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GK Digest August 2017



Contain Current Affair of August 2017

Important Days

National Handloom Day: 7 August 2017

- National Handloom Day is being observed today to encourage people to use hand-made loom in the country. The main event will be held in Guwahati to celebrate the third National Handloom Day.
- Central Government has declared August 7 as National Handloom Day, to be celebrated every year due to its significance in India's history, as 'Swadeshi Movement' was launched in 1905 on this day. The movement involved revival of domestic products and production processes.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the first National Handloom Day on August 7 in 2015

World Bio Fuel Day: 10 August 2017

- Every year 10th August is observed as World Bio-Fuel Day in a bid to create awareness about non-fossil-fuels (Green Fuels).
- On this day in 1893, Sir Rudolph Diesel (inventor of the diesel engine) for the first time successfully ran the mechanical engine with Peanut Oil.
- His research experiment had predicted that vegetable oil is going to replace the fossil fuels in the next century to fuel different mechanical engines.
- Thus to mark this extraordinary achievement, World Biofuel Day is observed every year on 10th August.

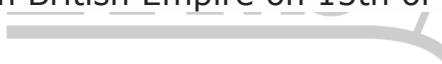
International Youth Day: 12 August

- On 17 December 1999 the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth that 12 August be declared International Youth Day.
- It reaffirms the important role youth can play in deterring and resolving conflicts, and are key constituents in ensuring the success of both peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.
- Theme 2017: "Youth Building Peace"
- In 1985, the UN celebrated the first International Year of Youth.

Organ Donation Day: 13 August 2017

- Organ Donation Day in India is celebrated on 13th of August every year by the people, government organizations and other related professions in order to motivate normal human beings to donate the organs as well as to understand the value of organ donation in the life of an individual.
- The organ donor can be anyone of which the organ can be transplanted to the patient urgently requires.
- The organ donated by the normal human being is saved properly to transplant into the patient whenever he or she require.
- One can get the new life through the organ transplantation donated by someone.

India Celebrates Independence Day: 15 August 2017

- Independence Day is an annual observance celebrated every year on 15th of August. India's Independence Day is a day of great significance for the people of India.
 - At this day India got freedom from the British rule after long years of slavery.
 - It has been declared as the National and Gazetted Holiday all across the India in order to independently commemorate the independence of the country from British Empire on 15th of August in 1947.
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World Photography Day: 19 August

- August 19 is observed as World Photography Day, which aims to inspire photographers across the planet to share a single photo with a simple purpose: to share their world with the world.
- World Photo Day originates from the invention of the Daguerreotype, a photographic process developed by Frenchmen Louis Daguerre and Joseph Nicéphore Niépce in 1837.
- On August 19, 2010 World Photo Day hosted its first global online gallery.
- Almost 270 photographers shared their pictures and people from over 100 countries visited the website. This marked the first official, globally reaching World Photo Day.

World Humanitarian Day: 19 August

- On 19 August 2003, a terrorist attack hit the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, killing 22 people. Among those who lost their lives was Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN's top representative in Iraq.
- Five years later, the General Assembly adopted a resolution designating 19 August as World Humanitarian Day.
- Every year since then, the humanitarian community has organized global campaigns to commemorate WHD, advocating for the safety and security of humanitarian aid workers, and for the survival, well-being and dignity of people affected by crises.

National Sports Day 2017: 29 August 2017

- National Sports Day in India is celebrated on August 29, the birthday of Dhyan Chand, one of the greatest field hockey players of all time. Dhyan Chand won gold medals for India in Olympics in the years 1928, 1932 and 1936.
- National Sports Awards such as Arjuna and Khel Ratna are conferred on selected athletes by the President of India every year, on this day.
- The National Hockey stadium in Delhi was renamed as Dhyan Chand National Stadium in 2002.
- The National Sports Day celebrations are a commemoration of his achievements.
- The day is also known as Rashtriya Khel Divas. The Major Dhyan Chand Awards conferred on athletes is the highest award for lifetime achievement in sports and games in India.

United Nations observed International Day against Nuclear Tests on August 29

- The UN-established International Day against Nuclear Tests was observed across the world on August 29 'to galvanize the United Nations, Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, youth networks and the media to inform, educate and advocate the necessity of banning nuclear weapon tests as a valuable step towards achieving a safer world'.
- Since 2010 the event is being observed by coordinating various activities throughout the world, such as symposia, conferences, exhibits, competitions, publications, and lectures in academic institutions, media broadcasts and other initiatives.

National Events

Government enters into nine Unilateral Advance Pricing Agreements (UAPAs) with Indian taxpayers in July, 2017

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) entered into nine Unilateral Advance Pricing Agreements (UAPAs) with Indian taxpayers in the month of July, 2017. Some of the UAPAs signed had rollback provisions also.
- The APA Scheme endeavours to provide certainty to taxpayers in the domain of transfer pricing by specifying the methods of pricing and determining the Arm's Length Price of international transactions in advance for a maximum period of five future years. Further, the taxpayer has the option to rollback the APA for four preceding years, as a result of which, a total of nine years of tax certainty is provided. Since its inception, the APA scheme has attracted tremendous interest among Multi National Enterprises (MNEs).
- The nine APAs signed in the month of July, 2017 pertain to diverse sectors of the economy. CBDT has signed its first APA with a taxpayer engaged in supplying rigs used in Oil & Gas exploration. Other than the Oil & Gas Sector, the APAs pertain to Education, Banking, Pharmaceutical, Manufacturing and Information Technology sectors of the economy. The international transactions covered in these nine APAs include the provision of software development services, provision of IT enabled services, provision of engineering design services, distribution, contract manufacturing, etc.

Supreme Court no to use of heavy metals in firecrackers

- Citing health hazards, the Supreme Court asked firecracker manufacturers not to use heavy metals like lithium, antimony, mercury, arsenic and lead and chemical elements like antimony "in any form whatsoever" in their products.
- A bench of Justices Madan B Lokur and Deepak Mehta said it was the responsibility of the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) to ensure that the order was complied with, including in Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu where there were a large number of cracker manufacturers.

- Though the compounds of strontium too were cited as hazardous for health, the court sought more clarity on the matter and fixed August 23 for the next hearing.

Govt nod to rename Mughalsarai railway station as Deen Dayal Upadhyaya

- The centre approved a proposal to rename the Mughalsarai railway station in Uttar Pradesh after RSS ideologue Deen Dayal Upadhyaya
- The proposal was given by the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh in a bid to revive the legacy of Upadhyaya, who died in 1968 at the junction itself.
- The junction, the fourth busiest railway station in the country, is located on the main Howrah-Delhi Grand Chord line. The Uttar Pradesh government, headed by Yogi Adityanath, had in June approved the proposal of renaming the station and forwarded it to the Ministry of Railways for final approval.

Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi launches Jiyo Parsi Publicity Phase-2" in Mumbai

- The Union Ministry of Minority Affairs launched Jiyo Parsi Publicity Phase-2 in Mumbai, Maharashtra under the Jiyo Parsi scheme.
- The Jiyo Parsi Publicity Phase-2 aims to decline trend of the population of the Parsi community and reverses it to bring their population above the threshold level.
- Jiyo Parsi scheme is a Central Sector Scheme for containing population decline of Parsis in India. Its main objective is to reverse the declining trend of the Parsi population by adopting a scientific protocol and structured interventions. It aims to stabilize and increase the population of Parsis in India.

Government Forms Panel To Suggest Data Protection Framework

- The government has constituted a 10-member committee to recommend a framework for securing personal data in the increasingly digitised economy as also address privacy concerns and build safeguards against data breaches.

- The panel will study and identify key data protection issues and recommend methods to address them.
- The formation of the panel comes amid concerns over personal information being compromised with increasing use of biometric identifier Aadhaar in an array of services - from filing tax returns to availing government doles.
- The committee of experts headed by Justice BN Srikrishna, former judge of Supreme Court, will suggest a draft data protection bill,
- The panel will make specific suggestions to the government on principles to be considered for data protection in India and "also suggest a draft data protection bill"

Govt launches e-RaKAM portal for selling agri produce

- The government today launched a portal, e-RaKAM, to provide a platform to sell agricultural produce.
- The portal is a joint initiative by state-run-auctioneer MSTC and Central Warehousing Corporation arm CRWC.
- E-RaKAM is a first-of-its-kind initiative that leverages technology to connect farmers of the smallest villages to the biggest markets of the world through internet and e-RaKAM centres.
- E-RaKAM is developed by MSTC Limited and supported by marketing & logistics partner CRWC Limited.
- E-RaKAM is a digital initiative bringing together the farmers, FPOs, PSUs, civil supplies and buyers on a single platform to ease the selling and buying process of agricultural products.

India Permitted To Construct Kishanganga, Ratle Projects: World Bank

- India is allowed to construct hydroelectric power facilities on tributaries of the Jhelum and Chenab rivers with certain restrictions under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), the World Bank has said.
- The World Bank's comments came as officials from India Pakistan concluded the secretary-level talks over the IWT.
- Pakistan opposes the construction of the Kishanganga (330 megawatts) and Ratle (850 megawatts) hydroelectric power plants being built by India in Jammu and Kashmir,

Cabinet to take up scrapping of no-detention policy in schools

- States will soon be able to able to conduct exams for students of class 5 and 8 who fail in the annual exams to give them another chance to pass with the Union cabinet likely to take up a proposal on Wednesday of scrapping the 'no-detention policy',
- States will have the discretion to give another opportunity to these students to pass. Under the proposal, students of classes 5 to 8 who do not pass the examination in March will be given a chance in May or June.
- However, they will be detained if they fail again according to the proposal.
- In case a student is unable to pass the annual exam in March, he/she will get another opportunity in May or June. Before sitting for the exams once again, the students will be asked to attend 'remedial classes'. Once the new system comes into force, the onus would be on the states to decide whether to hold examinations in classes 5 and 8.

CIC reconstitutes bench to hear complaints against political parties

- Chief Information Commissioner R K Mathur has constituted a larger bench to hear complaints against six national political parties not adhering to the CIC order bringing them within the ambit of the RTI Act.
- The bench will replace a three-member panel headed by Sridhar Acharyulu which was hearing the matter since July 22, 2016 until one of its members Bimal Julka decided to recuse himself citing workload. After his recusal, Mathur had put the matter in abeyance till further notice.
- Besides Mathur himself, the new Bench will have Information Commissioners-- Sharat Sabharwal, Manjula Prasher and Divya Prakash Sinha.
- The new Bench will start hearing the matter from August 16

Bills to extend GST to J-K passed by Lok Sabha

- The Lok Sabha passed legislation to extend the Goods and Services Tax (GST) to Jammu and Kashmir, making it part of the "one nation, one tax" regime.

- The House passed the Central Goods and Services Tax (Extension to Jammu and Kashmir), Bill, 2017 and the Integrated Goods and Services Tax (Extension to Jammu and Kashmir), Bill, 2017 after a brief discussion in which members by and large welcomed the measures.
- The two bills replace an order promulgated by the President

Online tatkal railway tickets: Now you can pay on delivery

- People can now pay later for tickets booked under the tatkal quota on the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corp (IRCTC) website, it was announced on Wednesday.
- Till now, this service was available only for general reservations. For tatkal bookings, people had to pay first via the standard online payment gateways before the IRCTC portal confirmed their ticket.
- For tatkal tickets, IRCTC users will be able to pay via cash, debit card or credit card by opting to have tickets delivered at their doorstep, said IRCTC payment provider Anduril Technologies.
- IRCTC processes 130,000 Tatkal transactions daily. A majority of these tickets are booked within minutes of the quota opening.
- The new feature eliminates the transaction failures as often the money gets debited and the ticket is not issued due to multiple reasons. The refund cycle is of about seven to 15 days.

Haryana bans govt school teachers from taking mobile phones to classrooms

- The Haryana government barred school teachers from stepping inside the classrooms with mobile phones and decided to hold head of the school "accountable" for violation of this norm.
- This restriction of going to the classroom without mobile phones also applies to the head of school.
- The education department has directed that all inspecting officers, whether on regular inspection or surprise inspections, will check whether these instructions are being followed in letter and spirit.
- Teachers will keep mobile phones in the staff room or in an area earmarked by the head of school.
- However, in case of unavoidable reasons the teacher has to take mobile phone to the classroom for "academic use" then prior permission of the head of the school is must.
- The teacher will have to write the reason(s) in a register that will specially be maintained for this purpose.

- In case someone wants to reach out to the teachers in case of emergency, the head of the school will make available two contact numbers

'Aadi Perukku' celebrated

- Thousands of men and women celebrated 'Aadi Perukku' festival at the bathing ghats of the Periyar river in Veerapandi and Uthamapalyam in Tamil Nadu
- Pilgrims began to throng the banks of the river since morning as the flow was good, thanks to discharge of a large quantum of water from Periyar dam in order to improve the storage level in Vaigai dam.
- Women performed special pujas to the river and prepared sweet pongal and offered to it. Irrespective of caste and community, both men and women prayed together for rain. Men performed rites for their forefathers. Many took holy bath in the river before offering prayers.

Maharashtra Government launches two online portals MahaDBT, MahaVASTU

- Maharashtra Government launched two online portals MahaDBT and MahaVASTU to streamline the process of direct benefit transfer (DBT).
- It is the first state in the country to launch such a system that will provide direct benefits with Aadhaar authentication.
- MahaDBT portal: It is an Aadhaar-authenticated electronic mechanism that will enable direct transfer of benefits for over 40 schemes currently implemented.
- MahaVASTU portal: It is an online building permission management system, through which construction approvals will be sanctioned with full transparency.

Lok Sabha passes bill to raise Nabard's capital to Rs 30000 crore

- A bill to enable exit of RBI from Nabard and increase authorised capital of the development institution six times to Rs 30,000 crore was passed by the Lok Sabha
- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Amendment) Bill, 2017 also seeks to amend certain clauses in the light of reference of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Development Act, 2006 in the proposed legislation.
- Minister of State for Finance Santosh Kumar Gangwar said that the law is one of the "major step" towards doubling farmers' income by 2022.

- This is a small bill but irrespective of that, 28 members put their views on this legislation, which reflects the interest of members's on agriculture related issues

Lok Sabha passes Banking Regulation Bill 2017

- The Banking Regulation (Amendment) Bill 2017 was passed by the lower house of the parliament.
- It will replace the Non-Performing Assets Ordinance, which came into effect earlier this year.
- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, on Monday, had introduced a bill in Lok Sabha to amend the Banking Regulation Act 1949. The measure allows the RBI to initiate insolvency resolution process on specific stressed-assets.
- The RBI would also be empowered to issue other directions for resolution, appoint or approve for appointment, authorities or committees to advise the banking companies for stressed-asset resolution.
- The non-performing assets of banks have increased to more than Rs 9 lakh crore and now RBI is empowered to refer the cases to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board. In June, RBI had identified 12 large loan defaulters who account for 25% of the total bad loans in the Indian banking system.

Bengaluru will soon have India's first helicopter-taxi service

- Bengaluru will become the first city in the country to provide a helicopter taxi service
- The service will be operated by Thumbby Aviation Private Limited who have partnered with the Bangalore International Airport Limited to start the Heli Taxi service.
- The helicopter service will initially be operated between Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport and the Electronics City area.
- The travel time will be cut down to 15 minutes instead of the two hours taken by road.

Government announces new PSU ETF called Bharat-22 with diversified portfolio

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced creation of new Exchange Trade Fund called Bharat 2022, comprising of 22 companies, or

investments from central public sector undertakings, public sector banks and some other strategic holdings.

- Compared to energy heavy CPSE ETF, Bharat 22 is a well diversified portfolio of companies from six sectors (basic materials, energy, finance, FMCG, industrials & utilities) with a 20% cap on each sector and a 15% cap on each stock.
- It will feature four banking stocks -- SBI, Axis Bank, Bank of Baroda and Indian Bank -- other than CPSEs such as Nalco, ONGC, IOC, BPCL and Coal India.
- Besides, there will be nine other PSUs as well as REC and PFC.
- The first central public sector enterprises (CPSE) ETF, which was set up in 2014, comprised of 10 companies — Oil and Natural Gas Corp. (ONGC), Coal India, Indian Oil Corp. (IOC), GAIL (India), Oil India, Power Finance Corp. (PFC), Bharat Electronics, Rural Electrification Corp. (REC), Engineers India Ltd and Container Corporation of India.
- Government had raised Rs 8500 crore by divesting through CPSE ETF in FY'16-17.

'All ASI-protected monuments declared polythene-free zones

- All monuments and archaeological sites protected by the ASI have been declared as polythene free zones
- A total of 3,686 historical monuments and archaeological sites have been declared protected as that of national importance by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Second phase of measles-rubella vaccination drive launched in eight states

- Aiming to eliminate measles and curb instances of rubella by 2020, the Centre has rolled out the second phase of its measles-rubella (MR) vaccination campaign in the country.
- Nearly 3.4 crore children across eight states and union territories — Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu — will be covered in this stage.
- While measles is a viral infection that can be fatal, congenital rubella syndrome is responsible for irreversible birth defects. The Union health ministry's campaign against the two diseases intends to cover approximately 41 crore children in a phased manner, making it the largest-ever worldwide.

- The first phase of the campaign was launched across five states — Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Lakshadweep and Puducherry — in February this year.

Govt declares entire Assam as 'disturbed' area under AFSPA for another month

- The Centre has declared entire Assam as a "disturbed" area under the controversial Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) for one more month, citing various violent activities by insurgent groups ULFA, NDFB, and others.
- The Union home ministry also declared Meghalaya's border areas adjoining Assam, and three districts in Arunachal Pradesh as "disturbed" under the AFSPA for two more months with effect from August 3.
- In separate gazette notifications, the home ministry said the entire Assam, has been declared "disturbed" under the AFSPA with effect from August 3 till August 31.
- The ministry said the 20 km belt in Meghalaya bordering Assam will also continue to be a "disturbed area" under the AFSPA with effect from August 3 to September 30.

NCRB merged with bureau of police research

- In a debatable move, the government merged the National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB) - which, over the years, has been the principal source of reference by policy makers, police, criminologists, researchers and media - both in India and abroad, with the Bureau of Police Research and Development(BPR&D).
- The ministry of home affairs issued an order on Friday evening placing NCRB's functions under the Director General of BPR&D, who will now oversee all the data collection related to Crime in India, Accidental Deaths and Suicides, Prison Statistics and Fingerprints.
- Sources say that BPR&D has been given charge of NCRB so that there is more research based and methodological data collection in future as data collection by NCRB as of now was that of taken from states and sometimes inaccurate.
- It was felt that if the researchers of BPR&D, which conducts its own researches and commissions many to private institutes/bodies to study the crime patterns, policing and other related aspects, and statisticians of NCRB work together, there will be more accurate and research based data collection

Luxury cars, SUVs to cost more as GST Council approves cess hike

- Sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and luxury cars, which became cheaper after the 1 July rollout of the goods and services tax (GST), may cost more with the GST Council, federal indirect tax body, planning to raise cess on them from 15% now to up to 25%.
- The proposal to raise the ceiling of cess covers large motor vehicles with capacity for 10-13 persons, mid segment and large cars, sports utility vehicles, mid segment hybrid cars and other hybrid vehicles, all of which at present attract 15% cess. However, it is not clear if cess will be raised on small petrol cars which at present attract 1% cess and and diesel cars bearing 3% cess, although they fall under the same heading in the tax manual as the other cars.

August 15 to be celebrated as 'Sankalp Parva': Govt

- The Centre has decided to observe this Independence Day as 'Sankalp Parva' and asked the people to dedicate themselves to social causes and share their ideas to make a new India.
- Terming 'Quit India Movement' as an important milestone, the government has asked people to take a pledge to create a new India that is strong, prosperous and inclusive.
- The Quit India Movement or 'August Kranti' began on August 9, 1942. "Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, people across India, in every village, city, transcending all barriers came together with a common mission to uproot imperialism,

Justice Dipak Misra to be next Chief Justice of India

- The Union government appointed Justice Dipak Misra as the next Chief Justice of India.
- He will be replacing incumbent Justice J S Khehar, who is set to retire on August 27.
- It was Khehar who had recommended Misra's name to succeed him as the next Chief Justice of India.
- Justice Misra will be sworn in as the 45th Chief Justice of India by President Ram Nath Kovind on August 27.

Govt launches a new scheme to boost agri startups

- Joining hands with the IIM Ahmedabad, India's premier farm research institute - Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) - on Friday launched a central scheme to promote agri startups in the country.
- The programme - known as AGRI UDAAN - Food and Agribusiness Accelerator 2.0 - will help select innovative startups to scale up their operations in agri value chain for effective improvement in agriculture.
- This is a six month programme in which short-listed agri startups with promising innovative business models will be mentored and guided to scale up their operations.
- During this period, the startups will be trained in different aspects of technology commercialization, product validation, business plan preparation, risk analysis, customer engagement, finance management and fund raising.

UP Cabinet changes name of scheme launched by SP government

- The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet approved renaming of another Samajwadi Party (SP) government-run scheme, and the Samajwadi Sarvhit Kisan Bima Yojna will now on be known as the Mukhymantri Sarvhit Kisan Bima Yojna
- One major rule that has already been done away with vis-a-vis police recruitment is addition of physical test marks in the final results; now on, the marks of physical test will not have any bearing on the final results.
- Previously, physical fitness marks were added to the Class X and Class XII marks. Now on, the recruitment will be done through a written examination, following which a merit list will be made and the physical test will be conducted later.
- The applicants will have to fulfil certain physical test criteria like 4.8 km race, which for women will be 2.4 km.

Kerala, Haryana top sanitation survey

- The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation released the findings of the survey of 1.4 lakh rural households, undertaken by the Quality Council of India (QCI) between May and June this year.
- The survey, covering 4626 villages across all States and Union territories, claimed that 62.45% of the households had access to a toilet.
- The survey also pointed that 91.29% of the people who had access to a toilet also used it, indicating a change in sanitation behaviour.
- Northeastern States of Sikkim, Manipur and Nagaland were top performers with 95% rural households covered by toilets. And so were

the Himalayan States of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand with over 90% toilet coverage of the rural houses.

- Interestingly, BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh and NDA-ruled Bihar were among the worst performers in terms of rural sanitation. In Bihar, only 30% of the rural household had access to toilets while Uttar Pradesh was marginally better at 37% . Another BJP-ruled State, Jharkhand, too scored the same as U.P.

Coconut regains `tree status in Goa as Assembly passes bill

- The Goa Legislative Assembly passed a bill which reclassifies coconut as a `tree, ensuring legal protection for it.
- Goa Forward Party, a partner in the Manohar Parrikar-led government, had promised to reclassify coconut.
- The previous Laxmikant Parsekar-led government had changed classification of coconut tree to a `palm.
- However, the decision kicked up a controversy as green activists claimed that it would make it easy to cut down coconut trees indiscriminately in the coastal state as it would require no formal permission.
- The Assembly, on the last day of Monsoon session today, passed the Goa, Daman and Diu (Preservation of) Trees Act, 1984 to regulate felling of coconut trees and reclassify it as tree.

NITI Aayog selects 3 States for transformative change in Health & Education sectors

- In a major push to competitive, cooperative federalism, NITI Aayog, today, announces partnership with three States each to radically transform their Health and Education sectors.
- NITI Aayog has selected Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Karnataka to improve healthcare delivery and key outcomes in these States. In Education, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Jharkhand have been selected for support to better learning outcomes.
- The six States have been chosen after a rigorous competitive process based on comprehensive metrics to determine potential for impact and likelihood of success.
- States were called to, first, express intent of collaborating with NITI Aayog to better their Health and Education indices. States then made presentations for each sector which was assessed by a committee comprised of senior members of NITI Aayog and Health and Education ministries.

- The States highlighted the initiatives undertaken by them thus far, their willingness to accelerate improvement and justified why they should be selected for the institutional support being offered by NITI Aayog.
- This three-way partnership between NITI, State Governments and a knowledge partner for each of the sectors is part of the Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital (SATH) initiative of NITI Aayog.

Panel to make drugs more affordable constituted

- The government has formed a committee in its bid to make drugs more affordable in the country.
- The government has constituted a committee of joint secretaries for ensuring enhanced affordability, availability and accessibility of drugs for the citizens,
- Elaborating on the terms of reference of the committee, the minister said it would suggest ways to make pricing policy in favour of poor patients. The committee would also review the scope of Drugs (Price Control) Order 2013 and suggest ways for strengthening the regulatory provisions of the order.

Gujarat first state to implement coal utilisation between power units

- Setting a precedent, the Gujarat government has issued a tender for power developers to receive cheap coal marked for the state in return for selling coal-based power at less than Rs 2.82 a unit.
- Through the auction, Gujarat will transfer the coal allocated to power generating stations owned by Gujarat State Electricity Corporation (GSECL) to more fuel-efficient private power plants.
- The reverse auction would be held in September for procuring 1,000 megawatt (Mw) of power. The successful power plant would be selling electricity to the state from October 1 to June 30, 2018
- The move is in line with the initiatives of the central government to ensure fuel availability to stressed power plants.
- The aim is to reduce the cost of fuel for financially ailing distribution companies and ensure effective distribution of domestic coal.

UP CM Yogi Adityanath flagged off 'Namami Gange Jagriti Yatra' from Lucknow

- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath flagged off the 'Namami Gange Jagriti Yatra' from his official residence in state capital Lucknow.
- The 'Namami Gange Jagriti Yatra' is being organised by the Uttar Pradesh Home Guards.
- 'Namami Gange Jagriti Yatra' will conclude on September 6.

India ratifies 2nd commitment period of Kyoto Protocol

- India has ratified the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol that commits countries to contain the emission of greenhouse gases, reaffirming its stand on climate action.
- In a brief statement, India's Permanent Mission to the UN said that India deposited its Instrument of Acceptance of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol under the UN Convention on Climate Change here yesterday.
- With this, India became the 80th country to accept the amendment relating to the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, the international emissions reduction treaty.
- The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement linked to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which commits its Parties by setting internationally binding emission reduction targets.
- The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997 and entered into force in February 2005.

PF account to be automatically transferred on job switch

- From next month, your PF account will be transferred automatically when you change your job, chief provident fund commissioner V P Joy has said.
- The EPFO has also stepped up efforts to expand coverage, and initial results have been positive.
- PF money should be withdrawn only for major purposes like housing, education of children, or serious hospitalisation.

Nabin Tan Mon Bikash Yojana launched

- Heritage Conservation Society has launched a scheme – 'Nabin Tan Mon Bikash Yojana' – in memory of Nabin Sharma. The scheme is especially for school children. After August 15 the members will visit schools in the entire region to promote the scheme. Dr Navanil Baruah, Dharendra Nath Choudhury, Nirupama Borgahain were present at the launch of the scheme.

- To promote health habits among children like correct standing and sitting posture, songs and rhymes for different musical drill of Sisu Prami Nabin Sharma are now preserved by Adviser Gayatri Goswami in Digital form

Joint Statement of the 15th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting

- The Fifteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting was convened in Kathmandu, Nepal on 10-11 August 2017.
- The Fifteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting was attended by His Excellency Mr. Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, M.P., Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; His Excellency Lyonpo Damcho Dorji, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Royal Government of Bhutan; Her Excellency Smt. Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister of the Government of the Republic of India
- The Meeting considered and approved the Reports of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Sessions of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meetings held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 07 February 2017 and 10 August 2017 respectively.

Parliament passes Banking Regulation Bill for non-performing assets

- The Rajya Sabha passed the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2017, which will enable the government to empower the RBI to direct lender banks to act against big loan defaulters.
- The bill, which amends the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, will replace the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2017.
- Once it becomes a law, the central government may authorise the RBI to issue directions to the banks to initiate proceedings in case of loan repayment default. These proceedings would be under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.
- The RBI may, from time to time, issue directions to banks for resolution of stressed assets and may specify authorities or committees to advise banks on resolution of stressed assets.
- Stressed assets are loans where the borrower has defaulted in repayment or where the loan has been restructured (such as by changing the repayment schedule).
- The bill inserts a provision to state that it will also be applicable to the State Bank of India, its subsidiaries, and Regional Rural Banks.

Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY) To be launched

- The Government of India has decided to launch a new sub-scheme named "Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY)" as part of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
- The Self Help Groups under DAY-NRLM will operate road transport service in backward areas. This will help to provide safe, affordable and community monitored rural transport services to connect remote villages with key services and amenities for the overall economic development of backward rural areas.
- This will also provide an additional avenue of livelihood for SHGs. The basic outline of AGEY was discussed in a meeting of State Transport Ministers of 13 States held in June 2016 at Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh and all the Transport Ministers had expressed their appreciation of this initiative.
- AGEY will be initially implemented in 250 Blocks in the country on pilot basis with each Block provided upto 6 vehicles to operate the transport services.
- During the current year implementation of the scheme has been so far approved for 52 Blocks in 8 States namely Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand and West Bengal with a total provision of Rs.16.06 Crore of which the Government of India share would be Rs.10.16 Crore. The balance funding would be provided by the respective States.
- The Blocks will be selected by States from among the Blocks where NRLM is being implemented intensively and where mature CBOs are already functioning. Backwardness, lack of transportation links and sustainability of service would be the guiding factors in the selection of Blocks and routes.

India's first aviation university to open in UP's Rae Bareilly next week

- The country's first aviation university at Fursatganj in Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareilly district is all set for inauguration on August 18.
- Civil aviation minister Ashok Gajapathi Raju, his deputy Jayant Sinha, Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, Congress vice-president and Amethi MP Rahul Gandhi, among others are expected to attend the inaugural event
- The Cabinet had in 2013 given its approval to the proposal for setting up of the university.

- The Rajiv Gandhi National Aviation University Bill, 2013 had received the assent of the President of India and published in the Gazette of India on September 19, 2013.
- About 26.35 acres of land available with the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi, an autonomous flying training institute under the central government, was identified for setting up of the RGNAU in its first phase (2013-14 to 2018- 19).
- Fursatganj lies at the border of Rae Bareli and Amethi.
- In line with its objective of promoting aviation teaching and training, RGNAU has signed an MoU with GMR Aviation Academy for Joint PG Diploma in Aviation/ Airport Operations which is an employability oriented program focused at providing trained manpower to the industry, officials said.
- The university is also planning to launch MBA programme in aviation management in near future, they said, adding RGNAU shall also be affiliating colleges/ institutes for BSc (Hons.) in aircraft maintenance.

Indian Coast Guard ship 'Shaurya' commissioned in Goa

- Indian Coast Guard ship "Shaurya", the fifth in the series of six 105-metre offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) commissioned in Goa by Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan.
- The OPV, which draws 2,350 tonne and is propelled by 9100 kilowatt diesel engine, has been designed and built indigenously by Goa Shipyard Ltd and is fitted with state-of-the-art navigation and communication equipment, sensors and machineries.
- The features include 30mm CRN 91 Naval Gun, integrated bridge system, integrated machinery control system, power management system and high-power external fire fighting system
- The ship will be based at Chennai and operate under the operational and administrative control of Commander Coast Guard Region (East) and will be deployed extensively for Exclusive Economic Zone surveillance, apart from safeguarding India's maritime interests.

Odisha govt and Facebook launches 'SheMeansBusiness' programme to train women entrepreneurs

- Chief minister Naveen Patnaik launched 'She Means Business' programme of Facebook for women entrepreneurs in Odisha.
- Under the scheme 25, 000 women entrepreneurs and self-help group (SHG) members will be given training on digital marketing skills within next one year.

- Odisha government's partnership with Facebook aimed to reduce the digital divide and empower nearly 25,000 women entrepreneurs and SHGs.
- It is the job of government to empower people to aspire high with the faith that their aspirations will be turned into reality

Environment Minister launches 'Gaj Yatra' to mark World Elephant Day 2017

- Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, launched 'Gaj Yatra' here today, a nationwide campaign to protect elephants on the occasion of World Elephant Day. The campaign is planned to cover 12 elephant range states.
- World Elephant Day is an annual global event celebrated across the world on August 12, dedicated to the preservation and protection of elephants. The goal of World Elephant Day is to create awareness about the plight of elephants and to share knowledge and positive solutions for the better care and management of captive and wild elephants.
- African elephants are listed as "vulnerable" and Asian elephants as "endangered" in the IUCN Red List of threatened species. As per the available population estimates, there are about 400,000 African elephants and 40,000 Asian elephants.

First South Asian Youth Summit to be held in India

- The first South Asian Youth Summit-2017 is all set to be organised in the Bhubaneswar City of Indian state of Odisha from September 17.
- The four-day Summit would focus on a wide range of problems being faced by youths of South Asia and discuss their solutions
- Ministers of all eight SAARC member countries would participate in the Summit to discuss culture, tourism, peace and infrastructure development in South Asia as well as sustainable development goal adopted by the United Nations

PM Narendra Modi Launches Website To Honour Gallantry Award Winners Since Independence

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a website to honour all the gallantry award winners since Independence.
- The portal will preserve and tell the stories of our bravest men and women, civilians as well as armed forces personnel".

- In remembrance of our heroes who have been awarded gallantry awards since Independence, launched the site <http://gallantryawards.gov.in>

India's first railways disaster management centre to come up near Bengaluru

- Trains falling into rivers and coaches catching fire will be common sights in the country's first 'railways disaster management village' expected to come up on the outskirts of Bengaluru by December next year.
- The railways has earmarked the 3.32 sq km village of Hejjala, with a population of 3,483 people, to develop its Disaster Management Institute and Safety village at a cost of Rs44.42 crore
- The focus is on imparting state of the art training on rescue, medical relief and rolling stock restoration techniques in a classroom and also using various simulated teaching aids. However, it is the practical reproduction of accidents on site and the ensuing rescue operations that are being touted as the big ticket venture.

India's first online course on Infusion Therapy launched

- A global authority in infusion therapy launched India's first online course on Infusion Therapy for nurses, under which it aims to train over 3,000 nurses in the vital medical procedure.
- Announcing the initiative, which will boost nurses even in rural parts of India, INS said that utilising the reach and ease of the digital platform, the course will enable members to access the various infusion therapy modules and presentations through its website.
- Infusion therapy means the administration of a drug intravenously, but the term also may refer to situations where drugs are provided through other non-oral routes, such as intramuscular injections and epidural routes.

Odisha: Special programme to prevent spread of malaria

- A special programme would soon be launched to prevent the spread of malaria in remote areas of Odisha's Ganjam district.
- The programme has been christened as "Durgama Anchalare Malaria Nirakaran" (DAMON).
- The health officials have identified over 135 remote villages under the jurisdiction of five community health centres as malaria prone areas.

- The community health centres have been identified as Patrapur, Adapada, Badagada, Dharakote and Gallery
- People testing positive for malaria will be provided treatment under the programme. Besides other diseases like malnutrition among the children and complicity among the pregnant women will also be identified in the camps and necessary treatment will be provided

Maharashtra Launched Namu Yuva Rojgar Kendra

- Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has launched Namu Yuva Rojgar Kendra, a farmers' market on wheels, which aims at delivering farm-fresh organic produce at reasonable prices.
- A total of 125 farm-to-home delivery vans will tour the city to sell the produce. So far, 10 vehicles with fresh farm produce have been rolled out in the city.
- The remaining 115 vehicles to be launched within a month. The vegetables sold in the mobile vans will be priced 25% lower than the average market rate.
- The initiative aims to generate jobs for uneducated youth and women.

BSE's IndiaINX to commence gold options from Aug 30 at GIFT IFSC

- The international exchange from BSE, IndiaINX, on Monday received an approval from the regulator, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), to commence trading in Gold Options contracts - the first for India at GIFT IFSC.
- The underlying asset for the options will be IndiaINX Gold Futures, while the instrument type will be OPTCOM. Current Contract value with Strike price+ Premium will be \$ 32, and Contract Size will be One India Inx Gold Futures contract.
- Minimum tick size is \$ 0.1. The options types will be premium style European Call & Put Options, while contract months will be January, March, July, September and November.
- This instrument will give the buyer a right to buy or sell an underlier at a preset price on a future date. Considering the other gold contracts on BSE's India INX, we are clocking daily average turnover of \$ 35 Million

Sankara Rao to be IFCI Chief Executive

- IFCI Ltd, a government company, is set to have a new Managing Director & CEO in E Sankara Rao, who is currently Chief General Manager at India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL).
- The Appointments Committee of Cabinet has given its nod for the Department of Financial Services (DFS) proposal to appoint Emandi Sankara Rao as Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of IFCI Ltd, official sources said.
- A formal order from DFS is expected soon. Rao's appointment will be valid for three years. Rao is also currently a director and chief executive officer at IIFCL Asset Management Company Ltd.

India moves to revive TAPI gas pipeline

- India will host the next steering committee meeting of the proposed 1,814 kilometre-long Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline, senior officials on both sides confirmed.
- The decision was came during the sixth joint Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) meeting on trade, economic, scientific and technological cooperation.
- The pipeline, that had its ground-breaking ceremony in December 2015, has seen flagging interest since then for a number of reasons. India's effort is to tap Turkmenistan's Galkynysh gasfields, which are the fourth largest in the world.
- The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline (TAPI), also known as Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline, is a natural gas pipeline being developed by the Asian Development Bank.
- The pipeline will transport Caspian Sea natural gas from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan into Pakistan and then to India. Construction on the project started in Turkmenistan on December 13th, 2015. The pipeline is expected to be operational by 2019.
- The abbreviation TAPI comes from the first letters of those countries. Proponents of the project see it as a modern continuation of the Silk Road

Cabinet approves creation of a single non-lapsable corpus fund

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has accorded its approval today for the creation of a non-lapsable pool in the Public Account for secondary and higher, education known as "Madhyamik and Uchchatar Shiksha Kosh" (MUSK) into which all proceeds of "Secondary and Higher Education Cess" will be credited.

- The funds arising from the MUSK would be utilized for schemes in the education sector which would be available for the benefit of students of secondary and higher education, all over the country.
- The major benefit will be enhancing access to secondary and higher education through the availability of adequate resources while ensuring that the amount does not lapse at the end of financial year.
- Ongoing Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan Scheme and other approved programs including: National Means-Cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme and National Scheme for Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education.

India opens first Partition museum 70 years after bloody event

- In the 70 years since India and Pakistan were created from the former British Empire, there has never been a venue focused on the stories and memorabilia of those who survived that chaotic and bloody chapter in history — until now.
- A new museum on the Partition of the Indian subcontinent opens this week, as the two South Asian giants mark seven decades as independent nations.
- The exhibitions, housed in the red-brick Town Hall building in the north Indian border city of Amritsar, include photographs, newspaper clippings and donated personal items meant to tell the story of how the region's struggle for freedom from colonial rule turned into one of its most violent episodes, as communal clashes left hundreds of thousands of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs dead and another 15 million displaced from their ancestral homes.

Karnataka launches 'Indira Canteen' in Bengaluru

- 'Indira Canteen', aimed at serving the poor at subsidized rates, was inaugurated in Bengaluru on Wednesday by Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi.
- Mr. Gandhi, who had the first breakfast at the canteen in Jayanagar, said 'Indira Canteens' would serve the migrants who came to Bengaluru with a dream to build something. "No person in Bengaluru should ever go hungry and the canteens are a great means towards it," he said, asking the government to give much attention to cleanliness and taste.
- Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that Indira Canteens was a continuation of the Congress's commitment to a hunger-free Karnataka.

Environment Minister Launches "Harit Diwali, Swasth Diwali" Campaign

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, launched the "Harit Diwali, Swasth Diwali" campaign. Addressing a gathering of about 800 children from schools of Delhi and NCR, the Minister impressed upon the children the importance of their contribution towards reducing pollution by not bursting harmful fire crackers during Diwali.
- As a part of the campaign, the Environment Ministry will undertake various activities to create awareness among various stakeholders and encourage people to participate in combating air pollution.

PM addresses Young Entrepreneurs at the "Champions of Change" initiative organised by NITI Aayog

- The Prime Minister interacted with Young Entrepreneurs at the "Champions of Change" initiative organised by NITI Aayog at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra.
- Six groups of Young Entrepreneurs made presentations before the PM on themes such as - Soft Power: Incredible India 2.0; Education and Skill Development; Health and Nutrition; Energizing a sustainable tomorrow; and Digital India; New India by 2022.
- The Prime Minister described the "Champions of Change" initiative as one effort to bring together diverse strengths for the benefit of the nation and society.
- The Prime Minister said this initiative would be taken forward and institutionalised in the best possible way. One possibility could be to associate the groups that made presentations today, with the respective departments and Ministries in the Union Government.

Govt extends tax exemption for industry in North East, hilly states

- As many as 4,284 industrial units in the North East and the Himalayan States will get GST relief in the form of a refund of Central share of CGST and iGST.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Wednesday gave its nod for a new scheme to refund the Central share of Central GST (CGST) and integrated GST (iGST) to these units in lieu of the excise exemption lost due to the onset of goods and services tax (GST) and scrapping of excise laws from July 1 this year.

- The 4,284 eligible industrial units were granted excise duty exemption for the first 10 years after commencement of commercial production under the North East Industrial and Investment Promotion (NEIIPP) 2007 and package for special category States for Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh to promote industrialisation.
- Under the scheme, if the Centre collects, say, Rs.100 in the form of CGST and iGST, then the aggregate refund will only be Rs.58, that being the Centre's share under the devolution formula approved by the Finance Commission

Cabinet clears stalled Bihar dam project

- The Union Cabinet has decided to revive the North Koel Reservoir Project, stalled since 1993, and claims it will irrigate over 40,000 hectares in some of the most backward and drought-prone regions in Jharkhand and Bihar.
- However, the centre piece of the project, the Mandal dam, will be made smaller than proposed and capacity reduced by up to 85%, to accede to environmental and forest norms.
- The dam threatened to submerge portions of the Betla National Park and the Palamau Tiger Reserve and in its truncated avatar will cause only "minimal" submergence of the reserve
- The National Wildlife Board cleared the project two months ago but imposed conditions.
- A 24 MW power project that was to be part of the original design has also been scrapped.

TRIFED celebrates World Honey Bee Day

- To create awareness about Beekeeping and uses of its products including Honey, Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) is celebrating World Honey Bee Day (WHBD) on 19.08.2017 in the Country and on 18.08.2017 at all its Regional Offices and 43 Retails Outlets spread in the country.
- TRIFED is an apex organisation at National Level and functioning under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal Affairs. TRIFED is serving the interests of Tribals, who are engaged in collection of NTFP and making of Tribal Art & Handicraft Products for their livelihood so as to ensure better remunerative price for their products as well as for the socioeconomic betterment through Self Help Groups, Empanelled NGOs, State level Tribal Development Corporations, Forest Development Corporations for undertaking marketing development of the tribal products.

MyFASTag apps launched by NHAI

- National Highways Authority of India has launched two mobile Apps, MyFASTag and FASTag Partner.
- These mobile apps will help in the availability of FASTags for Electronic Toll Collection.
- The cumbersome method of purchase and recharge of FASTags has been one of the major challenges. The mobile Apps launched will ease the process, making it possible to buy or recharge FASTags at the click of a mobile button.
- MyFASTag is basically a consumer App that can be downloaded from the App Store for both Android and iOS systems.
- A consumer can purchase or recharge FASTags on this App.
- The App also helps to keep track of transactions and provides for online grievance redressal
- From 1st October 2017, all lanes of all 371 NHAI toll plazas in the country will become FASTag enabled. One lane in every toll plaza will be a dedicated FASTag lane where no other form of payment will be accepted.

CCEA approves proposal of DIPAM for strategic disinvestment

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, CCEA has approved the proposal of Department of Investment and public Asset Management, DIPAM for the strategic disinvestment.
- The approval will help in speedy completion of strategic disinvestment transactions.
- The department will set up an alternative mechanism comprising of the Finance Minister, Minister for Road Transport and Highways and Minister of Administrative Department, to decide on the matters relating to terms and conditions of the sale from the stage of inviting of Express of Interests till inviting of financial bid.
- It will also empower the Core Group of Secretaries to take policy decisions with regard to procedural issues and to consider deviations as necessary from time to time for effective implementation of decisions of CCEA.

Navika Sagar Parikrama : Indian Navy's all women team to circumnavigate globe

- A six-member all-woman team of the Indian Navy will set sail in early September to circumnavigate the globe on the sailing vessel, INSV

Tarini. This is the first-ever Indian circumnavigation of the globe by an all-woman crew.

- Titled Navika Sagar Parikrama, the voyage will begin from Goa in the first week of September and culminate on their return in March next year. The distance will be covered in five legs, with stop overs at four ports — Fremantle (Australia), Lyttelton (New Zealand), Port Stanley (Falklands) and Cape Town (South Africa).
- INSV Tarini is a 55-foot sailing vessel, which has been built indigenously, and was inducted in the Navy early this year.

SDMC launches 'terminator train'

- A special train called the 'mosquito terminator' was pressed into service on Friday by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), in collaboration with the Northern Railway, to spray anti-larval chemicals along the tracks to control mosquito breeding.
- To fight vector-borne diseases such as dengue and chikungunya, insecticide will be sprayed using power sprayers, which will be attached to trucks placed on the train.
- The power sprayers will allow the insecticide to be sprayed around 60 metres on both sides of the track.

Defence Ministry approves delegation of powers to Border Roads Organisation

- The Ministry of Defence has decided to delegate administrative and financial powers to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to avoid delays on account of references between the Chief Engineer, HQ DGBR and the Ministry.
- The Defence Ministry intends to bring transformational changes in the organisation in order to improve the pace of execution of works and to achieve desired outcomes according to the requirement of the armed forces.
- Enhancing the powers at all levels in the BRO, the Ministry of Defence has now approved that for both departmental and contractual mode of execution, a chief engineer of the BRO can accord administrative approval up to Rs. 50 crore, ADGBR up to Rs. 75 crore and DGBR up to Rs. 100 crore.
- The Ministry of Defence has approved policy guidelines based on which the BRO may engage big construction companies for taking up road projects on a turnkey basis.
- It is expected that with a delegation of powers by the Ministry of Defence to the BRO, the pace of road construction in border areas

would improve and the BRO would be able to complete ongoing and new projects in compressed timelines.

Swasth Bachche, Swasth Bharat': HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar Launches KVS Initiative

- 'Swasth Bachche, Swasth Bharat' Programme, an initiative of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan to prepare a physical Health and Fitness Profile Card for more than 12 lakhs of Kendriya Vidyalaya students was launched in Kochi.
- Swasth Bachche, Swasth Bharat programme will provide a comprehensive and inclusive report card for children covering all age groups and children of different abilities.
- It also intends to imbibe values of Olympics and Paralympics amongst students. Bring back the childhood amongst children and make physical activity and recreational games an integral part of learning process, Motivating potentially outstanding performers in various games and sports of excellence, using technology for data capture and analytics, and giving access to schools, parents and teachers are also the objectives of the programmes.

Cloud seeding begins in Karnataka

- The cloud seeding experiment taken up at cost of Rs.35 crore, called Project Varshadhari, began on Monday.
- This cloud seeding operation, a first in Magadi and Ramanagaram, aims to condense small water particles by clouds (size less than 10 microns) to droplets of 50 microns, which can constitute rains.
- The flight for cloud seeding - BQ-100 Beechcraft - was scheduled to take off from Jakkur Airport at 2.45 p.m.
- The flight is expected to a one-hour sortie and will spray Silver Iodide, Sodium Chloride and Potassium Chloride to condense the water particles.
- A committee, comprising meteorologists, experts in cloud physics and hydrologists, will monitor the process.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh launches digital police portal

- A digital police portal under the CCTNS project, which aims to create a national database of crimes and criminals, was launched by Home Minister Rajnath Singh.

- The police portal will provide 11 searches and 46 reports from the national database for state police and central investigation agencies.
- Central investigating and research agencies have also been provided logins to the digital police database to access crime statistics
- Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems Project (CCTNS) has enabled 13,775 out of 15,398 police stations to enter 100 per cent data into the software.
- The CCTNS project will interconnect about 15,398 police stations and additional 5,000 offices of supervisory police officers across the country and digitise data related to FIR registration, investigation and charge-sheets in all police stations.
- This would lead to development of a national database of crimes and criminals, the official, privy to the development

Andhra Pradesh first to implement Bharat QR digital payments

- Andhra Pradesh's Eastern Power Distribution Company Ltd (EPDCL) and the Southern Power Distribution Corporation of AP Ltd (SPDCL) have become the first state-owned distribution companies in India to accept payments through Bharat QR, the world's first interoperable quick response code acceptance solution launched by the Reserve Bank of India.
- As part of the 'Vizag less-cash city' initiative underway between Visa and the Andhra Pradesh government, the state has witnessed a slew of initiatives aimed at increasing the rate of digital payment adoption across the masses
- The Vizag Digital Dhan Sankalp project is an initiative spearheaded by the Government of Andhra Pradesh and Visa, to develop Visakhapatnam into India's first "less-cash" city.
- Visa and bank partners will focus on driving the digitization for a range of key use cases determined to significantly boost the rates of cashless payments.

SC strikes down instant triple talaq

- The Supreme Court banned on Tuesday a controversial Islamic practice of instant divorce as arbitrary and unconstitutional, in a landmark verdict for gender justice that will stop Muslim men calling off a marriage on a whim.
- In a split verdict, three of the five all-male judges on the case said the practice of saying "talaq", or divorce, three times in one go – sometimes even over email and WhatsApp – violated women's right to equality and was not integral to Islam.

- The dissenting note came from Chief Justice of India JS Khehar and justice S Abdul Nazeer, who argued instant talaq should be suspended and the government asked to bring a law to regulate the practice within six months. The majority verdict overrides the minority view.
- Muslim men in India can still divorce using two other forms of talaq that have a three-month cooling off period. Muslim women usually divorce using a practice called Khula. Instant talaq, or “talaq-e-biddat”, is banned in 22 Muslim-majority countries, including Pakistan, for being sinful and arbitrary.

Cabinet Approves Indo-Nepal MoU On Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Nepal on Drug Demand Reduction and Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and precursor chemicals and related matters.
- The MoU indicates the mechanism of information exchange and the competent authorities in the two countries who are responsible for the implementation of the MoU and exchange of any information.
- Cooperation on drug matters is expected to curb the illicit traffic of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals in the two countries.
- The MoU provides that the parties shall endeavour to develop mutual cooperation with a view to resolve the issue of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors.
- It also aims to exchange information of operational, technical and general nature in drug matters, exchange literature on their existing laws, rules, procedures, best practices and methods of curbing illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors and any further amendments to the existing legislation.

Cabinet approval for panel to study quotas within OBC quota

- The union Cabinet approved the setting up of a commission to examine the sub-categorization of almost 5,000 castes in the central list of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) to ensure a “more equitable distribution” of reservations in central government jobs and educational institutions.
- Under Article 340 of the Constitution, the President would be recommended to constitute a commission that would examine the central list of OBC and sub-categorise it.

- The proposal is that there will be sub-categorisation within the OBC list for the purposes of central government employment,

40-member panel to select films for IFFI

- The Information and Broadcasting Ministry today constituted a 40-member 'preview committee' with filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri as its convenor to select movies for the international film festival at Goa.
- Other members of the new committee include Agnihotri's wife and actress Pallavi Joshi, author and Padma Shri-awardee Narendra Kohli and actress Hrishitaa Bhatt
- Film editor Aarti Bajaj, film critic and screenwriter Khalid Mohamed, and film director Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury are among the other members of the newly-constituted committee.
- The International Film Festival of India (IFFI) will be held in Goa from November 20 to 28.

NITI Aayog to launch 'Mentor India Campaign'

- In an attempt to catch young talent, NITI Aayog- country's premier think tank, is launching the 'Mentor India Campaign', a strategic nation building initiative to engage leaders who can guide and mentor students at more than 900 Atal Tinkering Labs, established across the country as a part of the Atal Innovation Mission.
- The nationwide campaign will be unveiled by the Chief Executive Officer of the NITI Aayog, Amitabh
- Mentor India is aimed at maximizing the impact of Atal Tinkering Labs, possibly the biggest disruption in formal education globally.
- The idea is to engage leaders who will nurture and guide students in the Atal Tinkering Labs. These labs are non-prescriptive by nature, and mentors are expected to be enablers rather than instructors

Right To Privacy Is Fundamental Right Under Constitution, Declares Supreme Court

- A nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court has ruled that Indians enjoy a fundamental right to privacy, that it is intrinsic to life and liberty and thus comes under Article 21 of the Indian constitution.
- The bench, led by Chief Justice J.S. Khehar, pronounced a unanimous judgement even if the judges had slightly different arguments as to how privacy is intrinsic to right to life and liberty.

- The bench comprised Chief Justice Khehar and Justices J. Chelameswar, S.A. Bobde, R.K. Agrawal, Rohinton Nariman, A.M. Sapre, D.Y. Chandrachud, Sanjay Kishan Kaul and S. Abdul Nazeer.

Sushma inaugurated first Videsh Bhavan

- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj inaugurated the country's first Videsh Bhavan at the Bandra Kurla Complex
- As a pilot project, four offices of MEA — Regional Passport Office, Protector of Emigrants office, Branch Secretariat and Regional Office of ICCR — have been assimilated and brought under one roof.
- The pilot project of the Videsh Bhavan of Mumbai is part of the Centre's policy to bring together different offices of the MEA under a single roof and work closely with states as more and more Indians are going abroad for employment, education, business and tourism.
- Currently, many of the 90-plus RPOs and PoEs function from rented offices and the implementation of Videsh Bhavans in different state capitals is expected to cut costs besides ensuring improving efficiency and hastening delivery of services.

CCEA nod to rename food processing scheme as PM Kisan Sampada

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) today approved renaming the new central food processing scheme SAMPADABSE 4.95 % as Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) with an aim to benefit 20 lakh farmers and generate 5.30 lakh jobs by 2020.
- The objective of the PMKSY is to supplement agriculture by promoting processing and reducing farm wastage.
- The scheme with an allocation of Rs 6,000 crore is expected to leverage investment of Rs 31,400 crore
- The CCEA today approved a proposal to rename the scheme SAMPADA as PMKSY for the period 2016-20 coterminous with the 14th Finance Commission cycle,
- The PMKSY will promote setting up of food processing units to boost availability of processed food items in the domestic market and for export purpose. The scheme will encourage creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet.

National Sports Museum to be established in New Delhi

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports is going to establish National Sports Museum, first of its kind, at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi.
- Museum will showcase India's achievements in sports and also focus on the traditional sports within the country.
- The aim of the Museum is to popularise the sports as a way of life within the country. Accordingly, the proposed Museum would go beyond the classical approach of a collection of memorabilia to become an interactive venue of interest for all age groups.
- In addition, Shri Goel said, it will display achievements of the Indian greats in sports and also act as an educational hub and offer opportunity for the young to delve into some sporting activity.

Government finalises new cadre policy for IAS, IPS officers

- The new policy for cadre allocation has been finalised by the Central government for IAS, IPS and other officers, aimed at ensuring "national integration" in the country's top bureaucracy.
- Officers of all-India services -- the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service (IFoS) -- will have to choose cadres from a set of zones instead of states. The new policy will seek to ensure that officers from Bihar, for instance, will get to work in southern and north-eastern states, which may not be their preferred cadres
- Under the new policy, candidates appearing for the civil services examination-- conducted annually by the Union Public Service Commission -- will have to first give their choices in a descending order of preference from among the various zones.

PM greets people of Odisha on the occasion of Nuakhai Juhar

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has greeted the people of Odisha on the occasion of Nuakhai Juhar.
- Nuakhai or Nuankhai is an agricultural festival mainly observed by people of Western Odisha in India.[6] Nuakhai is observed to welcome the new rice of the season.
- According to the calendar, it is observed on Panchami Tithi (the fifth day) of the lunar fortnight of the month of Bhadrapada or Bhadra (August–September), the day after the Ganesh Chaturthi festival.
- This is the most important social festival of Western Odisha and adjoining areas of Simdega in Jharkhand

Odisha launches grid connected roof top solar projects

- With an aim to promote renewable energy in Odisha, chief minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday launched grid connected rooftop solar projects.
- Under the programme, the consumers can install small solar plants on their rooftops and consume the generated solar power during day time.
- Excess power (if any) can be exported to the grid through their service cable.
- The chief minister also launched a web platform www.rtsodisha.gov.in on the occasion that will facilitate different stake holders such as Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency, distribution companies and vendors.

EPFO organizes Tiranga Yatra to Commemorate 75th anniversary of the Quit India Movement

- There are moments in the journey of nations that fundamentally alter the course of history. One such moment was the Quit India Movement that began on 9th August 1942 which finally culminated into freedom of India.
- Thereby the nation is observing the 75th anniversary of Quit India Movement. The Tiranga Yatra is an opportunity to achieve 'Sankalp' to 'Siddhi' towards a 'New India'.
- Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, is participating in the celebrations of 75th anniversary of Quit India Movement by organizing Tiranga Yatra all the stakeholders i.e. workers from different industries, employers from different sectors and staff & officers of Ministry of Labour and Employment including EPFO participated in the Tiranga Yatra organized in Mumbai on 23rd August 2017.
- The Tiranga Yatra was flagged off by the Minister of State (IC) for Labour and Employment, Shri Bandaru Dattatreya, near Indian Oil Office, Bandra (E), Mumbai and culminated at EPFO Regional Office at Bandra (E), Mumbai.

Panel on National Mineral Policy to submit report by Oct-end

- The panel mandated to review the National Mineral Policy, 2008, and suggest a new framework will submit its report by October-end.
- The panel was formed in line with a Supreme Court directive asking the government to take a fresh look at the policy in question.

- The 29-member panel, under the chairmanship of Mines Additional Secretary K Rajeswara Rao—consisting of joint secretaries from ministries like coal, steel, shipping, road, transport and highways and finance as its members, among others—will submit its report by October-end.
- The terms of reference of the committee include reviewing “the National Policy 2008 and suggest a new policy taking into account the measures already taken and may need to be taken for bringing in further transparency, balanced social and economic growth, including sustainability of mining industry,” the ministry said.
- The panel will also make recommendations on conservation and mineral development and protection of environment and steps to assess the carrying capacity of mining in states.

Air Force Chief inaugurates 56th annual aerospace conference

- Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa inaugurated the 56th annual three-day conference of Indian Society of Aerospace Medicine at the Institute of Aerospace Medicine in Bengaluru.
- He highlighted the Institute's role in "the progress made in Night Vision Goggle training" in his speech, calling it "an example of the support aerospace medicine has made to the evolving flying environment".

First-ever transgender beauty pageant held in Gurugram

- The first edition of Miss Transqueen India, a beauty pageant for transgenders, took place in Gurugram
- At the final event, 16 contestants from Delhi, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur, Karnataka and other states will compete to win the Miss Transqueen India title.
- Nitasha, a trans woman who hails from Kolkata, was named the first Miss Transqueen India
- Loiloi from Manipur bagged the first runner-up position and Ragasya from Chennai was crowned the second runner-up.
- The winner will go to Thailand for Miss International Queen, the first runner-up will compete at Miss Transsexual Australia. We are looking for another international pageant so that we can send the second runner-up too,

Govt restricts import of gold, silver items from South Korea

- The government restricted imports of gold and silver items from South Korea in a bid to check spurt in inbound shipments of precious metals from that country.
- The importers will now have to obtain a license from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) for importing gold and silver from South Korea.
- These restrictions are being imposed against the backdrop of sudden surge in imports of precious metal from South Korea, with which India has a free trade agreement since January 2010.
- Gold imports from South Korea has jumped to USD 338.6 million between July 1 and August 3 this year. The import in 2016-17 stood at USD 70.46 million.
- Imports of gold from non-FTA countries, attract 10 per cent customs duty.
- India is the world's second biggest gold consumer after China. The imports mainly take care of demand by the jewellery industry.
- The collections from customs duty and IGST from imports post implementation of GST has almost doubled to Rs 30,000 crore in July.

KSTDC announces special Golden Chariot packages for Dasara

- The Department of Tourism through Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) has planned to launch "Dasara Special Tour Package" in Golden Chariot Luxury Train to promote the State festival.
- Golden Chariot is the South India's first and only luxury tourist train run by KSTDC.
- it would provide an excellent opportunity to people to experience royalty on board, which would showcase the Nadahabba, Mysuru Dasara and its grandeur. This would be a unique opportunity for people to witness Dasara as a royal guest and also experience the great train journey at a subsidized cost.

ICEX launches world's first diamond futures contracts

- The Indian Commodity Exchange (ICEX) launched the world's first diamond futures contracts on Monday to provide exporters with a hedging tool.
- India is a global diamond polishing hub where 14 out of every 15 rough diamonds in the world are polished. At the launch, the first diamond contract for delivery in November was traded at Rs 3,279/cent. One cent is the one-hundredth of a carat (ct).

- ICEX has launched 1 ct diamond futures contract for delivery in November and followed by contracts with monthly settlements.
- 50 cents and 30 cents contracts will be introduced after making the initial contract successful.
- The 1-carat contract for expiry in November, December and January will have delivery centre at Surat. The merger of Ahmedabad-based National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE) into ICEX was also announced.
- ICEX will soon approach the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Ahmedabad, to initiate the merger procedure. After merger clearance, ICEX would automatically get approval for the launch of some agricultural commodities like rubber, coffee.
- ICEX will offer HVS2 quality diamond certified by the International Institute of Diamond Grading & Research (IIDGR), a De Beers group company, and vaulting services will be offered by Malca Amit.

Narendra Modi inaugurates 'hanging bridge' in Kota

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi threw open to traffic Rajasthan's first six-lane cable stayed (CS) bridge in Kota via video conferencing from Udaipur
- The bridge, over Chambal River, has the longest main span of 350 metre in the country and will also act as a bypass to Kota City.
- Meanwhile, large LED screens had been put at the bridge to broadcast the PM's speech from Udaipur and a large number of people arrived at the bridge to witness the ceremony.
- This bridge will reduce commuting time by 60 minutes through National Highway no 27 (Kota-Chittor National Highway) and National Highway no 12 (Kota-Jhalawar NH).

Karnataka to merge health schemes, launch 'Arogya Bhagya

- In a move to ensure medical benefits to entire population of Karnataka, the State government has decided to merge various health schemes and launch unified 'Arogya Bhagya' to cover all the 1.4 crore households.
- The Universal Health Coverage scheme would help the card holder get treatment in all the empanelled private hospitals besides government hospitals to get treatment without paying any cash.
- The main theme of the 'Arogya Bhagya' scheme is "Treatment First and Payment Next".

- All the health facilities will be provided through Aadhaar linked Universal Health Card. For priority households that consists of 1.05 crore families there will be no need to make any contribution
- This include farmer household, teachers from aided schools, Anganwadi, Asha workers, mid-day meal workers, households

Government to hold pan-India handloom, handicraft camps

- The textiles ministry would organise camps across the country from October in handlooms and handicrafts clusters to provide different services including issuance of credit facilities to weavers and artisans.
- These camps, to be organised from October 7 to 17, will be organised under the initiative 'Hastkala Sahyog Shivar'.
- Services that will be provided to weavers and artisans in these camps include issuance of credit facilities through MUDRA scheme; assistance for technological upgradation; distribution of modern tool kits and equipments; issuance of Yarn Pass Book among others.
- It is proposed to organise the camps in more than 200 handloom block level clusters and weavers' service centres and more than 200 handicraft clusters in collaboration with states

Gobindobhog rice gets geographical indication status

- Gobindobhog rice, a speciality from Burdwan district of West Bengal, has got the geographical indication (GI) status. The state government had applied for GI status for Gobindobhog rice on August 24, 2015.
- The region of Burdwan (now divided into the districts of east and west Burdwan) is known as the rice bowl of Bengal. As a result of getting the GI tag, as the certification is also called, rice from other regions or rice of other varieties cannot be branded as 'Gobindobhog'. The marketability of the rice would be strengthened, for the local, national and international markets, government officials said.
- This variety of rice is primarily cultivated in east Burdwan district - in the southern basin of the Damodar river in the Raina 1, Raina 2 and Khandaghosh blocks. Gobindobhog was cultivated in an area of 35 hectares last year. Of this, 20 hectares were spread over Raina 1 and Raina 2 blocks.
- The south Damodar belt has been the traditional area of Gobindobhog rice cultivation.

Room rent in hospitals exempted from GST

- Rent paid by patients for hospital rooms will be exempted from the Goods and Services Tax (GST),
- Issuing clarifications on levy of GST on the tariff for various accommodation services, the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) said the tax on rooms in the hotel, guest house or inns will be payable on the actual amount charged and not on declared or published tariff.
- No GST is applicable on room tariffs of less than Rs 1,000.
- A 12 per cent tax will be levied on the tariff of more than Rs 1,000 and less than Rs 2,500 while an 18 per cent levy would come in for room rents of between Rs 2,500 and Rs 7,500.
- A GST of 28 per cent will be charged on tariff greater than Rs 7,500.

India's first World Peace University inaugurated in MIT, Pune

- Envisioning education through a holistic outlook of knowledge building to establish peace and harmony in the world, the Dr Vishwanath Karad MIT World Peace University located in Pune was inaugurated by chief minister of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis
- Following the celebrations, a two-day 'Global Summit Science and Spirituality for World Peace' was organised discussing issues of national and international importance and how a different outlook towards education could solve many of them.
- "MIT World Peace University is an entirely new concept, a model for a moulding global citizens. There is no difference between science and spirituality.
- Science is looking at the ultimate truth about the nature and universe and spirituality is a look at the ultimate truth of the inner being, the human being. One cannot distinguish himself from God

UP govt decides to end interview in govt jobs

- The Uttar Pradesh cabinet on Tuesday decided to end the process of holding interview for selection of candidates for the government jobs in all the non-gazetted posts of Group B, C and D categories.
- The UP Cabinet also decided to fix the support price of common variety of paddy at Rs 1,550 per quintal, and Rs 1,590 per quintal for grade-A paddy

Friday declared 'Day of Helping Hand' in Andhra Pradesh by CM Naidu

- In a novel pro-governance initiative, Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has declared Friday as the day of the week when he will meet with the poor and underprivileged sections of Andhra Pradesh society to hear their grievances and try to resolve them.
- The day has been declared as the "Day of Helping Hand".

YUVA is Delhi Police initiative under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

- The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the YUVA – a skill development programme and an initiative by Delhi Police under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
- The 'YUVA' initiative by Delhi Police aims to connect with youth by upgrading their skill as per their competencies.
- It will help them to get a gainful employment under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna under the Ministry of Skill Development.
- Delhi Police has tied up with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for providing mass job linked skill training for the selected youth.
- National Skill Development Corporation shall be providing skill training to the youth under 'Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna' (PMKVY) and CII will provide job linked training through its Sector Skill Councils who are connected to industry and thereby provide job guarantee.

INTERNATIONAL EVENT

India-Bhutan trade & transit pact come into force

- India and Bhutan mutually decided to bring into force the 'new' bilateral Agreement on Trade, Commerce and Transit with effect from this July 29, an official statement said on Monday. The new agreement will further strengthen the bilateral trade relations between India and Bhutan, it said.
- The agreement provides for a free trade regime between the territories of India and Bhutan. The agreement also provides for duty-free transit of Bhutanese merchandise for trade with third countries. It was last renewed on July 29, 2006 for ten years. The validity of this agreement was extended (with effect from July 29, 2016) for one year or till the new agreement comes into force, through exchange of diplomatic notes.

- The new agreement was signed on November 12, 2016, and as per its provisions, the pact was to come into force on a mutually decided date.

John Kelly Sworn In as White House Chief of Staff

- John Kelly was sworn in as President Donald Trump's new chief of staff Monday, tasked with bringing order to an often chaotic White House and jump-starting the President's stalled legislative agenda.
- Republicans on Capitol Hill hope Kelly, a retired United States Marine Corps general known for his fastidious nature, will bring order to a White House where disorder -- in the eyes of those on the Hill -- has led to few legislative victories and slumping poll numbers.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi elected as interim Pakistan PM

- Shahid Khaqan Abbasi was elected as the interim Prime Minister of Pakistan by the National Assembly. He will be taking over from Nawaz Sharif, who was disqualified by the Supreme Court over the Panama Papers scandal.
- Abbasi will be sworn in later at a special ceremony at the President's House, where President Mamnoon Hussain will administer the oath to him.
- He first entered into politics after the death of his father Khaqan Abbasi, who was the Minister of production at that time.
- Abbasi won from Rawalpindi in 1988 as an independent candidate. He was reelected in 1990 and became the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence. He also was the Chairman of Standing Committee of National Assembly on Defence.

China opens first overseas base in Djibouti

- China has formally opened its first overseas military base in Djibouti with a flag raising ceremony and military parade.
- More than 300 people attended Tuesday's ceremony, including deputy Chinese naval commander Tian Zhong and Djibouti's defence minister
- The event was timed to coincide with the celebration of the 90th anniversary of the establishment of China's military, the People's Liberation Army, on August 1.
- China began constructing a base in Djibouti last year. It will be used to resupply navy ships taking part in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions off the coasts of Yemen and Somalia, in particular.
- Home to only around 800,000 people, Djibouti also hosts troops from US, France and Japan.

- Djibouti is a tiny barren nation sandwiched between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia. It is at the southern entrance to the Red Sea on the route to the Suez Canal.

India and Somalia sign agreement on transfer of sentenced persons

India and Somalia on Tuesday signed a bilateral agreement for the transfer of sentenced persons, thus deepening humanitarian cooperation between the two countries.

The agreement was signed between External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Somalia Yusuf Garaad Omar. The agreement will help Indian inmates imprisoned in Somalia or vice versa be near their families while serving the remainder of their sentence and also facilitate their social rehabilitation.

BRICS trade ministers meet concludes in Shanghai

- The two-day meeting of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) trade ministers was held in Shanghai
- A six-member delegation led by Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman participated in the August 1-2 meeting.
- The ministers adopted seven documents at the conclusion of the meeting and that includes trade in services cooperation roadmap, e-commerce cooperation initiative and framework on strengthening the economic and technical cooperation, and outlines for BRICS investment facilitation.

Donald Trump signs Russia sanctions Bill into law

- U.S. President Donald Trump has signed legislation imposing new sanctions on Russia into law,
- The U.S. Congress voted last week by overwhelming margins for sanctions to punish the Russian government over interference in the 2016 presidential election, the annexation of Ukraine's Crimea and other perceived violations of international norms.
- The new law allows Congress, which passed the measure to punish Russia over interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the annexation of Ukraine's Crimea, to halt any effort by Trump to ease sanctions on Russia.

- His hands were tied after the Republican-controlled Congress approved the legislation by such a large margin last week that any presidential veto of the bill would have been overridden.

US issues ban on tourist travel to North Korea

- The United States issued a ban prohibiting its citizens traveling to North Korea, a move triggered by the death of a US student imprisoned by Pyongyang during a tourist visit.
- The ban, which comes into effect September 1, was introduced after officials said the "serious risk" of arrest by Pyongyang officials during tourist travel presented an "imminent danger to the physical safety" of its citizens.
- "All United States passports are declared invalid for travel to, in, or through the DPRK unless specially validated for such travel,"

Iran's Hassan Rouhani sworn in for second term

- Iran's President Hassan Rouhani vowed to continue his efforts to end the country's isolation as he was sworn in for a second term on Thursday by supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.
- However, his inauguration came less than 24 hours after fresh sanctions were imposed by US President Donald Trump, who has threatened to tear up the nuclear deal entirely.
- Rouhani, a 68-year-old moderate who has faced fierce criticism from conservatives for his efforts to rebuild ties with the West, issued a call for unity.

Qatar to approve permanent residency for some expats

- Qatar plans to allow some expatriates to obtain permanent residency
- A draft law approved at a cabinet meeting will allow permanent residence to the children of Qatari women married to non-Qataris, as well as expatriates who provide outstanding services to Qatar
- Gulf Arab countries have a high number of expatriate workers but do not allow naturalisation of foreigners, except in rare cases.

USISPF set up to deepen Indo-US ties

- A new representative body -- US- India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) -- is being set up to further enhance business relations between the two countries.

- The non-profit corporation aims to promote bilateral trade and work on creating "meaningful opportunities that have the power to change the lives of citizens"
- The body will work closely together with businesses and government leaders to achieve its goals of driving economic growth, job creation, innovation, inclusion and entrepreneurship, it added.
- USISPFs board of directors will include Chairman John Chambers (Executive Chairman, Cisco), Vice-Chairs Punit Renjen (Global CEO, Deloitte LLP) and Edward Monser (President, Emerson Electric), and board members Indra Nooyi (Chairman and CEO, PepsiCo), and Ajay Banga (President and CEO, MasterCard) Others on the board include Susan Esserman (Partner, Steptoe and Johnson), William Cohen (Chairman and CEO, The Cohen Group), Purna Saggurti (Chairman of Global Corporate and Investment Banking, Bank of America Merrill Lynch), and Frank Wisner (International Affairs Advisor, Squire Patton Boggs), it added.
- Mukesh Aghi will lead USISPF as president while Gaurav Verma will serve as chief operating officer.

Japan marks 72 years since world's first atomic bomb attack at Hiroshima

- Japan on Sunday marked 72 years since the world's first nuclear attack on Hiroshima, with the nation's traditional contradictions over atomic weapons again coming into focus.
- The anniversary came after Japan sided last month with nuclear powers Britain, France and the US to dismiss a UN treaty banning atomic weapons, which was rejected by critics for ignoring the reality of security threats such as North Korea.
- Japan is the only country to have suffered atomic attacks, in 1945.

Indian American appointed US county's Deputy Comptroller for Minority Affairs

- Indian American Dilip Chauhan has been appointed to a key position of Deputy Comptroller for Minority Affairs in New York's Nassau county.
- Chauhan has been active in numerous community and business organisations in the New York area and had joined the Comptroller's office in 2015 as Director for Community Affairs, South and East Asia. He served as senior advisor to the Comptroller since early 2017,
- The Comptroller's Office has been a driving force in advocating for increased business opportunities for Minority and Women Owned

Enterprises (MWBEs) and veterans to meet the county's aspirational goals

8th meeting of Regional Technical Group on Trade, Commerce and Investment CBM of the Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process held in New Delhi

- The eighth meeting of the Regional Technical Group of Confidence Building Measure on Trade, Commerce & Investment Opportunities under the Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process was hosted by India
- The participants shared the view that Afghanistan acted as a natural bridge in promoting regional connectivity and economic integration.
- There was consensus that economic development was an important factor in ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan and the Heart of Asia Region. In this context, the participants shared views on various measures and steps to promote transit and trade and realizing reliable and robust connectivity, with Afghanistan as the hub.
- This included the recognition of the need to make the existing transit and trade agreements more inclusive and comprehensive by expanding them both northwards and southwards to connect South Asia with Central Asia; strengthening growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and involvement of women in economic development, including through women entrepreneurship; and simplifying customs procedures.
- The initiative by India to develop a web portal, with participation of FICCI, for exchanging information on regional markets, trade and investment opportunities; and facilitating networking between businesses for the participating countries was appreciated.

Dhaka to open diplomatic station in Chennai

- Bangladesh will soon open a new diplomatic station in Chennai.
- The new post was likely to focus on medical tourism and educational centres that drew thousands of Bangladesh citizens to India every year.
- The main focus of the new diplomatic station in Chennai will be to address the needs of Bangladeshi citizens who visit India for medical and educational purposes.
- Medical treatment, especially super-specialty treatment of kidney, eye and neurological issues available in southern India, is the best in the region, which draws our citizens to India in large numbers. This has helped build a strong people-to-people bond

- Bangladesh at present has a High Commission in Delhi, two Deputy High Commissions in Kolkata and Mumbai, and two Assistant High Commissions in Guwahati and Agartala. The outpost in Agartala was the latest to be upgraded in the past decade.

Qatar offers visa-free entry to 80 countries, including India

- Qatar announced on Wednesday a programme to allow visa-free entry for citizens of 80 countries to encourage air transport and tourism amid a two-month boycott imposed on the Gulf state by its neighbors.
- Nationals from dozens of countries in Europe and elsewhere including India, Lebanon, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States will now receive tourist visas on arrival to the gas-rich country which hosts the soccer World Cup in 2022.

India placed at 43rd among 45 nations in global innovation index

- In a global retirement index of 43 countries, India has ranked the lowest.
- The index by French asset management company Natixis Global, ranks countries on the basis of four factors -- the material means to live comfortably in retirement; access to quality financial services to help preserve savings value and maximize income; access to quality health services; and a clean and safe environment.
- On all four, India has ranked the lowest. Switzerland, Norway and Iceland top topped the ranking.
- The index ranks 43 countries which include International Monetary Fund (IMF) advanced economies, members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China).
- India ranks 43rd in this year's GRI and has the same score compared to last year but its sub-indices all rank in the bottom five.

Indian Film Festival of Melbourne 2017

- The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) is the biggest Indian film festival outside of the Indian soil, and is an official film festival supposed by the Victoria Government in Australia. This year IFFM will enter its eighth year
- The Amitabh Bachchan and Taapsee Pannu starrer 'Pink' was named the Best Film at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne 2017. Sushant Singh Rajput was named the Best Actor for 'MS Dhoni: The Untold Story' and the Best Actress award was given to Konkona Sen Sharma

for 'Lipstick Under My Burkha'. Meanwhile, Nitesh Tiwari was named Best Director for 'Dangal'.

India, Russia to Hold Major Tri-Service 'Indra' Combat Exercise in October

- In the midst of evolving security situation in the region, India and Russia will hold a mega war game in October involving their armies, navies and the air forces for the first time to further ramp up military ties.
- The exercise Indra, which will be held in Russia from October 19 to 29, will primarily focus on achieving coordination between forces of the two countries in a tri-services integrated theatre command scenario
- It will be for the first time India will participate in a tri-services exercise with a foreign country with such a large scale participation by the Navy, the Army and the Air Force
- The armies, navies and air forces of Russia are holding bilateral exercises separately but this is for the first time, both the countries will carry out a tri-services exercise.
- Russia has been a long-standing defence partner of India and both the countries are now eyeing to further deepen the ties.

Kenya election: Uhuru Kenyatta defeats Raila Odinga

- Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta has been re-elected following Tuesday's election, officials say.
- Mr Kenyatta, in office since 2013, took 54.3% of votes, ahead of his rival Raila Odinga, with 44.7%.
- However, it has been endorsed by international observers.
- Mr Kenyatta said they had ensured a "free, fair and credible election".

Lord Krishna-themed coin to be released by Chad on Janmashtami

- A limited edition silver coin on Lord Krishna will be released on Janmashtami on August 15 by the Republic of Chad in commemoration of the 5,244th birth anniversary of the Hindu God
- This full-dimensional 3D coin weighs 100 grams and has been made of pure silver, numismatist Alok K Goyal, the designer of the coin
- There will be 251 pieces made available for sale in the Indian market out of a total of 501. People who want to buy it have to do it online on

www.headytail.com. The price has been kept at Rs 25,555 per coin with free shipping within India

UN declares Somalia free of polio

- The UN World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Sunday it had not recorded any case of polio disease in Somalia in the last three years, declaring the country polio free.
- The WHO said the country recorded the last case of polio in 2014 in the central part of the country but has since then remained free of the paralyzing disease.
- The UN health agency, however, warned Somalia remained vulnerable, calling for continued vaccination campaign,
- The declaration by WHO keeps Somalia outside the last group of countries which still record cases of polio in the world.
- Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan are the remaining countries where polio is still being recorded. The WHO chief warned Somalia remains at risk of importation of the virus from these countries.
- Norway has the fastest mobile internet in the world: Ookla
- According to global leader in broadband testing Ookla, Norway has the fastest mobile Internet in the world. In only 13 months, Norway has jumped from 11th to first place on the list of world best providers of fast Internet connection
- The development has been specially noticed after Telenor, a major operator in Norway, increased the speed on individual subscriptions last September. Telenor is one of the three operators in Norway that have built their own mobile networks which other operators are hiring.
- The Netherlands and Hungary are ranked number two and three on the list of the world's fastest mobile networks.

India, China to join Indian Ocean exercise

- Despite growing tensions with China, Indian Navy would join the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy in a maiden maritime search and rescue exercise to be chaired by Bangladesh at the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in November this year.
- "Bangladesh, the current Chair, is scheduling a maiden International Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise (IMMSAREX) in November in the Bay of Bengal to be attended by ships and aircraft of the members and observers of the IONS

- The IONS is a regional forum of Indian Ocean littoral states, represented by their Navy chiefs, launched by India in February 2008. It presently has 23 members and nine observers.

India-ASEAN Youth Summit in Bhopal from Aug 14-19

- Over 100 delegates from 10 ASEAN countries - Brunei, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam - will participate in the India-ASEAN Youth Summit to be held in Bhopal from August 14-19.
- The exercise will mark the 25th anniversary of the ASEAN-India dialogue partnership in the ongoing year and also the commemorative years theme of "Shared Values, Common Destiny".
- Apart from the 100 delegates from ASEAN countries, the summit will also have participation of 75 youth leaders from India.

World's most liveable cities: Melbourne ranked Number 1

- The 2017 Global Liveability Ranking was released today by the Economist Intelligence Unit
- The EIU Liveability index scores 140 of the world's major cities in healthcare, education, stability, culture, environment and infrastructure.
- Melbourne tops the index for the 7th time in a row with perfect scores for health, education and infrastructure
- Adelaide equal 5th with Canada's Calgary
- Perth creeps into the 10 at 7th

Qatar launches new direct sea route to Pakistan as Gulf blockade continues

- Qatar has launched a new direct route between the country's Hamad Port and Pakistan's port of Karachi
- The new route was launched on Sunday and it will boost trade between the two countries. It will also offer "fast and secure" corridor for importers and exporters, with transit time of six days from Qatar to Karachi and eight days back
- Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Egypt imposed land, air and sea blockade on Qatar since 5 June, accusing it of financing extremist groups and allying with the Gulf Arab state's arch-foe Iran

Sohail Mahmood Takes Charge as Pak's High Commissioner to India

- Pakistan's High Commissioner-designate Sohail Mahmood arrived in India on Wednesday and took charge at the Indian High Commission.
- He succeeds career diplomat Abdul Basit, who served as the country's envoy for four years.
- He has wide experience in the diplomatic service having served in various Pakistan missions abroad including Washington and New York.
- Mahmood served as the Ambassador of Pakistan to Thailand from 2009-2013.

Cabinet approves MoU between India, Sweden on IPR

- The Union Cabinet cleared MoU signed between India and Sweden on intellectual property right (IPR) cooperation, aimed at benefiting entrepreneurs, investors and businesses.
- This will enable India to exchange experiences in innovation and IP ecosystems.
- The MoU establishes a wide-ranging and flexible mechanism through which both countries can exchange best practices and work together on training programmes and technical exchanges to raise awareness on IPRs and better protect intellectual property rights
- As part of the MoU, a joint coordination committee with members from both sides will be established to exchange best practices, experiences and knowledge on IP awareness among the public, businesses and educational institutions of India and Sweden.

Italy to host fall G-7 interior ministers summit on security

- Italy will host a summit of Group of Seven interior ministers centered on security issues in the fall.
- Italian Interior Minister Marco Minniti says the meeting is being organized at the request of Italy's G 7 partners: Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan and the United States.
- Italy currently holds the rotating helm of the G-7 industrialized nations.
- G-7 summit would probably be held in October.

India signs Global Environment Facility (GEF) Grant Agreement with the World Bank for USD 24.64 Million for Ecosystems Service Improvement Project

- A Grant Agreement from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) of the World Bank of USD 24.64 million for Ecosystem Service Improvement Project" was signed Shri Sameer Kumar Khare, Joint Secretary (MI), Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance on behalf of the Government of India and Mr. Hisham Abdo Kahin, Acting Country Director for India on behalf of the World Bank
- The size of Project is USD 24.64 million which entirely will be financed by the World Bank out of its GEF Trust Fund. The projects duration is 05 years.
- The objective of the Project is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Departments of Forestry and Community Organisations to enhance forest ecosystem services and improve the livelihoods of forest dependent communities in Central Indian Highlands.

China launches first cyber court in e-commerce hub

- China launched its first cyber court specialising in handling internet-related cases in the e-commerce hub of Hangzhou amid a spike in the number of online disputes.
- The Hangzhou Internet Court in Hangzhou, capital of east China's Zhejiang Province will handle cases such as online trade disputes and copyright lawsuits.
- The cases handled by the court will be tried online, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.
- Yesterday, the Hangzhou municipal legislature appointed the president, vice presidents and judges of the court.
- Hangzhou is home to many Internet companies, including e-commerce giant Alibaba.

First regional centre of NDB opens in S Africa

- The first regional centre of the New Development Bank, set up by India and other BRICS nations, was officially opened in Johannesburg by South African President Jacob Zuma and the banks Indian head K V Kamath.
- The New Development Bank (NDB), formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank, is a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) with an initial authorised capital of the bank is USD 100 billion.
- The idea for setting up NDB was proposed by India at the 4th BRICS summit in 2012 held in New Delhi. The creation of a NDB was the main theme of the meeting.

TRAI inks cooperation pact with Malaysia telecom regulator

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has inked an agreement with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission(MCMC) to deepen bilateral cooperation in telecom and broadcasting regulation.
- The two telecom regulators on Tuesday signed a letter of intent (LoI), under which they will exchange information and regulatory best practices.
- TRAI chairman RS Sharma and MCMC chairman Halim Shafie were signatories to the pact, which will enhance cooperation and bilateral ties between the two entities.
- The telecom regulators of India and Malaysia will also undertake joint capacity building exercises in telecom and broadcasting regulation

US sends first-ever shipment of its coal to Ukraine

- The US has sent the first-ever shipment of its coal to Ukraine under a deal between a US mining company and Ukrainian state-run thermal energy producer earlier this year
- This shipment will boost both of our country's economies by supporting jobs in the coal and transportation industries

Madhur Bhandarkar's 'Indu Sarkar' to open '15th Annual Bollywood Festival - Norway'

- Madhur Bhandarkar's 'Indu Sarkar' is all set to open the 15th Annual Bollywood film festival, Norway to be held in September.
- The film is based on a 21-month long period, from 1975 to 1977, when the then prime minister Indira Gandhi unilaterally had a state of emergency declared across the country.

Rajnath Singh to attend SCO meet on disaster in the Kyrgyz Republic

- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh will attend a two-day meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on disaster prevention and relief at Choplon Ata in Kyrgyz Republic beginning today
- Founded in 2001, the SCO member countries are China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan, and the bloc is headquartered in Beijing.

- The participation of India as SCO member will open additional opportunities for giving new impetus to the development of international cooperation in the field of protecting the population and territories from emergency situations within the framework of the SCO and will bring it qualitatively new positions in regional and global formats

Indian Navy Band to Participate in International Military Music Festival in Moscow

- The International Military Music Festival "Spasskaya Tower" is the parade of the best military music bands of Russia and other countries that takes place every year at Red Square in Moscow. This Music Festival is a mega event, where military musicians represent the variety of national, artistic and military traditions of the world.
- Every year about 1500 musicians, military men and other artists from around 40 countries perform at the "Spasskaya Tower".
- The Festival is duly considered one of the largest international events in Russia and attracts tremendous response of the general public.
- A Tri-Services band from the Indian Armed Forces has also been invited to participate and perform in the prestigious event.
- The participation of the Tri- Services Band would foster better ties between the Armed Forces of the two countries and is also a befitting acknowledgment of the professional skills of the Indian Armed Forces bands.
- The Tri- Services Band comprises 07 Officers and 55 PBORs.
- The Naval Band component comprising of 01 officer and 09 musician sailors is being led by Commander Satish K Champion, Command Musician Officer, Eastern Naval Command.

Google brings free WiFi to Indonesia

- Google is extending its successful Google Station program to Indonesia
- The company is partnering with internet service providers (ISPs), venue owners, and system integrators in Indonesia to provide consumers with free access to Wi-Fi at railway stations, universities, and other public areas.
- The expansion of the program, which was first launched in India 18 months earlier, could bring more users online, expanding Google's global footprint
- By extending the program to Indonesia, Google is likely seeking to replicate the success of its Google Station program in India

Festival of India being Organised in Brazil from 31 August to 9 September 2017

- A Festival of India is being organized in Brazil from 31 August-9 September 2017. The Festival will showcase diverse Indian culture, i.e. classical dances, literature, cuisine and Exhibition on Mahatma Gandhi. The following events will be held in the cities of Brasilia, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro:
- Bharatnatyam Dance by Devayani and Group from 31 August-4 September 2017.
- Kathak Dance by Nandini Singh and Group from 1-5 September 2017
- Indian Food Festival from 3-9 September 2017
- Literary Festival from 5-9 September 2017
- Exhibition on Mahatma Gandhi from 31 August-9 September 2017

U.S. imposes first economic sanctions against Venezuela

- Trump administration restricted Venezuela's ability to borrow money from American creditors, a prohibition intended to starve President Nicolás Maduro's troubled government of much-needed cash.
- The Treasury Department, following through on President Donald Trump's threat of economic sanctions, banned debt trades for bonds issued by the Venezuelan government and its state-owned oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela SA, the economy's financial driver.
- But it continued to avoid the penalty that would inflict the most damage on the South American country: an oil embargo.
- The U.S. debt ban could push Venezuela closer to financial default.

Donald Trump signs memo banning transgender recruits from US military

- US President Donald Trump has signed a memo ordering the Pentagon to ban an Obama-era plan of recruiting transgender individuals in the military,
- Trump directed the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Homeland Security with respect to the US Coast Guard, to return to the longstanding practice on military service by transgender individuals that was in place prior to June 2016.
- The memorandum has requested the Pentagon to develop an implementation plan for the ban by February 21, 2018, which should be put in place on March 23, 2018.

Taiwan Launches First Homegrown Satellite From US Air Base

- Taiwan has launched Formosat-5, the first homegrown observation satellite, from an air base in the US, the island nation's National Space Organisation (NSO) announced.
- The octagonal satellite - 2 metres high and 1.2 metres in diameter - cost some 3 billion Taiwanese dollars (\$100 million) and made contact with a station in Norway at 4.13 a.m., Efe news quoted NSO as saying.
- The satellite is equipped with Complementary Metal-oxide-semiconductor sensors to observe the Earth. Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen called the launch a great leap that demonstrates Taiwan's technological progress.

India, Germany ink pact to boost green energy ties

- India has entered into a pact with Germany to improve parameters for grid integration of renewable energies.
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH India on behalf of Germany signed an agreement on technical cooperation under the "Indo-German Energy Programme - Green Energy Corridors (IGEN-GEC)"
- This relationship between GIZ and India will result in improved market mechanisms and regulations and help train manpower in India to ensure grid stability to ensure more and more integration of renewables in the country
- GIZ and MNRE will work on improving market mechanisms and regulations for integration of renewable energies, advancing technical and institutional conditions in specified target states, regions and on a national level, adding human capacities to handle systemic (strategic, managerial, financial, technical) renewable energies integration in an efficient and effective manner.

Five year anti-dumping duty on sodium nitrite imports from China

- The Finance Ministry has imposed a five year anti-dumping duty on Sodium Nitrite imports from China.
- Deepak Nitrite Ltd had filed the petition, which was also supported by Punjab Chemicals & Crop Protection Ltd, seeking sunset review investigations on Sodium Nitrite imports from China, sources said. There are two more producers of Sodium Nitrite in the country - National Fertilisers Ltd and Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers Limited.

- Based on the recommendations of the Designated Authority in the Commerce Ministry in its final findings of its third sunset review investigations, the revenue department has imposed definitive anti-dumping duty of \$ 72.95 per tonne on Sodium Nitrite imports from China.
- Sodium Nitrite is an oxidising and also a reducing agent.
- It is a white crystalline powder mostly used in the pharmaceutical and dye industries, lubricants, lubricants, construction chemicals, rubber blowing agent, meat processing, and textiles.

Kenya just imposed the world's toughest law against plastic bags

- Kenyans producing, selling or even using plastic bags will risk imprisonment of up to four years or fines of \$40,000 from Monday, as the world's toughest law aimed at reducing plastic pollution came into effect.
- The East African nation joins more than 40 other countries that have banned, partly banned or taxed single use plastic bags, including China, France, Rwanda, and Italy.
- Many bags drift into the ocean, strangling turtles, suffocating seabirds and filling the stomachs of dolphins and whales with waste until they die of starvation.
- Kenya's law allows police to go after anyone even carrying a plastic bag.



Two-day Indian Ocean Conference in Colombo from Aug 31

- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will travel to Colombo to participate in the two-day Indian Ocean Conference to be held from August 31 in which Sri Lankan prime minister and president are among key speakers. Foundation, a Delhi-based think tank, will host the IOC 2017 in collaboration with RSIS, Singapore, and NIFS, Colombo—both research and study centres—and the theme of the conference is peace, progress and prosperity
- This will be second IOC conference. The first was held in Singapore last year in partnership with think tanks from Singapore, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh

U.N. nuclear watchdog opens uranium bank in Kazakhstan

- The International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. global nuclear watchdog, opened a uranium bank in Kazakhstan, a \$150-million

facility designed to discourage new nations from enriching the nuclear fuel.

- The Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) Bank in the city of Oskemen, in eastern Kazakhstan, will store up to 90 tonnes of the fuel, enough to power a large city for three years, and sell it to IAEA members if they are unable to procure it elsewhere.
- The LEU Bank will serve as a last-resort mechanism to provide confidence to countries that they will be able to obtain LEU for the manufacture of fuel for nuclear power plants in the event of an unforeseen, non-commercial disruption to their supplies
- Russia has operated a similar bank since 2010 but the one in Kazakhstan will be the first one fully owned and operated by the global nuclear watchdog.

Lebanon gets first animal protection law

- Lebanese President Michel Aoun on Tuesday signed the country's first animal welfare bill into law, guaranteeing that domestic and wild animals will be legally protected from abuse.
- The bill is the culmination of years of lobbying for the protection of animals in the Mediterranean country,
- The law, passed by parliament on August 16, outlines requirements for keeping domestic pets, regulations for zoos and pet shops, and penalties for violations -- including jail time and fines.
- It also outlaws abusing pets or owning wild or endangered animals.
- The trade of rare animals is big business in Lebanon, where prized tigers and lions are often locked in cramped cages, forced to perform in circuses, and paraded by wealthy individuals as status symbols.
- Other countries in the Middle East, including Tunisia and Qatar, also have animal welfare legislation, although enforcement continues to present a challenge.

India-Myanmar to sign MOU for conservation of quake-damaged Pagodas at Bagan

- India and Myanmar will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the conservation of earthquake-damaged pagodas at Bagan during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Myanmar next week.
- The cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Myanmar for the conservation of earthquake-damaged pagodas at Bagan, Myanmar.
- Bagan is a renowned tourist attraction of Myanmar and India's role in rebuilding damaged pagodas at Bagan will be an opportunity to

showcase India's expertise in the restoration and conservation of monuments not only to the people of Myanmar but also tourists from other countries.

- The MoU will be signed during the visit of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Myanmar on September 6-7, 2017.

Cabinet clears pact with Brazil on zebu cattle genomics

- The Union Cabinet today approved an agreement between India and Brazil for cooperation in the fields of zebu cattle genomics and assisted reproductive technologies.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed in October 2016, will strengthen the existing friendly relations between India and Brazil.
- The Union Cabinet was apprised of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and Brazil for cooperation in the fields of Zebu Cattle Genomics and Assisted Reproductive Technologies,
- The MoU will promote the development of genomics and Assistant Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) in cattle through joint activities between the two countries.
- An implementation committee would be created with an equal number of representatives of each party for determining the activities and developing work plans and subsequently their evaluation.

Cabinet approves MoU on "India-Israel Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund"

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Israel on "India-Israel Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund (I4F)".
- India and Israel will make an contribution of four million US Dollars each for the Fund, both equivalent amount, annually for five years. The Innovation Fund will be governed by a joint Board which will consist of four members from each country.
- The activities supported by the Joint Fund would increase the techno-economic collaboration between the two countries by investing in jointly developed technology projects and collaborations based on technological innovation.
- It would leverage the complementary strengths of Israel and India to encourage Israel-Indian joint projects that capitalize on both the national and global marketplace.

PM Modi to attend BRICS summit in China

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Xiamen in China to attend the BRICS summit which will be held from September 3-5
- The BRICS countries are home to 42% of the world's population. Their total share in the global economy has risen from 12% to 23% in the past decade while contributing more than half of global growth.
- China has invited Egypt, Kenya, Tajikistan, Mexico and Thailand as guest countries for the upcoming BRICS summit

Sports

India bags 24 medals at Jordan Open TT

- India have bagged a rich haul of 24 medals at the Jordan Junior and Cadet Open table tennis tournament. The tally includes seven Gold, seven Silver and 10 Bronze medals. In the event held at Amman, India ended as the second best finishers.
- In the cadet singles final, Payas Jain had to be satisfied with the silver after going down to Taipei boy Hsu p-Hsuan 4-11, 6-11, 6-11. The team title was denied to India in the cadet section when Payas, Yashansh Malik and Chinmaya Somaiya found the going tough against Hsu Po-Hsuan, Lin Yen-Cun and Peng Chih who claimed the gold.
- Payas, however, overcame Iran's Mohammad Amin Samadi to win the boys singles title with a 11-5, 11-9, 12-10 triumph. Anargya Manjunath grabbed the singles crown when she scored a 11-7, 6-11, 11-5, 12-10 victory over Taipei's Cheng Pu-Syuan in a needle final contest.

Isner downs Harrison for fourth ATP Atlanta title

- John Isner claimed his fourth ATP Atlanta title, saving a set-point in both sets en route to a 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (9/7) win over Ryan Harrison.
- Second-seeded American Isner notched his second ATP title in as many weeks after lifting the trophy in Newport last week.

Rahul, Manu-Sumeeth clinch titles at Lagos Open

- Indian shuttler C Rahul Yadav and men's doubles pair of Manu Attri and B Sumeeth Reddy clinched the men's singles and men's doubles title respectively at Lagos International challenge in Nigeria.
- Fourth-seeded Rahul surpassed compatriot Karan Rajan Rajarajan
- In the doubles summit clash, top-seeds Manu and Sumeeth, who played at the Rio Olympics, defeated local pair of Godwin Olofua and Anoulwapo Juwon Opeyori 21-13 21-15.

ICC Rankings: Ravindra Jadeja Maintains Top Position, Virat Kohli Stays Fifth

- Star spinner Ravindra Jadeja maintained pole position in the bowlers' list while India skipper Virat Kohli remained static at fifth place in the batting charts in the latest ICC Test Rankings
- In the batsmen's rankings, Cheteshwar Pujara is the top-ranked Indian at the fourth position while opener Shikhar Dhawan climbed 21 places to be ranked 39th.
- The batting list is being topped by Australia captain Steve Smith followed by England's Joe Root and New Zealand's Kane Williamson.
- In the bowlers' chart, Ravichandran Ashwin displaced Sri Lanka captain Rangana Herath to claim the second spot back. Herath is third in the rankings. Pacer Mohammed Shami gained a place to be 23rd.
- Jadeja and Ashwin also maintained second and third ranks respectively in the all-rounders' list. Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan is still perched at the top of the table.

Vijender Singh beats Maimaitiali to win WBO Oriental Super Middleweight title

- The legend of Vijender Singh continued to grow as the Indian boxing star outslugged his Chinese opponent Zulpikar Maimaitiali in a close bout to retain the WBO Asia Pacific Super Middleweight title in Mumbai
- It was double delight for the fans as Singh also snatched the WBO Oriental Super Middleweight title from the Chinese, who is nine years younger to him. It was the 32-year-old Beijing Olympic bronze medallist's ninth successive win in his professional career.

Ankur Mittal wins gold in Asian Shotgun Championship

- Indian shooter Ankur Mittal clinched the individual as well as the team gold medal in men's double trap at the 7th Asian Shotgun Championship in Astana, Kazakhstan on Saturday.

- Mittal shot 71 in the six-man final to finish at the top of the podium.
- With scores of Sangram Dahiya (43) and Mohammad Asab (34) added to Mittal's final total, India managed to bag the top prize in the team event too.
- In the individual event, Dahiya finished fourth, while Asab had to contend with the fifth position.

Ravindra Jadeja becomes top-ranked Test all rounder for first time

- Ravindra Jadeja was already the top ranked Test bowler in the ICC Test rankings but now he is also World No 1 in all rounders after eclipsing Shakib Al Hasan of Bangladesh in the latest rankings announced on Tuesday
- R Ashwin has been removed from his second spot in ICC Test rankings for bowlers with Jimmy Anderson's seven wickets propelling him to World No 2.

Real Madrid beat Manchester United to win European Super Cup

- Real Madrid beat Manchester United 2-1 on Tuesday to lift the European Super Cup for the fourth time as they became the first team to retain the trophy since AC Milan in 1990.
- The UEFA Super Cup is an annual football match organised by UEFA and contested by the reigning champions of the two main European club competitions, the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Europa League.
- The UEFA Super Cup is an annual football match organised by UEFA and contested by the reigning champions of the two main European club competitions, the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Europa League.

At 15, Shapath becomes youngest to figure in TOP scheme

- Budding India shooter Shapath Bhardwaj, aged 15, has become the country's youngest athlete to figure in the government's Target Olympic Podium (TOP) scheme.
- The Meerut-based Shapath, studying in class 10, is among 45 elite athletes, including Olympic medalists PV Sindhu, Sakshi Malik and Saina Nehwal, to be selected for the ambitious scheme.
- TOP Scheme Elite Athletes Identification Committee in the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, which is chaired by ace shooter and Olympic

gold medalist Abhinav Bindra, selected the athletes after evaluating their performance in relation to the international standard.

Davinder Singh Becomes 1st Indian To Qualify For Javelin Finals

- Davinder Singh Kang became the first Indian to qualify for the final round of the javelin throw at the World Athletics Championships while his more fancied compatriot Neeraj Chopra crashed out in the qualification round.
- The 26-year-old athlete from Punjab was under pressure to touch the 83m in his final attempt and he was the last man to take the throw. He did it in style by sending the spear beyond the qualification mark to the huge relief of the Indian camp.
- Thirteen throwers -- five from Group A and seven from Group B crossed the automatic qualification mark of 83m and all of them will compete in the final round on August 12.

Sravanth Malla Clinches Title of National Champion at 2017 South Asian Spelling Bee

- Sravanth Malla correctly spelled the word "Chytridiales," defined as an order of simple, aquatic fungi of the phylum Chytridiomycota, during the 2017 South Asian Spelling Bee finals to clinch the title of national champion and take home a cash prize of \$3,000.
- Sreeniketh Vogoti of St. Johns, Fla., was the first runner-up at the Touchdown Media initiative

Afghanistan hosts its 1st official recognised cricket match

- Afghanistan hosted its first-ever officially recognised cricket match in the form of a One Day between Band-e-Amir and Speenghar, which commenced the Ghazi Amanullah Khan Regional One Day Cup.
- It was the first match to be played since Afghanistan received the first-class and List A status in February 2017.
- Notably, Afghanistan was granted Test status in June.

Anand beats Nepomniachtchi to jump to joint lead at Sinquefield Cup

- Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand defeated Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia in the seventh round to jump to the joint top position in the Sinquefield Cup, a part of the Grand Chess tour.

- The second straight victory with white pieces took Anand to 4.5 points from seven rounds and with just two rounds remaining in the super tournament, the Indian ace now shares the lead with overnight leader Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France and Levon Aronian of Armenia.

Maheshwari Chauhan bags bronze for India at Asian Shotgun Championship

- Shooter Maheshwari Chauhan secured a bronze at the Asian Shotgun Championship to earn India's first women's skeet individual medal at a top international competition
- It was made sweeter when she led her country to the team silver alongside compatriots Rashmi Rathore and Saniya Sheikh.
- The trio shot a total of 190, finishing behind Gold medallists China, who shot 195. Hosts Kazakhstan won the bronze shooting 185.
- India's day was all about Maheshwari though, when she shot 68 out of 75 earlier in the day to finish on top of the qualification pile of 22-shooters.
- It was a quality top six in the final rounds having the likes of Olympic finalists and World Cup Gold medallists Meng Wei of China and Sutiya Jiewchaloemmit of Thailand among others.
- Meng is currently ranked four in the world while Sutiya is ranked fifth.
- Reputations held as Maheshwari bowed out in third place on a score of 40 while China's Meng won gold shooting 55 and Sutiya claimed silver finishing a point behind Meng.

Lakshya Sen wins Bulgaria Open International Series

- Young Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen clinched the Bulgaria Open International Series title after notching up a hard-fought win over Croatia's Zvonimir Durkinjak in the men's singles final in Sofia, Bulgaria.
- The Uttarakhand shuttler, who celebrated his 16th birthday on Wednesday, defeated second seed Zvonimir 18-21, 21-12, 21-17 in a 57-minute match. He had beaten Sri Lanka's Dinuka Karunaratna 21-19, 21-14 in the semi-finals

Asensio stars as Real Madrid stroll past Barcelona in Spanish Super Cup win

- Real Madrid beat Barcelona, 2-0, to complete a 5-1 victory on aggregate in the Spanish Super Cup

- European and Spanish Champions Real Madrid, playing without Cristiano Ronaldo, downed rivals Barcelona 5-1 on aggregate, after a 2-0 second-leg win, to win the Spanish Super Cup.
- This was the Los Blancos' 10th Super Cup, compared to Barcelona's 12. Over the two legs, Real youngster Marco Asensio scored two long-range goals while Messi scored Barcelona's only goal.

Indian Athletes Bag 37 Medals at 7th World Dwarf Games

- The Indian contingent for the World Dwarf Games made the entire nation proud of their achievements as they bagged as many as 37 medals from the games, which were held in Toronto, Canada.
- Incredibly, they managed to secure a top-10 finish in the tournament, having clinched 15 gold, 10 silver and 12 bronze medals at the event.
- Joby Matthew contributed the most to India's medals tally, bagging two golds, three silvers and a bronze.
- Arunachalam Nalini won five medals, including one gold
- Another athlete CV Rajanna won the gold in the 200 metre sprint event while Devappa More won the 100 metre race, becoming the fastest man at the event.

Davinder Singh Kang finishes 12th in javelin final

- Davinder Singh Kang finished 12th in the men's javelin's throw final on the penultimate day of competitions at the World Athletics Championships in London
- Kang, who has become the first Indian to have qualified for the final round in javelin throw in a World Championship, came up with a best throw of 80.02m in his third attempt to end 12th in a 13-man field.
- Johannes Vetter of Germany won the gold with a best throw of 89.89m while Jakub Vadlejch (89.73m) of Czech Republic and Petr Frydrych (88.32m), also of Czech Republic, clinched the silver and bronze respectively.

15-yr-old wins bronze for India at Junior Shotgun World Cup

- Shapath Bharadwaj, a 15-year-old from Meerut, won a bronze medal in the double trap event at the ISSF Junior Shotgun World Cup in Italy.
- Earlier, shooters Lakshay Sheoran and Manisha Keer combined to win a bronze medal in the mixed team trap event.

Italy is currently dominating the event with three golds, three silvers, and a bronze medal

Wayne Rooney announces retirement from international football

- England's record goalscorer Wayne Rooney announced that he is retiring from international football with immediate effect after manager Gareth Southgate tried to recall him to the squad.
- The 31-year-old -- scorer of 53 goals in 119 appearances for his country
- Rooney has looked rejuvenated and happy -- scoring in both their Premier League matches so far -- since he re-signed for the club that nurtured his talent as a teenager before he left for United.

Cristiano Ronaldo wins UEFA Player of the Year award

- Cristiano Ronaldo has won his third UEFA men's player of the year award in four seasons, beating Lionel Messi and Gianluigi Buffon to get the trophy.
- Ronaldo helped Real to a second consecutive Champions League title and finished as the tournament's top scorer with 12 goals last season. He has now won the award three times, one more than Messi.
- Martens guided the Dutch women's team to their first international title when they won the European championship this year.

London to host 2018 table tennis team World Cup

- The 2018 ITTF Team World Cup will be held in London from February 22 to 25 next year, the world table tennis governing body announced.
- The International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) on Wednesday awarded the hosting rights for the event, its second most prestigious team tournament after the World Championships
- The Team World Cup, last held in Dubai in 2015, comprises 12 men's and 12 women's teams which include the host team, Continental Champions, and the other top finishers at the 2016 World Team Table Tennis Championships.

Belgian GP: Lewis Hamilton marks 200th race with victory

- Lewis Hamilton celebrated his 200th Formula One race in style on Sunday with a pole-to-flag Belgian Grand Prix victory for Mercedes that halved Sebastian Vettel's championship lead to seven points.
- Vettel finished second for Ferrari, 2.3 seconds behind, after pushing his rival all the way without being able to get close enough to make a move stick in what amounted to a two-horse race of relentless pressure.

PV Sindhu Becomes Second Indian To Win Silver At World Badminton Championship

- PV Sindhu grabbed a silver medal at World Badminton Championships at Glasgow.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised ace shuttler PV Sindhu for her performance
- She cruised into the final of the Badminton World Championships with an easy win over Chen Yufei of China

World Badminton Championships: Saina Gets Bronze

- Saina Nehwal settled for a bronze medal as her impressive run at the World Badminton Championships came to an end after a heartbreaking loss against Rio Olympics bronze medallist Nozomi Okuhara of Japan in the women's singles semi-finals.
- Saina, who had won a silver medal two years ago at Jakarta, gave everything in a battle of attrition but Okuhara's never-say-die attitude helped her to outmaneuver the Indian in an energy-sapping semifinal clash at the Emirates Arena.

Lionel Messi becomes the first player to score 350 La Liga goals

- There are very few records left for Lionel Messi to break. He's mostly competing against himself in individual honors, trying to set marks that can't be touched by anyone who comes after him. The La Liga goalscoring record is no exception.
- Messi has been La Liga's all-time leading scorer for a few years now — the previous record was held by Telmo Zarra, with 251 career goals. On Saturday, Messi became the first player in La Liga history to reach the 350 goal mark.

Bidhuri seals India's 1st medal at World Boxing C'ships 2017

- Indian boxer Gaurav Bidhuri assured India its first medal at the World Boxing Championships 2017 after defeating Tunisia's Bilel Mhamdi to enter the semifinals of the 56kg event.
- Bidhuri, a wildcard entrant, became only the fourth Indian boxer to secure himself a medal in the World Boxing Championships.
- The boxer was given entry after Bhutan declined the wildcard offer.

14-yr-old beats 36-yr-old to become youngest TT champion

- Japanese table tennis player Tomokazu Harimoto, aged 14 years and 61 days, defeated 36-year-old German Timo Boll in the Czech Open final to become the youngest winner of an ITTF men's singles tournament.
- Harimoto broke the record of China's Yu Ziyang, who was aged 16 years and 30 days when he won the Japan Open in 2014.

Now, athletes can identify prohibited medicines with NPPA, NADA app

- Drug pricing regulator National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) joined hands with National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) to help athletes understand medicines that could contain prohibited substances in sports through its app 'Pharma Jan Samadhan'.
- Through NPPA's app every consumer can know ingredients in a medicine. This will now have an additional feature, which will make it easy for athletes to keep away from medicines that have prohibited substances
- This app will bridge the information asymmetry for athletes and help them to keep away from the prohibited substances

Kerala CM launches U-17 World Cup Kochi host city logo

- Kerala Chief Minister Shri Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday launched the host city logo for Kochi, one of the venues of Fifa Under-17 World Cup.
- The logo represents and reflects Kochi's identity and will be a valuable tool in linking the local community in a global World Cup.
- Alongside the U-17 World Cup India 2017 official emblem, it will form a crucial link in the promotions and communications regarding the host city.
- The host city logo will allow all football fans in Kochi to have a local flavour and will be critical in the promotion of the tournament.

Banking & Finance

RBI slaps Rs 3 crore penalty on Union Bank for KYC non-compliance in two cases

- The RBI has imposed Rs3 crore penalty on state-owned Union Bank of India for "non-compliance" with the directions on Know Your Customer (KYC) norms in two separate cases.
- While in one case a penalty of Rs 2 crore has been imposed, Rs1 crore has been slapped in another case.
- RBI added however that the penalties were imposed due to deficiencies in regulatory compliance and "not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers".

SBI Cuts Saving Account Rate by 0.5% on Balance up to Rs 1 Crore

- The State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, has slashed interest on savings account deposits by 50 basis points to 3.5 per cent on balance up to Rs 1 crore,
- However, the bank will continue to offer 4 per cent interest on savings account balance of Rs 1 crore and above.
- The bank is introducing two-tier saving bank interest rate with effect from July 31. While balance above Rs 1 crore will continue to earn interest at 4 per cent per annum, interest at 3.5 per cent will be offered on balance of Rs 1 crore and below,

Indian Overseas Bank goes live with Bharat Bill Payment system

- Public sector Indian Overseas Bank has offered Bharat Bill Payment System, introduced by the National Payments Corporation of India, for its customers.
- BBPS is an integrated bill payment system that offers inter-operable online bill payments to customers.
- The services include online payments of electricity, telecommunication, DTH, water and gas bills, the Chennai headquartered bank said in a statement.
- Indian Overseas Bank is one of the three public sector banks (apart from Bank of Baroda and Union Bank of India) to get the approval from RBI for providing the service.

Samsung Pay now available for higher variants of State Bank of India debit cards

- The State Bank of India (SBI) and Samsung India on Tuesday announced the availability of payment platform Samsung Pay for

higher variants of SBI debit Card. This will allow SBI debit card holders to make payments using Samsung smartphones at Point of Sale (PoS) card machines at merchant outlets.

- SBI debit card users can also avail introductory cashback benefits upto Rs 500.

Flipkart completes eBay India merger

- E-commerce major Flipkart has completed the merger with eBay India's operations.
- With this, eBay.in will now be a Flipkart Group company.
- The deal was announced in April when the Flipkart group raised \$ 1.4 billion from global technology majors eBay, Tencent and Microsoft.
- In exchange of an equity stake in Flipkart, eBay had made a cash investment of \$ 500 million and sold its eBay.in business to Flipkart.

Airtel Payments Bank ties up with HPCL for ATM services

- Airtel Payments Bank, which has achieved 10 million customer base since launch, has tied up with Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited for enabling all its petrol stations that are typically cash surplus to be used as ATM points for customers of the bank.
- here are around 14,000 HPCL fuel stations will act as banking points for Airtel Payments Bank.
- It also offers facilities such as the opening of the account, cash deposit and cash withdrawal to the payment bank's customers.
- These cashless payments can be made by smart phones (MyAirtel App).

RBI cuts repo rate by 25 bps to 6%, loans may get cheaper

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut interest rates, in line with what the Street was expecting. Repo rate - the rate at the which the central bank lends short-term money to banks - was cut by 25 basis points to 6 per cent from 6.25 per cent. RBI's move comes on the back of inflation running well below its target for consecutive quarters. The central bank had last cut key rates in October 2016.
- The current rate of 6 per cent is the lowest since November 2010.
- The RBI also cut reverse repo rate -- the rate at which the central bank borrows money from commercial banks by 25 basis points to 5.75 per cent from 6 per cent.

- Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate -- the rate at which banks borrow overnight funds from RBI against approved government securities -- and the bank rate were also adjusted to 6.25 per cent.
- SBI also informed the stock markets that it had cut MCLR (marginal cost of funds based lending rate) or its key lending rate, by 90 basis points effective January 1, 2017, on the strength of large inflows in savings and current accounts after demonetisation.

RBI widens Basel-III-compliant asset base of banks

- Ahead of the implementation of the stringent capital requirements under the Basel-III regime from 2019, the Reserve Bank today amended a slew of previous regulations on the same, helping banks shore up their capital buffers and improve liquidity coverage ratios.
- Accordingly, the new amendments widen the assets of banks such as the excess CRR; excess G-secs holdings in SLR; and also excess g-secs under marginal standing facility, which all would now be included in the stock of liquid assets without any limit as also without applying any haircut, the central bank said in a notification.
- The liquid stock will also include marketable securities issued/guaranteed by foreign sovereigns which have only 0 per cent risk weight under the Basel II standardised approach for credit risk; actively traded repo or cash markets operations with zero risks, reserves held with foreign central banks in excess of the reserve requirement.
- Other term deposits with the central bank are not eligible for this. However, if the term expires within 30 days, the term deposits could be considered as an inflow, the RBI circular added.

SBI, Samsung collaborate to advance Digital India initiative

- The State Bank of India (SBI) and Samsung India on Tuesday announced the availability of Samsung Pay for higher variants of SBI debit card, giving a major boost to government's 'Digital India' initiative.
- Samsung Pay works on 2.5 million Point of Sale (PoS) Card machines across the country through its Magnetic Secure Transmission (MST) technology.
- Samsung Pay is currently available on a wide range of Samsung smartphones, enabling consumers to make offline payments without the need for a physical Card.
- "To help more consumers avail of our innovative payment system, we have also introduced Samsung Pay to our mid-segment smartphones

like the Galaxy J7 Pro. We recently introduced Samsung Pay Mini to cater to the unique requirements of mid-segment consumers too,

SEBI forms committee on fair market conduct

- Regulator Sebi set up a committee on 'fair market conduct' which will suggest measures for improving surveillance of the markets and strengthen rules for algo trades, among other norms.
- The panel, under the chairmanship of former law secretary T K Viswanathan, would suggest measures for improvement in PIT (Prohibition of Insider Trading) norms, PFTUP (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices) regulations and mainly related to 'trading plans' and handling of 'unpublished price sensitive information' during takeovers.
- It would be responsible for recommending steps to align insider trading regulations with Companies Act provisions.
- The committee will suggest short term and medium term measures for improved surveillance of the markets as well as issues of high-frequency trades, harnessing of technology and analytics in surveillance
- The other members of the committee are representatives of law firms, mutual funds, retail and institutional brokers, forensic auditing firms, foreign portfolio investors, stock exchanges, chambers of commerce, data analytics companies and the markets regulator.

BigBasket gets nod for FDI in food retail

- After Grofers and Amazon India, online grocery firm BigBasket on Wednesday received the government's nod for foreign direct investment to undertake retailing of food products, which are manufactured or produced in India
- The start-up, which applied for FDI in September last year, will have to spin off a new entity to start this business since 100% FDI is only applicable for food products manufactured or produced in India, whereas currently BigBasket sells other household products such as soap, shampoos etc through its e-commerce channel.
- Last year, three online commerce firms — Grofers, Amazon and Bigbasket — had applied seeking approval for FDI in food retail with an overall investment of \$695 million over a period of time with the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).

NCLT approves Airtel-Telenor merger

- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has approved the proposed merger between Bharti Airtel and Telenor India.
- The tribunal has instructed the companies to hold a meeting of equity shareholders and unsecured creditors.
- The Sunil Bharti Mittal-led company had announced in February that it would acquire the business of Telenor India for an undisclosed sum.
- Airtel would take over its spectrum in all seven circles — Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, UP (East), UP (West) and Assam. It would also acquire its licences and operations, including its employees and customer base of 44 million.
- This would help Airtel augment its overall customer base and network. It will also enable Airtel to bolster its spectrum footprint in the seven circles, with the addition of 43.4 MHz spectrum in the 1800 MHz band.

Mastercard, PayPal expand partnership into Asia Pacific

- Mastercard and PayPal have extended their partnership into Asia Pacific to enhance the consumer experience and make Mastercard a clear payment option with PayPal.
- The deal will expand PayPal's presence at the point of sale and enable Masterpass for Braintree merchants in the region. Additionally, both companies will collaborate to create opportunities to leverage Mastercard's new payment flow technologies, providing increased value to Mastercard cardholders, financial institutions, and PayPal customers.
- PayPal will also have the opportunity to give consumers and small businesses across Asia Pacific the ability to cash out funds held in their PayPal accounts to a Mastercard debit card.

Kotak Bank launches debit card offer for zero balance account

- Private sector Kotak Mahindra Bank will offer debit card at a special price of Rs 99 for the first year for customers who will open account under its zero balance account scheme till September 15.
- The usual annual fee for debit card procured by 811 account holders (zero balance) is Rs 299.
- The name 811, inspired by November 8, 2016, decision of demonetisation, allows customers to open a zero balance account using the bank's mobile application.
- To mark the 70th anniversary of country's independence, the special edition debit card will be available to customers who open an 811 account from August 8, 2017 to September 15, 2017

Amit Kumar Saroha wins silver in World Para Athletics Championship

- India's Amit Kumar Saroha clinched a silver in men's club throw F51 competition in World Para Athletics Championships
- Saroha's best throw of 30.25m, which came in his third attempt, fetched him a silver medal. In the process, the para-athlete from Haryana set a new Asian record in this event.
- Serbia's Zeljko Dimitrijevic retained his title with a world record throw of 31.99m.
- The 32-year-old Saroha had also won a silver in this event in the last edition of the biennial championships in Doha in 2015. He also had won a gold medal in this event in the 2014 Incheon Asian Para Games.

Vijaya Bank opens self-employment training institute in Indore

- Vijaya Bank has disbursed loan sanction letters to beneficiaries who were trained at the Vijaya Bank Self Employment Training Institute (VIBSETI) in Bhenslay Village, Indore, Madhya Pradesh.
- The bank has sponsored three VIBSETIs at Mandya and Haveri in Karnataka and Indore in Madhya Pradesh, where free residential training is provided to low-income groups/ rural youth. So far, more than 50,000 candidates have been trained, 70 per cent of whom have set up their own micro enterprises.



IDFC Bank partners with Zeta for e-payments solution

- For promoting an e – payments solution, private lender IDFC Bank has partnered with digital payments brand Zeta.
- The venture was initiated to launch 'IDFC Bank Benefits'-a payment solution for the corporates that digitally record their employee spends and claims, making the documentation convenient and paperless.
- The digital solution comprises an IDFC Bank Benefits Card and Zeta app which puts together allowances and reimbursements ensured by an employer into one preloaded card.
- As per the offering, the employees will be provided with an option to access the Benefits Card via the Zeta app on their mobile or via the web. This enables the employee to keep a track on spends, entitlement limits and submit claims, digitally, while on-the-move.

ICICI Bank Launches Instant Credit Card Service

- ICICI Bank announced the launch of Instant Credit Card Service, which will enable its savings account customers to get a credit card instantly, in a completely digital and paperless manner.
- This is the first-of-its-kind offering in the Indian banking industry, the private sector lender said in a press release.
- Using the Instant Credit Card Service, pre-qualified customers can apply and get credit card number and other important details online, using which, he/she can immediately start shopping online, without having to wait for the physical card to arrive.
- To apply for an instant credit card, customers can log in through their internet banking account, where they will be shown an option of availing a credit card with their individual credit limits. They can choose from a range of cards.

Sebi launches online registration for custodians of securities

- Markets regulator Sebi has introduced an online registration mechanism for custodians of securities to make it convenient for them to do business.
- The new system would help custodian of securities to complete registration and other regulatory filings with Sebi much faster and in a cost-effective manner.
- All applicants desirous of seeking registration as a custodian of securities are now required to submit their applications online only, through Sebi intermediary portal. Custodian of securities holds shares and other assets in electronic or physical form.

Lok Sabha passes bill approving merger of associate banks with SBI

- The government said the merger of the five associate banks with the SBI will lead to increased capital base and availability of loan, as the Lok Sabha passed the bill approving the amalgamation.
- The Lok Sabha passed the bill to repeal the SBI (Subsidiary Banks) Act 1959, State Bank of Hyderabad Act 1956 and to further amend the State Bank of India Act, 1955, following the merger of five associates with the parent SBI.
- SBI has come in the list of top 50 banks globally and is ranked at the 45th position.
- The merger will bring about increased capital base and increased ability to give loans. Also, small banks will get access to products like mutual funds

- According to the statement of object and reasons of the State Banks (Repeal and Amendment) Bill 2017, after the acquisition of the subsidiary banks by SBI, the subsidiary banks have ceased to exist and, therefore, it is necessary to repeal the State Bank of India (Subsidiary Banks) Act, 1959 and the State Bank of Hyderabad Act, 1956.
- Five associates and the Bharatiya Mahila Bank became part of State Bank of India (SBI) beginning April 1, catapulting the country's largest lender to among the top 50 banks in the world. The five associates that were merged are State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur (SBBJ), State Bank of Hyderabad (SBH), State Bank of Mysore (SBM), State Bank of Patiala (SBP) and State Bank of Travancore (SBT).

MCX gets Sebi approval for launching options contract in gold

- The Multi Commodity Exchange Ltd (MCX) has received markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India's (Sebi) approval to launch country's first gold options contract soon.
- In June this year, Sebi allowed options trading in commodities to deepen the market but permitted each exchange to launch options on futures of only one commodity initially.
- Putting in place strict eligibility criteria, Sebi said options could be launched on futures contract of only those commodities that are among the top five in terms of total trading turnover value of previous 12 months.
- Besides, the average daily turnover of underlying futures contracts of such a commodity in past one year should be at least Rs 200 crore for agricultural and agri-processed commodities, and Rs 1,000 crore for other commodities.
- Exchanges have been demanding for long that options trading in commodities be allowed. While Sebi had agreed to permit options trading last year itself, some legal requirements were holding back the move.
- Sebi had also stipulated necessary guidelines with regard to the product design and risk management framework to be adopted for trading in options on commodity futures.

Canara Bank unveils two new digital services

- State-run Canara Bank unveiled two new digital services for online payments.

- Bharat QR (Quick Response) is for payment settlement at merchant locations and Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) is an integrated bill payment system for net banking customers
- The first service is a mobile application, which enables a merchant to accept payments as settlement for sale of goods or services.
- Merchants enrolled by our bank will be allotted a QR code in line with the Bharat QR code standards. As the solution is interoperable, customers of any bank can make the payment using the mobile banking facility of their bank
- The second product (BBPS), an initiative of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and managed by the National Payments Corp of India (NPCI), offers bill payment services to the bank's net banking customers with network of agents.

Sebi ties up with Securities & Exchange Organization (SEO) of Iran for technical assistance

- Markets regulator Sebi entered into a pact with its counterpart in Iran to promote technical assistance and facilitate cross-border co-operation in the area of securities regulations.
- It will facilitate mutual assistance, contribute towards efficient performance of the supervisory functions, and enable effective enforcement of laws and regulations governing the securities markets.
- The MoU was signed by Sebi chief Ajay Tyagi and SEO Iran chairman Shapour Mohammadi here.
- Sebi has signed nearly two dozen bilateral MoUs with the regulators of various jurisdictions. The markets regulator is also a signatory to the multilateral MoU of International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO).
- In order to encourage the exchange of information and assistance, Sebi has been signing pacts with the jurisdictions who are yet to become a signatory to the multilateral MoU of IOSCO.

IOC buys more US crude; first to purchase Eagle Ford shale oil

- Indian state-refiner IOCBSE 0.41 % bought 1.9 million barrels of US crude in its second import tender seeking oil from the Americas, making it the first Indian refiner to purchase Eagle Ford shale oil
- IOC bought 950,000 barrels of light sweet Eagle Ford shale oil and 950,000 barrels of heavy sour Mars crude for end-October delivery from trading firm Trafigura

- The latest purchase comes after a previous import tender where IOC bought 1.6 million barrels of Mars crude and 400,000 barrels of Western Canadian Select.
- Indian refiners have turned their sights to crude from the Americas as they are keen to diversify their crude import sources as arbitrage opens due to global oil supply cuts.

BitBay launches trading platform for digital currency

- BitBay, one of the top ten cryptocurrency trading platforms in the world, has launched a dedicated platform for trade and exchange of digital currencies such as bitcoin, litecoin, ether, Lisk, monero, dash and gamecredits.
 - The company will also work towards creating awareness about digital currencies and also removing misconceptions related to these currencies in a market like India.
 - BitBay claims to be the only exchange in India that provides trade and exchange of multiple cryptocurrencies, high level security standards, including a "cold wallets" policy and two-factor authentication solutions.
 - It will be offering six digital currencies to keep and trade with local currency and will carry out demo trading from August 10 till August 24.
 - This would be done without real money to make users understand aspects of trading
- 

Facebook launches YouTube competitor called Watch

- In an apparent bid to take on Google-owned YouTube, Facebook has rolled out 'Watch' — a redesigned video platform for creators and publishers.
- The social media giant last year launched 'Video' tab in the US which offered a predictable place to find videos on Facebook.
- Shows are made up of episodes — live or recorded — and follow a theme or storyline.
- Facebook has also signed a deal with Major League Baseball to broadcast one live game per week.

City Union Bank offers instant credit cards

- City Union Bank customers can generate a credit card online.
- The Kumbakonam-headquartered bank introduced the option of an "instant credit card" for free for its Net banking customers. And, the

product, which was soft-launched on Saturday, seems to have caught the fancy of its customers instantly.

- All that a customer has to do is log on to his/her net banking account and seek a credit card. Only, the customer must have a fixed deposit with the bank. "We will mark a lien on the FD. The customer will be allowed a credit limit of up to 80 per cent of the deposit or a maximum of Rs 3 lakh,

HDFC Bank, PNB & YES Bank cut savings bank rate

- HDFC Bank, Punjab National Bank (PNB) and YES Bank have taken a cue from the recent move by State Bank of India (SBI) and a couple of other lenders to lower their savings bank deposit rates.
- Customers maintaining an SB account balance in HDFC banks of below ₹50 lakh will henceforth earn 3.5 per cent interest against 4 per cent earlier.
- The new rate, which is applicable to both resident and non-resident customers, is effective from August 19 for both banks.
- However, customers maintaining an SB account balance of ₹50 lakh and above will continue to earn 4 per cent.
- YES Bank has slashed its SB rate on deposits below ₹1 lakh to 5 per cent from 6 per cent. On deposits in the Rs. 1 crore and above the slab, the rate has been pared to 6.25 per cent from 6.50 per cent. The new SB rates for resident and non-resident customers will be effective September 1.
- Syndicate Bank launches 24X7 customer service
- On the occasion of 71st Independence Day, Syndicate Bank MD and CEO Melwyn Rego launched the Inbound Contact Centre (Customer Service – 24*7) in six Indian languages.
- Executive Director Ch S S Mallikarjuna Rao, H Bhaskar (GM), M Prasad (GM) and retired MD & CEO Arun Shrivastava were present.

RBI to release new Rs 50, Rs 20 notes, but old notes will still be valid

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) today announced that it would issue new Rs 50 and Rs 20 bank notes, but said the old versions of these notes will continue to be valid.
- The new Rs 50 notes won't have inset letters in the number panels. and the new Rs 20 notes will have the inset letter 'L' in both the number panels

- Both new notes will bear the signature of RBI Governor Urjit Patel, and the year of printing - 2016 - will be mentioned on the reverse side of the notes.

SBI gives leg-up to CSR initiatives, adopts 50 villages

- The nation's largest lender State Bank of India launched a CSR initiative, SBI Gram Seva, which will work in the areas of health, education, environment and rural infrastructure.
- The SBI Foundation will identify and partner with NGOs to carry out CSR initiatives under which it adopt five villages each from 10 village panchayats with each village getting around Rs 2.40 crore over the next three years.
- Initially, 10 gram panchayats comprising of 50 villages in six states have been adopted, she said, added the banks plans to adopt 100 gram panchayats in the next three years

Government extends Bhim cash back scheme for merchants till March'18

- The government has extended till March a cash back scheme that offers incentives of up to Rs 1,000 to merchants for accepting payments through the BHIM application.
- The BHIM cash back scheme for merchants will be operational till March 31, 2018
- Under the scheme, a merchant can get cash back of Rs 50 for 20-50 transaction, Rs 2 for every transaction thereafter till Rs 950. The monthly limit of BHIM cash back scheme is Rs 1,000.
- The condition for availing benefit is that at least 20 transactions should have been accepted by the merchant during the month from unique users of the BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money) with each amounting to minimum of Rs 25.

Regional rural banks' mergers gets exemption from CCI ambit

- The mergers of regional rural banks that are ordered by the government are now exempt from seeking CCI approval
- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) keeps a tab on unfair business practices across sectors. Mergers and acquisitions beyond a certain threshold compulsorily require clearance from the fair trade watchdog.

- Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) set up under the RRB Act, 1976 -- provide credit and other facilities to small farmers, agricultural labourers and artisans, among others, in the rural areas.
- The mergers of RRBs directed by the government have been exempted from seeking CCI approval. The exemption has been granted for a period of five years.
- The provisions of Section 5 and 6 of the Competition Act would not be applicable for five years on such transactions.

CASHe will scan your Facebook friends' list to decide if you are worthy

- Founded in 2016, CASHe makes use of the extensive data generated by a user on social media platforms to judge their credit worthiness in order to extend loans.
- CASHe is an app-only platform available at Google Play Store and Apple store which dispenses loans in a simple five-stage process. The loans are made available through an NBFC called One Capital.
- After you download the app on your mobile phone, you need to register through your social profiles on Facebook, Google+, or LinkedIn, fill your application form which requires four basic documents, pick your loan amount depending on your eligibility, and receive the amount in your bank account.
- The repayment option is either through bank transfers or cheque.
- The targeted user is between 24 to 34 years of age and the loan amount varies anywhere between Rs 5,000 to Rs 1 lakh, with the longest repayment period allowed is about six months.
- Name of the Company: CASHe
- Launch date: April 2016
- Founding team: V Raman Kumar
- Location: Mumbai

BSNL partners with MobiKwik to launch digital mobile wallet

- State-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) today unveiled its mobile wallet in partnership with MobiKwik to enable one-tap bill payment for its over 100 million subscribers. Besides, the subscribers will also be able to use the digital wallet at over 1.5 million merchants across India.
- The digital wallet, developed by MobiKwik for BSNL, is in line with the telecom corporation's intent to take the reach of digital payments to semi-urban and rural India

- The app will allow users to pay for online recharges, make bill payments, shop and book bus and train tickets.
- BSNL Chairman Anupam Srivastava said the partnership will ensure that all its 100 million customers are able to “seamlessly and conveniently transact and make mobile and other financial payments through the co-branded MobiKwik wallet

Banks to pay 3% GST on gold imports: CBEC

- Banks importing gold and precious metals will have to pay 3% tax under the GST which can be claimed as input tax credit
- Central Board of Excise and Customs said banks did not pay any VAT on the import of precious metals previously.
- They only paid customs duty. However, under GST, “3% Integrated-GST is payable on all imports of precious metals in addition to the basic customs duty. IGST paid can be taken as input tax credit by the banks
- Import of gold attracts a 10% basic customs duty. On top of that a 12.5% countervailing duty (CVD) was levied prior to GST.
- Since GST subsumed CVD, hence the GST rate on gold at 3% has to be paid at the time of imports in the form of IGST with effect from 1 July.
- The CBEC also clarified on levy of GST where the total value of a gold ornament is Rs30,000, including Rs2,000 as making charge

Cabinet approves plans to merge some state-run banks

- The government today decided to set up an Alternative Mechanism to oversee the proposals for consolidation of public sector banks (PSBs) with a view to creating fewer but stronger lenders.
- The Alternative Mechanism will be decided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said after the Union Cabinet meeting.
- The Cabinet gave in-principle nod to the constitution of the mechanism which will clear proposals of banks for mergers and amalgamation
- The final scheme will be notified by the central government in consultation with the Reserve Bank.

Walmart and Google partner on voice-based shopping

- Walmart and Google are today announcing a new partnership that will enable voice shopping through Google Assistant, Google’s virtual assistant that lives on devices like its smart speaker, Google Home. Specifically, consumers will now be able to take advantage of Walmart’s “Easy Reorder” feature through an integration with

Google's shopping service, Google Express. This will allow consumers to shop from hundreds of thousands of Walmart products just by speaking, the companies explain.

- Related to this, Google Express is also today ditching its membership fees, and now promises free delivery across its retailers in one to three days, as long as customer orders are above each store's minimums.

Closure of loss-making Bharat Wagon approved

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Wednesday approved the closure of loss-making Bharat Wagon and Engineering Company (BWEL), a Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Railways.
- 626 employees of BWEL will be benefited from the voluntary retirement scheme to be offered at 2007 pay scale. The government will have to provide a one-time grant of Rs.151.18 crore towards severance package and for clearing the current liabilities of the company
- Other decisions included a nod to two MoUs between India and Nepal. While one MoU will be signed to curb illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances between the two countries, another MoU will be signed between the two countries for laying down implementation arrangement on cost sharing, for starting construction of a new Bridge over Mechi River at the Indo-Nepal border.
- The CCEA has also approved the renaming of the new Central Sector Scheme — SAMPADA (Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters) as 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)' for the period of 2016-20.

Modi government notifies introduction of Rs 200 note

- The Modi government today notified introduction of new Rs 200 notes, according to a notification in the Gazette of India. The printing process of the new currency is almost over and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to circulate them any time now.
- This will be the first ever new note to be introduced by the RBI after the Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 notes introduced post the massive currency culling exercise in November last year.
- According to reports, Rs 200 notes will help bridge the gap between Rs 100 and Rs 500 notes and the RBI believes that they will become a 'very popular' denomination.
- Qatar Airways, Vistara in interline partnership pact

- Persian gulf carrier Qatar Airways on Tuesday entered into an interline partnership with Vistara, under which customers of the two carriers will have seamless travel to and from India to over 150 destinations.
- Interline partnership allows Qatar Airways' passengers to travel seamlessly to and from a wide range of cities within India across Vistara's network, via Qatar Airways' existing 13 Indian gateways and under a single ticket

OBC Creamy Layer Bar Raised To Rs 8 Lakh P.A.

- The income limit defining 'creamy layer' for OBC reservation has been raised by Rs 2 lakh per annum even as the Union cabinet today approved setting up of a panel for sub-categorization within the other backward classes for even distribution of reservation benefits.
- The government also ruled out having a relook at the present reservation system.
- The ministry of social justice and empowerment had proposed that OBC families which earn more than Rs 8 lakh per year should be classified as 'creamy layer' — the ceiling which bars members of the other backward classes from availing reservations in employment.
- There had been three revisions of the creamy layer bar. It was fixed at Rs one lakh in 1993 and hiked to Rs 2.5 lakh in 2004 and Rs 4.5 lakh in 2008.
- The present ceiling of Rs six lakh came into being in 2013. Jaitley also announced the decision of the cabinet to set up a commission to work out sub-categorization within other backward classes for a "more equitable distribution of reservation benefits amongst the OBCs".

Government notifies changes in Banking Regulation Act

- The government has notified the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act under which it can authorise the RBI to issue directions to banks to initiate insolvency resolution process to recover bad loans.
- The banking sector is saddled with non-performing assets (NPAs) of over Rs 8 lakh crore, of which Rs 6 lakh crore is with public sector banks (PSBs).
- Earlier this month, Parliament had approved the Act, which replaced an ordinance in this regard.
- The government in May had promulgated an ordinance authorising the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to issue directions to banks to initiate insolvency resolution process under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

- Following the ordinance, the RBI had identified 12 accounts each having more than Rs 5,000 crore of outstanding loans and accounting for 25 per cent of total NPAs of banks for immediate referral for resolution under the bankruptcy law.
- The loan defaulters identified by the RBI include, Essar Steel, Bhushan Steel, ABG Shipyard, Electrosteel and Alok Industries.

RBI launches Rs 200 note; promises to ramp up supply

- The Reserve Bank today launched the bright yellow Rs 200 notes and said it will shortly ramp up the supply of the new currency note across the country.
- Long queues of people were witnessed at RBI offices today to get the new Rs 200 currency note that has been introduced for the first time by the central bank.
- As per the new policy on theme-based currency notes, the Rs 200 bill bears motif of Sanchi Stupa to depict India's cultural heritage.
- The base colour of the note is bright yellow, the RBI said.
- The RBI had said that Rs 200 note will provide the "missing link" and ensure optimal mix of currency denominations.
- Prior to the introduction on the new notes, India has currency denominations of Rs 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and 2000.
- As such, in the lower end of the denomination series, Rs 200 has been the missing link. The RBI had recently introduced Rs 50 note with a new look and additional security features.

NPCI approves Spice Digital's operation under Bharat Bill Payment System

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has given a nod to Spice Digital Ltd. for processing bill payments under the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) as a Bharat Bill Payment Operating Unit (BBPOU).
- The BBPS through its centralised bill payment system will allow the users to use a single website or outlet to pay all their monthly or repetitive bills such as mobile phone and electricity.
- Bill payments is a major component of the retail payment transactions in India, and is characterized by the presence of large number of billers, and aggregators, who provide a variety of payment options to customers.
- According to the Digital Payments 2020 report by Google and Boston Consulting Group, non-cash contribution in the consumer payments segment will double to 40 percent.

- Spice Digital forayed into FinTech space three years ago. Today, SDL's Spice Money is India's leading India stack based FinTech Company.
- In August, 2016 the NPCI launched a pilot project for BBPS with eight BBPS operating unit, Spice Digital being one of the chosen units.

IRDAI launches central database of insurance sales persons

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has launched a Central Database of all Insurance Sales Persons in the country.
- Christened as 'Envoy', the database will ensure that all licensed insurance sales persons working for insurers and intermediaries including entities such as insurance agents, broker qualified persons, specified persons of corporate agents, authorised verifiers of web aggregators, point of sales persons (POS) etc do not work with multiple insurers and intermediaries in the same business category.
- At the present stage, Envoy covers POS, specified persons of corporate agents, qualified persons of insurance brokers and authorised verifiers of web aggregators.
- The database also provides a search facility for insurers and insurance intermediaries whereby an applicant insurance sales person's details are queried for a match in the database. Appointment of such a person by the insurer or insurance intermediary shall be taken up only after ensuring that the Applicant does not already figure in the database.

Jaitley launches BEML's metro manufacturing facility

- Defence Minister Arun Jaitley today launched BEML's third Line ultra modern metro manufacturing facility to enhance the production of metro cars for the forthcoming metro projects in India.
- Earlier in the morning, he inaugurated the indigenously designed and developed biggest ever diesel excavator BE1800D and crawler dozer BD475-1 and T-72 hull, meant for fitting into tanks, at Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) unit of Bharath Earth Movers Limited.
- Later, a number of organisations and local leaders including Kolar MP Muniyappa submitted memoranda against disinvestment of BEML.
- BEML had forayed into manufacturing and supply of hi-tech metro cars during 2002 and as a leading rolling stock supplier has so far supplied over 1,000 metro cars to Delhi, Bengaluru and Jaipur Metro Corporations.

Fringe benefits availed by employees liable to GST

- The new Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be applicable on any non-monetary fringe benefit an employee gets from his employer
- Monetary compensation paid to employees is not considered supply and will not attract GST
- The monetary income will, however, continue to attract the relevant income tax.
- The compensation to employees in the form of money is not a supply. However, fringe benefits are a supply of goods or services and are liable to tax if not exempted
- The fringe benefits are transactions in furtherance of business.

Airtel ties up with Symantec to offer cyber security solutions

- As it looks to cater to the growing cyber security requirements of businesses in India, country's top mobile operator Bharti Airtel has partnered with Symantec to provide cyber defense to enterprises.
- As part of the tie-up, Airtel will be the exclusive cyber security services partner for Symantec and will distribute the latter's enterprise security software, primarily targeting its existing enterprise customers.
- The partnership between the two companies has been announced amid the growing number of cyber-attacks in India as well as in the world.
- The government also has realised the importance of cyber security and is working on to strengthen the cyber security infrastructure of the country.
- Through the partnership with Symantec, Airtel will help its enterprise customers to secure their systems.

Canara HSBC Oriental Life launches 'PoS' product

- Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance Company (CHOICE) has come up with a 'Point-of-Sale' product targeted at the mass-market segment
- The product — 'PoS - Easy Bima Plan'— is the first PoS product for the company and is a pure term insurance plan that not only gives life cover but also returns all premiums paid during the payment term on survival till maturity
- The affordable premiums start from Rs.1,000 annually and there is inbuilt double life cover in case of accidental death, he said.
- While this product has initially been launched through a regional rural bank of Canara Bank, it would be available in the bank branches of Canara Bank and Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) in the next two months

Ujjivan SFB receives scheduled bank status from RBI

- Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ujjivan Financial Services Ltd, has been given scheduled bank status by RBI.
- Ujjivan SFB commenced its operations as a Small Finance Bank with effect from February 1, 2017.
- Currently, Ujjivan SFB has 65 full-fledged brick and mortar branches in eight states and two Union Territories. It plans to convert 160 existing branches and 29 new Unbanked Rural Centres (URCs) by the end of FY 2017-18 and the remaining branches will be converted over a period of two years in line with RBI approval.
- This status will enhance the market acceptability of the bank in its effort to garner institutional deposits at a competitive price and participate more actively in the inter-bank market. It also opens the door for issuing Certificates of Deposits (CDs), which will be an important source of funding

Centre clears 100% strategic sale of CEL

- The Centre has approved a 100% strategic sale along with transfer of management control of Central Electronics Ltd (CEL). Incorporated in 1974, CEL is under the administrative control of Ministry of Science and Technology.
- The CPSE is wholly owned by the government and has a net worth of ₹50.34 crore as on March 2017.
- The Government of India (GoI) has 'in-principle' decided to disinvest its 100 per cent equity in Central Electronics Ltd through strategic sale with transfer of management control," the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management said a bid document.
- The government plans to engage an advisor from a consulting firm, investment banker or a merchant banker or a financial institution, for providing advisory services and managing the disinvestment process.
- It is also looking to appoint a legal firm for advising on the strategic sale.

Awards & Honours

Trump awards Medal of Honor to Army medic 48 years later

- An Army medic who "ran into danger" to save wounded soldiers during a Vietnam War battle despite his own serious wounds became the first Medal of Honor recipient under President Donald Trump, 48 years after the selfless acts for which James McCloughan is now nationally recognized.
- Drafted into the Army, McCloughan was a 23-year-old private first class and medic who in 1969 found himself in the middle of the raging Battle of Nui Yon Hill.
- McCloughan willingly entered the "kill zone" to rescue injured comrades despite his serious wounds from shrapnel from a rocket-propelled grenade.

Tata Power awarded for excellence in cost management

- Tata Power, an integrated power company has been awarded for excellence in cost management in the 'power distribution and transmission' category at the 14th National Awards for Excellence in Cost Management 2016.
- The award by the Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICAI) is in recognition of Tata Power's continued efforts towards cost reduction and cost competitiveness.
- The National Award for Excellence in Cost Management was instituted in 2003.
- It looks to propagate and emphasise on wider application of Cost Management tools and techniques and adoption of relevant Cost Management Strategies across various sectors for improving competitiveness of industry.

Indian Air Force felicitates India women's cricketer Shikha Pandey

- Shikha Pandey, member of India women's cricket team which ended as runners-up at ICC Women's World Cup 2017, was felicitated by the Indian Air Force
- The cricketer received a cheque and medal from Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa at Air Headquarters in New Delhi
- Pandey was felicitated for her brilliant performance during the ICC Women's World Cup 2017, which took place in England from June 24 to July 17. She played a crucial role in the tournament, helping her side to reach the final after a gap of 12 years.
- Pandey was commissioned in IAF on June 30, 2012 as an Air Traffic Control Officer. The all-rounder made her international debut in the ICC World T20 in Bangladesh in 2014. Since her debut, she has been a regular member of the Indian team.

National Geographic Photographer of The Year

- A photograph of an erupting volcano hit by a bolt of lightning has earned Sergio Tapiro Velasco of Mexico the prestigious title of 2017 National Geographic Travel Photographer of the Year. Velasco will receive a 10-day trip for two to the Galápagos Archipelago with National Geographic Expeditions, as well as a \$2500 prize. Velasco's incredible photo was selected from over 15,000 entries from participants in more than 30 countries.
- Velasco took his grand prize-winning photo, titled "The Power of Nature," outside Colima, Mexico. For more than a decade, Velasco has been studying and photographing the Volcán de Colima, which is one of the most active volcanos in Latin America and also known as the "Volcano of Fire." Before he captured this striking photograph, Velasco had been carefully tracking an increase in activity and closely watched the volcano for almost a month.

Forbes World's Highest-Paid Authors 2017: J.K. Rowling Leads With \$95 Million

- Harry Potter creator JK Rowling has been named the world's most highly-paid author with earnings of £72.2m (\$95m) this year.
- The Edinburgh-based writer beat Dan Brown, Stephen King and John Grisham to top Forbes' list of the 10 highest earners in the global industry for the first time in almost 10 years.
- Her books have been turned into eight blockbuster feature films, and last year she made her screenwriting debut with a prequel movie, Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them.

Top Five

1. JK Rowling (Harry Potter) - \$95m (£72,183,000)
2. James Patterson (Women's Murder Club) - \$87m (£66,316,000)
3. Jeff Kinney (Diary Of A Wimpy Kid) - \$21m (£16,000,000)
4. Dan Brown (The Da Vinci Code) - \$20m (£15,250,000)
5. Stephen King (The Dark Tower) - \$15m (£11,434,000)

Prem Nazir Award for actor Sharada

- Veteran actor and national award winner Sharada has been selected for this year's Prem Nazir Award.
- Sharada had won three national awards with the first being for her performance in 1968 tragedy film 'Thulabharam'. She also won the

award for Swayamvaram (1972, Malayalam) and Nimajjanam (1978, Telugu).

- Prem Nazir won his only Kerala State Film Award in 1981; he won a Special Jury Award for the supporting role he played in the film Vida Parayum Munbe.
- He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1983 by the President of India in recognition of distinguished services of a high order to the nation in his field (acting).
- The Prem Nazir Award was initiated in his memory, in 1992, for excellence in contributions to the Malayalam cinema Industry. He has also held the position of National Film Award jury in 1985.

First woman officer to get gallantry award in Army

- Major Mitali Madhumita on Friday became the first woman officer to receive a gallantry award in the Army.
- She was honoured along with 21 Army personnel for acts of bravery and distinguished service at the military station here during the South Western Command Investiture Ceremony.
- Major Madhumita became the first woman officer to get the Sena Medal (Gallantry)
- Two Yudh Seva medals, nine Sena medals (Gallantry), two Sena medals (Distinguished) and eight Vishisht Seva medals were presented by General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, South Western Command, Lieutenant General S. K. Singh.
- Sepoy Jagtar Singh of the Punjab Regiment was awarded the Sena Medal (Gallantry) posthumously
- Sepoy Purna Limboo was also awarded the Sena Medal (Gallantry) for displaying exemplary courage during a search operation in Kulgam

Indian philanthropist honoured by UAE govt

- An Indian businessman in the UAE, who has spent over USD 4 million to help free prisoners languishing in jails due to non-payment of debts, has been honoured with the country's prestigious Community Service Medal.
- Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the UAE, Lt General HH Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, honoured Indian businessman and philanthropist Firoz Merchant with the Community Service Medal
- This is the first time any expatriate community member has been given this prestigious award.
- Since 2008, Merchant, founder and chairman of Pure Gold Jewellers, has spent Dh 15 million (USD 4.08 million) in paying off the debts of

10,940 prisoners languishing in the country's jails due to non-payment of debts.

Mimaansa wins award for combating learning disabilities

- A Mumbai-based organisation that works on assisting children who suffer from learning disabilities (LD), was awarded in the Young Innovators Challenge 2017 event hosted by 3M India and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for its work with students of municipal schools in Thane. The aim of the challenge was to come up with unique ideas to tackle India's social and economic problems.
- Mimaansa, started in 2012 by Poojaa Joshi, a former French teacher and now psychotherapist, works on offering early intervention for children with learning disabilities, including a remedial programme focused on alternative teaching strategies by skilled special educators.
- Mimaansa also offers teacher training programmes for municipal school teachers to help them identify and help students with LD, and counselling programme for children with LD.

Dev Patel To Be Honoured With Asia Society Game Changers Award

- Indian-origin actor Dev Patel is among nine individuals to be honoured by a leading educational organisation for making a 'transformative and positive' difference for the future of Asia and the world. London-born Patel, who became popular with his debut film Slumdog Millionaire, will be felicitated with the Asia Society 2017 Asia Game Changers Award at a ceremony to be held at the United Nations, New York, in November.
- The Asia Game Changer lifetime achievement award will be given to Aga Khan, Founder of the Aga Khan Development Network for using philanthropy to lift millions of Asia's most vulnerable.

Sardar Singh, Devendra Jhajharia to be awarded Khel Ratna awards

- Former India Hockey captain Sardar Singh and Paralympian javelin thrower Devendra Jhajharia have been selected to be awarded the prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna awards. The awards selection committee has recommended both Jhajharia and Sardar to be considered for the award jointly.
- With this, the 36-year old Jhajharia becomes the first Paralympian to be recommended for the country's highest sporting honour. Jhajharia

is also the first Indian to have won two Paralympic gold medals in the javelin throw event.

- Sardar, who is probably the most known hockey player after the likes of Dhyan Chand and Dhanraj Pillay, is now one of the senior players leading the team. He is one of modern hockey's finest defensive mid-fielders ever, leading India to two successive silver medal finishes in the Commonwealth Games. He was also awarded the Arjuna Award in 2012.

ASSOCHAM confers best Skilling India award on NACER

- Assocham, which has instituted skilling India awards to recognize contributions by individuals and organizations in successfully integrating developmental initiatives, processes and operations to meet growing skilling needs of the country, has conferred the best skilling award on National Centre for Excellence of RSETIs (NACER).
- NACER is an apex level organization for mentoring and monitoring RSETIs working under ministry of rural development.
- NACER was awarded best NGO in skill development award for 2016-17 in recognition of its contribution in the field of skill development through RSETIs

Harmanpreet's six named World Cup's Play of the Tournament

- The ICC has named Indian women's batsman Harmanpreet Kaur's six against England in the final of the ICC Women's World Cup at Lord's as the Play of the Tournament.
- Kaur's six edged out Indian pacer Jhulan Goswami's swinging delivery which bowled Australian captain Meg Lanning in the semifinal of the tournament.
- Notably, India finished the tournament as the runner ups.

NALCO bags Appreciation Award in large mines category

- Panchpatmali bauxite mine of National Aluminium Company (NALCO) has been awarded for its initiative in areas like environment, safety and health.
- The Navaratna PSU has bagged the Appreciation Award in large mines category at the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) Eastern Region Safety Health & Environment Excellence Awards 2016-17
- On behalf of NALCO, S Chaudhuri, General Manager (Mines) and Sanjaya Kumar Patnaik, AGM (Environment), received the award at the

11th Symposium on Safety and award ceremony organised by CII Eastern Region

Gemfield's 'Retail Jeweler India Award' given to Malabar Gold & Diamonds

- MALABAR Gold & Diamonds, one of the Big 5 jewelry retailers received the 'Retail Jeweler India Award' for the special contributions to the gem and jewellery industry.
- The panel of jury has selected from a list of over thousands of nominees from the industry for the coveted prize.
- Malabar Gold & Diamonds has also awarded the best television campaign award for the current year.
- Retail Jeweler India Awards was established in 2005 by Soma Bhatta, editor & director, The Retail Jeweler India magazine, and Samit Bhatta, associate publisher, The Retail Jeweler India magazine, with the mission to take the \$30 billion Retail Jewellery industry forward by creating a platform for recognizing the best work of the industry in fields of design, retail and marketing.
- It is also known as India's Oscars for the Retail jewelry industry and the only business awards specifically for retail jewelers in the country of 300,000 retail jewelers.
- Malabar Gold & Diamonds is among the few companies which are vertically integrated comprising of bullion desk, design centers, manufacturing, distribution, retail and after sale services. This enables the retailer to offer its customers products and services that unique and offer unmatched value and quality.

Hugo Award for Best Novel 2017 given to N.K. Jemisin

- The Hugo Award for Best Novel 2017 was given to Nora K. Jemisin, an American speculative fiction writer for her work "The Obelisk Gate".
- The award was presented at the 75th World Science Fiction Convention in Helsinki.
- The awarded book was the second in the trilogy that started with "The Fifth Season", which was New York Times Notable Book of 2015 and won Jemisin the Hugo Award for Best Novel in 2016
- Ada Palmer was awarded the Best New Writer, Seanan McGuire's "Every Heart a Doorway" was the Best Novella, "The Tomato Thief" by Ursula Vernon was the Best Novelette, and "Seasons of Glass and Iron" by Amal El-Mohtar the Best Short Story.
- "The Expanse: Leviathan Wakes", written by Mark Fergus and Hawk Ostby, was awarded the Best Dramatic Presentation Short Form. It

won over the best seller Game of Thrones, a series that had two books in the six-finalist shortlist.

- First presented in 1953, the Hugo Award is considered the highest honour for sci-fi works along with the Nebula Awards. It has been confirmed by the Guinness Book of Records to be the oldest sci-fi award in the world.

Hindustan Unilever wins 'Green Marketer' Award at Marquee Awards 2017

- Hindustan Unilever (HUL) won the 'Green Marketer' award at the debut edition of Marquee Awards 2017.
- The Special Award for 'Conquering an impregnable fortress' was won by Bira 91. Pro Kabaddi League was recognized as the brand that 'Traversed uncharted waters' and Paytm was recognized for 'Riding on an emerging wave'. Honda Motorcycle & Scooter was awarded for 'Breathing new life into a category', Indian Accent was recognized for 'Creating a Global Impact' while Oppo was recognized for 'Carving out a Niche' for themselves in a highly competitive category.

Roda Mehta to be conferred AAAI Lifetime Achievement Award 2017

- The Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI) honoured Roda Mehta with this year's AAAI Lifetime Achievement Award. This Award is the highest honour given to an individual in India for his/her outstanding contribution to the Advertising Industry.
- Roda Mehta is a pioneer in more ways than one. This Award is well-deserved recognition for the stellar leadership she provided our industry and our eco-system for over two decades, during which time she also nurtured a whole generation of professional talent

The Hindu Playwright Award 2017 presented

- The Hindu Playwright Award 2017 went to Gerish Khemani and Akshat Nigam for their play 'In Search of Dariya Sagar'. The Rs.2 lakh award, instituted in 2008 to reward the best new unpublished and unperformed play-script in English
- The other shortlisted works included Deepika Arwind's 'The Playwright is Dead' and K. Madavane's '1947 - The Man from Lahore', chosen by a panel of three judges from among the 183 entries received.

T J S George bags first Kesari Media Award

- Veteran journalist T J S George has been chosen for the first Kesari Media Award, instituted by the Kesari Memorial Journalist Trust
- The award comprises a purse of Rs 50,000, citation and a statuette designed by renowned artist Bhatathiri.

Marconi Lifetime Award for Pune-born Stanford Prof

- The US-based Marconi Society has announced its Lifetime Achievement Award to Indian-born Stanford University professor Thomas Kailath, for his outstanding contributions to modern communications.
- Kailath is the sixth scientist to be honoured with our Lifetime Achievement Award for his research contributions, which advanced modern communications technologies over the last six decades,
- The society named after Nobel Laureate Guglielmo Marconi (1874-1937), who invented the radio, was set up in 1975 by his daughter Gioia Marconi Braga through an endowment. It annually awards individuals whose scope of work and influence emulate the principle of "creativity in service to humanity" that inspired Marconi.

Music icon Bappi Lahiri awarded 7th Dr. Ambedkar award

- Bappi Lahiri, 1st music director who composed songs for Bharat Ratna Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee & Bharat Ratna Dr. Ambedkar gifted the CDs to Honorable President of India Mr. Ram Nath Kovind in the presence of Home Minister Rajnath Singh
- Bappi Lahiri was awarded 7th Bharat Ratna Dr. Ambedkar Award for his legendary 48 years of musical work in both Bollywood and Hollywood

Reliance Power's Sasan Mine awarded National Safety Award

- Reliance Power's Sasan captive coal mine has been awarded the National Safety Award (Mines) for 2013 and 2014.
- According to the company, its Sasan Mine was awarded for its "commendable safe work environment and safety practices".
- The award was given on Thursday at an event held here by President Ram Nath Kovind.
- The Sasan Mine — Moher and Moher Amlohri Extension coal mines — is a captive fuel source for Sasan Ultra Mega Power Project (UMPP) developed by Sasan Power, a wholly owned subsidiary of Reliance Power.

Indian-origin TV star crowned 'Child Genius'

- A 12-year-old Indian-origin boy has been crowned as the U.K.'s 'Child Genius' in a popular television quiz competition, days after he became an overnight sensation after answering all questions correctly.
- Rahul Doshi won the Channel 4 show 'Child Genius' by beating his nine-year-old opponent, Ronan

Oinam Bembem Devi 'Durga of Indian football' wins Arjuna Award

- Oinam Bembem Devi will be honoured with the prestigious Arjuna Award. Bembem, the flag bearer of Indian women's football over the past two decades, becomes the second Indian woman footballer to win the award, the first being Shanti Mullick in 1983.
- Bembem, nicknamed the "Durga of Indian Football" made her international debut in 1995. She bowed out on a high after winning the SAF Games Gold Medal in Shillong in February 2015.
- She is the 25th footballer to have won the award, the last being Subrata Paul in 2016. In addition, she was also awarded the AIFF woman footballer award twice, in 2001 and 2013.

President of India presents Colours to all five Ladakh Scouts Battalions

- The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind presented Colours to all five Ladakh Scouts Battalions and the Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre.
- It has been 54 years since the Ladakh Scouts became part of the Indian Army.
- The regiment has earned 605 Honours and Awards for conspicuous gallantry and distinguished service. This speaks for the exceptional valour and spirit of the Regiment personnel and is a model for all soldiers and officers of our armed forces.
- They have earned distinction in various wars and operations and excelled in sports, adventure pursuits and professional challenges.

Telangana CM chosen for agriculture leadership award

- Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao has been selected for the prestigious Agriculture Leadership Award-2017, according to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office.

- A Committee headed by agriculture scientist MS Swaminathan has recommended the CM's name. The award will be presented on September 5 at Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi.
- The Chief Minister has been selected for the award for his innovative services rendered to the welfare of farmers and the farm sector.
- The award, instituted by Indian Council of Food and Agriculture in 2008, is presented every year since then.

Govt launches video of National Anthem in sign language

- Union minister Mahendra Nath Pandey launched a video of the National Anthem in sign language and said the government addressed the physically challenged as "divyang" and not "viklang" to ensure there was no distinction.
- The 3.35-minute video, directed by Govind Nihalani, stars Bollywood star Amitabh Bachchan, along with physically challenged children performing the anthem in sign language, with the Red Fort in the background.

Nitish Kumar launches mobile therapy van for elderly people

- Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar flagged off mobile therapy vans which would provide basic medical assistance to elderly people, widows and other section who requires social security. The CM flagged off mobile therapy vans to launch "Buniyadi Sanjivani Sewa"
- A total of 11 vans were send on the occasion to as many districts including Nalanda, Patna, Bhagalpur, Begusarai, Buxar, Muzaffarpur, Nawada, Purnea, Rohtas, Darbhanga and Samastipur.
- The vans equipped with basic medical apparatus and accompanied by technical team would provide basic medical care to elderly people, widows and disabled in the districts.

Hyderabad startup wins award CMO Asia Excellence

- Hyderabad based startup, Paynear Solution was awarded 'Best Use of Mobile Technology in Financial Services in Asia' at the 'Eighth CMO Asia Excellence' awards, which were held in Singapore
- Pitted against some stiff competition in the category, Paynear emerged as a winner, thanks to its innovative use of technology to help the seamless processing of omni-channel transactions across platforms.

Arkansas Novelist Padma Viswanathan Awarded 2017 Porter Fund Literary Prize

- Indian American novelist and playwright Padma Viswanathan is the recipient of the 2017 Porter Fund Literary Prize for fiction.
- The Porter Fund Literary Prize is presented annually to an Arkansas writer who has accomplished a substantial and impressive body of work that merits enhanced recognition. The \$2000 prize makes it one of the state's most lucrative as well as prestigious literary awards.

National Sports Awards – 2017

- National Sports Awards are given every year to recognize and reward excellence in sports. Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award is given for the spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports by a sportsperson over a period of four year.
- Arjuna Award is given for consistency outstanding performance for four years, Dronacharya Award for coaches for producing medal winners at prestigious International sports events, Dhyan Chand Award for life time contribution to sports development.

(i) Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna 2017

S. No.	Name of the Awardee	discipline
1.	Shri Devendra	Para Athlete
2.	Shri Sardar Singh	Hockey

(ii) Dronacharya Awards 2017

S. No.	Name of the Awardee	Discipline
1.	Late Dr. R. Gandhi	Athletics
2.	Mr. Heera Nand Kataria	Kabaddi
3.	Mr. G.S.S.V. Prasad	Badminton (Lifetime)
4.	Mr. Brij Bhushan Mohanty	Boxing (Lifetime)
5.	Mr. P.A. Raphel	Hockey (Lifetime)
6.	Mr. Sanjoy Chakraverthy	Shooting (Lifetime)
7.	Mr. Roshan Lal	Wrestling (Lifetime)

(iii) Arjuna Awards 2017

S. No.	Name of the Awardees	Discipline
1.	Ms. V.J. Surekha	Archery

2.	Ms. Khushbir Kaur	Athletics
3.	Mr. Arokia Rajiv	Athletics
4.	Ms. Prasanthi Singh	Basketball
5.	Sub. Laishram Debendro Singh	Boxing
6.	Mr. Cheteshwar Pujara	Cricket
7.	Ms. Harmanpreet Kaur	Cricket
8.	Ms. Oinam Bembem Devi	Football
9.	Mr. S.S.P. Chawrasia	Golf
10.	Mr. S.V. Sunil	Hockey
11.	Mr. Jasvir Singh	Kabaddi
12.	Mr. P. N. Prakash	Shooting
13.	Mr. A. Amalraj	Table Tennis
14.	Mr. Saketh Myneni	Tennis
15.	Mr. Satyawart Kadian	Wrestling
16.	Mr. Mariyappan	Para-Athlete
17.	Mr. Varun Singh Bhati	Para-Athlete

(iv) Dhyan Chand Award

S. No.	Name (S/Shri)	Discipline
1 .	Mr. Bhupender Singh	Athletics
2.	Mr. Syed Shahid Hakim	Football
3.	Ms. Sumarai Tete	Hockey

- The awardees will receive their awards from the President of India at a specially organized function at the Rashtrapati Bhawan on August 29, 2017.

India LaRoda crowned Miss India America 2017 in Los Angeles

- Indian-African American India LaRoda was crowned Miss India America 2017 at the 25th anniversary
- The title of Mr. India America 2017 was grabbed by Karan Malik from Virginia.

- Other 2017 winners included: Jaskiran Waraich, Miss India Globe; Georgia's Satrugna Chowdry, Mr. India Globe; Veena Gurbani of Michigan, Miss India Global; Ricky Prasad, Mr. India Galaxy; Anisha Gupta, Miss India Galaxy; Aditi Parikh, Miss India North America; and Navjot Kaur, Miss India California 2017. India LaRoda and Karan Malik also won JINmodels.com's Mr. & Miss Photogenic 2017. Navjot Kaur and Arizona's Nitish Singh were the winners of the People's Choice Awards for 2017.

CM Confers Biju Patnaik Award For Scientific Excellence

- The Biju Patnaik Award for Scientific Excellence for 2016 was conferred upon Prof. Digambar Behera by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik
- Prof Behera is the Head of Department of Pulmonary Medicine in the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) in Chandigarh.
- Prof Prasanta Mohapatra of the Department of Computer Science in the University of California was bestowed with the Biju Patnaik award for 2015.
- The first of its kind award in the field of science was instituted by the State Government's Department of Science and Technology. The award comprises a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh, a citation, memento, certificate, shawl and silver medal.
- The Samanta Chandra Sekhar Award for 2016 was given to Prof. Swapna Mahapatra, Prof. Banshidhar Majhi and Prof. Sukumar Mishra; the award for 2015 went to Dr Sharat Kumar Pradhan, Prof. Sarat Kumar Swain and Prof. Bhishma Kumar Patel. The Samanta Chandra Sekhar award, named after the renowned Odia astronomer, is given for excellent research contribution in the field of science and technology during the five years preceding the year of award.
- Every year, the Odisha Bigyan Academy (OBA) felicitates Odia scientists who have made major contributions in the field of Science and Technology.

Tata Docomo wins DigitAnalysis' award for best Wi-Fi services in North India

- Tata Docomo was given the award for the best service provider in north India for its public Wi-Fi services by DigiAnalysis.
- It was also given an award for the best Wi-Fi roaming services provider for its roaming services, which it offers in partnership with iPass and Boingo.

- Tata Docomo claims to provide internet services at many prime locations such as airports, cafes and hotels. Further, Ookla ranked Tata Docomo Wi-Fi at Delhi's IGI Airport as the 4th fastest in Asia

Scientists who proved Einstein wrong to get Bell Prize

- A trio of scientists who defied Albert Einstein by proving that quantum particles, when correlated in pairs, interact with each other regardless of their distance, will be honored with the John Stewart Bell Prize from the University of Toronto.
- Einstein wasn't convinced with this theory of Quantum Entanglement and had called it "spooky action at a distance".
- Fifty years ago, Belfast scientist John Stewart Bell proved Albert Einstein wrong.
- Bell is regarded as one of the 20th Century's greatest physicists, and was widely believed to have been in line for a Nobel Prize in Physics when he died in 1990 from a stroke.
- Bell's Theorem - more formally known as 'On the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen paradox' - demonstrated that Einstein's views on quantum mechanics - the behaviour of very small things like atoms and subatomic particles - were incorrect.

Marg ERP Awarded Best Start-Up in Skill Development by ASSOCHAM

- At a gala ceremony organized by ASSOCHAM, Marg ERP, which has been actively involved in the government's Skill India Program, was awarded the Best Start-Up in Skill Development. The award was given by Mr Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Union Minister of State for Skill Development, Government of India.
- Marg ERP is the country's fastest growing integrated business management and inventory application software provider has been in the forefront of Skill India campaign. The company has set up has set up 500 academies across India for training personnel in software inventory and accounting. It plans to scale this up to 2000 by 2018.
- The ASSOCHAM Summit-cum-Awards is meant to honor and recognize those who have played a catalytic role and demonstrated their commitment to the advancement of Skills by implementing skills development and training programs. With more than 500 guests in attendance, the awards were announced at a gala lunch.

NRDC wins two awards

- NRDC, the technology transfer and commercialisation arm of the Ministry of Science & Technology, has won two accolades. It has won the Assocham Services Excellence Award 2017 and its Chairman and Managing Director, H Purushotham, an international recognition.
- The International Association of Advanced Materials (IAAM) Sweden honoured Purushotham with the IAAM Medal 2017 for his outstanding R&D contributions in the Advanced Materials Science & Technology during its award ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden.
- The award was presented during the three-day European Advanced Materials Congress held from August 22-24, where over 800 researchers/ scientists representing 92 countries had congregated. Purushotham delivered the IAAM Medal lecture on 'Commercialising advanced materials technologies from Indian R&D institutions to industry-challenges and case studies'.
- NRDC also won the Assocham Services Excellence Awards 2017 in the area of Technology Transfer Services. NRDC has transferred IPs and technologies to about 5,000 SMEs /start-ups / corporates.
- Martens named 2016/17 Women's Player of the Year

Dutch star Lieke Martens has been named UEFA Women's Player of the Year for the 2016/17 season

- The 24-year-old Barcelona forward, who recently helped the Netherlands to win UEFA Women's EURO 2017 on home soil and aided Rosengård to the UEFA Women's Champions League quarter-finals, received the award at a ceremony during the 2017/18 UEFA Champions League group stage draw in Monaco
- The UEFA Women's Player of the Year award is based on players' performances during the 2016/17 season in all competitions, both domestic and international, and at club and national team levels.

Konkani author honoured with literary award Saraswati Samman

- The prestigious literary award, the Saraswati Samman for 2016 was presented to Konkani writer Mahabaleshwar Sail
- Sail's award winning work is "Hawthan" that captures the lives of the potter community in Goa.
- Sail, who has been a soldier, having served in the 1965 war and later was a part of a UN peace keeping mission, earned praise for his gripping storytelling in Hawthth.
- He was presented with a plaque and a cash purse of Rs.15 lakh.

- The Saraswati Samman is an annual award for outstanding prose or poetry literary works in any 22 Indian language listed in Schedule VIII of the Constitution of India.
- It is named after an Indian goddess of learning and is considered to be among the highest literary awards in India.
- The Saraswati Samman was instituted in 1991 by the K. K. Birla Foundation. It consists of Rs 15 lakh, a citation and a plaque.

Samurai Tete first woman from Jharkhand to win Dhyan Chand Award

- Former India Women's Hockey captain Samurai Tete was awarded Dhyan Chand Award 2017 by the President Ramnath Kovind at a function held at Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi on the occasion of National Sports Day
- Resident of Simdega also known as Jharkhand's hockey nursery, Samurai has become the first woman from Jharkhand to bag the prestigious national award.
- She received statuettes, certificates and cash prize of Rs five lakh each for her achievements and contribution to Field hockey in India.
- It was under Samurai Tete's captaincy that Indian eves clinched Commonwealth Games hockey silver at Melbourne in 2006. 38-year-old midfielder was part of the team when Indian women won the gold medal in the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth games.
- Chief Minister Raghubar Das announced Sumrai Tete as the brand ambassador for Jharkhand hockey.

FICCI awards Dr KR Balakrishnan for his contribution to Healthcare

- Dr K R Balakrishnan, Director, Cardiac Sciences, Fortis Centre for Heart Failure & Transplant, Fortis Malar Hospital in Chennai, leading cardiac transplant surgeon on international repute, was awarded FICCI Special Jury Award for his contributions to healthcare and medical research at an event here recently.
- The Federation of India Chamber Of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) organizes this annual conference with an aim to facilitate organizations and individuals for their contributions to the industry by innovating for increased efficiency, affordability and improved performance of healthcare delivery at large.

Dr. Debraj Shome awarded Indian of the Year at India Leadership Conclave

- World Renowned facial plastic surgeon Dr. Debraj Shome has been awarded with the prestigious 'Indian of the Year' award at the 8th Annual India Leadership Conclave & Indian Affairs Business Leadership Awards 2017, held in Mumbai on 4th August 2017.
- India Leadership Conclave & Indian Affairs Business Leadership awards which are also known as the 'ILC Power Brand' were instituted by the Network 7 media group in the year 2009 to felicitate individuals as well as organizations for their relentless hard work and unequalled contributions in six different categories.
- The awards are given to individuals and companies who have achieved stellar heights of success in their chosen fields while having the courage to tread on the unknown path of innovation.
- Dr. Debraj Shome has been awarded with the 'Indian of the Year' for 2017, for reaching remarkable heights of success in facial plastic and cosmetic surgery and research.
- Dr. Debraj Shome is the top facial plastic and cosmetic surgeon in India and his talent and hard work have been recognized by many other agencies and organizations over the years. Four distinct prestigious fellowships make him an illustrious figure in the field of facial plastic surgery.

Reliance Foundation awarded Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar

- The Reliance Foundation was rewarded with the prestigious Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Award at Rashtrapati Bhawan
- For its contribution to the promotion of sports, the award went to Reliance Foundation.
- Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) also received the Rashtriya Khel Protsahana Purushkar this year for its 'Identification and Nurturing of Budding and Young Talent' (IDCO) program.

Women Transforming India Awards 2017

- Union Minister of Textiles, Information, and Broadcasting Smriti Irani will present this prestigious award to a number of women winners
- The award has been launched by NITI Aayog, in partnership with the UN in India and MyGov, to recognize the transformational impact of work undertaken by women across India. This year's campaign "to promote equal opportunity of women" received around 3000 entries from across the country

- Laxmi Agarwal, Uttar Pradesh, Subasini Mistry, Safeena Husain, Arunima Sinha, Kamal Kumbhar, Jamuna Tudu, Rajlakshmi Borthakur, Kiran Kanoji, Harshini Kanhekar, Shima Modak, Sunita Kamble, Kanika Tekriwal are the recipients of the award

Appointment

Sameer Garde named Cisco president for India, Saarc region

- Tech giant Cisco has named former Philips Healthcare executive, Sameer Garde as president for its India and Saarc operations.
- He succeeds Dinesh Malkani, who is leaving the company to pursue other opportunities.
- Malkani will continue to be associated with the company as strategic advisor till September 2017 to ensure a smooth and orderly transition
- Garde will be responsible for Cisco's senior-level external engagement, including those with government and industry associations.

BSE appoints Swarup as new Chairman

- The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) appointed Dharendra Swarup as its new Chairman.
- Swarup was appointed after his name was approved by the securities markets regulator Sebi.
- Swarup, who was functioning in the capacity of a Public Interest Director with BSE, replaces incumbent Sudhakar Rao, retired IAS officer.
- Swarup is a former Chairman of Pension Funds Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) and has over four decades of experience across finance, budgeting, public debt management, public policy and pension reforms.

Sanjaya Baru new secretary general of FICCI

- Sanjaya Baru, who was media advisor to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, has been named new secretary general of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci).
- Baru will assume the charge from September 1, Ficci President Pankaj Patel said in a statement. He will replace A Didar Singh.

US Senate confirms Christopher Wray as FBI Director

- The Senate has confirmed Christopher Wray to lead the FBI, replacing James Comey, who was abruptly fired by President Donald Trump amid the investigation into Russia meddling in last year's presidential election.
- The vote was 92-5 for Wray, a former high-ranking official in President George W Bush's Justice Department who oversaw investigations into corporate fraud. Wray, 50, inherits an FBI at a particularly challenging time given Trump's ousting of Comey, who was admired within the bureau.
- Wray won unanimous support from the Senate Judiciary Committee last month, with Republicans and Democrats praising his promise never to let politics get in the way of the bureau's mission.

Cricketer Harmanpreet Kaur to be appointed DSP by Punjab government

- Fresh from her successful performances in the recently concluded Women's World Cup, cricketer Harmanpreet Kaur was on Wednesday handed over a cheque of Rs five lakh by Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh here.
- The Punjab chief minister directed Director General of Police (DGP) Suresh Arora to complete the necessary formalities for Harmanpreet's appointment as a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) in the state police.
- Kaur, who hails from Moga district of Punjab, had led the Indian women cricket team to the final of the World Cup with her unbeaten 171-run knock from just 115 balls in the semi-finals against the formidable Australian women cricket side last month.
- Amarinder, reacting to Harmanpreet's performances in the World Cup, had promised to review the sports policy of Punjab to undo the "injustice" done to her by the previous Shiromani Akali Dal-BJP government in the state which refused to give her a job.

Air Marshal Hemant Narayan Bhagwat Appointed Air Officer-In-Charge Administration Of Indian Air Force

- Air Marshal Hemant Narayan Bhagwat took over as Air Officer-in-Charge Administration (AOA) of Indian Air Force at Air Headquarters in New Delhi on 1 August 2017.

- Air Marshal Bhagwat, the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM) and Vayu Sena Medal (VM) awardee, was commissioned in Administrative branch of the Indian Air Force in June 1981.
- After serving for seven years as an Air Traffic control Officer in three different operational bases of the IAF, he qualified as Parachute Jump Instructor and served in instructional capacity for 15 years.
- During his paratrooping career, he undertook over 2400 live parachute jumps in combat as well as sport profile from twenty different types of aircraft.
- He has also served as Chief Instructor of Paratroopers' Training School, Agra for five years and was leader of prestigious IAF Skydiving Team, Akashganga for several years.

Prabhat Kumar as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Kazakhstan

- Shri Prabhat Kumar, (IFS: 1991), presently Ambassador of India to Colombia has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- He is expected to take up the assignment shortly

Mohammad Mustafa appointed CMD of SIDBI

- Senior bureaucrat Mohammad Mustafa was appointed as Chairman and Managing Director in Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).
- Mustafa, a 1995 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre, is at present Joint Secretary in Department of Financial Services.
- The Appointments Committee of the cabinet has approved his appointment to the post for three years

Chabahar Port likely to be operational by 2018: Nitin Gadkari

- Amid deepening Indo-Iranian ties, the government is hopeful that the strategic Chabahar Port will be operational by 2018
- The Road, Transport, Highways and Shipping Minister will represent India at the oath taking ceremony Iranian President Hassan Rouhani tomorrow.
- As per the MoU signed between the two nations in May last year, India is to equip and operate two berths in Chabahar Port Phase-I with capital investment of USD 85.21 million and annual revenue expenditure of USD 22.95 million on a 10-year lease.

- Ownership of equipment will be transferred to Iranian side on completion of 10 years or for an extended period, based on mutual agreement. The Iranian side had requested for provision of a credit of USD 150 million in accordance with the MoU.

S. Aparna appointed Executive Director, World Bank

- S. Aparna, an IAS officer from Gujarat cadre has been appointed as Executive Director, World Bank to represent the constituency of India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka for three years.
- A 1988-batch IAS, she is currently Principal Secretary to Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani. At the World Bank, she will replace Subhash Garg, who was recently appointed Economic Affairs Secretary, Ministry of Finance.

Rajiv Kumar appointed vice-chairman of NITI Aayog

- Economist Dr Rajiv Kumar was appointed the new vice-chairman of NITI Aayog
- His appointment comes five days after the incumbent vice-chairman Arvind Panagariya announced he was quitting the government think tank on 31 August to return to Columbia University.
- Kumar, a senior fellow at Centre for Policy Research (CPR), is also chancellor of the the Gokhale Institute of Economics and Politics in Pune, and is the founding director of Pahle India Foundation, an organisation that specialises in policy-oriented research and analysis.

NDA candidate M Venkaiah Naidu elected India's next Vice-President

- NDA nominee M Venkaiah Naidu was on Saturday elected as the next vice-president of India by securing over two-thirds of votes, leaving opposition candidate Gopalkrishna Gandhi far behind. Naidu got 516 votes out of total 771 votes cast while Gandhi could only manage 244 votes. Of the 771 votes polled, 11 were invalid. Although 785 MPs are there in both Houses of Parliament, 14 MPs could not vote.
- Naidu will be the 13th person to hold the second highest constitutional post. The strength of the electoral college comprising both elected and nominated MPs of the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha is 790.

Former India all-rounder Madan Lal appointed chairman of DDCA's Cricket Affairs Committee

- Former India Test cricketer and Delhi captain Madan Lal has been appointed chairman of the newly-formed Cricket Affairs Committee (CAC) of Delhi & Districts Cricket Association (DDCA).
- The other members of the panel are former national selector Saba Karim, member 1983 World Cup-winning team Sunil Valson, women's India international Amita Sharma and senior sports journalist GS Vivek.
- The Committee has been entrusted with the duty of appointing coaches for various teams senior to age group, conducting trials, summer camps, selection matters as well as smooth conduct of Delhi league.

Neymar takes up goodwill ambassador position for Handicap International

- Brazilian star Neymar has become a goodwill ambassador for Handicap International on Monday, pledging to work for millions who are 'less visible' but deserve equality.
- Fresh from his first win with Paris Saint-Germain and his world-record signing from Barcelona, he was worth £198million, Neymar was announced as a goodwill ambassador outside the United Nations in Geneva.



Sandhu-Rojon appointed UN deputy representative for W Africa

- UN Secretary General António Guterres has appointed senior UN official Ruby Sandhu-Rojon as his new Deputy Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel.
- Sandhu-Rojon succeeds Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, who completed her assignment this month.
- Sandhu-Rojon brings to the position extensive experience with the United Nations, including in leadership positions with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and strong strategic planning, coordination, and programmatic skills.

Akshay Kumar appointed brand ambassador for Swachh Bharat

- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath today announced the appointment of Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar as the brand ambassador of the Swachh Bharat Mission in the state and also made his upcoming film "Toilet: Ek Prem Katha" tax free.

- The movie stresses on the importance of building toilets and ending open defecation in the country.

Flipkart's head of marketplace Anil Goteti to lead eBay India

- Flipkart has appointed its head of marketplace Anil Goteti to lead eBay India, which the homegrown ecommerce major acquired recently as part of a \$1.4 billion fundraising round.
- Goteti, who joined Flipkart in March 2013, currently heads the marketplace business, pricing and promotions platforms at the firm.
- Goteti has worked with McKinsey & Company and Qualcomm in the past.
- Naini was appointed recently when his predecessor Latif Nathani, who was managing director and vice president of eBay India since May 2013, resigned from the company.

Vinay Dube joins Jet Airways as CEO

- Jet Airways said Vinay Dube has joined as its chief executive officer after receipt of all requisite government and regulatory approvals.
- An Indian American, Dube's appointment was approved by the airline's board of directors on May 30. Jet Airways has been without a full-time CEO since Cramer Ball quit in February 2016.
- His appointment also comes at a time when the airline is facing challenging business conditions.
- Dube has served in various roles at Delta Airlines, Sabre Inc and American Airlines in the USA, Europe and Asia.

Prasoon Joshi to replace Pahlaj Nihalani as censor board chief

- The government has replaced Central Board of Film Certification chairperson Pahlaj
- Joshi was appointed with immediate effect for a period of three years or until further orders
- PAYBACK India Appoints Gautam Kaushik as CEO
- PAYBACK India has appointed Gautam Kaushik as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to further its journey as a growth-oriented and consumer-centric coalition loyalty program in India.
- In his capacity as the new CEO, Kaushik will be spearheading the India operations and will be leading all the critical business areas including Strategic Business Planning and Development, Partner Management & Acquisitions and Customer Engagement.

- Prior to joining PAYBACK, Gautam was working with American Express (AMEX) as Vice President (VP) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO), wherein he drove several potential acquisitions and strategic partnerships impacting critical business growth for AMEX in India.

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 on Tuesday named as India's Ambassador to Belgium and the European Union which has its headquarters in the Belgian capital of Brussels.
- The appointment assumes significance given India's ongoing negotiations for a free trade agreement with the EU which has been hanging fire after 16 rounds of negotiations.
- Reenat Sandhu was on Tuesday named as India's new Ambassador to Italy. The 1989 batch IFS officer replaces Anil Wadhwa, who retired this year.
- Ajit Vinayak Gupte, joint secretary in the external affairs ministry, has been named India's Ambassador to Denmark. The 1991 batch IFS officer will take over from Rajeev Shahare.
- Earlier this month, Ruchira Kamboj, who served as India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, was named India's new High Commissioner to South Africa.
- Pram Jit Mann, who was India's envoy to the Slovak Republic, was earlier named the Ambassador to Slovenia.

Milkha Singh appointed WHO's goodwill ambassador

- Legendary athlete Milkha Singh was appointed the World Health Organisation's goodwill ambassador for physical activity in the South-East Asia Region (SEAR)
- As goodwill ambassador, Milkha Singh will promote WHO SEAR's non-communicable diseases (NCDs) prevention and control action plan, which aims to reduce the level of insufficient physical activity by 10% and NCDs by 25% by 2025.

Delhi High Court appoints SY Quraishi as administrator of Archery Association of India

- The Delhi High Court has appointed SY Quraishi, former Chief Election Commissioner of India, as administrator of Archery Association of India (AAI) and ensure that its elections are held as per its constitution and the National Sports Code (NSC).
- The court came down heavily on AAI, de-recognized by the central government on December 07, 2012, and its Executive Committee, for failing to amend its constitution to bring it in conformity with the National Sports Code.

David Rasquinha appointed MD of Exim Bank

- David Rasquinha was appointed as Managing Director of Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank).
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment to the post for three years
- Rasquinha is at present Deputy Managing Director of the Exim Bank.
- Export-Import Bank of India is the premier export finance institution in India, established in 1982 under Export-Import Bank of India Act 1981.

Santosh Sharma appointed CMD of Hindustan Copper Limited

- Santosh Sharma was today appointed as Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL).
- He is at present Director (Operations) in the HCL.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved his appointment to the post for a period of five years,
- Emandi Sankara Rao has been appointed as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of IFCI Ltd.
- He is at present working as Director and Chief Executive Officer of IIFCL Asset Management Company Ltd.

Tata Motors Group appoints P.B. Balaji as CFO

- Automobile major Tata Motors announced the appointment of finance professional P.B. Balaji as the group's new Chief Financial Officer from November 2017.
- Balaji's appointment is expected to drive financial performance and bring greater vigour to operations and investment decisions across the different entities.

- Balaji is a global finance professional with over two decades of experience in the corporate sector.
- He started his career with Unilever in 1995 and worked in different corporate finance roles across Asian markets, Switzerland, UK and India. Since 2014, he has been heading the finance function as the Chief Financial Officer of Hindustan Unilever, a \$6 billion enterprise.

Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati given additional charge of Rajya Sabha TV

- Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi Shekhar Vempati has been given the additional charge of Rajya Sabha TV CEO after Gurdeep Singh Sappal resigned from his post
- Rajya Sabha TV is owned and operated by the upper house of Parliament. Vempati, formerly a part-time member of the Prasar Bharati Board, was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the public broadcaster in the month of June.

Vishal Sikka resigns as MD and CEO of Infosys

- Vishal Sikka has resigned as the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Infosys. Pravin Rao has been appointed as the interim CEO.
- U B Pravin Rao has been appointed as the Interim CEO of the company
- Rao is currently the Chief Operating Officer responsible for the entire portfolio of the company's offerings. Rao oversees the key functions of global sales, global delivery and business enabling functions.
- He drives and oversees the continuous renewal of key processes, systems and policies across the company in client relationship management, sales effectiveness, delivery excellence, quality, talent management and leadership development. Pravin is also Chairperson of Infosys BPO.

Adnan Sami, Yesudas appointed Bharat Bhavan trustees

- Pakistan-origin singer Adnan Sami, who got Indian citizenship last year, and eminent Carnatic musician and playback singer K J Yesudas have been nominated as trustees of the city-based Bharat Bhavan of Madhya Pradesh government
- The Bharat Bhavan complex, designed by eminent architect Charles Correa, is located on the banks of picturesque Upper Lake

- Indira Gandhi, who was the prime minister, had inaugurated the complex in 1982.
- The Bharat Bhavan, run by an autonomous trust, is a multi-art centre set up to create an interactive proximity in the verbal, visual and performing arts, according to its website.

Vladimir Putin Appoints Nikolay Kudashev As Russia's New Envoy To India

- Russian President Vladimir Putin today appointed career diplomat Nikolay Kudashev as Russia's new ambassador to India
- Mr Kudashev, a specialist in South East Asia, is currently the Deputy Director General Secretariat of the Ministry of foreign Affairs of Russia.
- "President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin by the executive order appointed Nikolay Kudashev as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of India,

Sri Lanka Appoints First Tamil Navy Chief After Four Decades

- Rear Admiral Travis Sinniah was today appointed as the chief of Sri Lanka's naval forces, making him the first from the minority Tamil community to head the Navy since the brutal civil war erupted in the country 45 years ago.
- Rear Admiral Sinniah, who played a decisive role in the destruction of the LTTE warships in deep sea during the height of the civil war, was appointed as the Navy chief by President Maithripala Sirisena.
- Rear Admiral Sinniah is the first from the Tamil community to head the Navy since the outbreak of the civil war in the north and east of the island in 1972.

Karur Vysya Bank appoints P R Seshadri as MD & CEO

- Karur Vysya Bank Ltd has informed BSE that the Reserve Bank of India has accorded their approval for the appointment of Shri P R Seshadri as Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of the Bank for a period of three years from the date of his taking charge

Mamta Suri takes charge as Executive Director, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)

- Dr. (Ms.) Mamta Suri took charge as Executive Director, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) in New Delhi today.

- Before joining IBBI, Dr. Suri was serving as Chief General Manager, Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India.
- Dr. Suri has obtained her Ph.D. in Finance from University of Delhi and M. Sc.in Insurance Risk and Management from City University, London.
- Dr. Suri is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) from the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India, and she has completed her graduation in law. She has also received Honorary membership for High Scholastic Achievement from USA.

Shri Dharmendra Kumar appointed as DG, Railway Protection Force

- Shri Dharmendra Kumar, IPS (AGMU:84) appointed as the Director General, Railway Protection Force, Railway Board. Presently he is working in CISF as Additional DG.
- The appointment of Shri Dharmendra Kumar will be effective from the date of assumption of charge of the post or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

Uber India appoints Vishpala Reddy as Chief People's Officer

- The US-based cab aggregator, Uber has roped in former American Express executive Vishpala Reddy as the Chief People's Officer for its India and South Asia operations.
- With over 17 years of experience, Reddy will also focus on enhancing diversity and inclusion by developing programmes to foster an equal opportunity workplace at Uber as part of her role.

N B Gupta appointed as Director (Finance), PFC

- N B Gupta has been appointed by Government of India as Director (Finance), Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC) for a period of five years or date of his superannuation whichever is earlier. Mr Gupta has assumed the charge of 'Director (Finance)' in PFC w.e.f. August 18, 2017.
- He has more than 30 years of experience in Power Sector and carries with him rich experience in the fields of Fund raising, International Finance, Internal Audit and Accounts Finalization etc.

Dharmendra Kumar appointed Director General of RPF

- CISF ADG Dharmendra Kumar has been appointed as director general of the Railway Protection Force.
- Kumar, who is a 1984 batch IPS officer of Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram-Union Territories (AGMUT) cadre, took charge
- Before being appointed additional director general (ADG), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Kumar was serving as special commissioner (Special Unit) in the Delhi Police.
- After the retirement of S K Bhagat in June this year, the additional charge of DG, RPF, was being handled by National Security Guard (NSG) DG, Sudhir Pratap Singh.
- Kumar will retire on September 30, 2018.

Ajay Vipin Nanavati appointed chairman of Syndicate Bank

- Ajay Vipin Nanavati was today appointed as the chairman of Syndicate Bank.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment as Non-Official Director/Non-Executive Chairman in Syndicate Bank for three years, according to an order issued by the Department of Personnel and Training.
- In 2015, the government had bifurcated the posts of chairman and managing directors in public sector banks.
- While the chairman became responsible for overall policy directions, the managing director and chief executive officer became the executive head, accountable for the day-to-day functioning of the bank.

Rajiv Bansal appointed interim Air India CMD

- Rajiv Bansal, the Additional Secretary and the Financial Advisor of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, has been appointed as the interim CMD of Air India
- Rajiv Bansal, the Additional Secretary and the Financial Advisor of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, has been appointed as the interim CMD of Air India

Air India CMD Ashwani Lohani named Railway Board Chairman

- Ashwani Lohani, CMD of Air India, has been named the Chairman of the Railway Board following the resignation of A.K. Mital.
- Mr. Lohani, an Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineering (IRSME) cadre had served as DRM, Delhi Division; Director, National Rail Museum; and Chief Administrative Officer, Rail Alternate Fuel. He

holds the Guinness Record for successfully running the 'Fairy Queen Express', the world's oldest working steam locomotive.

Nandan Nilekani Appointed Chairman of Infosys Board

- Nandan Nilekani was appointed as the chairman of the board of directors of Infosys. Sweeping changes have been made to the board in an attempt to restore stability after the resignation of Vishal Sikka as CEO
- Nilekani is a co-founder of Infosys and served as its CEO from March 2002 to April 2007.
- He left the company in 2009 to head the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), the Aadhaar authority.
- Sixty-two-year-old Nilekani held the role until 2014, before resigning to unsuccessfully contest Lok Sabha elections on a Congress ticket from Bengaluru (South).

Justice Dipak Misra Sworn In As 45th Chief Justice Of India

- Justice Dipak Misra, who led the Supreme Court bench that confirmed death to four convicts in the Nirbhaya gang-rape case in May this year, will succeed Chief Justice JS Khehar as the next Chief Justice of India.
- Justice Misra was sworn in as the 45th Chief Justice of India at a brief ceremony in the Darbar Hall of Rashtrapati Bhavan. President Ram Nath Kovind administered the oath of office to Justice Misra.
- Chief Justice Misra will hold office for the next 13 months, till 2 October 2018. As per the established practice, Chief Justice Khehar had had last month recommended Justice Misra's elevation as his successor.

Tata Sons names Roopa Purushothaman as Chief Economist & Head of Policy Advocacy

- Tata Sons appointed Roopa Purushothaman as Chief Economist and Head of Policy Advocacy to drive macro-economic research as well as all policy and advocacy initiatives as relevant to the businesses of the salt-to-software conglomerate.
- Purushothaman joins Tata Sons from Everstone Capital, where she was leading the research function. Before that, she was with Goldman Sachs International as Vice President & Global Economist. She will join the group with effect from 1st September 2017

HSBC India investment banking head Sunil Sanghai quits

- Foreign lender HSBC India's vice chairman and investment banking head Sunil Sanghai quit the British banking giant today and joined hands with the Dinesh Kanabar-promoted tax and regulatory firm Dhruva Advisors to start a merchant banking division.
- Sanghai, who has been occupying the current position since March 2016 and with HSBC since 2010, quit the bank earlier during the day.

Indian Hotels appoints Puneet Chhatwal as MD, CEO

- Tata group hospitality firm Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL) has appointed Duetsche Hospitality chief executive Puneet Chhatwal as its managing director and CEO.
- He will take over from incumbent Rakesh Sarna, who is stepping down on 30 September.
- Chhatwal is currently chief executive and member of executive board of Duetsche Hospitality/Steinberger Hotels AG, a large European hotel chain

Mohammad Mustafa takes charge as Sidbi chairman

- Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi) said Mohammad Mustafa has assumed office as the chairman and managing director.
- Prior to this, Mustafa was working as joint secretary in the department of financial services at the Centre
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment for a period of three years, according to a Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) order.

BSE board approves another 5-year term for Ashish Chauhan as CEO

- Top stock exchange BSE's board has approved another five-year term for its chief Ashish Chauhan, who has steered a strong turnaround and a highly- successful initial public offering (IPO) of the bourse with strong business expansion.
- Chauhan, who joined BSE as deputy chief executive officer (CEO) in 2009, was made MD and CEO for a period of five years with effect from November 2, 2012.
- The board approved re-appointment of Ashishkumar Chauhan as BSE's Managing Director and CEO for a further period of five years from November 2, 2017, to November 1, 2022.

Uber Selects Expedia's Dara Khosrowshahi As Its New CEO

- Uber's board of directors selected Expedia's Dara Khosrowshahi as the company's new CEO
- Khosrowshahi, a surprise candidate, will replace former CEO and co-founder Travis Kalanick, who resigned more than two months ago amid a series of scandals and controversies that have rocked the ride-hailing company for much of this year.
- Khosrowshahi, who is 48, has led Expedia since 2005, through a period of rapid expansion. An Iranian-American, Khosrowshahi is a graduate of Brown University who previously worked at IAC and Allen & Company. Earlier this year, he gained notoriety for his strong condemnation of Donald Trump.

RK Raghavan Indian High Commissioner to Cyprus

- Former CBI director R K Raghavan, who headed the Special Investigation Team that probed the Gujarat riots, has been appointed as Indian High Commissioner to Cyprus
- Raghavan, who was CBI director from January 1999 to April 2001, had investigated high profile cases like Priyadarshini Mattoo murder case, 2000 South Africa cricket match fixing, 2002 Gujarat riots.
- He has a master's degree in politics and public administration (Madras University) and an MS in criminal justice (Temple University, Philadelphia).
- A PhD in political science, Raghavan was a visiting fellow at the Rutgers University and Harvard Law School.

Gauba takes charge as Home Secretary; Mehrishi retires

- Senior IAS officer Rajiv Gauba today took charge as the Union Home Secretary after incumbent Rajiv Mehrishi retired from service.
- He will have a fixed two-year tenure.
- A 1982 batch officer of the Jharkhand cadre, 59-year-old Gauba was appointed Home Secretary about two months ago and has since been serving in the Home Ministry as Officer on Special Duty (OSD).
- Gauba had served as Secretary in the Urban Development Ministry before being appointed in the sensitive post.
- Earlier, he had worked in the Home Ministry as Additional Secretary, looking after the crucial left wing extremism division, among many other responsibilities.

P.V. Sindhu Announced as Bridgestone India's Brand Ambassador

- Bridgestone India, a subsidiary of the world's largest tyre and rubber company and a Worldwide Olympic Partner, has announced a partnership with ace badminton player and Olympic silver medallist, P.V. Sindhu to be the company's first brand ambassador.
- As part of the three-year agreement, Sindhu will be included in Bridgestone's activations around its Worldwide Olympic Partnership.
- Sindhu is among the world's leading professional badminton players who recently earned a silver medal at the World Badminton Championship in Glasgow.
- The Padma Shri recipient became the first Indian woman to win an Olympic silver medal in the Olympic Games Rio 2016. Sindhu's Olympic medal established her as the first Indian shuttler to reach the final of an Olympic Games badminton event and the youngest Indian to make a podium finish in an individual event at the Olympics.

Science & Technology

Scientists just created a flexible bio-glue for healing wounds

- Scientists have developed a super strong, flexible adhesive material inspired by the glue secreted by slugs that sticks to biological tissues – even when wet – without causing toxicity. The “tough adhesive” is biocompatible and binds to tissues with a strength comparable to the body's own resilient cartilage
- The key feature of our material is the combination of a very strong adhesive force and the ability to transfer and dissipate stress, which have historically not been integrated into a single adhesive
- Slugs secrete a special kind of mucus when threatened that glue it in place, making it difficult for a predator to pry it off its surface.

Bitcoin 'clone' sees a slow start following split

- Bitcoin's underlying software code was split, generating a new clone called "Bitcoin Cash," but the new virtual currency got off to a slow start due to lacklustre support for its network.
- The initiative was headed by a small group of mostly China-based bitcoin miners - programmers who essentially operate the bitcoin

network - who were not happy with scheduled improvements to the currency's technology meant to increase its capacity to process transactions.

- These miners, who get paid in the currency for contributing computing power to the bitcoin network, initiated what is known as a "fork" on Tuesday, where the underlying blockchain splits into two potential paths, creating a new digital currency.
- Bitcoin's split has created a new competitor to the original digital currency, which remains the oldest and most valuable in circulation.
- Yet only a small fraction of bitcoin miners have been contributing their computing power to the new blockchain, and it took nearly six hours for the first batch of Bitcoin Cash coins to be mined this afternoon, according to Blockdozer Explorer, a firm providing data on digital currencies.

Google's Internet Saathi programme reaches 100,000 villages

- American Internet giant, Google India said that it has reached a milestone of 100,000 villages with its Internet Saathi programme which was launched as a pilot in Rajasthan in July 2015 along with Tata Trusts.
- Google will also be expanding the program in two new states - Haryana and Bihar.
- Live in ten states in India, 25,000 fully trained Internet Saathis are working everyday across these villages to help women and children learn about the Internet. In total, over 10 million women have gained from the programme
- In Haryana, the program has already started to roll out and will be covering around 1000 villages and in Bihar the programme has kicked off from Ramnagar, Bagaha, Lauria, Manjha and Chakai villages and we will be covering over 7000 villages expanding it further later in the year.

Israel Launches Its First Environmental Research Satellite

- The first Israeli satellite for environmental research was launched from the European spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana. The satellite is a joint effort by the Israel Space Agency, under the aegis of the Science and Technology Ministry, and the French Space Agency (CNES) and was built in Israel by Israel Aerospace Industries.
- It is considered the smallest satellite of its kind in the world, and is built to survey and monitor large areas to study soil, vegetation,

forests, agriculture, water and air quality and other aspects of the environment.

- The satellite, which weighs only 265 kilograms and was launched on a Vega platform, was dubbed Venus, an acronym that stands for Vegetation and Environment monitoring on a New (μ) Micro-Satellite.

Army launches app for soldiers

- The Indian Army has developed a mobile application through which serving soldiers can track details like postings and promotions, an army official said on Wednesday.
- Through the 'Humraaz' app, soldiers can also view their monthly salary slips and the Form 16 and also download them.
- The mobile app has been developed in-house by the Army and will be launched in the second week of August for prompt communication of information to junior commissioner officers and other personnels.
- The Aadhar details will be verified with the Army database over (National Information Centre) NIC cloud and he will get a one-time-password on his registered mobile number.

India's first private missile production facility unveiled

- India's first private sector missile sub-systems manufacturing facility, a joint venture between the \$2.5 billion Kalyani Group and Israel's Rafael Advanced Defence Systems Ltd., was inaugurated near Hyderabad
- To begin with, the Kalyani Rafael Advanced Systems (KRAS) plant will make anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) Spike and the production is expected to begin in a few weeks, Kalyani Group chairman Baba N. Kalyani said. Besides supplying to the Indian Army, the plan is to export to South East Asian countries
- Formed in line with the 'Make in India' initiative of the Centre and the policy to encourage private sector participation in defence production, the 51:49 joint venture will develop a wide range of advanced capabilities.
- These include command control and guidance, electro-optics, remote weapon systems, precision guided munitions and system engineering for system integration. The plant would employ more than 300 engineers and provide indirect employment to 1,000 people.

Microsoft ties up with Telangana to provide AI-based eye care solutions

Microsoft is going to help the government of Telangana use artificial intelligence to provide eye care screening for children in the State. As part of the agreement, Microsoft's cloud based machine learning eye care screening Microsoft Intelligent Network for Eyecare (MINE) will align with the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram programme under the National Health Mission.

MINE is a global consortium of eye care providers, research and academic institutions that will apply artificial intelligence to help in eye care delivery. Microsoft system can predict whether a lasik, cataract or other surgery is going to be successful for a given patient or not. It is now also able to predict how a patient's refractive error is going to progress over time. For the new partnership with Telangana, the idea is that Insights derived from MINE will help make early interventions and prevention through treatment of refractive errors in children. This partnership will also offer access to Microsoft's cloud based analytics to derive insights from all the health screening programmes being run for infants to 18-year-old students.

Hubble detects Exoplanet with glowing water atmosphere

- An international team of researchers, led by the University of Exeter, made the new discovery by observing glowing water molecules in the atmosphere of the exoplanet WASP-121b with NASA's Hubble Space Telescope.
- In order to study the gas giant's stratosphere - a layer of atmosphere where temperature increases with higher altitudes - scientists used spectroscopy to analyse how the planet's brightness changed at different wavelengths of light.
- Water vapour in the planet's atmosphere, for example, behaves in predictable ways in response to different wavelengths of light, depending on the temperature of the water. At cooler temperatures, water vapour in the planet's upper atmosphere blocks light of specific wavelengths radiating from deeper layers towards space. But at higher temperatures, the water molecules in the upper atmosphere glow at these wavelengths instead.
- WASP-121b, located approximately 900 light years from Earth, is a gas giant exoplanet commonly referred to as a 'hot Jupiter', although with a greater mass and radius than Jupiter, making it much puffier. The exoplanet orbits its host star every 1.3 days, and is around the closest distance it could be before the star's gravity would start ripping it apart.

- This close proximity also means that the top of the atmosphere is heated to a blazing hot 2,500 degrees Celsius – the temperature at which iron exists in gas rather than solid form.

NCERT Launches Web Portal For Supply Of Textbooks

- Upendra Kushwaha, Minister of State, Ministry of Human Resource Development has launched the NCERT's Web portal for supply of textbooks to schools and individuals in New Delhi.
- The portal will ensure better distribution of textbooks across the country and will also address the apprehensions, on the part of schools and parents, regarding unavailability of National Council Of Educational Research And Training (NCERT) textbooks, said a statement from the ministry.
- The schools will be able to log on to the portal, by entering their respective Boards' affiliation numbers and other details, till 8th September 2017 for placing their orders for the session 2018-19.
- The Web Portal can be accessed at www.ncertbooks.ncert.gov.in.
- At the time of placing the orders, the schools are not required to make the payment; the payment can be made just before the supply.
- The schools will also have the option of directly procuring textbooks either from their nearest NCERT vendors or from the Regional Production-cum-Distribution Centres (RPDCs) of the NCERT's located at Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Guwahati, and Bengaluru,

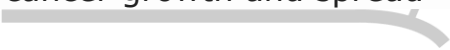
Google, NSDC Launch Android Skill Development Programme to Improve Mobile Developer Ecosystem

- The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Google India launched Android Skill Development programme to impart mobile development training on the Android and Web platform and improve the quality of mobile app development ecosystem in India.
- Under the initiative, NSDC would introduce a specific course to create applications for the mobile platform that can be used on smartphones and tablets running on the Android operating system.
- The collaboration aims to accelerate mobile skill training and create opportunities for youth in the country,
- The 100-hour duration course is designed to be delivered by NSDC's partner agencies, outside the formal education system.
- NSDC and Google India will also work together to focus on up-skilling Android trainers under the programme.

ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund launches 'Plan Your Goal' website

- ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund has launched a new website 'PlanYourGoal.com' to help users plan their investments according to their future financial goals.
- The website guides the users to plan their big spends, tax investments as well as the corpus required during retirement.
- The website also provides recommendations based on calculation

Low-cost, highly sensitive blood test for cancer detection developed

- Stanford scientists have developed a low-cost and highly sensitive blood test that may quickly detect cancer growth and spread.
 - The test, called **single-colour digital PCR**, can detect genetic mutations in minute amounts of DNA released from cancer cells into the blood.
 - The highly sensitive test requires only a fraction of a tube of blood and can detect as few as three mutation-bearing molecules in a single reaction, researchers said.
 - It has the potential to be personalised to recognise mutations unique to any individual cancer,
 - In contrast, molecular tests like the one we have developed will enable patients to be monitored at every visit, and thus have the potential for quickly tracking cancer growth and spread
- 

Tata Power introduces QR code for bill payment

- Tata Power has introduced a QR code service for bill payments in the megapolis,
- The QR code linked to Unified Payments Interface (UPI) will be printed on the electricity bills and customers can scan the code with Bhim app or any other UPI-linked bank apps and pay their bills without any hassle,
- The bill details will be displayed on the app, after which the customer can authorise the payment within a few seconds and his bill will be paid instantaneously with a real time update of the payment in his consumer account.

NASA Successfully Launches Latest Communications Satellite

- NASA's Tracking and Data Relay Satellite-M (TDRS-M), which is the third and final in a series of next generation communications satellites,

has successfully been placed into orbit following separation from an United Launch Alliance (ULA) Atlas V rocket. TDRS-M launched Friday at 8:29 a.m. EDT from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida.

- Ground controllers report the satellite is in good health at the start of a four-month checkout in space by its manufacturer, Boeing.
- NASA will conduct additional tests before putting TDRS-M into service early next year. When ready, TDRS-M will become part of NASA's Space Network providing navigation and high-data-rate communications to the International Space Station, NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, rockets and a host of other spacecraft.
- The mission of the TDRS project, established in 1973, is to develop, launch and deliver data communications relay spacecraft to support NASA's Space Network, which provides high-data-rate communications and accurate navigation.
- The TDRS-M spacecraft is effectively identical -- in both function and performance -- to the TDRS-K and -L spacecraft launched in 2013 and 2014, respectively.

Google Android 8.0 Oreo is now official

- Google Android 8.0 Oreo, the next version of the mobile OS has been officially announced for the world. Google announced the Android Oreo name
- Android 8.0 brings a host of improvements and new features to Android including Picture-in-Picture mode, better battery optimization and more.
- First, Picture-in-picture will let users do two tasks simultaneously on any size screen, and apps like YouTube, Google Duo already support this.
- In terms of notifications, the new notification dots will let users tap these and see what is new in the app. There's also the Autofill framework, which will auto fill log-in for apps where users have granted permission.
- Additionally developers of password manager apps can now use the new APIs to make this autofill option available to users in other apps.

UK scientists create world's smallest surgical robot to start a hospital revolution

- British scientists have developed the world's smallest surgical robot which could transform everyday operations for tens of thousands of patients.

- From a converted pig shed in the Cambridgeshire countryside, a team of 100 scientists and engineers have used low-cost technology originally developed for mobile phones and space industries to create the first robotic arm specifically designed to carry out keyhole surgery.
- **The robot, called Versius,** mimics the human arm and can be used to carry out a wide range of laparoscopic procedures – including hernia repairs, colorectal operations, and prostate and ear, nose and throat surgery – in which a series of small incisions are made to circumvent the need for traditional open surgery.
- This reduces complications and pain after surgery and speeds up recovery times for patients.
- The robot is controlled by a surgeon at a console guided by a 3D screen in the operating theatre.

Twitter launches digital education programme for media agency professionals in Asia Pacific

- Twitter has kicked off its new media agency programme called #TweetToTheTop in India. Eleven agencies from global media and advertising networks including Dentsu, GroupM, IPG and Omnicom will be participating in this initiative.
- #TweetToTheTop is Twitter's first year-long agency engagement programme dedicated to media executives in five countries in Asia Pacific: India, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines and Australia.
- #TweetToTheTop aims to attract hundreds of young media planners and executives from the five markets to showcase their best work using Twitter solutions.

Ocean forecasting system for Madagascar and Mozambique

- The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) of the Ministry of Earth Sciences here inaugurated the Ocean Forecasting System for Comoros, Madagascar, and Mozambique at the third Ministerial Meeting of Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Asia and Africa (RIMES), held at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
- The ocean forecast and early warning information on high wave, currents, winds, tides, sub-surface ocean conditions cater to users like fishermen, coastal population, tourism sector, coastal defence officials, marine police, port authorities, research institutions and offshore industries of these countries.

- These ocean services are aimed towards safety at the sea. The system would offer oil spill advisory services, high wave alerts, port warnings, forecast along the ship routes in addition to tsunami and storm surge warnings and help in search and rescue operations.
- INCOIS is already providing these operational services to Maldives, Sri Lanka and Seychelles.

India Gets Its Own Sniper Rifle From West Bengal's Ishapore

- After using German sniper rifles Heckler & Koch for decades, India got its own sniper rifle from Ordnance Factory Ishapore in West Bengal. The new rifle is likely to eliminate country's dependence on importing rifles from other manufacturers abroad.
- Kolkata Police will be introducing it to services after it is tested by a group of commandos.
- The Ishapore sniper costs Rs. 2.5 lakh plus taxes.
- The rifle has a calibre of 7.62 mm and weighs 6.7 kg.
- The rifle can shoot the target up to 800 Metres.
- The biggest advantage of the rifle is the abundance of indigenous ammunition.
- Kolkata Police will be introducing it to services after testing.
- Ishapore Ordnance Factory received orders from Central Reserve Police Force, Haryana and Rajasthan Police.
- The rifle will be important for urban police for VIP protection, hostage situations and terror attacks.
- The research and development for the sniper was done at Ishapore for more than a year.
- The factory also produced INSAS rifle which is used by many forces.

Ranking & Index

Forbes Asia's 200 Best Under A Billion: Three Indian Companies Register Presence

- In a recent list of Asia's best under a Billion 2017 released by Forbes, three Indian companies succeeded in marking their presence with outstanding performance. Manpasand Beverages, Kelton Tech Solutions and 8K Miles software services made it to the list of companies that proved to be the reliable growth engines.

- China, Hong Kong and Taiwan retained dominance in the list.

Mukesh Ambani overtakes Hong Kong's Li Ka-shing to become second richest man in Asia

- Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani has overtaken Hong Kong business magnate Li Ka-shing to become Asia's second-richest man. According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, Ambani's wealth has seen a rise of \$12.1 billion with the oil-to telecom conglomerate's shares seeing a surge with investors rallying behind his decision to launch the cheapest 4G phone, according to a Bloomberg report.
- Li Ka-shing is the richest man in Hong Kong with a business empire that ranges from telecommunications to retail and port

Four Indian Cities In Top 5 Fastest Growing

- Delhi will have the fastest growth of any city in Asia, with the economy to be almost 50 percent larger in 2021 than it was at the end of last year.
- Indian cities are set to expand the most across the region, with growth speeding up from the past 5 years, according to a new study from Oxford Economics, which ranked Asia's 30 largest cities.
- With financial and business services projected to be the fastest growing sector in India, Delhi's dominance in this industry will lead to higher growth and higher incomes.

Three Indian firms among Forbes' most innovative companies

- Three Indian firms -- Hindustan Unilever, Asian Paints and Bharti Airtel -- are among Forbes' list of the world's 100 most innovative companies, where Salesforce.com has replaced Tesla Motors on the top position.
- While HUL and Asian Paints have moved up in their ranks to seventh and eighth respectively (from 31st and 18th last year), Bharti Airtel has entered the ranking at 78th position.
- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Sun Pharma and Larsen & Toubro were also on the 2016 list but they failed to make the cut this year, bringing down the total number of Indian firms from five to three.
- The annual 'World's Most Innovative Companies' are the ones that investors expect to be innovative now and in the future. Besides, to be included in the list, firms need seven years of public financial data and \$ 10 billion in market cap.

Serena Williams is the highest-paid female athlete of 2017

- Forbes recently released its list of the highest-paid female athletes, and to no-one's surprise, Serena Williams is right at the top and leads by a significant margin.
- Between June 2016 and June 2017, Williams earned \$27 million (R361,19 million), Forbes reports. This is more than double any other female athlete in the world this year. While she's earned a lot from prize money, much of Williams' revenue comes from her multitude of endorsements.
- These include deals with Nike, Intel, Beats by Dre and JPMorgan Chase

Here's the top 5 list of the highest-paid female athletes in the world:

- Serena Williams (tennis) – \$27 million (R361,19 million)
- Angelique Kerber (tennis) – \$12,6 million (R168,55 million)
- Danica Patrick (motor racing) – \$12,2 million (R163,2 million)
- Ronda Rousey (UFC) – \$11 million (R147,15 million)
- Venus Williams (tennis) – \$10,5 million (R140,46 million)

Emma Stone named 2017's highest-paid female actor with \$26m

- Emma Stone has been named Hollywood's best-paid female actor in Forbes' annual list of top earners.
- The 28-year-old made \$26m in the last 12 months, the majority of which was earned from her Oscar-winning performance in the musical romance La La Land. The film made over \$445m worldwide.'
- Jennifer Aniston comes in a close second, earning \$25.5m in the last 12 months.
- Former top-ranked Jennifer Lawrence comes in at No. 3

5 Indian-origin persons in Fortune's annual '40 Under 40' list

- Five Indian-origin persons, including Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, have featured in Fortune's annual list of 40 young and influential people in the field of business inspiring others with their work.
- Fortune's 2017 '40 Under 40' list is an annual ranking of the most influential young people who are under 40 in business, whom the magazine termed as "disruptors, innovators, rebels and artists" inspiring others.
- The list has been topped by 39-year-old French President Emman "France's youngest leader since Napoleon" who swept the presidential elections in May "obliterating the two-party system that had governed the country for generations."

- The Indian-origin persons on the list are 26-year-old Divya Nag, who oversees Apple's ambitious ResearchKit and CareKit programmes that encourage developers to build health-related apps, Rishi Shah, 31, and Shradha Agarwal, 32, who helm more than 10-year-old health-tech firm Outcome Health and CEO and founder of non-profit Samasource 31-year-old Leila Janah.

PM Modi, Priyanka feature in LinkedIn Power Profiles List of 2017

- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and actress Priyanka Chopra have found a spot in the LinkedIn Power Profiles List of 2017.
- Professional networking giant LinkedIn announced its fourth edition of Power Profiles, a list of the most viewed LinkedIn profiles of professionals in India
- Other influencers are Kailash Satyarthi, Founder of Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, Global Chief People Officer and Priyanka, who are new entries in the list.
- Prabir Jha, global chief people officer, Cipla, and Manu Kumar Jain, Vice President and Managing Director, Xiaomi Technology, have returned to the list this year.

Forbes' highest paid actors: Shah Rukh Khan among world's top 10

- Forbes' list of highest paid actors in the world is out now, and it's a good news for Bollywood fans. While Mark Wahlberg has topped the list this year, three Indian actors find place in the top 10.
- While Shah Rukh Khan is at number 8, Salman Khan and Akshay Kumar follow at number 9 and 10 respectively.
- According to Forbes, while SRK earned \$38 million (Rs 243.50 cr), Salman made \$37 million (Rs 237 cr) and Akshay took home \$35.5 million (Rs 227.5 cr).

Alibaba Founder Jack Ma becomes Asia's richest person

- According to Forbes, as of the end of last week, Jack Ma, the founder of the leading e-commerce giant in China, was worth \$37.4 billion, with Tencent (TCEHY) Chairman Ma Huateng now ranked second with a \$36.7 billion fortune.
- According to Forbes' real-time billionaire's list, the two Chinese businessmen go back and forth as the richest in Asia. Global rankings put Ma at No. 18 while Huateng is No. 19.

Obituary

Dhrupad maestro Ustad Sayeeduddin Dagar dies aged 78

- Ustad Hussain Sayeeduddin Dagar, maestro and custodian of the venerable Dhrupad tradition of Hindustani classical music and a member of the eminent Dagar family, passed away aged 78 in Pune late on Sunday night after a brief illness.
- Known affectionately to his legions of disciples and admirers as 'Saeed Bhai', the maestro was born in Alwar in Rajasthan in 1939 and was the youngest among the eight famous Dagar brothers – all exponents of the ancient, complex and elaborate Dhrupad tradition.
- Dhrupad - a Sanskrit portmanteau of Dhruva (immovable) and Pad (verse) has its roots since ancient times, mentioned as early as the 3rd Century B.C. in the Natyashastra.

Sam Shepard, Actor and Pulitzer-Winning Playwright, Is Dead at 73

- Sam Shepard, whose hallucinatory plays redefined the landscape of the American West and its inhabitants, died at his home in Kentucky. He was 73.
- In plays like "True West" (1980), "Fool for Love" (1983) and the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Buried Child" (1978), he dismantled the classic iconography of cowboys and homesteaders, of American dreams and white picket fences, and reworked the landscape of deserts and farmlands into his own shimmering expanse of surreal estate.

Legendary footballer and Olympian Ahmed Khan dead at 90

- Ahmed Khan, a member of India's gold winning football team at the first Asian Games in 1951, passed away at the age of 91 after prolonged illness.
- A prolific striker, Khan represented India in two Olympic Games -- 1948 in London and 1952 in Helsinki apart from two Asian Games in Delhi and 1954 in Manila.
- Khan, who played as a striker represented India in 11 matches and made his debut against France in the London Olympics. He scored 3 goals including one against Yugoslavia in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics.

Book & Authors

Rajan's book on RBI stint in 'turbulent times'

- Raghuram Rajan explains economic concepts and talks of issues like tolerance and connection between political freedom and prosperity in his new book — I Do What I Do: On Reform, Rhetoric & Resolve — which is a collection of essays and speeches during his stint as RBI head.
- When Rajan took charge as RBI Governor in September 2013, the rupee was in free fall, inflation was high and exchange reserves were falling.
- Rajan's commentary and speeches in the book convey what it was like to be at the helm of the central bank in those turbulent but exciting times

