day one of the GST regime, reconcile and file their GSTR forms, and have access to dashboards that enable

better cash flow management and maintenance of GST-compliance ratings.

Ola ties up with Jio Money to give customers more cashless options for payment

- Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio has made an entry into the app-based taxi service space.
- Travel aggregator Ola has tied up with India's leading wallet Jio Money to provide customers with more cashless options for payment.
- The current payment options available are pay in cash, by using credit/debit cards and Ola Money.
- This means that now when you have sufficient funds in your Jio Money wallet, you can opt to use it to pay for your Ola rides.
- With Jio Money, Ola riders will get special offers and hassle free travel, giving it precedence over other payment options available.

SBI, Tirumala Milk Products tie up for providing loans to dairy farmers

- State Bank of India has entered into a tie-up with Tirumala Milk Products, a South- based company which was acquired by Groupe Lactalis in 2014, to provide loans to dairy farmers who supply milk to the latter.
- France-based Groupe Lactalis, which also acquired Indore-based Anik Dairy in 2016, wants to double the number of dairy farmers under its fold to three lakh and ramp up the amount of milk it procures daily to 25 lakh litres by 2020 from 14 lakh litres now.
- Under its scheme for financing dairy units, SBI offers loans for, among others, construction of shed, and purchase of milch animals, milking machine, and chaff cutter.
- Under another scheme, the bank provides loans to dairy societies for modernisation and creation of infrastructure such as purchase of automatic milk collection system, purchase of transport vehicles and bulk chilling unit.



For the first time, RBI makes banks accountable for misselling

- Banks for the first time have been made accountable for misselling third-party products like insurance policies or mutual fund schemes. Customers can also file complaints against banks for problems with mobile and digital banking services.
- The RBI on Friday said that it has widened the scope of its Banking Ombudsman Scheme 2006 to include deficiencies arising out of sale of third-party investment products by lenders.
- Under the amended scheme, a customer would also be able to lodge a complaint against banks for non-adherence to the RBI instructions with regard to mobile or electronic banking services.
- Following the amendment, the pecuniary jurisdiction of the ombudsman to pass an award has been doubled from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh.
- The ombudsman has been empowered to award compensation not exceeding Rs 1 lakh for loss of time, expenses incurred and also harassment and mental anguish suffered by the complainant.
- Until now, if the buyer of an insurance policy or mutual fund was missold s/he had to seek redressal from the insurance company or the mutual fund.
- However, before filing a complaint with the ombudsman the customer has to approach the grievance redressal department of the bank and wait 30 days for a response.

Mobile banking complaints possible now under Ombudsman scheme

- You can now complain against banks for fraudulent or wrong transactions on the internet and mobile banking or in the case of misselling of products from banks.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) widened the scope of its Banking Ombudsman Scheme 2006, to include, inter alia, deficiencies arising out of sale of insurance/ mutual fund/ other third party investment products by banks, the central bank said in a statement on its website.
- The amended Banking Ombudsman Scheme shall come into force from July 1, 2017.
- Under the amended Scheme, a customer would also be able to lodge a complaint against the bank for its non-adherence to RBI instructions with regard to Mobile Banking/ Electronic Banking services in India.
- The monetary compensation has been increased from existing Rs 1 million to Rs 2 million (Rs 10-20 lakh).

Index & Ranking

Nine Indian Cities in JLL's latest 'Global 300' rankings

- Nine Indian cities figure on the latest edition of 'Global 300' cities - the annual JLL ranking exercise, which represents 300 major cities. These cities are the focus of commercial activity and interest, 40% of the world's economy, and three-quarters of global real estate investment.
- While Delhi and Mumbai rank in the 'Global Top 30', other cities such as Bangalore, Chennai and Kolkata sit within the 'Global Top 100' - with Hyderabad sitting just outside
- Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune and Surat are the other cities to have found a place in the list.

Global Peace Index 2017: World 0.28% more peaceful than last year

- Levels of peace around the world have improved slightly for the first time since the Syrian war began, but harmony has decreased in the US and terrorism records have increased, a Sydney-based think-tank has found.
- The Institute for Economics and Peace published its Global Peace Index on Thursday for the 11th year running.
- Researchers said conflict costs had an enormous impact on economies worldwide.

- They called for more money to be spent on peacebuilding.
- Their report found that the world became 0.28% more peaceful over the past year.
- Syria is the least peaceful country in the world for the fifth year running.
- Iceland remained the most peaceful country in the world, a spot it has occupied since 2008.
- The other four most peaceful countries are New Zealand, Portugal, Austria, and Denmark.
- India secured 137th rank out of 163 countries.

India overtakes China to top global retail index: GRDI

- India has surpassed China to secure the top position among 30 developing countries on ease of doing business, according to a study that cited India's rapidly expanding economy, relaxation of FDI rules and a consumption boom as the key drivers.
- The 2017 Global Retail Development Index (GRDI), now in its 16th edition, ranks the top 30 developing countries for retail investment worldwide and analyses 25 macroeconomic and retail-specific variables.
- India's rapidly expanding economy, easing of foreign direct investment (FDI) rules and a consumption boom are the key drivers for India's top ranking in the GRDI.
- India's retail sector has been growing at an annual rate of 20 per cent. Total sales surpassed the USD 1 trillion mark last year and the sector is expected to double in size by 2020. Rapid urbanisation and a growing middle class with higher income levels is driving up consumption across the country, the consultancy group said.
- The government's continued support to relax FDI regulations in key areas of the retail sector have provided further boost to its growth

India ranks 154 in global healthcare rankings for 2015, Switzerland tops list

- Global healthcare rankings in 195 countries was released and India ranked a lowly 154th on the Healthcare Access and Quality Index, making it among the biggest underachievers in Asia.
- Among nations with more than a million souls, top honours for 2015 went to Switzerland, followed by Sweden and Norway,

- Iceland (No. 2), Australia (No. 6), Finland (No. 7), the Netherlands (No. 9) and financial and banking centre Luxembourg rounded out the first 10 finishers
- The Healthcare Access and Quality Index, based on death rates for 32 diseases that can be avoided or effectively treated with proper medical care, also tracked progress in each nation compared to the benchmark year of 1990.
- The biggest underachievers in Asia included Indonesia, the Philippines, India (ranks 154) and tiny Brunei, while in Africa it was Botswana, South Africa and Lesotho that had the most room for improvement. Regions with healthcare systems underperforming relative to wealth included Oceania, the Caribbean and Central Asia.

India slips to 45th spot in IMD's World Competitiveness list

- India has been ranked 45th, down four notches from last year, in terms of competitiveness in the annual rankings compiled by IMD which saw Hong Kong topping the list.
- US was "pushed out" of the top three slots while Hong Kong consolidated its dominance of the annual rankings for the second year in the list compiled by the International Institute for Management Development's (IMD) World Competitiveness Center.
- Switzerland and Singapore were ranked second and third respectively, with the US at the fourth spot — its lowest position in five years and down from third last year.
- The Netherlands completed the top five, jumping up from eighth last year.
- Others in the top 10 list include Ireland at sixth, Denmark seventh, Luxembourg (eighth), Sweden (ninth) and UAE at 10th.
- As India slid, China improved its position by seven places to 18th,
- The IMD World Competitiveness Center is a research group at IMD business school in Switzerland. It has been publishing the rankings every year since 1989. This year's list comprises 63 countries with Cyprus and Saudi Arabia making their first appearance.
- Meanwhile, for the first time this year, the IMD World Competitiveness Center also published a separate report ranking countries' digital competitiveness.
- At the top of the digital ranking is Singapore, followed by Sweden, the US, Finland and Denmark, while the bottom five are Indonesia, Ukraine, Mongolia, Peru and Venezuela.

QS World Universities Ranking 2018: IIT Delhi, IISc Bangalore make it to top 200

- The Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2018 has been released and giving India a reason to rejoice, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Bombay, IIT-Delhi and Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, have made it to the top 200 global universities.
- This is for the first time that three prestigious Indian institutions have featured in the list of the top 200 universities as per the QS Rankings.
- For the first time Delhi University (DU) entered the top 500 group.
- Improvement witnessed
- IISc Bangalore has climbed from 190 to 152
- IIT Delhi moved from 172 to 185
- IIT Bombay jumped from 219 to 179 this year
- A number of 26,000 universities were surveyed globally.

Virat Kohli sole Indian in Forbes's list of world's highest-paid athletes

- Indian cricket captain, Virat Kohli has made it to the Forbes's latest list of the world's 100 highest-paid athletes.
- Ranked at No 89, Kohli is the only Indian on the list, which is topped by football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo.
- The 28-year-old batting sensation earned \$22 million over the last 12 months; \$3 million through salary and winnings, and \$19 million through brand endorsements.
- Rounding out the top five highest-paid athletes are Lionel Messi (\$80 million), Roger Federer (\$64 million) and Kevin Durant (\$60.6 million). The top five is the same as last year with only James and Messi swapping places

Chrissy Teigen, Donald Trump and the man behind Pepe the Frog top list of the 25 most influential people on the internet

- Time magazine has released its third-annual list of the 25 most influential people on the internet.
- Perhaps unsurprisingly, President Donald Trump has made the list, as has John Legend's Twitter-happy wife Chrissy Teigen and the maker of Pepe the Frog, one of the most widely used memes online.

The people in the list are

- Chrissy Teigen, Matt Drudge, J.K. Rowling, Carter Wilkerson, Carter Wilkerson, Brian Reed, BTS , Alexei Nalany, Matt Furie , Steven Pruitt, Bana Alabed, Gigi Gorgeous, Jonathan Sun, Katy Perry, Kim Kardashian, Branden Miller, Ezra Levin, Leah Greenberg, Angel Padilla, Sara Dohl and Matt Traldi , Rihanna , Chance the Rapper, Ariel Martin , Cassey Ho, Huda Kattan, Mark Fischback, Danielle Weisberg and Carly Zakin



Science & Technology

'Super-Earth' Found 21 Light Years Away May Host Alien Life

- Scientists have discovered a potentially habitable Earth-like planet, located just 21 light years away, that may host liquid water on its surface.
- Researchers used the radial velocity technique, which involves measuring the changes in the position and velocity when the star and a planet rotating around their common centre of gravity.
- Depending on the relative masses of the two objects gravity will determine the magnitude of the change in velocity of the star, which can be measured using its observed spectrum.
- Scientists from Instituto de Astrofisica de Canarias (IAC) in Canary Islands found that the planet, with a mass between two and three times the Earth, resides at the edge of the habitable zone of its host star GJ625 (Gliese 625).

- This is the sixth super-Earth closest to our solar system in the habitability zone of its star, while the red dwarf is among the 100 stars closest to the Sun
- This planet is particularly interesting because of its proximity. It is only 21 light years away, and is one of the least massive known "Super-Earths".
- Red dwarfs are the most common stars in the universe and they can host planets. However, only a few hundred of them are known. The majority have been discovered orbiting much more distant stars, using the transit method, in which the planet causes a minor "eclipse" when it passes in front of the star.

US successfully 'intercepts and destroys' target in missile test

- The Pentagon successfully shot down an intercontinental ballistic missile using its own upgraded long-range interceptor missile in what was widely seen as a test of US ability to counter a North Korean missile launch.
- The Missile Defense Agency launched a ground-based interceptor from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California to intercept a US-launched mock ICBM target over the Pacific Ocean, according to a US defense official.
- The test ICBM, which flew thousands of miles per hour, was destroyed "thousands of miles off the coast" of the US mainland, with the intercept taking place northeast of Hawaii,
- The interceptor "destroyed the target in a direct collision," according to a statement from the Missile Defense Agency.

IIT Kharagpur researchers develop new technology to manufacture biofuel

- Researchers at IIT Kharagpur have developed a new technology which will change the way biofuel is manufactured by making the process cheaper, quicker and pollution-free.
- The 'soil-to-soil' manufacturing technology developed at the P.K. Sinha Centre for bio-energy at IIT-Kgp is in the process of being patented
- 2gm bioethanol can be produced from various naturally available lignocellulosic components. But to do so it needs to be treated chemically. Because of chemical treatment, the process contributes to polluting the environment.
- Lignocellulose refers to plant dry matter (biomass). "We have replaced this chemical treatment with enzymes which degrade the lignin specifically there by making the

manufacturing process pollution free Lignin is a complex organic polymer deposited in the cell walls of many plants, making them woody. Explaining how the technology would work, she said, "Unlike the chemical treatment here the waste product is pollution-free and hence utilising the residual biomass to organic fertilizer is possible.

- The National Policy On Biofuels had set the target at 20% blending of biofuel with petrol by 2017. With the government expecting biofuel business in India to touch Rs50,000 crore by 2022 this new green technology with lesser manufacturing cost and time can become a game changer.

Parker Solar Probe: Humanity's First Visit to a Star

- In order to unlock the mysteries of the sun's atmosphere, Parker Solar Probe will use Venus' gravity during seven flybys over nearly seven years to gradually bring its orbit closer to the sun.
- The spacecraft will fly through the sun's atmosphere as close as 3.9 million miles to our star's surface
- Parker Solar Probe will perform its scientific investigations in a hazardous region of intense heat and solar radiation.
- The spacecraft will fly close enough to the sun to watch the solar wind speed up from subsonic to supersonic, and it will fly through the birthplace of the highest-energy solar particles.
- Parker Solar Probe is part of NASA's Living With a Star program to explore aspects of the sun-Earth system that directly affect life and society.
- The Living With a Star flight program is managed by the agency's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, for NASA's Science Mission Directorate in Washington. This is the first time NASA has named a spacecraft after a living person.

Online APAR for Indian Trade Service SPARROW-ITS Launched

- In accordance with the Government of India's policy to introduce online Annual Performance Appraisal Report (APAR) for Group 'A' services,
- The APARs would be generated and transmitted online to the concerned officers for filling up of the self appraisal. The officer can then submit the self appraisal online through Digitally Signed Signature (DSC) or through E-sign.

- The subsequent processes of reporting and reviewing would also be done online by the Reporting and Reviewing Officer by using DSC or E-sign.
- The timelines have been drawn up for each stage of the process.
- The entire process of filling up of APAR would have to be completed by 31st December and no remarks can be added after that date.

IIT Kharagpur develops technology for doctors to monitor hospital-bound patients

- Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur has come up with a wireless technology for remote monitoring of patients' condition ferried in ambulances.
- Christened 'AmbuSens', the technology has been developed in the SWAN lab of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) of the institute.
- AmbuSens is capable of wireless monitoring of various physiological parameters like ECG, heart-rate, temperature and blood-pressure.
- It can be fitted in an ambulance to ensure remote monitoring of patient condition by the doctors even before they reach the hospital,
- The system preserves patient's data confidentiality while simultaneously using the analytic and computing power of cloud computing.
- The web interface of the AmbuSens system provides an easy-to-use graphical interface for doctors and paramedics alike with data visualisation tools such as real-time ECG graph rendering, and can be accessed from internet-enabled laptops, tablets and smartphones.

NASA to Launch First-Ever Mission to Study Neutron Stars

NASA is set to launch the world's first mission devoted to studying rapidly spinning neutron stars, the densest objects in the universe.

- The US space agency plans to launch the Neutron Star Interior Composition Explorer, or NICER, aboard SpaceX CRS-11, a cargo resupply mission to the International Space Station, now rescheduled to be launched aboard a Falcon 9 rocket on Saturday.
- The SpaceX cargo resupply mission was earlier scheduled for launch on Thursday. The launch was aborted due to bad weather.
- About a week after its installation aboard the International Space Station as an external attached payload, this one-of-a-kind investigation will begin observing neutron stars - objects containing ultra-dense matter at the threshold of collapse into black holes

NASA launched sounding rocket to release radiant artificial clouds

- NASA launched a sounding rocket which will release blue-green and red artificial clouds.
- The launch of the Terrier-Improved Malemute sounding rocket testing a new deployment system to support space studies was originally scheduled for May 31, but it was delayed due to poor weather conditions.
- The rocket will eject 10 canisters about the size of a soft drink can between 10 to 20 km from the rocket's main payload, and these containers will release the vapour between 4 and 5.5 minutes after launch.
- The development of the multi-canister or ampule ejection system will allow scientists to gather information over a much larger area than previously allowed when deploying the vapour just from the main payload.
- Ground cameras will be stationed at Wallops and in Duck, North Carolina, to view the vapour tracers.

ISRO to Launch Its Heaviest Rocket and Satellite

- India's most powerful homegrown rocket is launched today
- The 43-metre (140-foot) rocket was scheduled to lift off just before 5:30pm (12:00pm GMT) from the southern island of Sriharikota, one of two sites used by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to launch satellites.
- This latest model boasts a powerful engine that has been developed in India over many years. Programme managers hope the technology will reduce reliance on European engines that have propelled some of India's spacecraft in the past.
- The GSLV Mk III rocket will carry a satellite weighing more than three tonnes into a high orbit above Earth, a landmark achievement as India had struggled to match the heavier payloads of other space giants.

ISRO's most powerful rocket GSLV Mk III places GSAT-19 communication satellite in orbit

- Indian Space Research Organisation on Monday successfully launched its most powerful rocket, GSLV Mk III nicknamed 'Fatboy'+ , by firing a high thrust indigenous cryogenic engine in the first developmental flight and placed the country's heaviest satellite in orbit.

- With the launch, Isro has demonstrated its mastery in developing a cryogenic engine, a technology denied to it years ago. The launch proves the homegrown launch vehicle's capability of hurling up to four tonne payload into higher orbits.
- It has also laid a strong foundation for its ambitious future projects, including Chandrayaan-II and a manned mission, besides venturing into the global heavy payload market.
- GSLV Mk III-D1 carrying communication satellite GSAT-19+ lifted off from the second launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota at 5.28pm. Around 16 minutes after takeoff, the vehicle placed the satellite in the geosynchronous transfer orbit.

Mongolia's first university satellite flies into space from U.S.

- The first university satellite of Mongolia which is named after the Mongolian endangered Gobi bear — Mazaalai — was sent off into space in the United States.
- The launch took place at 5:50 am Ulan Bator time from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, United States.
- The Mongolian CubeSat is a component of the Birds 1 satellites, which also include four other CubeSats belonging to Japan, Nigeria, Ghana and Bangladesh. They were launched from the SpaceX Falcon9 Rocket.
- The Mongolian CubeSat is designed, built and owned by a team of young scholars of the National University of Mongolia (NUM) in collaboration with young scholars and students from participating countries including Ghana, Japan, Bangladesh and Nigeria.
- It is the first university satellite to be launched in Mongolia. The CubeSats will be launched and docked to the International Space Station where the satellites will be deployed into lower orbit during the last week of June 2017.
- The Mazaalai satellite was supposed to be sent to space on June 2, then the flight was postponed due to rain. It's the second satellite of Mongolia after the Mongol Sat-1 was sent into space on April 19.

Planet in Milky Way galaxy to be named after Bengaluru's 16 year old Sahithi

- A minor planet somewhere in the Milky Way galaxy, many light years from Earth, will be called Sahithi Pingali.
- That is the name of a 16-year-old schoolgirl from Bengaluru, whose concern and work towards the city's polluted lakes have made her not only a star but a planet.

- A minor planet will be named after Sahithi through the Ceres Connection programme run by the MIT Lincoln Laboratory and Society for Science and the Public. Fewer than 15,000 people in the world share the honour of having a minor planet named after them.
- Sahithi Pingali won three special awards in addition to a second prize in the Earth and Environmental Sciences category at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair ISEF at Los Angeles.
- The awards were for an app-based system which she developed to monitor water bodies.

New species of flying squirrel, a 'surprising' discovery

- Scientists have discovered a new species of flying squirrel in North America that had been hiding in plain sight for hundreds of years.
- Known as Humboldt's flying squirrel, or *Glaucomys oregonensis*, the new flying squirrel species inhabits the Pacific Coast region of North America.
- Until now, these coastal populations were simply thought to be the already-known northern flying squirrel,

World's first hybrid 'aeroboot' made by Indo-Russian JV unveiled

- The world's first hybrid "aeroboot" capable of travelling on land, water, snow and sand that has been built by an Indo-Russian joint venture was unveiled in Moscow on Tuesday at a start-ups event organised by Russia's state-run Skolkovo Foundation.
- The aeroboot is designed to access difficult terrain, such as flooded or marshy areas where the use of regular boats is made impossible because of shallow water, patches of dry land or by marine vegetation.
- The aeroboot is on a demonstration in and around a pond in the two-day Startup Village annual event in Moscow for technology entrepreneurs and investors organised by Russia's biggest innovation fund the Skolkovo Foundation.

Hottest known planet in universe discovered

- Scientists have discovered the hottest known planet located 650 light years from Earth, which is warmer than most stars in the universe and sports a giant, glowing gas tail like a comet.

- The Jupiter-like planet orbits a massive star KELT-9 every day and a half, researchers said.
- With a day-side temperature peaking at 4,326 degree Celsius the newly discovered exoplanet, designated KELT-9b, is hotter than most stars and only 926 degree Celsius cooler than our Sun.
- KELT-9 radiates so much ultraviolet radiation that it may completely evaporate the planet. Or, if gas giant planets like KELT-9b possess solid rocky cores as some theories suggest, the planet may be boiled down to a barren rock, like Mercury," said Keivan Stassun, professor at Vanderbilt University in the US



Indian-American Raja Chari among 12 NASA astronaut candidates

- After screening a record 18,000 applications, the NASA has finally picked 12 astronaut candidates — its largest astronaut class since 2000 — and Indian-American Raja Chari, a Lieutenant Colonel with the US Air Force, has bagged a most sought-after seat.
- If all goes well, Chari may become the third person of Indian origin from the US after the late Kalpana Chawla and current NASA astronaut Sunita 'Suni' Williams to fly to space.
- Shawna Pandya, a Canada-born neurosurgeon, is also in the race to go on a space mission with NASA after being shortlisted under its 2018 Citizen Science Astronaut (CSA) programme earlier this year.
- The selected 12 – seven men and five women — will be trained for missions into the Earth orbit and conduct key research for deep space missions, including Mars.

- The term astronaut candidate refers to individuals who have been selected for the NASA astronaut corps and are currently undergoing a training programme at the Johnson Space Center in Houston

Scientists find world's oldest fossil mushroom

- Roughly 115 million years ago, when the ancient supercontinent Gondwana was breaking apart, a mushroom fell into a river and began an improbable journey.
- Its ultimate fate as a mineralized fossil preserved in limestone in northeast Brazil makes it a scientific wonder, scientists report in the journal PLOS ONE.
- The mushroom somehow made its way into a highly saline lagoon, sank through the stratified layers of salty water and was covered in layer upon layer of fine sediments.
- In time -- lots of it -- the mushroom was mineralized, its tissues replaced by pyrite (fool's gold), which later transformed into the mineral goethite,

Jupiter is the most ancient planet in the solar system

- Jupiter is the oldest planet in the solar system, according to research published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).
- Scientists led by Thomas S. Kruijer of the University of Münster, in Germany, measured concentrations of molybdenum and tungsten isotopes derived from iron meteorites to model the age of the system's largest planet.
- There are two distinct groups of iron meteorites, the researchers suggest, which arose separately within the nebula cloud from which the solar system eventually coalesced.
- They represent, they write, "two genetically distinct nebular reservoirs that coexisted and remained spatially separated" during the first few million years of the solar system's formation.
- The most plausible explanation for their separation, Kruijer and colleagues suggest, is the formation of Jupiter in between them.
- Jupiter is a type of planet known as a gas giant. Its likely formation involved first the accretion of a solid core, followed by the accumulation of thick layers of gases surrounding it.

DRDO Successfully Test-fires Anti-tank Missile Nag in Rajasthan

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Tuesday successfully test-fired Anti-tank Guided Missile (ATGM) 'Nag' in a desert in the western sector of Rajasthan.
- The "fire and forget" third generation anti-tank guided missile 'Nag' is equipped with the highly advanced Imaging Infrared Radar (IRR) seeker with integrated avionics, technology which is possessed by very few nations,
- DRDO chairman Dr S Christopher congratulated the team who were a part of the mission.

China launches its first X-ray space telescope

- China successfully launched its first X-ray space telescope to study black holes, pulsars and gamma-ray bursts, state media reported.
- A Long March-4B rocket carried the 2.5-tonne telescope into orbit from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China's Gobi Desert
- The Hard X-ray Modulation Telescope (HXMT), named Insight, will allow Chinese scientists to observe magnetic fields and the interiors of pulsars and better understand the evolution of black holes.
- It will also help scientists search for gamma-ray bursts corresponding to gravitational waves and study how pulsars can be used for spacecraft navigation
- In April, China's first cargo spacecraft successfully docked with an orbiting space lab - a key development toward China's goal of having its own crewed space station by 2022.

NASA's James Webb space telescope to find signs of life in exoplanets

- Finding signs of life on the earth-sized planets of the TRAPPIST-1 system and on Saturn's moon Enceladus are among the science targets that NASA's James Webb space telescope has following its launch and commissioning
- These specific observations are part of a program of Guaranteed Time Observations (GTO), which provides dedicated time to the scientists that helped design and build the telescope's four instruments.
- NASA recently announced the discovery of the first known system of seven Earth-sized exoplanets around a single star.
- All of these seven planets around the TRAPPIST-1 star could have liquid water — key to life as we know it — under the right atmospheric conditions.

- Launching in 2018, the James Webb space telescope is the scientific successor to NASA's Hubble Space Telescope. It will be the most powerful space telescope ever built.

NASA Finds 10 'Earth-Like' Worlds

- Astronomers using the Kepler space telescope have detected 219 possible new exoplanets in our galaxy, including 10 relatively small, rocky and possibly habitable planets similar to our own
- These are the last additions to the catalog of exoplanets compiled during the first phase of the Kepler mission, when the space telescope scanned some 200,000 stars in the Cygnus constellation in an effort to find worlds beyond our own.
- The official catalog now contains 4,034 total "candidates" - tiny blips in the data that are thought to signal the presence of a planet around a star.
- The Kepler space telescope was launched into orbit around the sun in 2009.

Lockheed Martin Signs Pact With Tata to Make F-16 Fighter Jets in India

- US-based aerospace and defense manufacturing firm Lockheed Martin announced on Monday that it will partner with Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) to manufacture and export the F-16 Block 70 aircraft from India.
- .The F-16 Block 70 is ideally suited to meet the Indian Air Force's single-engine fighter needs and this unmatched U.S.-Indian industry partnership directly supports India's initiative to develop private aerospace and defense manufacturing capacity in India
- India's air force needs hundreds of aircraft to replace its Soviet-era fleet, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has said foreign suppliers would have to make the planes in India with a local partner to help build a domestic industrial base and cut outright imports.

China plans to send mini-ecosystems to Moon

- In a first, China is planning to send mini-ecosystems - containing potato seeds and silkworm eggs - to the Moon next year, in an attempt to study how the organisms develop on the lunar surface.

- The 3-kilogramme mini-ecosystem, developed by research teams led by Chongqing University in China, will be sent to the Moon by the Chang'e 4 scheduled to launch in 2018, authorities announced at the Global Space Exploration Conference.
- An 18-centimetre-tall cylinder will carry potato seeds and silkworm eggs to be incubated.
- The silkworms will hatch and create carbon dioxide, while the potato plants will generate oxygen,
- Zhang Yuanxun, has designed the ecosystem

ISRO to launch earth-observation Cartosat-2E and 30 nanosatellites

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is all set to launch an earth-observation satellite, named Cartosat-2E on June 23.
- A from the Cartosat-2E, 30 other nano satellites, both national and international , will be transported by the PSLV as well.
- This comes after earlier this month, India successfully launched its heavy rocket GSLV Mk-III which boosted ISRO's reach to a new height.
- This is the 40th flight of the rocket which will carry the Cartosat-2E, a pivotal satellite when it comes to earth-observation and the rest 30 nano satellites.
- While almost 29 of the satellites onboard are from foreign countries, the only one nano satellite sent by India is the one which was created by the students of Noorul Islam University of Tamil Nadu.
- The rest of the countries who shall use the Indian PSLV for transporting their own nano satellites are, Austria, Belgium, Chile, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, the UK and the US.
- Cartosat-2E will facilitate monitoring of the earth and using its panchromatic and multispectral cameras it shall provide regular remote sensing services.
- Apart from that, it shall also be useful as its name suggests, in cartographic applications, meaning in creation of land use maps, coastal land use and regulation, change detection to bring out geographical and man-made features and various other land information system applications.
- It shall also be useful in utility management for example in road network monitoring and water distribution.
- Cartosat-2E weighs 712 kilogram and along with the other 30 satellites, it will be launched from the launchpad one of Satish Dhawan Space Centre, popularly known as Sriharikota launch range at 9.29 am(IST).

- The satellites will be placed in a 505 kilometer polar sun synchronous orbit, the report suggested.

MOM completes 1000 Earth days

- India's Mars orbiter, launched in 2013, was expected to last six months or 180 days after reaching its destination.
- But having completed four years and 1,000 Earth days in orbit, the spacecraft shows no signs of fatigue, continuing to relay back a mass of images and data, each contributing to better understanding of the red planet.
- After its launch on November 5, 2013 by the PSLV-C25 rocket, the spacecraft travelled to the red planet for nine months and entered the Martian orbit on September 24, 2014 in its very first attempt.
- 1,000 Earth days correspond to 973.24 Mars Sols (Martian Solar day) and the MOM completed 388 orbits.
- The long life of the spacecraft indicates two things: first, there was no fuel leakage and second, the orbiter withstood all the rigours of the difficult journey,

Rare extreme helium star bigger and hotter than our Sun discovered for first time in 40 years

- A rare example of an extreme helium star has just been identified by astronomers. It is known as GALEX J184559.8–413827 - or J1845–4138 for short.
- Extreme helium stars are very rare and mysterious, made up mostly of helium rather than hydrogen, which is the most common element in the Universe.
- This oddity has long puzzled scientists, but they have also been fascinated by the fact that these stars are supergiants much larger and hotter than the Sun.
- Besides helium, these stars also have significant amounts of carbon, nitrogen and hydrogen. The first one ever identified was spotted in 1942 by an astronomer called Daniel Popper.
- Over the 30 years that followed, a small number of extreme helium stars were discovered with the help of spectroscopic surveys but astronomers continued arguing about how these stars formed. Identifying them beyond doubt also proved tricky on many occasions.

Nasa launches world's lightest satellite designed by 18-year-old TN student

- India once again broke a global space record by launching the world's lightest satellite weighing a mere 64 grams, called Kalamsat, designed and developed not by professional space scientists and engineers, but by 18-year-old Tamil Nadu student Rifath Sharook and his team.
- The tiny satellite, named after Abdul Kalam, was flown by a Nasa sounding rocket and the lift-off was from the space agency's Wallop Island facility around 3pm (IST).
- Kalam had his training in the sounding rocket programme at Wallops Island in the '60s. Kalamsat was the only Indian payload in the mission.

NASA tests flexible solar array on space station

- NASA is testing for the first time the effectiveness of a flexible solar array on space station that could one day power satellites and spacecraft.
- The Roll-Out Solar Array, or ROSA, an advanced, flexible solar array that rolls out like a tape measure "can be easily adapted to different sizes, including very large arrays, to provide power for a variety of future spacecraft,
- It also has the potential to make solar arrays more compact and lighter weight for satellite radio and television, weather forecasting, GPS and other services used on the Earth.
- In addition, the technology conceivably could be adapted to provide solar power in remote locations.
- NASA tested the ROSA technology in vacuum chambers on the Earth several years ago, but this is its first test in space.
- Over the weekend of June 17-18, 2017, engineers on the ground remotely operated the International Space Station's robotic Canadarm2 to extract the Roll Out Solar Array (ROSA) experiment from the SpaceX Dragon resupply ship.
- The new solar array design rolls up to form a compact cylinder for launch with significantly less mass and volume, potentially offering substantial cost savings as well as an increase in power for satellites.

ISRO-made system to alert users at unmanned level crossings

- Satellite-based chip systems will now alert road users at unmanned level crossings about approaching trains and also help in tracking train movement on a real-time basis.
- On a pilot basis, the Mumbai and Guwahati Rajdhani trains will be equipped with this system.
- Road users will be warned by hooters once a train approaches an unmanned level crossing as railways are installing ISRO-developed integrated circuit (IC) chips on locomotives of trains.
- There will be hooters at 20 unmanned level crossings on Rajdhani routes for Guwahati and Mumbai

Paris agreement's 1.5C target 'only way' to save coral reefs

- Greater emissions reductions and delivering on the Paris climate agreement are now “the only opportunity” to save coral reefs the world over from decline, with local responses no longer sufficient
- The first global scientific assessment of the impacts of climate change on the 29 world heritage-listed coral reefs found that the frequency, intensity and duration of heat-stress events had worsened with increasing global warming, with massive consequences for the 29 world heritage sites.
- The Unesco report found that local efforts to increase reefs’ resilience “remain necessary but are no longer sufficient” without complementary national and international efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels – the most ambitious target set by the Paris agreement, and understood to be the maximum possible to secure coral reefs’ long-term survival.

NASA's Opportunity Rover Spots Evidence of Ancient Lake on Mars

- NASA's Opportunity Mars rover is examining the edge of a crater on the red planet that may once have been a lake of liquid water.
- The Opportunity rover found rocks at the edge of Endeavour Crater that were either transported by a flood or eroded in place by wind.

- The features were seen just outside the crater rim's crest above Perseverance Valley, which is carved into the inner slope of the rim. Researchers plan to drive Opportunity down Perseverance Valley after completing a "walkabout" survey of the area above it.
- The Opportunity mission has been investigating sites on and near the western rim of Endeavour Crater since 2011.
- The crater is about 22 kilometres across.
- A portion of the crest at the top of Perseverance Valley has a broad notch. Just west of that, elongated patches of rocks line the sides of a slightly depressed, east-west swath of ground, which might have been a drainage channel billions of years ago.

Social Progress Index: India's quality of life improves

- The 2017 Social Progress Index report was launched on 21 June by SPI with support from Deloitte and its strategic partners
- It finds that 113 countries, out of the 128 countries ranked, have improved their level of social progress since 2014, with some countries demonstrating that it's possible to significantly improve social progress, in spite of economic and geopolitical challenges.
- Denmark is the world's top performer this year (scoring 90.57/100), closely followed by a combination of the remaining Nordic countries, as well as countries much larger in size and more diverse in population, including Canada, Netherlands, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Germany.
- India which is ranked at 93rd position performs within the expected range on a relative basis.

ISRO's GSAT-17 launched successfully from French Guiana

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s latest communication satellite GSAT-17 was Thursday successfully launched around 2.00 am by a heavy duty rocket of Arianespace from the spaceport of Kourou in French Guiana. Configured around I-3K extended bus, the 3,477 kg GSAT-17 carries payloads in Normal C-band, Extended C-band and S-band to provide various communication services.
- The satellite also carries equipment for meteorological data relay and satellite-based search and rescue services being provided by earlier INSAT satellites.

- The launch of GSAT-17 will be the third satellite launch by ISRO this month, the other two being the first developmental flight of GSLV MkIII and PSLV C-38 missions, both from Sriharikota spaceport.
- The recent launches by the space agency were GSAT-19 satellite on June 5 and the PSLV-C38 that orbited Cartosat-2 Series satellite along with 30 co-passenger satellites on June 23 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre.

NASA's Quieter Supersonic Jet Closer To Reality

- NASA has achieved a significant milestone in developing a quieter supersonic passenger jet that can safely travel over land.
- It's Called X-Plane
- The US space agency completed the preliminary design review (PDR) of its Quiet Supersonic Transport (QueSST) aircraft design.
- QueSST is the initial design stage of NASA's planned Low Boom Flight Demonstration (Lbfd) experimental airplane, otherwise known as an X-plane.
- The QueSST design is capable of fulfilling the Lbfd aircraft's mission objectives, which are to fly at supersonic speeds, but create a soft "thump" instead of the disruptive sonic boom associated with supersonic flight today.
- The Lbfd X-plane will be flown over communities to collect data necessary for regulators to enable supersonic flight over land.

Books & Authors

JRR Tolkien book Beren and Lúthien published after 100 years

- A new book by Lord of the Rings author JRR Tolkien is going on sale - 100 years after it was first conceived.
- Beren and Lúthien has been described as a "very personal story" that the Oxford professor thought up after returning from the Battle of the Somme.
- It was edited by his son Christopher Tolkien and contains versions of a tale that became part of The Silmarillion.
- The book features illustrations by Alan Lee, who won an Academy Award for his work on Peter Jackson's film trilogy.

Arundhati Roy's The Ministry Of Utmost Happiness launched

- The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, reels, often buckles under the spectre of having thwarted time in its wake, but just about manages to keep it together.
- As Thomas Harris wrote in The Silence of the Lambs: "All good things to those who wait".
- The Ministry of Utmost Happiness isn't about the good things at all.
- It is, as is always the case with Roy (but we have just the one book to compare it to) about the little things.
- Only this time, these things are considered in the shadow of India's poignant history, the deep-rooted political fibre, the glut of religion and caste and so much more.

President of India receives first copies of book Lalan Shah Fakir Ke Geet and DVD of selected songs of Lalan Shah Fakir

- The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee received the first copies of book Lalan Shah Fakir Ke Geet written by Prof. Muchkund Dubey and DVD of selected songs of Lalan Shah Fakir today (June 3, 2017) at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- President congratulated Prof. Muchkund Dubey who had served as High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh for his pioneering work and for giving an opportunity to recognize and pay tribute to Lalan Shah Fakir, a great saint, poet and social reformer.
- He also congratulated the Sahitya Academi for publishing the book and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations for supporting the project of producing a DVD containing the Hindi rendering by Begum Farida Parveen.

Jairam Ramesh's book on the naturalist in Indira Gandhi launched

- The book "Indira Gandhi – A life in Nature", was launched by Congress president Sonia Gandhi at the Indira Gandhi Memorial
- Former Union minister Jairam Ramesh, who has authored the book published by Simon & Schuster, presented the first copy of the book to the Congress President, besides to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, former minister Karan Singh and Priyanka Gandhi.

- The book brings out some of the unpublished works sourced through archives and personal sources material that highlighted the unexplored aspect of Indira Gandhi's life — her love for nature.
- The book showcases how Indira Gandhi led India to the path of conservation and made it a priority of economic development.

Ex-Uttarakhand CM Ramesh Pokhriyal authors book on Atal Bihari Vajpayee

- Former Uttarakhand chief minister Pokhriyal, who credited Vajpayee for his debut in politics, authored a 450-page book titled -'Yug Purush, Bharat Ratna, Atal Ji' – which will be officially unveiled soon.
- However, the first copy of the book on the social and political life of Vajpayee was presented to Mukherjee

Book on Darkest Days of Emergency Released

- The Emergency — Indian Democracy's Darkest Hour, a book written by A Surya Prakash, chairman Prasar Bharati was released by Union Minister for Urban Development and Information & Broadcasting Venkaiah Naidu and Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani at Ahmedabad
- The book was launched at a conference to mark the anniversary of the Emergency and to honour those who fought for restoration of democracy in the country in the mid-1970s.
- The event was organised by MeghNirghosh Media Ltd.




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The advertisement features a light green background with a pattern of small icons related to banking and finance. At the top center is the IBPS logo, which consists of a blue square containing a white lowercase 'i' and a blue lightning bolt. Below the logo, the text 'IBPS PO' is written in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Underneath that, 'Mega Preparation Course' is written in a smaller, black sans-serif font. At the bottom center, there is a dark blue rounded rectangular button with the white text 'ENROL HERE' in a bold, sans-serif font.

